



**Acolyte & Chalice Manual  
St. James Episcopal Church  
Louisa, VA**

## **Introduction**

Thank you for agreeing to serve your church as an acolyte and lay Eucharistic minister. You may be wondering why you are taking part in this activity, except for the fact that someone asked you, but I want you to know that your ministry is very important.

All of us who participate during the services have the same job: to help others worship. Whether it is the Priest, Acolyte, or Lay Eucharistic Minister, each of us has a role to play and when we perform our roles well then we create a space where people can come away from the hectic pace of their lives and find comfort, reassurance, insight, and renewal as they worship God. Sometimes our individual jobs may seem simple but they are crucial to the church's worship experience.

This manual is designed to give you all the information you need. When you serve on a Sunday morning or during a holiday celebration you are one of our worship leaders and that is an important job. I hope you will read these pages carefully and do your job well and with joy. This is our ministry, this is how we honor God, and I thank you for your willingness to serve.

Blessings,

Fr. Alex Riffée

## **General Information**

- Please arrive at least 15 minutes before your service.
- Please dress appropriately – (avoid things that might cause you to trip) – If you have a t-shirt under your alb/make sure the writing and logos are appropriate.
- Make sure your alb or your cassock and surplice are the correct size.
- Crucifers, torch and banner bearers wear a white alb. Lay Eucharistic Ministers wear a cassock and surplice.
- The bottom of your robe should come to the top of your shoes.
- Following the service, do not leave, meet in the Narthex to check-in with Alex for questions or future tasks.

## **General Service Information**

- Everyone should be in the church hall dressed and ready to go by 9:20 a.m.
- The priest and/or ushers will let you know when to line up in the center aisle.
- The order of procession is:

**Crucifer  
Torchbearer – Torchbearer  
(Banner) if used  
Choir  
Lay Eucharistic Ministers/Chalicers  
Clergy**

- During a 3-stanza song, the crucifer begins the procession when the congregation begins to sing the hymn (not when the music starts).
- During a song of 4 or more stanzas, the crucifer begins the procession at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> verse.

- Please walk slowly and with dignity. Hold your cross, candle, or banner straight and high. How the acolytes carry themselves will set the tone for the rest of the liturgy.
- During the service every Acolyte is asked to participate in the liturgy. This means following along in your bulletin and singing the hymns.
- When you are sitting down during the service, please sit up straight. You are helping set the tone for others so please do not slouch or rest your head in your hands.
- Receiving Communion: When it comes time to take Communion all of the Acolytes will join other Lay Eucharistic Ministers around the table. We will receive standing up and in the round.

## Specific Duties

### Head Crucifer (1<sup>st</sup> Crucifer)

- The Head Crucifer is in charge of the acolyte team. The rector or an Acolyte Instructor will assist him or her, if needed.
- When you put on your alb, please make sure that it looks neat and straight. If you need help tying a cincture (rope), the clergy will be happy to assist you.
- The Head Crucifer should make sure the candles are lit before the service begins.
  - As you face the altar the candle on your right should be lit first, this is the Epistle side. The candle on your left, the Gospel side, should be lit last.
  - When extinguishing the candles, stand in front of the altar and extinguish the candle on your left first, followed by the candle on the right.
    - Light = right, left...Extinguish = left, right.
    - The old saying to remember this is: *The Gospel never stands alone*. In other words, it

cannot give off light without the scriptures that preceded it.

- For the 9:30 service please extinguish the candles during the last hymn. Gospel side first and then Epistle. Reverence the altar (a slight bow) before and after you extinguish the candles.
- Retrieve your cross from the sanctuary at least 10 minutes before the service.
- In procession carry your cross high and straight.
- You are first and so you set the pace for everyone else. Please walk slowly.
  - When you reach the altar, please put your cross in its holder, making sure it squarely faces the congregation, and sit in the chair near the high altar.
- During the Gospel Procession, wait until the priest goes to the high altar to retrieve the gospel book before you go to retrieve the cross.
  - When the Priest turns for the procession, you will turn and lead the procession to the 3<sup>rd</sup> pew. After the reading you will lead the procession back.
- It is your job to help the priest set the altar during Communion.
- Please take from or bring these items to the altar in the following order:
  - The Priest will first give you the pall, burse, and veil (The materials covering the chalice).
  - Afterward, the Priest will have you take the ciborium (bread holder).
  - Bring a cruet of water so the Priest can bless it and pour into the chalice of wine.

- Take the cruet from the Priest, while holding a lavabo bowl and towel, and pour water over the hands as the Priest prays for spiritual cleansing.
- During the distribution of Communion to the congregation, you may take your seat near the lectern, while the Priest and Chalice administer to the people.
- Candles should be extinguished at the 9:30 service.
- The priest will give you a signal when to start the recession. (signal = slight bow).
  - Please be alert because when the recession starts depends on the length of the hymn.
  - Please recess slowly and with dignity.
- Hang your robes up and replace your cross in the church. (Make sure the other acolytes hang their robes properly)
- **Note:** If there is Morning Prayer instead of a Eucharist, then your job is the same except you have no Communion responsibilities and there is no gospel procession.

### Torch Bearers

- When you put on your alb, please make sure that it looks neat and straight. If you need help picking vestments that fit, your team leaders will be happy to assist you.
- Retrieve your torch from the sanctuary at least 10 minutes before the service.
- In procession carry your torch high and straight. Make sure your torch is the same height as the one across from you.
- During the procession and recession, the Torch Bearers positions are directly behind the Head Crucifer.
- When you reach the altar please put your torch in its holder and sit (left and right) on the benches closest to the Communion Table.

- When the Gospel procession begins, let the Priest go to the High Altar and then retrieve your torch. When the torches and crucifer are lined up behind the Priest, facing the altar, wait until the Priest turns with the gospel book to begin your procession.
  - Turn in toward the crucifer and let the crucifer lead you down.
- Process slowly and stop in between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> pew (crucifer will turn and stop at the 3<sup>rd</sup> pew).
  - Turn toward the center and back up so that the minister can step in between the two torches. You may rest them on the ground while the Priest is reading.
  - When the reading of the Gospel is finished, please turn and recess back toward the altar and put your torches in their stands.
- The Priest will give you a signal when to start the recession. (signal = slight bow).
  - Please be alert because when the recession starts depends on the length of the hymn.
  - Please recess slowly and with dignity.
- Hang your robes up and replace your cross in the church. (Make sure the other acolytes hang their robes properly)
- **Note:** If there is Morning Prayer instead of a Eucharist, then your job is the same except you have no Communion responsibilities and there is no gospel procession.

## Chalicers

- You are serving a very important role within the church by helping at the altar.
- When you arrive, please put on a cassock and surplice. Please make sure that it looks neat and straight.
- Before the service, meet the choir and altar party in the hallway between the sanctuary and parish hall.
  - We will say a prayer before entering the sanctuary.
- You will follow the choir in the procession and recession.
  - When you reach the communion table, observe the altar with a slight bow, before going to your seat.
    - You will sit near the bench closest to the pulpit.
- During communion, after the elements are consecrated, the Priest will hand out the bread.
- After everyone has received, he will offer you the chalice of wine and you will commune the rest of the Altar Party.
  - When the party has received, go up to the high altar and set up the railing for the congregation.
- Following the Priest from left to right, you will offer wine to those who ask for it.
  - Some will sip from the cup.
  - Some will intinct or place the wafer in the cup.
    - If they intinct, hold the purificator under the cup to keep wine from spilling.
  - **Some will receive bread but not desire wine.**
    - If they cross their arms as if to receive a blessing, simply present the cup near them and say, “The blood of Christ the cup of salvation.” You do not need to place it in front of them.
      - This is to offer them the full nature of the sacrament even if they cannot

receive due to a theological view, age, or a personal matter.

- When offering the cup, say one of these two formulas:
  - The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation. [Amen.]
  - The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life. [Amen.]
- Often times, there will be a parishioner with mobility issues. Be on the lookout and inform the Priest so there is enough of the sacrament to offer them.
  - Follow the Priest into the congregation and offer the chalice.
- After everyone is communed, you may help [not obligated to] consume some of the wine in the chalice before handing the chalice back to the Priest.
  - The Priest will consume the rest, and offer ablutions (clean) with water, before recovering the chalice.
  - Remain standing next to the Priest and he will ask the congregation to join in the post-communion prayer.
- As the final hymn begins and the acolytes begin their procession, the chalicer and priest will face the high altar bow and recess after the choir.
- The Priest will follow in behind you and offer the dismissal.
- Be sure to place your cassock and surplice in the same location where you found it.
- Blessings for your leadership!