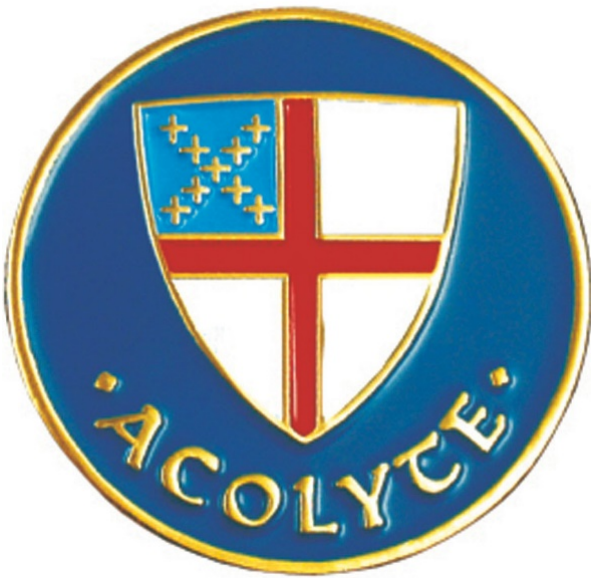


Acolyte Manual



Acolyte Manual Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to join one of the most important worship ministries of St. James's Episcopal Church. Serving as an acolyte has a rich history and tradition in the Christian Church. I give thanks to God for your willingness to serve and to take on such an important responsibility.

As an acolyte you are now one of the leaders of worship each week. Together with our choir, clergy, lectors, and lay Eucharistic ministries, we help to create a holy place where people can come away from the hectic pace of human life and find comfort, reassurance, and renewal in their Christian lives.

Your participation not only in the various roles of torch bearer, crucifer, and server at our altar may seem simple, but the leadership you provide saying prayers, singing hymns, and giving guidance to other acolytes is critical to our weekly celebration at St. James's.

This manual is designed to give you information that you need to be one of our leaders of worship. When you serve on Sundays or during Christmas, Holy Week, or Easter, you have an important ministry to the people of our sacred community. I hope you will find this guide helpful and please know that I am also willing to help you with any questions that may arise on Sunday mornings.

As one of our leaders, you will be in my prayers as you begin this spiritual journey and please know how much I appreciate your willingness to serve the people of our church.

With every good blessing, I am
Yours in Christ,

Fr. John F. McCard
Rector, St. James's Episcopal Church

General Information

- Please arrive at least 20 minutes before your service.
- Please dress appropriately – no tennis shoes, flip flops, or Sport sandals or t-shirts with logos that can be seen through an alb.
- The Acolyte Vesting Room is off the Assembly Room in the basement of Gibson Hall. Make sure your alb (white robe) or your cassock (red robe) and surplice (white vestment that goes over the red cassock) are the correct size. Cassocks and surplices are arranged on color-coded hangers in four general size categories (cassocks on the darker colored hanger and surplices on the lighter colored hanger). As a courtesy to your fellow acolytes, please return them to the same hangers after the service is over.
- Crucifers wear a white alb; Torch and Banner Bearers wear red cassocks and white surplices.
- The bottom of your cassock should come to the top of your shoes.
- The surplice should be large enough to cover your wrists and your waist.

General Information Regarding the Service

- Everyone should be in the Narthex dressed and ready to go no later than 10 minutes before the service (by 8:50 a.m. or 11:05 a.m. during the program year or 9:50 a.m. in the summer).
- The ushers or the clergy will let you know when to line up in the center aisle.
- The order of procession is:
 - 1st Crucifer
 - Torchbearer – Torchbearer
 - Banner Bearer
 - Banner Bearer
 - Choir
 - 2nd Crucifer
 - Lay Eucharistic Ministers
 - Clergy
- When the choir is *not* processing, the 1st Crucifer begins the procession when the congregation begins to sing the hymn (not when the music starts).
- When the choir is processing, the 1st Crucifer begins the procession at the start of the hymn.
- 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. Everyone can see you 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 inside the altar rail will receive the bread and the wine standing behind the altar. The other acolytes will receive Communion kneeling at the altar rail. Please come forward and kneel when you see the acolytes inside the altar rail taking Communion.

Specific Duties

Head Crucifer (1st Crucifer)

- The Head Crucifer is in charge of the acolyte team. He or she will be assisted by an adult leader.
- When you put on your alb, please make sure that it looks neat and straight. If you need help tying your 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 the left first, followed by the candle on the right.
 - The old saying to remember this is: *The Gospel never stands alone*. In other words, it never burns by itself.
- You should extinguish the candles during the last hymn. Reverence the altar (a slight bow) as you pass from one candle to the other.
- Retrieve your cross from the sanctuary at least 10 minutes before the service.
- Carry your cross high and straight in the procession.
- 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 closest to the credence table (this is the table with the bread and wine on it for use during communion).
- It is your job to help the priest set the altar during the Eucharist.
- Bring items to the altar in the following order:
 - Two footed patens (large silver plates)
 - Extra chalice (large silver goblet)
 - Bread box (round or square silver box with extra wafers for communion)
 - Wine cruet (glass pitcher of wine)
 - Water cruet (glass pitcher of water)
 - Small rectangular glass bottle of wine, when present.
- During the distribution of Communion, remain standing behind the altar and help the Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEMs) by refilling their chalices from the flagon (large silver pitcher of wine) when needed. Pour carefully and always over the white altar cloths and never over the colored altar frontal.
- Candles should be extinguished after both the 9:00 and 11:15 a.m. services.
- One of the clergy will give you a signal (signal = eye contact/slight bow) when to start the recession.
- Please be alert because when the recession starts depends on the length of the hymn.
- Please recess slowly and with dignity.

- Hang up your alb in the vesting room and replace your cross in the church. **Make sure the other acolytes hang up their robes properly.**
- Note: During **Morning Prayer** your job is the same except you have no Communion responsibilities.

2nd Crucifer

- When you put on your alb, please make sure that it looks neat and straight. If you need help tying your cincture (rope) the clergy will be happy to assist you.
- Retrieve your cross from the sanctuary at least 10 minutes before the service.
- Carry your cross high and straight in the procession.
- During the procession and recession, the 2nd Crucifer's position is directly in front of the Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEMs) and the clergy.
- When you reach the altar, please put your cross in its holder and sit on the bench outside the altar rail on the Gospel side of the church (the left side as you face the altar.)
- During the Eucharist and Morning Prayer you have no other specific duties other than to carry the cross.
However, please be ready to help when asked.
 - Periodically look up during hymns to see if a clergy member needs your attention.

Torch Bearers

- When you put on your cassock and surplice, 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 altar rail.
- During the singing of the Gospel hymn please look for a signal from the priest sitting behind the altar to know when to begin the Gospel procession. There is no Gospel procession during Morning Prayer.
- When the Gospel procession begins, walk up to the altar, bow and pick up your torches. Turn and walk down the step and then wait for the priest and the Lay Eucharistic Minister (LEM) to fall in behind you.
 - Process slowly half-way down the aisle and then stop, turn toward the center, and back up so that your back is touching the pew behind you. You can then rest your torch on the floor.
 - The LEM will pass between you, turn and take the Gospel book from the priest.

- The priest will then read the Gospel. Please hold still as the Gospel is read.
- When the reading of the Gospel is finished, please turn and recess back toward the altar and put your torches in their stands.
- Then, when you pass in front of the altar as you are walking back to your seats, turn and reverence the altar (a slight bow). You do not bow when you are holding your torch.
- The Torch Bearer sitting on the Gospel side (the left side as you face the altar) is responsible for collecting the offering plates. (look for signal)
 - When the organ begins to play the Doxology (*Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow*), walk up to the altar, bow, and retrieve the large silver plate sitting on the credence-table (wooden shelf) on the gospel side.
 - Carry the plate down to the steps and receive the offering plates from the ushers.
 - When you have received all the plates please carry them carefully (they will be heavy) back up to the altar.
 - Pause in front of the altar as the Celebrant blesses the offering and then place them all back on the credence table. Then return to your seat, bowing as you pass in front of the altar. (You do not bow when you are holding the offering plates.) You will always have the responsibility of the offering plates whether it is a service of Morning Prayer or Holy Eucharist.

Banner Bearers

- When you put on your cassock and surplice, 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 banner and meet in the Narthex at least 10 minutes before the service.
- Large banners are located inside the church and should be carried in the following order of priority:
 - St. James's banner
 - Alpha & Omega
 - Fire banner
 - EYC banner
- Small banners may be carried instead if the Banner Bearer is too small to carry a large banner. There are three and they are located in the Acolyte Vesting Room:
 - Bless God needlepoint
 - Praise God needlepoint
 - Cross & Lily
 - Lion & Lamb
 - Noah's Ark

There is no priority order for the small banners; however, the Cross & Lily banner should not be carried during the seasons of Advent nor Lent and the Lion & Lamb banner should not be carried during the Easter season.

- Banners during special services:
 - EYC banner should be carried on Youth Sunday
 - Fire banner should be carried on Pentecost
 - Noah's Ark banner should be carried at the Blessing of the Animals service in October

- At the end of the service all banners should be returned to the location from which they came.
- Carry your banner high so that you can see in front of you during the procession. Make sure your banner is the same height as the one behind you or in front of you.
- During the procession and recession, the Banner Bearers' positions are directly **behind the Torch Bearers.**
- When you reach the front of the church, please put your banner in its stand and sit (left and right) on the benches behind the prayer desks. Please make sure that your banner in its stand is facing the congregation.
- During the final hymn, look for a signal to retrieve your banners and follow in kind with the other acolytes.
- During the Eucharist and Morning Prayer you have no other specific duties other than to carry your banner. However, please be ready to help when asked.



ST. JAMES'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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