

Assisting Ministers

St. Luke's Lutheran Church

January 2019

About Assisting Ministers

Assisting Ministers (AMs) fulfill two important roles in the worship life of St. Luke's Lutheran Church. First, AMs embody theological roles within the worshipping community. Second, AMs carry out functional roles necessary for worship to be led in good order. The importance of their presence in worship cannot be diminished. Therefore, we honor those who serve as AMs and give thanks to God for their leadership.

The Theological Roles of Assisting Ministers

AMs are visible reminders of the priesthood of all believers. Lutherans celebrate that in Holy Baptism, God joins the us with Christ in his death and resurrection. God takes us to the cross of Jesus and the empty tomb of Easter. God unites us with Christ, giving us new life through his death and resurrection. At the same time, the Holy Spirit empowers us to be members of the church who share in the Priesthood of All Believers.

Assisting Ministers are a reminder that we all share in the Priesthood. Worship happens because we all participate. The ordained and called pastor of the congregation participates as the Presiding Minister. S/he is responsible for preparing the weekly worship, making sure that worship is done properly, and presiding over the weekly assembly when sacraments are celebrated.

The pastor is a member of the priesthood shared by all believers. Lutherans understand that ordained pastors are people who raised up from within the priesthood of all believers. S/he is sent to seminary to learn how to lead the congregation in its "priestly" duties. The pastor is to be considered a priest among the many priests present within the congregation. S/he has no special powers not given to other baptized members. The pastor has not been changed in his/her being. In Lutheran theology and practice, the Pastor preserves good order and assures that the congregation's worship is in line with practices of the ELCA, Lutherans worldwide, and other Christians. The pastor ensures that in this congregation the gospel is rightly preached and the sacraments are properly celebrated.

The presence of the AM in the leadership of the community is a visible sign of our theological assertion. S/he is a non-ordained sign of the priesthood of all believers. As such, s/he helps the congregation remember that the worship is held in common with all who share in the priesthood of all believers.

The Functional Roles of Assisting Ministers

Lutheran worship provides for a division of leadership among the ministers of the church. There are parts of the liturgy led by the Assisting Minister. Other parts are led by the Presiding Minister. Many parts are to be led by the congregation, the choir, and other participants. Within the liturgy, the AM leads in functional ways. S/he does certain things. The AM also has specific duties before and after worship.

Ten Practices of Effective Assisting Ministers

1. AMs are recognized for leadership skills.
2. AMs have high regard for the weekly assembly.

3. AMs understand the flow of the liturgy.
4. AMs prepare prayers for the service to include current events.
5. AMs practice their parts in the service prior to Sunday morning.
6. AMs are mindful of the needs of the congregation and other leaders.
7. AMs project confidence.
8. AMs speak clearly.
9. AMs lead congregational singing (preferably).
10. AMs exhibit a heart for serving others.

Reverencing the Altar

The action of reverencing the altar pays respect to the action God does at our communion table. Leaders of worship are to be instructed that reverencing the altar happens as we enter the chancel at the beginning of the service and again at the end of the service, as we depart from the chancel.

Seating Locations for Leaders

Worship leaders are to be seated in the worship leader area in the chancel. Three chairs are set in the front row. One for the Presiding Minister, one for the preacher, one for the Assisting Minister. Pastor Jordan will sit on the corner closest to the ambo. Assisting Ministers will sit on the front corner closest to the north wall. The center chair will be for the Associate pastor. When the Bishop or another special speaker worships with us, the Assisting minister moves to the back row.

Instructions for the Assisting Minister:

1. Assisting Ministers serve according to a schedule. It is important that a variety of Assisting Minister gifts lead the congregation. Therefore, an Assisting Minister should lead only as often as other Assisting Ministers.
2. When Assisting Ministers have a conflict that keeps them from serving when scheduled, they work with other AMs to find a replacement. Once a replacement is found, the AM contacts Office Staff to inform of the change.
3. Office Staff will have the bulletin and binder done by Thursday afternoon. They will place the Assisting Minister's completed binder on the counter in the Robing Room.
4. AMs should also prepare to read the lessons, should a lector be absent. Therefore, AMs should know what lectors do.
5. Prior to Worship: Assisting Ministers are to modify prayers to include events from the news that should be included in the prayers.
 - a. Example: Earthquakes, fires, shootings... other concerns
 - b. Illnesses and deaths in the congregations
 - c. Prior to worship, ask the if there are any other concerns that came in during the weekend that need to be added to the prayers.
6. AMs arrive at Church at least 45 minutes prior the service at which they are serving.
7. AMs work with ushers to be sure that all lights are on in the sanctuary.
 - a. Especially important: that the three lights are turned on. They are independently controlled from a panel in the narthex, not tied into the automatic system.
8. AMs place bulletins for leaders on the seats in which the sit
 - a. Bulletins for: Acolytes, AM, Pastor, Communion Assistants, and for any guest we might have.
9. AMs work with the AV Team to assure the sound system is on. They do a sound and position check on the microphone being used by the AM. This needs to be done before many people are in the building. (30 minutes prior to worship)

- a. NOTE: Microphones are to be positioned so that the microphone skims along the cheek. It should be pointed toward the mouth, less than a ¼ inch away from your skin, and a ½ inch away from the edge of your mouth.
 - b. If your microphone is not skimming along your cheek and/or if it is not pointed toward your mouth, it will not pick you up well and will cause a greater likelihood of feedback in the system.
 - c. See diagrams posted in the Robing Room for Proper microphone placement.
10. AMs assist other worship leaders, such as acolytes, Lectors, communion assistants, Visiting Clergy, and other guests.
 - a. Ask each if they have questions.
 - b. Help acolytes get robes on and field questions they have. (10 Minutes prior)
 - i. Copies of Acolyte Instructions are in the Robing Room.
 - c. Remind Communion Assistants of instructions.
 - i. Copies of Communion Assistant Instructions are in the Robing Room.
 - d. Assist Lectors with the Lectionary.
 - e. Assist visiting clergy and other guests with needs they may have
 - i. Showing hospitality to and guiding them
 - ii. Helping them with microphones
 - iii. In the absence of a Pastor, helping guest clergy know those things that are different about worship in our facility.
 1. Who does what in worship
 2. Change to Change the World
 3. Communion Distribution
 4. Microphones
 5. Other as needed.
11. AMs ensure that the pulpit mic is properly placed for lectors to use. (15 minutes prior to worship)
12. In the absence of Acolytes, AMs light candles, receive the offering, and extinguish the candles.
13. When a lector is missing, the AM reads the lessons.
14. AMs, Acolytes and Pastor meet 5 minutes prior to worship for prayer. The AM will lead this prayer, asking God's blessing on the service and other as appropriate.
 - a. All preparation for the service needs to be completed prior to this time. This will be a time for prayer and last-minute instructions from Pastor.
15. Worship leaders normally wear an alb, a cincture and a cross at Saturday evening services and at the early service on Sunday.

The Robing room

- A place for worship leaders to get ready
- All robes and mics are stored in the Robing room
- AM binders will be found in the Robing room.
- The goal of this room: to make sure all leaders have a place to be leading up to worship.

When leading at the Altar

- Please stand to the Presiding Minister's left when both you and s/he are at the altar.
- The Presiding Minister will use the left side.
- Whenever you are at the altar with the Presiding Minister, s/he has all the materials you will need in his/her binder. Therefore, the Assisting Minister leaves his/her binder at his/her seat.

- The Assisting Minister turns pages for the Presiding Minister when at the altar.

When Serving Holy Communion

- Please help Pastors make sure that they are rotating between the sections each week. Ask pastors which sections they will take. Then, work other servers to determine who goes where.

Assisting Acolytes

- Acolytes need help
- Prior to worship: locate bulletins for the acolytes and place them in their seats.
- Please help them get on their robes, cincture, and cross
- Assist them with candle-lighters
- Keep them moving
- Encourage and remind acolytes to participate fully in the service
- Get to know the acolytes. They're great kids with an important ministry.

The Prayers

- "Let us Pray..." is only spoken twice in the service: prior to the prayer of the day and prior to the Offering Prayer.
- The prayers of the church/people (AKA Prayers of Intercession) **do not** start with you saying, "Let us pray." The first section of printed type functions as the "let us pray." If you say it, you are repeating yourself.
- Be sure you practice the prayers ahead of time. If there is going to be a problem, it usually happens in the prayers of the church. Know pronunciations of names.
- ALWAYS include items from the news in the prayers. Customize the prayers according to what is happening in the world.
- Prayers are led from the Ambo.
- The Assisting minister should assume the "orans" position of prayer: Both arms uplifted in prayer with palms toward the heavens.
- Including the saint listed in the next to the last petition.
- Remember, the presiding minister does the final petition.

Setting the Table

- Please assist PJ in preparing the table as the offering is being taken.
- The plate is always placed so that it is between the chalice and the congregation.
- Following HC, assist PJ, as needed, to finish covering the elements.
- Note that purificators (folded napkins) are placed over cups before the pall (square board) is put on top. The practical logic behind this: the pall cannot be washed...

Blessing of Kids

- When there is only one pastor present in worship, remember to bless children who come to your station, but don't receive communion.
- A Simple Blessing: "May Jesus Bless You."
- Using "pinky" edge of the right hand, so that your thumb is at the top.

If the Presiding Minister (Pastor) Is Unable to Serve

Assisting Ministers are capable of leading worship should a solo pastor suddenly become sick, or becomes unavailable last minute. The following modifications to the service would need to be made:

1. There would be no communion

- a. Remove bread and wine from the altar.
- b. After the offertory prayer:
 - i. Pray the Lord's Prayer
 - ii. Pronounce the Benediction Blessing
 1. The one at the end of the service, not the Post-Communion Blessing
 - iii. Sing a closing Hymn – if there isn't one scheduled, work with musicians to determine one to sing.
 - iv. Lead the congregation in announcements
 - v. Complete the service with the Dismissal.
2. Here's how you could do the sermon: In a format known as *Lexio Divina*.
 - a. Read the gospel slowly.
 - b. Ask the congregation to think about the Gospel during a few moments of silence.
 - c. Instruct the congregation to listen again to the gospel.
 - i. Let them know that you're going to read the gospel slowly.
 - ii. Tell them that you'll pause again after reading it.
 - iii. Then, let them know that you're going to ask them to respond to three questions:
 1. What caught your attention in the Gospel?
 2. Why did it stand out?
 3. What do you think is the meaning of this?
 - d. Read the gospel a 2nd time – slowly.
 - e. Let there be a period of silence so people can think about what they heard
 - f. Ask the three questions of people – take as many responses as you think appropriate.
 - i. Repeat what people say so everybody can hear it – or – take a handheld microphone around to people who wish to respond.
 - g. Last thing: ask if anybody would like to summarize the wisdom that has come from the congregation.

Who Leads What in Worship

Participants in worship:

Presiding Minister
Preacher
Assisting Minister
Lector
Communion Assistants
Musicians
Congregation

Locations for Leadership

Baptismal Font
Center of Congregation, middle aisle
Floor Front
Brown Deck
Center Front (over the AV cover)
Behind the Altar
At the Ambo

<u>Holy Communion</u>	<u>Led by</u>	<u>Location</u>
Confession and Forgiveness	Presiding Minister	Baptismal Font
Thanksgiving for Baptism	Presiding Minister	Baptismal Font
Hymn	Congregation	
Apostolic Greeting	Presiding Minister	Brown Deck: Pres. Min, AM, Cantor
Kyrie	(Assisting Minister)	Brown Deck: Pres. Min, AM, Cantor
Canticle of Praise	(Assisting Minister)	Brown Deck: Pres. Min, AM, Cantor
Prayer of the Day	(Presiding Minister)	Brown Deck: Pres. Min, AM, Cantor
Reading 1	Lector	Ambo
Psalm (spoken)	PJ, AM, or Cantor	Ambo
Psalm (sung)	PJ, AM, or Cantor	Piano Side
Reading 2	Lector	Ambo
Gospel Acclamation/verse	Preacher	Ambo
Gospel Reading	Preacher	Ambo
Sermon	Preacher	Ambo
Hymn of the Day	Congregation	
Creed	Assisting Minister	Center Front
Prayers of Intercession	Asst & Pre Mins	Ambo
Peace	Presiding Minister	Center Front
Offering	Presiding Minister	Center Front
Offertory Prayer	Assisting Minister	Altar
Great Thanksgiving		
Dialogue	Presiding Minister	Altar: Asst & Pre Mins
Preface	Presiding Minister	Altar: Asst & Pre Mins
Holy, Holy	Congregation	Altar: Asst & Pre Mins
Eucharistic Prayer	Presiding Minister	Altar: Asst & Pre Mins
Lord's Prayer	Congregation	Altar: Asst & Pre Mins

Communion	Congregation	Railing/Floor
Lamb of God	Congregation	Railing/Floor
Communion Blessing	Presiding Minister	Altar
Post Communion Song	Congregation	Altar
Post Communion Prayer	Assisting Minister	Altar
Blessing	Presiding Minister	Center Front
Sending Song	Congregation	
Dismissal	Assisting Minister	Baptismal Font

Assisting Minister Checklist

Prior to Sunday

- Pray for your upcoming ministry: for your leadership – for the people who will worship with us.
- Review scripture to be read in worship
- Check the News

Prior to Worship

- Arrive at Church at least 45 minutes prior to the service
- Pray for your ministry – the people coming and your leadership
- Modify prayers of intercession to include events from news

By 30 Minutes prior to service:

- Check in with Pastor – Review Service with him OR check to see if there are any changes
- All lights are turned on in the sanctuary – including the two controlled from front
- Check to be sure that heat, air conditioning, and/or ventilation
- Flowers located and placed on proper table
- Place bulletins on chairs leaders: Acolytes, AM, Pastor, Communion Assistants, Guests
- Soundcheck with AV Team – Check Microphone Placement for Self
- Check altar: Communion prepared?

15 minutes Prior to worship:

- Pulpit Mic properly placed for lectors
- Assist Acolytes with robes: Using cinctures according to liturgical color, and cross
- Answer Acolyte questions
- Lector is in the Church and has readied the Lectionary for reading
- Communion Assistants are all in the Church
- AV Team is in place
- Ushers are present and active

10 Minutes Prior

- Dress in Alb and Microphone, white cincture, cross

5 Minutes Prior

- Corral Pastor if not, yet, present in the robing room
- Lead prayer with Pastor, Acolytes, and other worship leaders you invite

3 Minutes Prior

- Light acolyte candle-lighters and send acolytes into sanctuary

1 Minute Prior

- Enter sanctuary with Pastor and be seated