

# Trinity Lutheran Church



## Worship Assistant Guide

# Worship Assistant Guide

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction and Welcome .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Acolytes .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Altar Guild.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Communion Assistants .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Communion Bearers.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Greeters .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Nursery Attendants .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Readers (Lectors).....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Ushers.....</b>	<b>31</b>

### Introduction and Welcome

God's richest blessings to you!! We thank you for your desire to help in the ministries of God's church here at Trinity, and we pray that you will be inspired and encouraged by the Holy Spirit as we work together in His service!!

Serving God's people takes many forms. The purpose of the sections in this guide are to help answer questions and provide for consistency in our service to God's people through our worship activities here at Trinity.

It has been suggested that some basic information be available to assist those who have graciously offered to help in the various worship functions. Too often, we have relied on word of mouth, or hoped that the people who have volunteered have picked it up on their own. That's a pretty tough way to learn a new role – and even for those of use who have served more times than we can count, it's sometimes helpful to have a reminder. First and foremost, none of us are experts – so if you have any questions, comments, suggestions, or complaints, please let someone on the worship committee know as soon as you can so we can get something done about it. If we don't know what needs to be addressed, it definitely won't get resolved.

We are thankful for the gifts you bring to our ministry, and we hope you find this guide helpful. If you have additional questions or need more detail, please contact the pastor or a member of the worship committee.

# Worship Assistant Guide

## Acolytes

### Preparation for Worship

Acolytes should be at church 15 minutes before the service. Upon arrival, notify one of ushers that you are there at church,. It is best to walk downstairs through the fellowship hall and up the stairs next to the sacristy.

You should be robed and ready 10 minutes before the start of the service. Please get ready in the sacristy and be as quiet as possible, remembering that people may already be in the church sitting quietly.

Choose a robe (the real name is an “alb”) and a rope (the right name is a “cincture”). Put on the robe and the rope, using the shepherd’s knot for the rope. (We’ll teach you that knot – it’s simple!) Make sure the robe fits OK and the rope isn’t too long. You don’t want to trip!! (Also - after worship, when you are finished, be sure to hang up your robe.)

When you are sitting in the front of the church, remember where you are and what you are doing. You are expected to participate in the entire worship service. Everyone can see you, so you should sit straight, pay attention, and be ready to perform your service!! Please do not chew gum!! Again – DO NOT CHEW GUM!!

### Lighting the Candles

#### Basic Candle Lighting Instructions when there are only TWO candles:

When the organist begins playing the before-service music:

Light the candle lighter in the sacristy. Please make sure the match is fully extinguished before leaving the sacristy.

Walk to the center of the altar, facing it, and pause briefly. (You may want to bow slightly while you pause – this is called reverencing the altar, and shows your respect for God in His house at His altar). This pause should take 3-4 seconds.

Light the right candle as you face the altar, then light the left candle.

Return to the center in front of the altar, face it, and pause or bow.

Put the candle lighter out by pulling the wick back into the holder by sliding the knob towards the handle.

Go to your seat in front of the organ and place the candle lighter in the stand on the far side of your seat.

#### Basic Candle Lighting Instructions when the BACK CANDELABRAS are up:

# Worship Assistant Guide

When the organist begins playing the before-service music:

Light the candle lighter in the sacristy. Please make sure the match is fully extinguished before leaving the sacristy.

Walk to the center of the altar, facing it, and pause (or bow slightly).

Light the right candle on the altar, then light the left candle on the altar.

Go to the back of the altar, and light the right side candles first, bottom candle first to top candle.

Move to left side, and light the left side candles, bottom candle first to top candle.

When the candles have all been lit,

Return to the center in front of the altar, face it, and pause (or bow).

Put the candle lighter out by pulling the wick back into the holder by sliding the knob towards the handle.

Go to your seat in front of the organ and place the candle lighter in the stand on the far side of your seat.

## **When the Paschal Candle is up:**

Any time the Paschal Candle (the big white candle that stands by itself) is up, it should be the first candle lit (even before the ones on the altar) and the last candle put out.

## **To extinguish (put out) the candles:**

To put the candles out, put the bell-shaped snuffer over the top of the candle and hold it for a moment to let the candle burn out. If you lift it too quickly, the candle will still be burning. DO NOT smash the snuffer into the top of the candle.

During the last hymn, Pastor will give you a signal to start putting out the candles. PAY ATTENTION!!

Walk to center of altar, facing it, pause for prayer or bow.

The candles are put out in the reverse order from how they are lit – this means the last candle that you lit will be the first one you put out.

After the candles have all been put out,

# Worship Assistant Guide

Return to the center in front of the altar, face it, and pause (or bow).

Take the candle lighter with you through the door into the sacristy.

Put the candle lighter in the stand.

Take off the rope and robe and HANG THEM UP in the cabinet.

NOTE: If the back candelabras are up, you may need to start putting out the candles BEFORE Pastor gives you a sign. Pay attention to how long the hymn is and how long it will take you to put out the candles. It works best if the candles are out before the hymn ends. You will know about how long it will take to get them all put out and use that to decide when to start. If the hymn is short, you might have to start putting the candles out as soon as the assembly begins singing.

## Prayer Requests

During the hymn after the sermon, usually during the second verse, you need to walk down the center aisle to the back of the church and back to the front, collecting any prayer requests. Take your time. Take any requests you receive to Pastor, then return to your seat. If the hymn only has two verses, you'll need to start before the end of the first verse.

You need to do this on your own – you should not expect to get a signal to do this.

## Collecting the Offering

At the time for the offering (it is listed in the bulletin and Pastor usually makes an announcement that it is time for the offering):

Go to the table behind the altar and pick the offering plates. Walk to the center of the aisle and wait for the ushers to come up the aisle. Hand the offering plates to the ushers when they get to you, then return to your seat.

When the organist starts to play the offertory response, go back to the center aisle and wait for the ushers to bring the offering plates to you. Take the plates from the ushers and return them to the same table you got them from.

You need to do this on your own – you should not expect to get a signal to do this.

## Communion

When it is time for communion, during the song "Lamb of God", step up towards the altar with the communion assistant so Pastor can serve you communion.

After the communion assistant gives Pastor communion, take an empty brass communion tray from the altar or the wicker basket to collect the empty communion glasses in.

# Worship Assistant Guide

When the communion is being distributed, Pastor will stand in the center, the communion assistant will stand next to Pastor, and you will stand next to the Communion assistant farthest from Pastor.

If you are using a communion tray instead of the basket, pay attention to how full your tray is getting. When the communion assistant needs to get a new tray, you should get a new tray, too – if the communion assistant’s tray is nearly empty, it means your tray is nearly full. When your tray is full, just go get an empty tray. Don’t wait – there won’t be anywhere for people to put their glasses once your tray gets full – and they’ll wait for you to get back with the empty tray. Usually, there won’t be a problem if you are using the basket – but if there is a large crowd, it could get full – so pay attention.

Remember that after the first side of the assembly has received communion, the communion assistant and you will move to the other side of Pastor, lining up with the communion assistant next to Pastor and you on the outside (the same way you were on the other side).

Usually, communion will also be taken to someone sitting in the assembly. Follow behind Pastor and the communion assistant to collect the empty glasses.

After everyone has taken communion, either take your tray back to the altar and stack it with the other trays, or set the basket back where you picked it up from. You should then return to your seat.

## **Baptism**

During the baptism service, you will be Pastor’s assistant. When there is a baptism, it is usually after the sermon, so watch for Pastor to signal you. **PAY ATTENTION!!**

You may need to help carry the service book, and the baptismal napkin from the altar to the font. Pastor will carry some of this, but you could be asked to carry any of these things, so you need to be ready. Sometimes, the service will be printed in the bulletin, so pay attention to Pastor.

During the actual baptism, you will hold the service book or bulletin for Pastor to read from. You need to hold it still so he can read it, and pay attention to where he is in the service, in case he wants you to turn the page.

When the baptism service is over, be sure the service book is taken back up to the altar and put on the stand (the real name is the “missal stand”).

# Worship Assistant Guide

## Altar Guild

The Altar Guild is responsible for preparing the nave and chancel for worship. These are the people who hang, store, and clean the paraments and altar linens, who prepare the candles, update the hymn board and hang banners, prepare the bread and wine for communion, and help prepare for baptisms and funerals. These are important roles that happen largely behind the scenes. Something changes in the worship space every Sunday – and these are the people who make that happen.

Many times, the Altar Guild does its work when nobody else is in the church. For safety reasons, someone should know you are going to the church – and you should not use step stools or ladders if you are in the church alone.

### Paraments and Linens

Paraments are the altar and ambo (pulpit) hangings that are changed to match the liturgical color of the church season. The technical name for the type of parament we use is antependium (plural is antependia), which is from Latin meaning “to hang before”.

Linens are the sacramental white cloths that serve various purposes during worship. Some linens are used in a manner like a table cloth, others are serving linens, such as used during communion. Each will be discussed in more detail below.

Trinity uses paraments in the following colors:

- Blue: Advent; Blue represents Hope – which we have in the preparation for the birth of Jesus
- White: Christmas, Epiphany, Maundy Thursday, Easter, All Saints, Christ the King, and other Feast Celebrations and commemorations indicated on the liturgical calendar; White represents both the purity of the newborn Jesus, and our light and joy in him as in his Resurrection
- Green: the seasons of Epiphany and Pentecost; Green represents our growth in Christ and our faith, as we follow in his teachings and ministry
- Purple: Lent; Purple represents repentance and the solemn nature of the season, as we journey to Christ’s death on the cross
- Red: Day of Pentecost, Reformation Sunday, ordinations, confirmation, and other commemorations indicated on the liturgical calendar; Red represents the color of fire, as when the Holy Spirit descended with tongues of fire; it is also used at times when martyrs are remembered.

The larger of the paraments are for the altar. There is a heavy weight bar that is placed in a loop on the back of the altar paraments to help hold them in place when hung. Trinity’s paraments are from two different sources, and need to be hung differently.

When placing the green and purple paraments on the altar, the parament loop containing the weight bar should lie on top of and aligned with the rear edge of the

# Worship Assistant Guide

mensa (the top of the altar). For the remaining paraments, the loop containing the weight bar will hang off the rear edge of the altar several inches. The front of the parament should be adjusted so it hangs 3-4" from the floor. The parament lies directly on the altar, with no other coverings underneath it. The paraments must be centered on the altar and hang squarely.

When only a single location is used for proclaiming God's Word, rather than having both a pulpit and lectern, it is customarily referred to as an "ambo". Trinity also uses paraments for the ambo, which match the altar paraments. These are hung using a rod through a loop at the end of the parament at the bottom edge of the top, rather than a weight bar like the altar paraments. Note that there are two white ambo paraments – one for the Christmas / Epiphany season (with a manger) and one for the other times when white is used.

## Altar Linens

Although there are other altar linens that may be used, Trinity uses only one – called a Fair Linen. This is the tablecloth for the Lord's Supper. This is the topmost, white cloth that covers the mensa. It should be centered on the altar, and hangs off the outer edges of the altar. These linens should not be folded or pressed so there are visible creases – rather they should be rolled so they remain flat.

## Sacramental (Communion) Linens

Sacramental linens are white cloths used in the preparation for and distribution of Holy Communion. The corporal is a square white linen that is placed on the center of the fair linen in the center of the altar, on which the communion vessels are placed. A purificator is a square white linen used to clean the rim of the chalice during distribution. The communion pall is a hard, linen covered square that is used to cover the chalice. The veil is a linen used to cover all of the communion vessels.

## Vestments

Vestments are the distinctive garments worn by worship leaders when performing liturgical functions. These include the albs worn by the acolyte and pastor, and as well as the stoles worn by the pastor as a sign of ordination. Trinity has stoles which match the paraments – these are kept by the pastor. If the stoles need cleaning or repair, the pastor may contact a member of the altar guild for assistance. The albs and cinctures (rope belts for the alb) used by the acolytes are hung in the tall cabinet in the sacristy. The altar guild should check the cleanliness and condition of the albs and cinctures on a periodic basis (approximately every six months, and especially before the return to the two-service schedule at the conclusion of the summer schedule).

## Preparing for Worship

The chancel (the raised area surrounding the altar) and the nave (the area where the



# Worship Assistant Guide

assembly sits) should be prepared for worship the day before the service. The following steps are provided for general preparations. Specific sections are provided for banners, candles, flowers, communion, baptism, and funeral preparations.

1. Check the liturgical calendar in the sacristy to be sure the correct color paraments are hanging. If the paraments need to be changed, remove the ones from the altar and the ambo and return them to the sacristy. Be sure not to drop the weight bar from the altar parament as it is being handled.

2. If the paraments are being changed, locate the correct paraments in the sacristy closet. Examine them for wrinkles or damage. If the paraments are wrinkled, they should be gently pressed, preferably using steam with the lowest heat possible. The iron should only be applied to the back of the parament, and should not be directly applied to any of the appliqués or embroidery as the heat of the iron can damage or discolor these details.

3. Hang the paraments on the altar and ambo, ensuring they are centered and hung straight. Remember the different positioning of the weight bar for the altar paraments depending on the color of the parament, as discussed above.

4. Ensure the fair linen is clean and appropriately placed across the top of the mensa, on top of the parament. Be sure the fair linen hangs evenly over the sides

5. Take a bulletin from the table outside the doors to the nave to update the hymn board. (There should be bulletins already in place for the organist and acolyte – do not move those.)

NOTE: Before updating the hymn board the first time, contact another member of the altar guild to show you how to lower and raise the board. Never stand under the board while it is being raised or lowered.

6. Using the words and numbers from the boxes in the sacristy closet shelf, update the hymn board with the correct day and the hymns. Double-check the information after you have placed the numbers on the board to be sure they are correct. Be sure the words and numbers are appropriately centered. Numbers and words should be arranged so that they do not extend beyond the edges of the board.

7. Ensure both offering plates are located on the small credence table behind the altar nearest where the acolyte sits.

8. Check to make sure the bulb in the sanctuary lamp (the red lamp that hangs above the right side of the chancel area) is not burned out. Turn on the spot lights and check for any that are burned out. If any bulbs need to be replaced, please notify the property committee.

9. Check the area for general cleanliness. Be sure there are no spider webs on any of

# Worship Assistant Guide

the lights, on the wall or processional crosses, or around the altar or ambo.

10. Be sure that flowers, banners, Holy Communion, Holy Baptism, or funerals are addressed using the specific sections below.

## Preparing and Hanging Banners

Trinity has a collection of themed banners stored in the two cabinets in the sacristy. Some of the banners are to be hung from the banner stand at the front of the nave. Other banners are hung along the side walls of the nave. Most of the banners are tagged with the day or season for which they are appropriate.

NOTE: If banners are being changed, it should be done with the assistance of another person. For safety's sake, stepstools or ladders should never be used if you are in the church alone. Always be sure someone knows you have gone to the church if you are there by yourself.

If there is a special day or season, choose the appropriate banner for the banner stand. Inspect the banner to be sure it is clean and in good repair – if it is soiled or needs repair, the banner should not be used. Be sure to notify a member of the worship committee which banner needs cleaning/repair. The banners for the banner stand have a loop at the top of the banner with a cutout at the center to receive the hanging bar from the stand.

The banner stand should be placed in such a way that the banner is not obstructed – but also that the banner does not obstruct anything else or block any travel path. The ideal location would be somewhat behind the hymn board but in front of the door to the choir/high school room, with the hanging rod almost touching the wall. In this location the banner is visible and it does not obstruct the view of the window, nor does it block the access to the choir/high school room.

The banners for the side walls are hung from rods and the wall hooks. Some banners are hung using the wooden rods; other require the use of the metal rods.

When banners have been taken down, they should be inspected for cleanliness or damage. If there are no problems, the banner should be stored by hanging it over one of the rods in the storage cabinet. Take care to hang the banner such that it will not wrinkle or crease.

## Candles

Lighted candles are among the oldest ornaments of worship, as fire has long been seen as a sign of God's presence. In their most basic sense, candles serve as a visual reminder of Christ as the light of the world.

Be sure to check the wick in the candle lighter to ensure there is enough available for

# Worship Assistant Guide

the acolyte to light all the candles. If the wick is too short, new wicks are in the drawer in the storage closet in the sacristy. The wicks are replaced by extending the wick-slide full out, and removing the remaining short length of wick. Insert approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch of wick through the slot in the slide, and fold the end over towards the long end of the wick to secure it. Pull the slide back toward the handle to retract the wick.

Trinity normally uses oil-filled candles. The candle tubes are plastic, with an internal reservoir that is filled with the oil fuel. The brass “follower” for these candles is actually a screw-on cap that holds a fibrous wick.

**NOTE:** Because handling the candles or the fuel may leave your hands oily, this should be the last item of preparation – any handling of linens, paraments, or communion items should be completed before handling anything related to the candles.

Fuel levels in the altar and candelabra candles must be checked before every Sunday to ensure there is sufficient fuel for the candles to stay lit for both services. The Paschal candle contains enough oil that it does not need to be checked so frequently.

There is a board in the sacristy with cut-outs to hold both altar candles and all the candelabra candles, for ease in filling them. The candles should be moved to the sacristy to be checked and filled, to avoid spilling the fuel on the altar, linens, paraments, or the floor. Avoid using the same countertop used for preparing the bread and wine for communion.

Carefully unscrew the follower-cap, taking care that the wick is not pulled out or damaged, and look into the tube. Most of the candles have a small piece of cork that floats to indicate the oil level – it is difficult to see the oil. It may also be helpful to shine a light from behind the candle to help see the oil level. Add oil to approximately one inch below the top of the tube. If too much oil is added, the tube will overflow when the wick and follower-cap are replaced.

The oil is contained in squeeze bottles located in the cupboard in the sacristy closet. The flip-top caps should not be discarded when a bottle of fuel is emptied, but should be transferred from bottle to bottle.

Before replacing the follower-cap, examine the wick to be sure it is long enough to extend into the fuel and extends above the follower enough for the visible flame. There are instruction sheets for adjusting or replacing the wicks in the drawers or cupboards in the sacristy closet.

When screwing the follower-cap back onto the tube, ensure the threads are properly aligned – the cap should never be forced. If aligned properly, it will screw on easily. If aligned improperly, the candle tube will be damaged and require replacement.

When handling any oil-filled candle, be sure to always keep it upright. If they are tipped, the oil will spill out.

# Worship Assistant Guide

## Altar Candles

There are two altar candles in brass candle holders on the altar. These candles are used for every worship service. Ensure the candles are clean – wipe off any oil residue or soot. Be sure that no oil gets on the linens or paraments. The candles should be placed on the right and left side of the altar symmetrically – approximately four inches from the front of the altar and four inches from the outer edge of the altar. When handling the brass candle holders, gloves should be used to keep finger prints and oils off the brass to minimize the need for polishing.

## Paschal Candle

The paschal candle is the large decorated candle that symbolizes Christ's Easter triumph over the darkness of sin and death. Its size is also a reminder of the pillar of cloud and fire that led God's chosen people to the promised land.

The paschal candle is used for each service during the Easter season and on the Day of Pentecost. It should be located to the right of the ambo as you face the front of the church, but not up on the riser.

During the rest of the year, the candle should remain in the sacristy except for services where there is a baptism or for funerals. Ideally, the unlit candle would be placed near the baptismal font and lighted during baptism services, but such a location is not practical for our worship space.

For baptisms, the candle should be located near the ambo where it would normally be during the Easter season. For funerals, the candle should be placed near the head of the casket.

## Candelabra

The candelabra are the two free-standing brass candleholders that hold 7 candles each. The candelabra are adjustable, so it is important to be sure they are set at the same angles. There are no liturgical requirements for the candelabra, but Trinity has often used them during the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, and Easter, and for other Festival services. At other times, they are stored in the sacristy closet.

A single candelabrum is used during the Good Friday Tenebrae service, but it is arranged in a triangular manner (both sides rise to the center). In this configuration, the candelabrum is known as the Tenebrae hearse.

## Advent Candles

During the season of Advent, a wreath with four large blue candles is used as part of our preparations for the coming of Christ. The wreath is normally placed to the right of

# Worship Assistant Guide

the ambo as you face the front of the church, but not up on the riser.

The Advent wreath is stored in the sacristy closet. It mounts to the metal, brass-tone stand with the square, black metal base. The wreath is arranged so each of the four candles are on a different level.

The Advent candles are not oil-filled; they are traditional beeswax candles. The candles are actually white, with a blue wax covering on the outside – care must be taken when handling these candles so they are not broken or the blue is not chipped away.

There are four, heavy brass candle followers in the sacristy cupboard which are placed on the top of these candles. It is important to ensure that the top of the candle is trimmed appropriately to receive the follower so there is enough wick for the acolyte to light the candle. Be careful not to “twist” the candles when placing the followers or putting the candles in the sockets on the wreath – this action can break the candle or remove the blue skin.

## Flowers

We normally are blessed with fresh cut flowers for use during our worship services. The flowers are usually delivered to the church by the florist and placed either in the narthex kitchenette or in the Fellowship Hall kitchen. The flowers are arranged in disposable plastic vases. Be sure to add water to the plastic vases, if needed, to keep the flowers looking fresh.

The flowers are placed in the brass flower stands behind the altar. Be sure the stands are placed appropriately and symmetrically in the chancel, and the flowers are placed in the stands so they are displayed properly – so they face the assembly.

Some times there are no flowers – on these occasions, the flower stands should be removed from the chancel and stored in the sacristy closet.

During Easter and Christmas when additional flowers such as poinsettias, lilies, hyacinths, etc., are added for the enhancement of the worship environment, place the flowers around the altar and the baptismal font, being careful that they will not impede movement or create a tripping hazard.

A single rose will normally be displayed on the altar when a child is born to a member or active participant at Trinity.

The florist should be notified in advance of the service to the so that a rose can be included with the flowers sent to the church. As an alternative if there are no flowers or there is insufficient advance notice for the florist, a rose may be purchased individually. (Remember to submit the receipt for reimbursement).

# Worship Assistant Guide

## Preparing for Holy Communion

1. Cleanliness is important since communion vessels not only contain the representation of Christ's Body and Blood, but these elements are for our consumption. Please be sure that you wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before handling the materials for Holy Communion.
2. Be sure all items used in the preparation and serving of communion are clean.
3. Locate the bread, wine and grape juice. These are normally stored in the sacristy refrigerator/freezer. Extra wine is stored in one of the sacristy cabinets (the location changes, so you may have to look for it.) Although any bread would be appropriate, Trinity's current preference is a flat bread (not pita bread). Ensure the bread is fresh (check for mold, and be sure the bread is not dry or brittle). We normally use a light colored wine and dark colored grape juice, to help the communion assistants. The grape juice is used for those with special needs. Any kind of wine can be used. Remember that, in Lutheran understanding, the wine is not a physical representation of Christ's blood. Therefore, using red wine because it looks more like blood can be misleading. A practical consideration is that white wine does not stain linen as does red wine.

## Preparing the bread and wine to be brought forward

The bread, a symbol of our daily work, and wine, a symbol of great joy – both to be used by God in Holy Communion – are presented along with other gifts as the offering is brought forward. This section describes preparing the bread and wine for the communion bearers to bring forward.

1. In the sacristy, fill the small cruet (small glass pitcher) (Figure 1) with wine. This wine will be poured into the empty chalice by the communion bearers before they bring the bread and wine to the altar. There should be enough wine to serve those people assisting with communion. If the pewter chalice will be used for communion, the pewter flagon (large pitcher) is used instead of this small cruet. The use of the pewter vessels is discussed later.



Figure 1, cruet

2. Locate the brass, gold-plated chalice (Figure 2) in the sacristy cupboard. This chalice is the one normally used during communion. Ensure it is clean. For some festival services, the common cup is offered during the distribution of communion. On these occasions, we will use the larger pewter chalice instead of the gold one.



Figure 2, chalice

# Worship Assistant Guide

3. Locate the paten (brass-colored plate) (Figure 3) which is used to hold the bread for communion. Place a paper doily on the paten. Wrap two pieces of bread in plastic (to keep it fresh – the wrap will be removed by the communion bearers before the bread is taken to the altar) and place it on the paten.



Figure 3, paten

4. Locate two 12 inch by 12 inch linens in one of the sacristy drawers or cupboards. One of these linens will be used as a corporal, placed under the vessels; the other linen will be used as a veil to cover the bread and wine on the offertory table (the table on which the communion bread and wine are placed prior to the service) in the back of the church.

5. Take the cruet, chalice, paten and bread, and the linens to the back of the nave. Unfold and lay one of the linens on the small offertory table at the back of the nave (the part of the church where the assembly sits), next to the bookcase holding the extra worship books near the sound equipment. Set the cruet, chalice, paten and bread on the linen (corporal). Leave the chalice empty. (The communion bearers will pour the wine into the chalice before it is carried to the altar.) Cover all of the contents with the second linen (veil).

## Preparing the altar

Our normal communion distribution is with the individual cup. On some festival occasions, the common cup will be offered in addition to the individual cup. For these services, a large pewter chalice and flagon are used; the gold-plated chalice and small glass cruet are not used. The preparation of the pewter chalice and flagon will be discussed separately below. The individual cups are contained in trays which we currently place on the altar.

Communion materials must always be handled with dignity and respect. Since the bread and wine will also be handled, it is important that hands, utensils, counters, and vessels are all maintained clean. It may be surprising to know that communion by individual cup has been found to be less hygienic than use of the common cup – there is more handling of the individual cups. For this reason, it is especially important to thoroughly wash your hands before preparing the communion trays.

1. In the sacristy, locate the brass communion trays (Figure 4). They are normally stored on a shelf in the sacristy closet. The trays are stackable – there is a base and a top for the stack of trays. We usually prepare two trays for a communion Sunday, but if large attendance is anticipated (such as for Christmas or Easter) a third tray should be prepared. There is a removable insert in the tray that holds the individual cups. Check the tray and insert to be sure they are clean – wash and dry them



Figure 4, stacked trays

# Worship Assistant Guide

thoroughly if necessary.

2. Locate the individual plastic cups, which are usually stored in the cupboard above the sink in the sacristy. Place empty cups in the trays being prepared. Although these cups are disposable, we take care to treat them respectfully to ensure they remain worthy vessels to contain the Eucharist.

NOTE: It would be preferred to use non-disposable individual glasses. Such glasses are more environmentally considerate. The use of disposable cups is primarily for convenience – there is concern that their disposal not only contributes to unnecessary waste, but that it may be inappropriate to discard them without first cleaning them since they contain remnants of the sacramental wine.

3. In each tray, fill the center cup and the ring surrounding the center cup with grape juice. The cups should be filled about 2/3 full.

4. The remaining cups should each be filled 2/3 full with wine. For ease in filling these cups, a dispenser similar to a large, open syringe is available in one of the sacristy cupboards and can be used. Be sure it is clean before it is used. Once all the necessary trays have been filled, stack them on the base and place the cover on the stack. If only two trays have been filled, place a third, empty, tray on the bottom of the stack – the pastor prefers this to have a more significant presence on the altar.

5. Locate the larger square linen, called a corporal (Figure 5), in one of the sacristy drawers or cupboards. Ensure it is clean. This linen, unfolded, will be placed on the center of the fair linen on the center of the altar. The communion vessels will be placed on this linen.



Figure 5, corporal

6. Locate the communion pall (hard, linen-covered square, Figure 6) and one purificator (small, folded linen for wiping the chalice rim, Figure 7) in one of the drawers or cupboards in the sacristy.



Figure 6, pall



Figure 7, purificator



# Worship Assistant Guide

7. Locate the communion veil (Figure 8), which is a larger, 24 inch by 24 inch, white linen with an embroidered cross near that center, in one of the drawers or cupboard in the sacristy. This linen will cover all the communion vessels and linens after they have been placed on the altar.



Figure 8, veil

8. Bring the linens and the stack of communion trays to the altar. Unfold the corporal and place it on the center of the fair linen in the center of the mensa (top of the altar).

9. Place the stack of communion trays on the center of the corporal.

10. Lay the pall and purificator on the corporal next to the communion trays on the corporal.

11. Cover the communion trays and the linens with the veil, taking care to ensure the veil is straight, and the cross is aligned.

12. In the sacristy, locate the lined, wicker basket (Figure 9). This basket is used to collect the used individual communion cups. Line the basket with a washable terry cloth (a paper towel is not preferred because it would contain consecrated wine which should not be thrown into the trash) – do not place any communion linens in the basket. Take special care in the preparation of the basket to ensure it does not take on the appearance of a trash receptacle – it is important that the vessels used during communion are worthy to contain the Eucharist. Ensure the basket is clean and in good repair. The basket is used instead of an empty tray for receiving the empty cups to avoid the difficulty some parishioners may have placing a cup into an empty tray.



Figure 9, basket

## Preparing the Pewter Chalice and Flagon

The pewter chalice and flagon may be used for special services such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Easter, Pentecost, Reformation, All Saints, and Christmas Eve, in the distribution by common cup. When used, these vessels take the place of the brass, gold-plated chalice and small glass flagon which are normally used.

1. Locate the flagon and the chalice in the cupboard in the sacristy. Ensure they are

# Worship Assistant Guide

clean – wash and dry them thoroughly if necessary.

2. Pour approximately 2 cups of wine into the flagon.
3. Place the flagon, along with the paten and bread and the linens as prepared above, and set them on the small offertory table at the back of the nave (the part of the church where the assembly sits), next to the bookcase holding the extra worship books near the sound equipment. (Do not place the pewter chalice at the back of the church – it will be placed on the altar.)
4. The empty chalice should be placed on the altar next to the stack of communion trays, with the communion pall placed over the cup. The veil also covers the chalice when it is placed over the communion vessels.

## Following Worship

1. After the end of the service, the communion vessels, the communion linens, and the remaining bread and wine from the altar and the small table in the rear of the nave are collected and returned to the Sacristy.
2. The remaining bread and wine must be handled properly, since it has been consecrated as Christ's body and blood. Pour any remaining wine from the individual cups into a large cup. Once all of the remaining wine has been collected, you may either drink it or pour it on the ground outside the church, in an area that is not walked on (the flower beds, for example). Do not pour consecrated wine down the drain or dispose of it into the trash. Any wine that had been poured into the individual cups or into a chalice or flagon should not be re-used. Wine left out in the air oxidizes and is exposed to mold spores. Once the wine is exposed to the air, it can not be poured back into the bottle for later use. Otherwise, the wine in the bottle will be contaminated and mold will grow overnight in the individual cups when left out overnight again on the altar.
3. The remaining bread should be consumed – you may offer it to others from the assembly or take it home. Although it is preferred that the bread be eaten, it may also be scattered outside, in an area not walked on. Do not dispose of the bread in the trash.
4. Gently clean all of the vessels used in communion with hot water and dish soap. Do not use any abrasive materials on the vessels. Dry completely with a soft cloth. Do not use paper towels on the shiny chalice and paten as this will scratch the finish.
5. Return all of the vessels to their proper location where you found them during the preparation. Cloth protective bags should be available for the shiny paten and chalice for storage.
6. Examine the communion linens for cleanliness. Any that are stained should be soaked in Tide detergent and water as soon as possible. All of the communion linens

# Worship Assistant Guide

used during the service need to be washed, ironed, and folded. The linens should be folded in three segments (not in half) and returned to the sacristy before the next service.

7. Check to be sure there will be adequate supplies for the next communion service. If additional bread, wine, grape juice, or individual cups are needed, be sure to notify someone else on the altar guild or leave a note in the church office, if you will not be the one setting up the next time. (If you purchase any supplies, be sure to collect any receipts and submit them for reimbursement – the church budget will cover these expenses. If you wish to donate them, submit your receipts and indicate, “Gift in kind” so it may be recorded on your giving statement.)

8. Check the chancel area for cleanliness. Any wine that has spilled on the floor should be wiped up with one of the purificators used during the liturgy – it should not be wiped up with a paper towel and thrown into the trash. Likewise, any bread crumbs should be collected in a purificator and scattered on the ground outside. They should not be vacuumed or thrown into the trash.

9. Check to be sure the fair linen has not become soiled. If it has, remove it and place a clean fair linen on the altar. Be sure to wash the linen as you would the other linens from communion and return it to the church. Remember that the fair linen should not be folded – it should be rolled so there are no creases visible.

10. Before leaving the church, be sure the sacristy lights are off and the door is closed and locked. Return the key to its storage location.

## Baptism

We recall our baptism every day. Symbols of baptism are prominent throughout the scriptures, in our liturgy, and in Trinity’s worship space. The windows at the front reflect water – connecting the old testament flood, the promise of the rainbow, the flowing river and scalloped shell. We have been blessed with a baptismal font that contains much rich symbolism for this sacrament. The wood colors, shape, and continual flow of water all have meaning. The font is central to our worship space, just as it is to our Christian identity.

## Preparing the Font

Practically, there is a certain amount of necessary maintenance care for the font to ensure the symbolism remains strong and effective. Much of this care will be arranged and performed by the members of the property committee or worship committee. The altar guild needs to check the font to be sure no significant maintenance is required.

1. Ensure the water is clean. With the lights on in the nave, and, without turning on the font, check to be sure the water is clear. If the water is cloudy or dirty, it must be changed. This process is somewhat complex, and should not be attempted. Contact

# Worship Assistant Guide

the worship committee for assistance if you believe the water needs to be changed.

2. With font off, check the water level. With the font off, the water level should be approximately 1.5 inches below the top of the outside bowl. There is a small fill mark on the inside of this bowl, on the side where the font switch is located. If needed, add water to this mark. **DO NOT OVERFILL.** Adding too much water may cause leakage and damage the font.

3. To help keep the water clear, one teaspoon of household chlorine bleach should be added to the water once per month. When adding this bleach to the water, be sure the font has been turned on and the water is flowing to mix the bleach into the water thoroughly. Take care when handling the bleach – ensure you do not splash it on yourself or get it in your eyes. Be careful not to get any bleach on the carpet or other fabrics to avoid discoloration.

**NOTE:** It may be helpful to pre-measure the bleach into a cup or other container in the sacristy, to avoid trying to measure with the bleach bottle in the nave. Bleach should be added to the font water prior to the first communion Sunday of each month. This will ensure the bleach is added on a regular basis – but there is no significance to this particular timing.

4. With the font running, you should check to be sure the power supply does not need to be recharged. There are removable panels in the cabinet that allow checking the remaining power available, as well as for connecting the cord for recharging the power supply. If you have never done this before, contact a member of the worship committee or the property committee to show you how this is done.

5. After completing these checks (several minutes should be allowed if bleach was added to the water), turn the font off by pressing the button again, until it clicks.

## Preparing the baptismal candle and napkin

When a baptism is scheduled, the altar guild ensures the font, baptismal napkin, and baptismal towel are ready. The paschal candle is also used during services when there is a baptism to emphasize the connection between baptism and the death and resurrection of our Lord. The baptismal candle should be lit from the paschal candle.

1. Locate a baptismal “napkin” (Figure 10) in one of the sacristy drawers. This is a small linen which has been embroidered with an appropriate symbol of baptism, such as a scalloped shell. This linen is used during the baptism liturgy to dry the person being baptized. This linen will be presented to the person being baptized (or a family member) following the baptism.



Figure 10, baptismal napkin

# Worship Assistant Guide

2. Locate a baptismal candle (Figure 11) in the cupboard above the counter in the sacristy closet. Remove the candle from the box, but save the box for the person being baptized. Inspect the candle for damage (be sure there is a wick, the candle is not broken, etc.)



Figure 11, baptismal candle

3. Place the napkin and the candle on the altar, taking care that the candle will not roll off. The box for the candle should be left in the sacristy – it should not be placed on the altar. Remember to give the box to the person being baptized (or a family member) after the service.

4. If the paschal candle is not in the chancel, move it to its customary location near the ambo, so it can be lit during the service. It should be returned to the sacristy after the service

## Funerals

Preparation of the worship space should follow the same general pattern as a regular worship service.

The paraments should be appropriate for the liturgical season. Check with pastor, however – there are lesser festivals and commemorations which are date-specific and could be appropriate for the funeral service. These special days and the correct color are identified on the liturgical calendar in the front of Evangelical Lutheran Worship (the red hymnal).

Ensure the candles are filled. The paschal candle should be placed near where the head of the casket will be – a recommended location is on the left side of the chancel (on the riser), near the brass floor fitting (don't set the stand on the fitting).

Contact the pastor to find out the hymn numbers. There is no need to have words on the hymn board for a funeral. Place the numbers on the board starting with the top-most row. There should always be something in the top row (to cover the screws).

Also ask the pastor whether Holy Communion will be celebrated as part of the funeral. If so, set up communion as you would for a normal communion service, except the bread, chalice, and cruet should be placed on the altar next to the stack of communion trays under the veil, rather than on the offertory table at the back of the nave.

# Worship Assistant Guide

The altar guild should also prepare the funeral pall for use. The pall is a large, white cloth that covers the casket. The funeral liturgy resonates with the promise that all who are baptized into Christ have "clothed themselves" with Christ, and that all who are buried with Christ in baptism will be raised with him in newness of life. The pall helps the assembly focus on the worship of God and the hope of the resurrection by emphasizing the equality of all people in Christ. We are all the same in Christ regardless of our earthly means, and the pall prevents both the display of a costly coffin and the awkwardness of a simple one. The white color of the pall reminds those assembled of their faith in the resurrection and further symbolizes putting on the robe of Christ's righteousness in baptism. It is especially appropriate to recall baptism – the beginning of a Christian life – as the body of someone who has faithfully served Christ during life enters the church for the last time.

Trinity's pall is stored rolled up, on top of the sacristy cupboards over the sink. It is large, heavy, and difficult to handle, so two people should be available to prepare it. The pall should be carefully unrolled and carefully ironed, if needed. As with the paraments, it should only be ironed from the back, and with the lowest steam heat possible.

The pall will be placed on the coffin as it is brought into the nave, as part of the funeral liturgy remembering baptism. The pall may be placed by funeral directors, pallbearers, or family members, but someone should be available to assist if needed. Sometimes, the pall has been draped over the back pew in preparation – this may be disconcerting to those who are being seated. Consider having the pall prepared in the Sunday school room at the bottom of the west stairwell, and bringing it up the stairs through the church office just before the casket is carried up the stairs.

You should also be prepared to assist with placing flowers, if needed.

The baptismal font will need to be moved from its normal location in the aisle at the center of the nave. (If the service is being conducted without a coffin present, the font does not need to be moved.) It should be moved to the chancel area, to the right side of the ambo. Be sure it remains in a visible and prominent location. The font is on casters, but two people should move it. Be careful as it is moved, so the water does not splash out. Be especially careful where the floor changes from carpet to wood.

If the funeral will be conducted with cremated remains, one of the credence tables normally standing behind the altar may be moved forward and onto the main floor – to the left side of the chancel. The table should be near the paschal candle. The remains may be placed on the table before the service or brought forward as a coffin would be. The funeral director would coordinate this.

After the service, be sure to return the pall to its stored location, and make the church ready for the next service.

# Worship Assistant Guide

## Communion Assistants

### Introduction

Communion assistants participate in worship in a significant and very visible role as an assisting minister. Assisting with distribution of Holy Communion is an important ministry leadership function, and should be carried out with reverence, dignity, and confidence. Normally, communion assistants should be active, confirmed, members (or associate members) of the congregation. As an assistant to the presiding minister, you will perform an integral part of the worship service through the distribution of Holy Communion. You should be fully knowledgeable of your responsibilities and how to perform your duties before the worship service begins. If you have any questions, seek out the pastor, an usher, or a member of the worship committee before the service begins.

At Trinity, the Communion Assistant distributes the wine, after the pastor has distributed the bread, to each communicant.

Note: Since offering communion involves handling the bread and wine, if you are ill, please consider asking another communion assistant to take your place.

### Distribution

During the offertory response, the offerings and the bread and wine are brought forward. The communion assistant should go forward and stand next to the acolyte during the singing of the offertory response, but without interfering with the ushers or communion bearers. It is best to either move forward by the side aisle on the north side of the nave, or wait until the ushers and communion bearers have left. Since the passing of the peace occurs just prior to the offering being received, it may be helpful to move to the back of the nave while sharing the peace, in order to position yourself to use the north side aisle.

Note: If you have moved to the back of the church, there is a container of hand sanitizer on the table just outside the doors into the nave – consider using this after sharing the peace (before moving to the front of the church) to ensure your hands are clean before handling the bread and wine at the altar.

It is important to be in place before the offertory response ends. There will not be an extra bulletin by the acolyte, so be sure you are prepared to fully participate in the communion liturgy – either by memory or by bringing your bulletin with you.

At the conclusion of the communion liturgy, the pastor will announce that all is ready, and “Lamb of God” will be sung. As the assembly sings, the communion assistant and the acolyte step to the altar to receive communion. The wine will be offered from the chalice – if grape juice is preferred, be sure the pastor knows this ahead of time.

# Worship Assistant Guide

After the communion assistant and the acolyte have communed, the communion assistant will give communion to the pastor. Break off a piece of the bread and give it to the pastor, saying, "The body of Christ, given for you." The pastor may respond, saying "Amen." Take the chalice and offer it for the pastor to drink, saying "The blood of Christ, shed for you." The pastor may respond, saying, "Amen." Receive the chalice back from the pastor, and using a purificator (small, white linen napkin) wipe the inside and outside edge of the chalice. Place the chalice back on the altar, taking care not to spill it.

After everyone at the altar has received communion, pick up a tray of glasses filled with wine and grape juice. Note that the center glasses are filled with grape juice and usually have a darker color than the wine.

Watch for which side of the nave will be communed first (it is not always the same!). The communion assistant should stand next to pastor – on the side that is being communed. Be sure the acolyte is standing next to you to receive the empty cups.

Communicants will approach the pastor, who will distribute the bread with the words, "The body of Christ, given for you." The communicants will then approach the communion assistant.

If a person places their arm across their chest, this is a sign that they are requesting grape juice. Use the glasses in the center of the tray. Otherwise, give the glasses filled with wine.

As each person is handed a cup to drink, clearly say, "The blood of Christ, shed for you." Be sure the distribution is conducted with dignity and purpose – it should not be done with a sense of haste or urgency. (There should never be the impression that the bread and wine are simply being "handed out".)

When your tray runs out of glasses of wine or grape juice, step back and turn to the altar to switch the empty tray with a filled tray. Return to your position and resume giving communion.

After everyone from one side of the nave have communed, the communion assistant and the acolyte should move to the opposite side of pastor, with the communion assistant again standing next to pastor.

Once all have communed at the altar, communion may be taken to some people at their pew. Follow the pastor and offer the wine or grape juice after the individual has received the bread, ensuring to say, "The blood of Christ, shed for you."

After all have communed, return to the altar with the tray and assist the pastor with reassembling the stack of trays and then return to your pew.



# Worship Assistant Guide

## Distribution including the Common Cup

During festival services, such as Christmas Eve or Easter, the common cup (chalice) may be offered in addition to the individual cups. In this case, two communion assistants will be needed to offer communion. The communion assistants should decide in advance who will offer the common cup and who will offer the individual cups, and which communion assistant will offer communion to the pastor. (It is distracting from the Meal when such decisions are being made at the altar).

When two communion assistants are being used, they should both move forward as when only one assistant is used – and they should both stand near the acolyte.

After the pastor has communed, the assistant who will be offering the common cup should ensure the chalice contains a sufficient amount of wine. If it needs more, simply add some from the flagon, taking care not to splash or spill the wine. Pick up the chalice and a purificator, which is the small, white linen napkin.

The assistant with the common cup should stand between the assistant distributing the individual cups and the acolyte.

If a person chooses to receive the common cup, they will pass by the individual cups and approach you. Offer the chalice for them to drink from – typically, the individual will take the cup from you and drink – but ensure the person actually has taken the cup before letting go – some people come from a tradition where they do not actually take the cup but drink from it as offered by the communion assistant – you need to be prepared should this occur. As they take the cup and drink, say, “The blood of Christ, shed for you.”

After the person hands the cup back to you, use the purificator to wipe the inside and outside of the chalice rim. Rotate the chalice so the next person drinks from a different place on the rim. The purificator should also be moved so a different place is used each time the chalice is wiped.

If the cup is becoming empty, return to the altar and add more wine from the flagon.

Repeat this process until everyone has communed.

If communion is taken to someone in the pews, be sure to follow, as some members in the pews may also wish to use the common cup.

After all have communed, return the chalice and purificator to the altar and return to your pew.

# Worship Assistant Guide

## Communion Bearers

Communion Bearers have an active and visible role in our ministry. They carry the bread and wine to be used for Holy Communion to the altar. The bread, a symbol of our daily work, and wine, a symbol of great joy, are presented along with other gifts as the offering is brought forward, during the services when Holy Communion will be celebrated.

Communion Bearers may sit in the pews throughout the service. Since the bread and wine will be at the rear of the nave (the part of the church where the assembly sits), the communion bearers will need to move to the back of the church to perform their duties. It may be convenient to do this during the sharing of the peace, which occurs just before the offering is collected. This way, there is less distraction from the worship – and it may provide the opportunity to share the peace with even more people! Another option would be to move to the back of the nave by one of the side aisles while the offering is being collected.

While the offering is being collected, the communion bearers need to prepare the bread and wine to be brought forward. There should be a white linen veil covering the communion vessels on the small offertory table next to the bookcase near the sound equipment. Remove the veil, fold it, and set it aside.

Remove the plastic wrap from the bread and set the wrap on the table – it will be discarded by the altar guild later. Place the bread back on the paten.

For a normal service when distribution is with the individual cup, a brass, gold-plated chalice will be brought forward for use during the communion liturgy. This chalice and a small glass cruet (pitcher) will be on the table. Pour the wine from the cruet into the chalice, being careful not to splash or spill the wine.

On certain festival occasions, such as Christmas or Easter, common cup distribution of communion may also be offered. On these occasions, a large pewter flagon (pitcher) containing wine will be on the table instead of the chalice and small cruet. This flagon will be brought forward instead of the brass chalice on these occasions.

Bringing the bread and wine forward as part of our offerings is an important and visible part of our worship. It needs to be conducted with dignity and confidence, handling the bread and wine with the appropriate respect and reverence. Children are encouraged to assist – be sure they understand the importance of what they are doing. It is suggested that if children are helping, they should carry the bread, to avoid spilling the wine.

After the bread and wine have been prepared, the communion assistants wait at the back of the nave until the ushers finish collecting the offering. When the offertory response (song after the offering) begins, the communion assistants need to follow the ushers to the altar. The acolyte will accept the offering plates from the ushers, and the ushers will step aside to allow the communion bearers to move forward.

The communion bearers should step to the riser – the pastor will normally come to you and take the bread and wine. If this does not occur, or there is a visiting pastor who is not familiar with our routine, pause a moment, then continue forward and place the bread and wine on the altar.

When you have finished presenting the bread and wine, you may return to your pew.

# Worship Assistant Guide

## Greeters

Most of us probably have a pretty good idea of what being a greeter is all about – hospitality and welcome. It's important that all people who come to our church are warmly welcomed, especially if they are a visitor. Greeters should be especially alert for first time visitors. Most people are a little uncomfortable if too big a fuss is made over them, but we certainly want to get to know people who visit us and may be interested in making Trinity their church home. It's important that we find out who our visitors are and where they live, so we can thank them for worshiping with us, as well as extend an invitation to return and consider becoming a part of our congregation's family.

When you are a greeter, you are possibly the first person someone meets when coming in the door. Your greeting of welcome, friendship and spirit of helpfulness conveys a very important first impression, whether the person is a visitor, member, or friend of the congregation.

Greeters should be at church about 20 minutes before the service starts. They should stand near the double doors between the foyer and the narthex (near the "Hands of Hannah" table). Be sure the lights in the foyer and the narthex have all been turned on. Greeters should offer a friendly greeting to everyone who enters, such as "Good Morning!" or "We're glad to have you with us!" or "It's good to see you!" with a firm (but considerate) handshake (or perhaps a hug, when appropriate!). Of course, these aren't the only greetings there are. It's important to keep your greetings to the right length – sometimes we're tempted to carry on a conversation with someone, but greeters should plan on having those "personal" conversations after worship or at a fellowship time.

When you notice someone new to the church, be sure to introduce yourself and ask their name. Ask them to sign the guest register at the top of the stairs leading into the nave (part of the church where the assembly sits). For someone new to Trinity, it is also important to help them learn about the building – consider introducing the visitor to another member and ask that person to show them around.

Greeters should stay near the doors as worship begins to greet anyone arriving a few minutes late. After about 5 minutes (or when the opening hymn begins), you should go to the nave for worship. Please wait until an appropriate time to go to your pew (during a hymn or music and not during prayer) as your entrance may be distracting to other worshipers.

# **Worship Assistant Guide**

## **Nursery Attendants**

The attended nursery during our 10:45 worship service provides an opportunity to minister to small children and their parents. When people entrust their children to our care, it is a large responsibility and joy, which should not be taken lightly.

Nursery attendants should arrive at church about 20 minutes before the beginning of the service. Attendants need to be in the nursery to receive children as families arrive, so their parents may attend worship.

Please note, some parents keep their children in worship until the end of the children's sermon and then allow them to go to the nursery. If no children are present at the beginning of the service in the nursery, please wait until after the children's sermon to join the rest of the worshipers in the nave. Please try to sit in the rear of the nave (the part of the church where the assembly sits) – this way you can see when a parent removes their child from the service, and can return to the nursery if needed.

There is a speaker in the nursery, so the worship service can be heard. The volume can be adjusted to the desired level by the volume control knob on the bottom of the speaker.

Nursery attendants must always be attentive to the children in their care. Safety is extremely important – if there are more children than you are comfortable working with, or there are behavior problems, be sure to contact someone for additional help. Children must never be allowed to remain unattended. Ensure that the children are behaving appropriately. Children older than 4 years should be with their parents and not in the nursery.

After the service has ended, ensure children are released only to their parent or guardian. Never leave the nursery until after all the children have been released.

Once all of the children have left, clean-up the toys that were used and place them back in the boxes. Return the room back to a neat condition in preparation for the next service. Turn off the lights in the nursery and any lights that were turned on down stairs (fellowship hall, restrooms, hallway, etc.) if it is the last service of the day.

# Worship Assistant Guide

## Readers (Lectors)

Proclaiming God's word is one of the central elements in our worship. The reading of the scriptures is one of the most important assisting ministry roles, and should be considered an awesome and joyful responsibility. Although at Trinity we have called the people who fulfill this responsibility "readers", another more appropriate term is "lector" – which better recognizes this person as an assisting minister.

Publicly proclaiming God's word is much more than simply reading – you become an agent of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the assembly. The Word itself is the most important part of this worship activity – you should be prepared, i.e., have your lessons ready, know when the choir sings, etc., before stepping to the ambo so there are no distractions.

Recommendations for the church regarding the announcement of the lessons have been provided for worship settings. For example, since complete references to the lessons being read are available in the bulletin or elsewhere (i.e., the chapters and verse numbers), they need not be spoken out loud. Our preference is that the reading should be introduced simply and boldly, in the following way;

**“A reading from [Jeremiah].”**

(In a sense we're saying, "Pay attention! God has something to say through Jeremiah. Listen!") It isn't necessary (or preferred) to include the chapter and verses in the announcement.

Remember that the reading is not "found in" (it wasn't lost) or "taken from" (it's still there) any book of the Bible. Likewise, introducing the scriptures is not a time for greeting or other announcements – the focus should be on proclaiming the Word.

The church office will normally mail the lessons for the day to the scheduled reader. The responsive psalm verses will also be provided. There are some helpful reminders included in this mailing which you should be sure to review.

The readings should be reviewed and practiced ahead of time. Be sure you know the appropriate pronunciations for any difficult words. Consult a pronunciation guide or talk to the pastor if you need assistance. It is helpful to read the lessons out loud while practicing. This helps build your familiarity with the particular lessons and will help you proclaim the Word with more confidence.

Once you arrive at church, please make note of when the choir will sing during the liturgy. The music the choir sings is associated with one of the lessons, the psalm, or the sermon and is placed accordingly.

You may sit in the pew of your choice during the service. The scripture readings usually follow the prayer of the day. On special occasions, this format may be changed so

# Worship Assistant Guide

please make note of any changes.

After the prayer of the day, walk to the chancel (at front of the nave – the part of the church where the assembly sits) and stand behind the ambo (lectern).

Adjust the microphone so that it is directly in front of your mouth so that you project the best sound into the sound system. You can also check to be sure the microphone switch is on as you adjust it – be sure not to turn it off!! Although we have a sound system, the microphone needs to be positioned properly. Don't be afraid to move it – the sound system doesn't do much good if the microphone can't pick up what is being said. Be sure to keep speaking towards the microphone as the lesson is read.

Speak loudly enough that you project your voice into the microphone. This is usually slightly above a normal speaking level. Even with the sound system, it is important that you **read slowly and firmly**, with clear enunciation. It is common for people speaking publicly to talk quickly – it is helpful to recognize this so that you do not rush through the scriptures as you read. The person at the sound system should make volume adjustments to the sound as needed.

At the conclusion of first and second readings, be sure to say the appropriate closing, such as "Word of God, word of life," and wait for the response, "Thanks be to God" before continuing.

As you read the lessons, remember when the choir will sing. When it is time for the anthem, the choir will come forward from the pews to sing - you may step down and take a seat in the front row pew until the choir is finished.

After the choir is finished singing, they will return to their seats. Approach the ambo again and after everyone has returned to their seats, complete the readings.

After you are finished with the second reading, you may return to your seat.

# Worship Assistant Guide

## Ushers

### Introduction

If the pastor and the other worship assistants lead the liturgy from the front of the church, ushers do the work at the back. Ushers do much more than hand out bulletins and collect the offerings. Ushers fill many roles – they greet, they coordinate, they prepare, they assist. Quietly and without drawing attention to themselves, ushers work to help gather the assembly and concentrate the focus on the word and sacrament.

The purpose of this section of the guide is to provide for some fundamental understanding of what ushers do, and to establish some basic consistency for the ushers here at Trinity. There's no way it can provide all of the guidance and instruction for everything! Much of what needs to be done will be obvious – the key is that it needs to be done!! If you're an usher, and it looks to you like something needs doing, the best thing to do is, just do it!!

If you are unable to perform some of the tasks that involve physical work, please ask someone for assistance.

The information in the following sections is based on the typical 10:45 Sunday morning worship service. During special services, such as for Lent, Holy Week, and Christmas, ushers will need to be prepared and anticipate what needs to be done.

### Lights

Ensure that the lights in the foyer, narthex, and in the entry to the sanctuary are turned on. It is important that the church looks "open for business" as we prepare for worship. When people enter the building – especially visitors – and the lights aren't on or the doors are closed, we don't present a welcoming environment. The lights should remain on until worship has ended and people have left the building – there is often activity during the service and we always want the fellowship time after worship to be bright and welcoming, as well.

When you arrive, the lights in the sanctuary (the part of the church where the assembly sits) will probably be off and the spotlights on the chancel (the front part of the church where the altar is) are off or dimmed. The spotlights are controlled by a series of dimmer switches on the back wall of the sanctuary. Rotate these switches to turn all the spotlights fully on. The lights in the sanctuary are controlled by two switches labeled front and back – turn both switches on. These switches will spring return to the middle position. There are compact fluorescent bulbs in most of the sanctuary light fixtures – there may be a slight delay when you turn on the switch before they come on. These lights take a few minutes to attain their full brightness, so it is best to turn them all on when you turn on the other lights.

After worship, and when everyone has left the rooms, be sure the lights have all been

# Worship Assistant Guide

turned off. The dimmer switches for the lights on the chancel have a detent so you know when the switch is rotated fully off.

## Elevator

Check the elevator to be sure it is ready for use. Be sure the folding doors are closed – if either door is not fully closed, the elevator can't be called to another floor. The light inside the elevator is automatic. If there's a problem and someone gets stranded in the elevator, there are instructions inside the mechanical room off the narthex kitchenette.

## Temperature/Fans

When the weather is cool, be sure the thermostats in the foyer, the narthex and the sanctuary have been set to 68 degrees. The thermostat in the sanctuary is on the wall to the left side of the sanctuary, near the door by the organ. The thermostat in the narthex is on the wall near the door to the men's restroom. The thermostats in the sanctuary and the narthex are on timers, and should have automatically turned on the heat, but you should check the temperature anyway. The unit in the foyer only heats when the narthex heat is running.

Because the heating system creates a great deal of distracting flow noise in the piping, it is desired that the room temperature be fully raised before worship. When the heat runs in the sanctuary, the noise is loudest in the back, on the left side. If the sanctuary heat turns off while the narthex heat is still running, there will be flow noise at the front near the chancel. If the temperature is within a couple of degrees of the thermostat setting near the start of worship, you should adjust the setting for both thermostats down so the setting is one degree below the indicated temperature (not the setting) to cycle the furnace off. If the thermostats need to be adjusted, just use the up or down buttons on the front panel. This will stop the flow noise, which is a significant distraction. With people in the sanctuary, the temperature will continue to increase so it should be warm enough to maintain comfort. (An interesting thumb rule is that each person in a room gives off the same amount of heat as a 60 watt incandescent light bulb.)

When the weather is warm, we can use fans to circulate air to help maintain comfort, since we don't have air conditioning.

There are ceiling fans in the sanctuary which are controlled by a switch on the back wall near the light switches. These fans are helpful when it feels "stuffy" in the sanctuary, and work well to move the air in the room.

We also have two exhaust fans which will draw outside air into the building through open doors and windows. These fans remove air from the building through louvers high on the back wall of the sanctuary and high on the wall in the narthex. During the winter season, these louvers are covered – the covers **MUST** be removed before the fans are operated to prevent damage to the fans. **DO NOT OPERATE THE FANS IF THE**



# Worship Assistant Guide

COVERS ARE IN PLACE!! Similarly, since the fans are exhaust fans, there must also be a source of air into the building when they are operated.

Before the narthex fan is started, the entry doors into the church and the foyer doors must be propped open.

Before the sanctuary fan is started, several windows in the sanctuary should be opened. It is usually best to open windows near the front of the church for the best air exchange. If windows near the back of the church are opened, the air exchange is short circuited – meaning the cool outside air from the back windows will be sucked into the fans and exhausted back outside, and the hot air will stay in the building. For this same reason, the double doors entering the sanctuary should not be propped open when the sanctuary fan is operating, to maximize the benefit of the exhaust fan. Keeping the doors closed also keeps the fan noise outside the sanctuary.

Sometimes, it is much cooler in the building than it is outside, and turning on the exhaust fans actually heats up the building. In these circumstances, the better judgment may be to leave the exhaust fans off to keep the cooler air in the building

The switches for these exhaust fans are located in the church secretary's office. The switch for the narthex fan looks like a large light switch. The switch for the sanctuary fan is a large switch with a handle on it, which is rotated to start the fan.

After worship, or when the fans are no longer needed, they should be turned off, then the doors and windows should be closed.

## **Baptismal Font**

Be sure the baptismal font is running – there is a push-button on/off switch located just below the top of the font, on the side nearest the altar. The switch is somewhat hard to press – but it clicks and you will see/hear the water begin to flow. The font should be turned on at the same time the lights are turned on.

After worship, when everyone has left, be sure the font has been turned off, by pressing the same switch used to start it.

## **Bulletins**

The bulletins should be on the table in the hallway leading to the sanctuary. If not, look on the counter in the church secretary's office. The ushers should check to be sure the people who are scheduled to assist for the day are available – and try to obtain replacements if they are not. Since the order of worship is printed in the bulletin, it's important to be sure everybody who should participate gets a bulletin – especially for children who are old enough to follow the service. For young children, there are children's bulletins available and there are also "busy bags" filled with soft toys, etc., for small children to use during worship.

# Worship Assistant Guide

## Doors

Be sure the double doors leading to the sanctuary are not propped open. There is often a good amount of activity in the narthex and in the hallway leading to the sanctuary before the worship service begins. The conversations and other noises can be distracting for those who have already entered the sanctuary to pray or prepare for worship. Therefore, we desire that the double doors leading into the sanctuary should not be propped open. Be alert to help with opening these doors for those who may need assistance. The doors also should not be propped open during worship.

## “Traffic Control”

As people arrive for worship, the ushers will be some of the “auxiliary greeters” they encounter. Ushers should be prepared to answer questions about the building, about worship, and Trinity as a congregation. Be sure families with young children are aware we have a staffed nursery available (for children 4 years old and younger) during the late service. Families with small children may also be offered a seat near the back of the sanctuary, should they need to leave to care for their children.

Be sure there is a working pen at the guest book. Encourage visitors to sign the guest book or complete an attendance card in the pew. Introduce the visitors to another member of Trinity, and be sure to let the Pastor know which people are visitors.

Once worship has started, ushers may feel free to join their families for worship, although it is helpful if they are seated near the back of the sanctuary. Sometimes, ushers may be needed to help with someone who needs assistance during worship and being near the back of the church can provide quicker response.

It may also be helpful to bear near the back of the sanctuary if it is necessary to “control traffic” during the service. While it is not our intent to restrict anyone, we should also expect certain respect and courtesy from those attending worship, including children. Ideally, there would be no need for anyone to leave the sanctuary during worship, but practicality dictates otherwise. Whenever someone leaves, there is a certain element of distraction which cannot be avoided. When people arrive late or return to the sanctuary, however, every effort should be made to help ensure the smallest distraction possible. People should be encouraged to wait until hymns are being sung before returning to their seats. If children begin making multiple trips, they should be encouraged to be seated near the rear of the sanctuary to reduce the distractions.

At the end of the service, during the singing of the final hymn, prop open both doors at the back of the sanctuary. Be sure the lights are still on in the hallway, narthex and foyer – to facilitate fellowship until all have left the building.

# Worship Assistant Guide

## Attendance

Trinity maintains informal attendance records to aid with making official reports to the Synod and ELCA offices. Ushers are requested to count the adults and children attending worship and in the nursery, and record these totals, by service, in the notebook kept in the drawer of the table in the entryway to the sanctuary. It is usually best to make this count shortly after worship has begun.

Please make every attempt to avoid distraction while making this count. For example, it is not appropriate during worship to walk well into the sanctuary while obviously counting, or during the confession liturgy when everyone is facing the font and it would be obvious someone is counting people. Ideally, nobody should even be aware that attendance is being counted.

## Collecting the Offerings

Among the most visible duties of the ushers are the collection of the offerings. At the appropriate time in the liturgy (normally after Passing the Peace), the ushers should be at the back of the church ready to proceed to the front of the church to take the offering plates from the acolyte, pastor, or other worship assistant. Usually, the cue to walk forward will be an announcement from the pastor, or when the organist begins to play. The tradition at Trinity is to collect the offering pew-by-pew using two ushers in the center aisle. The ushers stop at each pew, and the plates are passed down the pew and returned to the usher. When the plates have been returned to both ushers, they proceed to the next pew. When they reach the back of the sanctuary, they should wait until the organist begins playing the offertory response, or the pastor calls for the offering to be brought forward, before taking the plates back to the front of the church. The acolyte, pastor, or other worship assistant should take the plates, and return them to the credence table near the acolyte's pew. On occasion, there may not be an acolyte or the pastor may be at the altar – in such a circumstance, upon reaching the front of the church, one of the ushers should take both plates and place them on the appropriate table.

If the offering is being collected on a communion Sunday, the communion bearers will be following the ushers as they take the offerings to the front of the church. When the acolyte has take the plates from the ushers, the ushers should step to the side – in front of the front pew, to allow the communion bearers to move forward with the bread and wine. The ushers should wait until the communion bearers leave before returning to the back of the church.

## Communion

During the distribution of Holy Communion, ushers help guide worshippers forward to receive communion. The pastor will announce that all is now ready, and may make short announcement about how communion is distributed. Following this announcement, the pastor will commune the communion assistant and acolyte while the

# Worship Assistant Guide

assembly sings, normally “Lamb of God”. The ushers should walk to the front of the sanctuary during this song.

Upon reaching the front, they should wait until the pastor has received communion and indicates which side of the sanctuary will be communed first – it varies from Sunday to Sunday. The side to commune first will be the side that the communion assistant and acolyte are standing on.

Trinity’s tradition is continuous communion, and the ushers guide the people forward, pew by pew, from one side of the church then the other, from the front of the church to the back of the church. There are no hard “rules” about ushering people forward, but it is preferred that there not be a long line of people waiting in the center aisle. One usher should walk to each pew to usher people forward; the other usher should remain at the front to offer any assistance that may be needed. Remember to gauge how long it takes for people to walk down the aisle to be sure there is continuous flow of people to receive communion.

After all the people from the pews on one side have been communed, be sure to wait until the communion assistant and acolyte have changes sides before sending people from the pews on the other side forward. The ushers normally receive communion after the people from the last of the pews have come forward.

The ushers should make note of those people who do not go forward and may wish to receive communion in their pew, so the pastor can be notified when the ushers approach the altar to receive communion. If in doubt, ask the person if they wish to receive communion. The pastor, communion assistant, and acolyte will bring the bread and wine to those individuals who could not come forward to receive them.

Some people may hand the ushers an attendance card as they go up to communion; these should be collected and placed on the church secretary’s desk.