



New Grace Acolyte Manual

Welcome

The ministry of acolyte is a serving ministry of the Church that comes from ancient times. From those days until now acolytes have been faithful and conscientious men, women, boys and girls, who love the Lord Jesus Christ and love serving Him at his sacred altar. It is an honor to be selected as one who serves, and, truly a ministry to God and God's people.

Table of Contents

- 1. Acolytes at New Grace Church*
- 2. General guidelines*
- 3. Acolyte level requirements*
- 4. Instructions for lighting candles*
- 5. Acolyte Vestments*
- 6. Order of Procession*
- 7. Church Year Seasons*
- 8. Symbolism of Liturgical Colors*
- 9. Order of Service*
- 10. Flag Procession*
- 11. Service Procedures (8:00 AM)*
- 12. Service Procedures (9:00 AM)*
- 13. Service Procedures (10:30 AM)*
- 14. Church Floor Plan*

ACOLYTES at New Grace Anglican Church

The Acolyte Corps is made up of members of the church who volunteer their time and talent to serve during the liturgy by carrying the processional cross, torches, banners and flags.

The Crucifers/Servers carry the processional cross and are trained to serve the Priest (celebrant) at the altar, distributing the offering plates, and provide direction to other acolytes when needed. Acolytes serve at the principal Sunday liturgy and festival services.

Because of the high privilege of serving in God's House, and at His Altar, being an acolyte is appropriately reserved for those who show a deep love for our Lord, His Church, and Altar. Although no one is worthy in a sense of being holy enough to work at God's Altar, by custom, this privilege is shared among those of devotion and prayer. The attitude an acolyte brings to these duties is all-important. With sincere devotion of mind and body, the acolyte strives to make their service an acceptable offering to our Lord. They will not need praise for their work or be depressed by correction and guidance, but will make a Christian witness with quiet rejoicing. A good acolyte accepts the work as a sacred duty, and participation reflects that devotion.

General Guidelines

Acolytes will normally arrive at the church no later than 15 minutes prior to the service they are assigned to. For special services, (Christmas, Easter, Weddings, Funerals, or any service at which the Bishop will attend), Acolytes will arrive 20 to 30 minutes prior.

Acolytes should be reliable. If you are delayed or cannot attend the service, it is your responsibility to find a replacement or notify the Acolyte director.

Acolytes should never detract from the reverence of the service. Fidgeting, giggling, etc are not tolerated. Your responsibility is to participate in and help lead worship so that the congregation is never distracted from their worship of God. The following should guide you:

- 1. Hands should be folded together at the waist when standing or walking unless holding or carrying something. Hands should be on the lap when seated.*
- 2. Never appear to hurry. All motions should be reverent.*
- 3. Do not stare at the congregation, but you may look about when performing a task that is necessary. Your attention should be directed toward the celebrant, lay reader, or the video screen when appropriate.*
- 4. Do not slouch. When seated, feet are kept together and legs are not crossed or stretched out. Feet should be flat on the floor.*
- 5. When walking or performing a duty, movements should be deliberate and dignified. Do not take shortcuts when approaching the altar. Acolytes will use the straight steps at the sides of the altar area. Acolytes do not move in diagonal directions in the altar area and do not use the curved steps.*
- 6. Always pause and bow when crossing in front of the cross and altar.*
- 7. Actions by two or more acolytes should be performed with the highest degree of uniformity whenever possible. Standing and sitting at the same time as other acolytes and the clergy is standard.*

8. *Always turn toward the cross. Two acolytes lining up for the recessional should turn toward the middle and each other as they turn to face the congregation.*

9. *Dress: Tennis shoes, or any light colored shoes, are inappropriate to wear when serving as an acolyte, as are flip-flops and sandals. Proper shoes are dark, and are the type that may be shined. Girls should not wear sandals. Brightly striped shirts, or those with a bold pattern, and t-shirts with words or designs, may be visible through the alb, and should not be worn. Blue jeans should not be worn.*

10. *When preparing for service, the demeanor of the vestment room should be quiet and calm. Discussion should be limited toward preparation for the service.*

11. *When carrying the Cross, torches, flags, and banners to/from the altar before/after the service, use the side aisles and carry them reverently with two hands. Never carry the cross at an angle.*

12. *Do not touch brass when carrying torches or the Crucifix. Fingerprints cause tarnishing.*

13. *Participate during the service in singing and prayer. The congregation looks to you as someone trained in the service. Lead in worship.*

14. *Do not bow when carrying the Processional Cross, torch, flags, or banner. A shallow head nod is allowed to indicate reverence and timing.*

15. *The sign of the cross should always be made reverently and in a dignified manner. Remember, you are signing yourself with the Cross of Christ and this act of devotion should convey that meaning. With your right hand, fingers together, touch your forehead first, then your chest, then your left shoulder and finally your right shoulder. If you are unsure of when to make the sign of the cross, watch the celebrant. When he makes the sign of the cross, you make the sign of the cross.*

16. *If you are unsure of what to do, discreetly ask the acolyte next to you or look toward the celebrant if needed. Ask before the service if unsure. Everyone makes mistakes, don't fear this job. **Remember that, as an acolyte, you are serving God—offer God your best service.***

Acolyte Level Requirements

Level One: Vestments Only

(May serve as first torch, second torch, and banner)

- 1. Attend initial training.*
- 2. Faithful in attendance.*
- 3. Participates in worship.*

Level Two: Green Ribbon

(May serve as first torch, second torch, banner, or Gospel torch)

- 1. Served at least three times.*
- 2. Faithful in attendance.*
- 3. Participates in worship.*
- 4. Match parts of the church.*
- 5. Match selected terms.*
- 6. Know location of extra wine and wafers.*

Level Three: Blue Ribbon

(May serve as any torch, banner, first or second crucifer; eligible to serve as a team leader.)

- 1. Achieved green ribbon.*
- 2. Faithful in attendance.*
- 3. Participates in worship.*
- 4. List parts of the church.*
- 5. Match additional selected terms.*
- 6. Demonstrate order of assisting the Priest or Deacon at the setting of the Holy Table.*
- 7. Draw and label the Epistle Credence table.*

Level Four: Purple Ribbon

(May serve any position as well as team leader.)

- 1. Achieve blue ribbon*
- 2. Faithful in attendance.*
- 3. Participates in worship.*
- 4. Demonstrate knowledge of order of the service of the Holy Eucharist.*
- 5. Knowledge of vestments, ex., only Celebrant wears a chasuble.*
- 6. List order of procession.*

Instructions for Lighting and Extinguishing Candles

- *Make sure that the candles are lit before the service. It is the team captain's responsibility to make sure that the candles are lit and may assign this job to a team member.*

- *Find a candle lighter in the vesting area. Hold it with one hand near the bottom and the other hand on or near the knob which regulates the length or the taper.*

- *Hold the candle lighter in front of you so that it is tipped slightly forward with the flame pointing away from you and the bell pointing toward you.*

- *Light the Eucharistic candles on the altar. Light the Epistle candle (right side of altar) first. Then light the Gospel candle (left side of altar). Remember, the Gospel candle should never be lit by itself. If two acolytes are lighting the candles, they should be lit or extinguished at the same time.*

- *After the service extinguish the Eucharistic candles. Begin by extinguishing the Gospel candle first (the candle on the left side facing the altar).*

Note: At this time (early 2011), we do not normally light and extinguish the candles. (The vestry women perform this task.) If the church acquires the traditional service candles, including branch candles, we will conduct training on those procedures. The basic guidelines for in this event will be:

Candle lighting should begin with the candles on the Altar, with the Epistle candle first, then the Gospel candle. The branch candles when in use are next. Begin lighting the branch candles with those closest to the Cross, then outward (as if opening a book). Always extinguish candles by reversing the order in which they were lighted (closing a book, outside to inside). The epistle candle is always the last candle extinguished.

Acolyte Vestments

Clergy, acolytes, choir members, and others wear vestments in obedience to Church customs. They symbolize the sacred nature and function of the office rather than the importance of the person. They are worn for the sake of dignity, and uniformity.

Acolytes should be fully vested at least 10 minutes prior to the procession.

Alb: The long white robe worn by a priest under Eucharistic vestments. Acolytes also wear this in most places. A hooded alb, or cassock-alb, is worn by the Crucifer.

Cassock: The long black or red robe used as a basic vestment. Clergy members wear the black cassock. Red cassocks are worn by the choir and acolytes.

Cincture: The band of cloth worn at the waist of the cassock. A rope girdle may also serve this purpose.

Cotta: A shorter and simpler form of a surplice; white, and worn over the cassock by the choir and acolytes.

Crucifers – alb (white robe) and cincture (rope)

Torches – red cassock and white cotta

Banners- red cassock and white cotta

Flags- red cassock and white cotta

**Acolytes will also wear a colored ribbon with crucifix denoting their level of achievement.*

ORDER OF PROCESSION
SUNDAY 9:00 A.M.

Crucifer

Torches

(Flags)

Banner

Choir

(Banner)

Chalice Bearers

(2nd crucifer)

Deacon

Priests/Celebrant

(Bishop)

**The positions in parenthesis are optional positions when the number of acolytes allow. These will normally be filled for high services. The order of precedence for acolyte positions will be: Crucifer, Torches, Banner, Flags, 2nd Crucifer.*

THE CHURCH YEAR

- **Advent**: *The four weeks before Christmas observing preparations for the coming of Christ.*
- **Christmas**: *The birth of Christ.*
- **Epiphany**: *The manifestation of Christ to the Wise Men.*
- **Ash Wednesday**: *First day of Lent. Forty Days before Easter.*
- **Lent**: *The forty days Christ spent in the wilderness.*
- **Holy Week**: *The final week of Lent. The week before Easter.*
- **Palm Sunday**: *The Sunday before Easter. It recalls Christ's' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.*
- **Maundy Thursday**: *Thursday of Holy Week. It commemorates the institution of the Lord's Supper. It is the day on which we wash others hands and feet as a sign of Christ's' love and servant hood.*
- **Good Friday**: *Friday of Holy Week. The day of the Crucifixion.*
- **Holy Saturday**: *The day and evening before Easter. Easter Eve.*
- **Easter**: *The day of Resurrection!*
- **Ascension**: *Forty days after Easter. The Ascension of Christ into Heaven.*
- **Day of Pentecost**: *Fifty days after Easter. The coming of the Holy Spirit. The birthday of the Christian Church.*
- **Trinity Sunday**: *The Sunday after Pentecost. Represents the three aspects of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*
- **Transfiguration**: *Commemorates our Lord's Transfiguration on the Mount when there came out of the cloud a voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear Him".*

- **Annunciation**: Day to recall the visit of Archangel Gabriel announcing the Incarnation to Mary.
- **All Saints' Day**: Day to remember the saints and martyrs of the Church not included with special days on the calendar. The last great festival of the Church Year.
- **Saints' Days**: Commemorate the lives of the saints and martyrs.
- **Rogation Days**: Days on which special prayers for the fruits of the Earth are offered.
- **Ember Days**: Days on which special prayers for the increase of the ordained ministry are offered.

SYMBOLISM OF LITURGICAL COLORS

White (or Gold): Signifies victory, purity, perfection, joy and the bright light of truth. Used for Christmas, Easter, Ascension, All Saints' Day, The Transfiguration, Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, and Saints' Days that are festivals.

Violet: Signifies penitence, expectation, and seasons of preparation. May be used for Lent in conjunction with a Lenten Array. Used for Advent in places where Blue is not.

Rose / Pink: May be used on 4 Lent (Mothering Sunday, Mid-Lent, Rejoice Sunday) in place of Violet or the Lenten Array, when a less penitential tone is set. May also be used on 3 Advent.

Red: Color of the Holy Spirit; symbol of fire and blood; signifies martyrdom and love for God. Used for Palm Sunday, the Day of Pentecost, Ordinations and Saints' Days commemorating martyrs.

Green: Signifies hope, regeneration, immortality, life and nature, peace, universality. Used for the season of Epiphany and the season of Pentecost.

Blue: Signifies truth, eternity. Used for Advent.

Black: Signifies mourning. Used on Good Friday.

ORDER OF SERVICE HOLY EUCHARIST

Acclamation (and Collect for Purity)

*** Entrance Hymn and Procession**

Salutation and Collect of the Day

Scripture Readings

*** Psalms**

*** The Holy Gospel**

Sermon

Nicene Creed

Prayers of the People

Confession and the Peace

*** Offertory Sentence**

(Presentation Hymn)

The Great Thanksgiving

*** Preparation of the Sacraments**

Prayer of Consecration

Memorial Acclamation

The Lord's Prayer

*** Holy Communion**

Benediction

*** Recessional Hymn and Recession**

Dismissal Blessing

*** The asterisks and bold print indicate actions/standing required by acolytes.**

FLAG PROCESSION

The American flag and the Anglican flag are occasionally used in the procession. It is important to show due respect when carrying the American flag. The flag should never touch the ground and is held vertically. The American flag is always carried on the right side of any other flag. However, when it is posted, it is posted on the left side of the altar (the right side of the speaker) and the Anglican flag on the other side.

This means that after pausing before the altar, the American flag crosses from the right side to the left side for posting. It is always allowed to pass in front of any other flag. The flags will be carried outside of the altar rail.

When posting the flags, the flag carrying acolytes pause and post them at the same time into their holders. The American flag carrier sets the timing for the posting. Both flag poles should touch the floor at the same time.

During the recessional, the flag bearers move to the flag positions. Again, the American flag carrier sets the timing for lifting the flags out of the holders. They are lifted at the same time that the torches and Crucifer lift out of their holders.

The Crucifer and the torches move to the center position at the altar rail, facing the altar. The flags move to the center position outside of the altar rail. When the Crucifer turns toward the aisle they turn to follow the torches at a distance of 10 feet. They do not pause at the center, and there is no need to cross paths because the American flag is already on the right side of the Anglican flag.

After the recession, the flags will be carried back to their holders at the front of the church along the outer aisles. The flags are never left alone to lean against a wall in the vestment room or at the rear of the church, and never allowed to touch the floor.

Carrying the flags requires coordination between the acolytes. When carried correctly, flag procedures can make the acolyte corps look professional. It is important to remember that many in the congregation have served in the Armed Forces or may have lost family members who died in war. They are sensitive to proper respect to the American flag. It is an honor to carry the American flag.

Service Procedures (8:00 AM)

The 8:00 am service celebrates Holy Eucharist with Rite I in the Common Prayer Book. The service uses the prayer book which is passed out prior to the service and returned at the completion of the service. The prayer books are stored in the vestment room.

The Priest is assisted by one acolyte. This acolyte wears the white alb and cincture. The acolyte performs all the duties required to assist the Celebrant, i.e.; Procession, Altar rail preparation, Collection of Alms, Sacrament preparation, Re-opening altar rail, Recession.

This acolyte for this service will be an experienced Crucifer. When the offertory is announced, the acolyte will proceed to the Epistle Credence table to assist the Celebrant in preparation of the Sacraments. Assist the Priest as necessary.

The Priest will probably take the Ciborium (covered bread cup) and the chalice to the altar. If the Priest requires more bread, bring him the covered bread box. Receive the Sacrament Veil from the Priest and place it neatly on the Credence table.

Next, prepare to wash the Celebrant's hands. Drape the Lavabo towel over the left arm; hold the Lavabo bowl with the left hand and the water flagon with the right. When signaled, approach the altar and pour water over the fingers of the Celebrant. Offer the towel by turning to the right. The priest will replace the towel. Return to the table and neatly arrange the table items.

Next carry the large Alms basin to the center of the altar rail and receive the offertory from the usher. Turn to the right to present the offering to the Priest. Ensure that the altar rail is prepared for Communion. After receiving Communion, stand by at the Credence table to assist. After Communion for the congregation, open the altar rail, move the center cushion and proceed to your seat by the Credence table.

Service Procedures (9:00 AM)

The 9:00 am service is the most formal service at New Grace. The service follows the Common Prayer Book Rite II service. The service is projected on the large video screens. This service requires the most acolytes. The acolytes will normally include a Crucifer, two torches, and a banner carrier. Special services (Christmas, Palm Sunday, Easter, and any time the Bishop is present) will also include two banners, and two flag carriers. (see Order of Procession)

Duties of the Crucifer:

The Crucifer is the team captain. He will ensure that the Altar candles are lit before the service, and that the torches, banners, flags, and Cross are prepositioned at the rear of the church for the procession. The acolytes should all proceed up the side aisle of the church at the same time. They should all meet and bow at the center of the altar rail, get their torch, flag, or banner, and then proceed to the rear of the church down a side aisle depending on the side of your equipment. Be courteous to incoming worshippers.

Procedures:

1. Procession: Slow steady walk to the altar rail. (Slow enough that candles do not blow out if carrying a torch.) Stop prior to the altar rail step so the torches stop by your side. Wait for the torches, to come to a halt at the rail. Signal the acolytes with a nod and proceed up the altar rail step and to the right side straight steps and then up to the holder. (The Banner and Flags will move to their positions outside of the altar rail.) Place the Cross in its holder. Wait until the torches, banners, and flags have posted their equipment. Proceed to the forward most seat on Epistle side. (Note: The choir will be following this procession, so do not delay after the banner and flags are at your side.)

2. Service: The Crucifer will stand at the Credence Table when the Offertory sentence is completed. He will assist the Deacon/Priest in preparation of the Sacraments. The Deacon will probably take the Ciborium (covered bread cup) and one of the chalices. The Crucifer will carry the remaining two Chalices to the deacon at the altar. If the Deacon requires more bread, bring him the covered bread box. Receive the Sacrament Veil from the Deacon and place it neatly on the Credence table.

Ensure the first torch has the large Alms basin and gloves. Next, prepare to wash the Deacon and Celebrants hands. Drape the Lavabo towel over the left arm; hold the Lavabo bowl with the left hand and the water flagon with the right. When signaled, approach the altar and pour water over the fingers of the Deacon and Celebrant. Offer them the towel by turning to the right. They will replace the towel. Return to the table and neatly arrange the table items.

Stand by the table during the Offertory. Ensure that the torches secure the altar rail for Communion. Return to seat.

After receiving Communion, get the wine flagon from the credence table and standby on the first step of the altar to refill the Chalices when required by the Chalice Bearers.

After Communion is served to the congregation, ensure that the torches have opened the altar rail.

3. Recession: After the Benediction, proceed to the Cross holder. Pause until the other acolytes are at their holders. (One of the torches has to cross the altar to his position.) Lead the acolytes to the center of the altar rail. Step down to the center and face the altar. When the torches are in position by your sides, and at the beginning of the second stanza of the Recessional hymn, turn to your right to recess down the aisle. Proceed slowly. The flags will follow the torches out on the outside of the rail, and the banner will lead the choir out after the flags (or torches with no flags). At the rear of the Nave, move to the side and face the altar. After the concluding prayer, carry the Cross back up the side aisle when able. Be courteous to the congregants that are leaving the pews.

Duties of the Acolytes: (torches, banners, flags)

The torch, banner, and flag acolytes are responsible to the Crucifer/Team Captain. Assist as needed in lighting candles. When the Crucifer decides; the acolytes should all proceed up the side aisle of the church at the same time. They should all meet and bow at the center of the altar rail, get their torch, flag, or banner, and then proceed to the rear of the church down a side aisle depending on the side of your equipment. Be courteous to incoming worshippers.

1. Procession: Follow the Crucifer. Torches maintain a five foot distance behind (two pews). Flags maintain a 10 foot distance (4 pews) behind the torches, (if included in the service.) Banner maintains a 10 foot distance (4 pews) behind the torches (or flags). When the torches arrive at the altar rail, the Crucifer will signal to proceed to post the torches and

cross. When the Crucifer signals, proceed up the step and to either side toward the straight steps prior to proceeding to the torch/banner holders. The American Flag will have the right of way and proceed outside of the altar rail but in front of the Anglican flag to the Gospel side (left) to its holder. The Anglican flag will cross behind the American flag and to the Epistle Side (right) to its holder outside of the altar rail.

The Epistle Side torch/banner acolytes after posting, will proceed to follow the Gospel side torch and banner toward their seats behind the altar with hands folded together.

The second banner which follows the choir will pause at the altar rail and then outside the altar rail to the straight steps and to the holder.

The second Cross which precedes the Deacons/Priests also pauses and proceeds to its holder. The second Crucifer will sit on the Epistle Side with the first Crucifer and Priests.

2. Service: The first torch (most senior) will assist at the Offertory by receiving the alms from the ushers. The large alms basin will be carried to the altar rail using white gloves. The acolyte will receive the offertory basins, turn toward the altar (to the right) and present the Alms to the Deacon/Priest. The second torch will proceed outside of the altar rail and close and lock the altar rail, position the altar cushion and return to the seats. After the Communion, the second torch will open the altar rail gate and move the cushion.

3. Recession: After the Benediction, proceed to the torch/banner/flag holders. When each acolyte is ready, the Crucifer will lift the Cross and proceed through the center of the altar rail. The torches follow and take their place at the side of the Cross. The flags proceed outboard of the altar rail to the sides of the torches. At the second stanza of the Recessional hymn, follow the Crucifer in order, turning toward the center to "about face" for the recession. Both torches should turn in unison, as well as the flags. (There is no need for the flags to switch sides on the Recession. The American Flag is already on the right side.) The Gospel Banner will lead the choir and the Epistle Banner will follow the choir.

Line up along the glass wall at the rear of the Nave until the concluding prayer. Carry the torches/flags/banners up the side aisle, with respect when able.

Service Procedures (10:30 AM)

The 10:30 am service is a contemporary service at New Grace. The service follows the Common Prayer Book Rite II service but the order of service is less formal. The service is projected on the large video screens. This service requires only one or two acolytes. The acolytes do not robe up prior to the service. There is no Procession or Recession. The acolytes sit in the pews until the preparation of Holy Communion.

When the offertory is announced, the acolyte will proceed to the Epistle Credence table to assist the Celebrant in preparation of the Sacraments. Use the side entry to the altar up the straight steps. If passing in front of the altar, pause and bow. Assist the Deacon/Priest as necessary.

The Deacon will probably take the Ciborium (covered bread cup) and one of the chalices. The Acolyte will carry the remaining two Chalices to the deacon at the altar. If the Deacon requires more bread, bring him the covered bread box. Receive the Sacrament Veil from the Deacon and place it neatly on the Credence table.

Next, prepare to wash the Deacon and Celebrants hands. Drape the Lavabo towel over the left arm; hold the Lavabo bowl with the left hand and the water flagon with the right. When signaled, approach the altar and pour water over the fingers of the Deacon and Celebrant. Offer them the towel by turning to the right. They will replace the towel. Return to the table and neatly arrange the table items.

Next carry the large Alms basin to the center of the altar rail and receive the offertory from the ushers. Turn to the right to present the offering to the Deacon/Priest. Ensure the ushers or second acolyte has closed the altar rail. If not, close the rail and position the center cushion.

After receiving Communion, pick up the wine flagon from the Credence table and wait at the first step of the altar to refill the Chalices if required by the Chalice Bearers.

After Communion for the congregation, open the altar rail/center cushion and proceed to a seat in the pews.

Church Floor Plan

