

**December 2007 Training for  
Acolytes, Ushers, Vergers, Greeters, Readers, Eucharistic Ministers<sup>1</sup>**

Ver 3.0, 27 November 2007

The word, “liturgy” means “the work of the people,” and to create a spiritual and physical space where worship can be experienced in a spiritual manner requires the coordinated efforts of many people including ushers, oblationers, readers, acolytes, the choir, and the clergy [priest(s) and deacon(s)], among others.

It is important to have a training exercise for everyone involved in worship because our individual tasks are dependent on the work of others, in much the same way that the production of a play is dependent on the actors, the musicians, the lighting and sound technicians, and the stage hands. While everyone can (and should) rehearse and learn their work on their own, it is only through coordinated rehearsal that a distraction free experience will be produced. It is also a good idea for all participants to be aware of each other’s duties in case we are asked to substitute for someone sometime.

This training exercise will not cover every aspect of each person’s work – just the main parts of the worship service that we do together. For example, the vergers do much of the preparatory work each Sunday. That prep work will not be covered here, but it is expected that each group will schedule time for specific training, much in the same way that sectional rehearsals are done by each instrumental group in an orchestra. For your information, the leaders of each of the groups involved in worship are shown in the table below. You should arrange with the leader a time when you can be re-trained each year to hone your skills and learn about any changes that may have been implemented. In addition, you should make sure that the scheduler for your group knows about any peculiarities with your weekend schedule(s) and you should always inform the scheduler whenever you make a substitution due to unforeseen circumstances.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Instructor email</b>	<b>Instructor Phone</b>	<b>Scheduler</b>	<b>Scheduler email</b>	<b>Scheduler Phone</b>
Vergers	Burn Curry	bwciii@eagleservcorp.com	601-268-3506	Ned McInnis	nedmcinnis@comcast.net	601-520-7283
Acolytes	Burn Curry	bwciii@eagleservcorp.com	601-268-3506	Ned McInnis	nedmcinnis@comcast.net	601-520-7283
LEM <sup>1</sup>	Bill Stroop	wgstroop@earthlink.net	601-329-3538	Ned McInnis	nedmcinnis@comcast.net	601-520-7283
8 am Ushers	Judith Jones	judipudi26@aol.com	601-583-8984	Judith Jones	judipudi26@aol.com	601-583-8984
10:30 am Ushers	Beejee Dickson	beejeed@yahoo.com	601-584-8378	Beejee Dickson	beejeed@yahoo.com	601-584-8378
Greeters	John Blanks	johnbabs@bellsouth.net	601-268-7329			
Readers	Bill Stroop	wgstroop@earthlink.net	601-329-3538	Ned McInnis	nedmcinnis@comcast.net	601-520-7283

<sup>1</sup> Note that only lay Eucharistic ministers (those who serve wine in church) are included in this training. Lay Eucharistic visitors (who take communion to the homebound after church) are *not* included because their work lies outside the church. Separate training will be provided for LEVs.

## **Usher Duties**

In addition to hospitality, ushers perform three principle functions:

1. Hand bulletins and announcements to parishioners and seat them if necessary.
2. Coordinate with the greeters to get newcomers to the parlor.
3. Act as oblationers (collect alms, and bring offerings to the altar).

### *Ushering Duties*

- In order to encourage parishioners to read the announcements, please pass out the announcements separately from the worship bulletin. It would be best at the 10:30 a.m. service if one usher was outside the outer doors of the narthex and one was inside the narthex. The outside person can help negotiate newcomers and others through the herd of choir members, and the inside usher can control the inner doors to keep noise down inside the church.
- At the end of the service, collect only the worship bulletins from parishioners, and encourage them to take the announcements home with them.
- If you see someone new (or unfamiliar to you) be sure to offer them a green Visitors packet. If there are none in the Narthex, go get one from a pew.
- Encourage them to fill out a visitor's card and tell them to put it in the offering (alms) basin when it comes around.

### *Coordination with Greeters*

- After the service, collect only the service bulletin for recycling (note that we don't need to re-use them. Indeed, we should encourage our people to take the lessons of the day home with them). Encourage parishioners to take the announcements (and other inserts) home with them.
- Show those who want the sermon where the sermons are located.
- Escort those who need help down the stairs.
- Personally escort newcomers/visitors to the parlor to meet with the greeter who will be in the parlor. Note that this task will be dependent on the number of ushers and greeters available. Ideally we will have two ushers and one greeter. One usher can escort a visitor to the greeter and then return. The greeter will be in the parlor to talk with newcomers, get them coffee, answer their questions, and introduce them to people.

Oblationer Duties

- After the peace, the ushers (now acting as oblationers) should stand at the back of the congregation in the center aisle and prepare to come forward to get the alms basins. Do not bring the bread and wine forward at this time!
- After the offertory sentence (“Walk in love as Christ loved us...,” etc.), come forward to the steps of the quire and wait for the acolyte to bring you the alms basins.
- Collect the alms and wait at the back of the church. Collect the bread and wine to bring forward as well.
- When the priest indicates for people to stand (8:30 am) or the presentation hymn (10:30 am), walk forward with the oblations and hand them to the priest. Because the altar book is on your right, hand the oblations to the priest on your left side. Always hand the bread and wine first, and then the alms basins. It might work best if the person(s) carrying the bread and wine walk(s) up the left side of the aisle.
- Wait for the priest to elevate the gifts before reverencing and leaving the sanctuary.

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Greeter Duties

The term “greeter” may be a misnomer for the job description. The “greeter’s” principle job junction is to answer questions and offer hospitality. Ideally we would like this activity to take place in the parlor between services and after the 10:30 a.m. service.

- As noted above, an usher will escort newcomers to the parlor, or to conscript a parishioner to serve as escort if shorthanded.
- Ideally, there will be two ushers and one greeter after each service, so that there will always be one usher in the narthex after each service to identify and “hold” newcomers until the other usher has returned from delivering their newcomer or visitor.
- The greeter will remain in the parlor to offer hospitality, introduce the newcomer to some parishioners, tell the newcomers where the restrooms are, offer them food, and coffee, etc. In addition, if the newcomer or visitor is unfamiliar with the Episcopal tradition,

there are brochures available in the parlor to help. Copies of these are included in Appendix B.

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**Acolyte Duties**

Acolytes are assistants at the service, and have many roles. Note that this training exercise is not all inclusive of all the duties of the acolytes. Only the parts that interface with other groups are discussed here. Please note that prior to communion, some acolytes sit in the choir pew of the quire closest to the organ.

- *Process in and out with torches and the cross.* When the vergers indicates, acolytes are to process in and out of the church. If there is only one acolyte, then that acolyte bears the cross. If there are two acolytes, one bears the cross and the other bears the gospel book. If there are three, two bear torches and one bears the cross. If there are four or more, two bear torches, one bears the cross, and one bears the gospel book. Children and young people are *always* welcome to serve as acolytes. If for some reason we have five or six show up for a service, *all* of them should vest and process. It is more important to include our young people in service than it is to worry about numbers, symmetry, and the like. This priest can immediately assign a task to every acolyte that shows up.
- *Processing for the gospel reading.* When the vergers indicates, acolytes are to process for the gospel reading. If there is only one acolyte, then that acolyte bears the cross. If there are two acolytes, one bears the cross and the other bears the gospel book. If there are three, two bear torches and one bears the cross. If there are four, two bear torches, one bears the cross, and one bears the gospel book. If there are five, two bear torches, one bears the cross, one bears the gospel book, and one comes last to hold the priest's prayer book.
- After the offertory sentence, one acolyte (the Gospel Book bearer) gives the two alms basins to the ushers/oblationers at the top of the chancel step, and then returns to her/his seat in the sanctuary.

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- *Assisting the priest vest and de-vest the chasuble.* The priest puts on the chasuble (the “poncho”) when s/he enters the sanctuary. Stand behind her/him and help get the collar of his robes and the chasuble to hang straight. Likewise at the 10:30 a.m. service, take the chasuble from the priest and lay it neatly over the altar rail.
- *Closing of the altar rail gates.* At the 8:00 am service, the altar gates are to be closed *only after* the invitation for communion has been given by the priest (i.e., after the words, “The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts, with faith and thanksgiving”). At the 10:30 service, the gates may be closed during the fraction anthem – but wait until near the end of the piece. *Under no circumstances are the gates to be closed during or before the words of invitation.*

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**Vergers Duties**

Attached as Appendix A is the latest edition of the vergers duties. Below are the vergers activities that take place during the worship service (not included in the Appendix material).

- *Process in and out with torches and the cross.* The vergers leads the procession in and out of church. If there is no acolyte, the vergers bears the cross. If there is one acolyte, then that acolyte bears the cross, and the vergers verges.. If there are two acolytes, one bears the cross and the other bears the gospel book. If there are three, two bear torches and one bears the cross. If there are four or more, two bear torches, one bears the cross, and one bears the gospel book. Children and young people are *always* welcome to serve as acolytes. If for some reason we have five or six show up for a service, *all* of them should vest and process. It is more important to include our young people in service than it is to worry about numbers, symmetry, and the like. This priest can immediately assign a task to every acolyte that shows up.
- *Processing for the gospel reading.* If there is no acolyte, the vergers is to process the cross for the gospel; the gospel is to always be preceded by the processional cross. If we have acolytes, then the vergers leads the acolytes in procession for the gospel reading. If there is only one acolyte, then that acolyte bears the cross. If there are two acolytes, one

bears the cross and the other bears the gospel book. If there are three, two bear torches and one bears the cross. If there are four, two bear torches, one bears the cross, and one bears the gospel book. If there are five, two bear torches, one bears the cross, one bears the gospel book, and one comes last to hold the priest's prayer book.

- *Setting the Table.* Set one chalice, one intinction cup, one paten with bread, the offertory flagon of wine (if necessary), and one ciborium (bread box) of unconsecrated wafers plus any LEV boxes (if necessary) on the corporal. Everything else should be placed on the credence table. Please do not set up multiple chalices of wine. *Note during lent, we will veil the chalice; during lent, leave one chalice, a purificator, the pall and the veil on the altar for the priest to re-veil the chalice.*
- *Taking communion to parishioners in the congregation.* The ushers will transmit information to the vergers about who in the congregation was not able to come up for communion. The vergers will then indicate to the priest that there are persons in the congregation needing communion. The vergers should always lead the priest and LEM to a person in the congregation who does not come up for communion. In the absence of an assigned LEM, the vergers act as LEM and do not carry the verge. This priest prefers that the vergers carry the verge in the crook of the arm when approaching a parishioner rather than holding it in front of them; some people might view a person with a stick as threatening.
- *Communing the priest.* This priest prefers to take communion last. He will eat of the bread, and then turn to the vergers for wine. Please offer it to him as you would if you were serving a parishioner, and say the words of administration ("The blood of Christ..."). This priest does not do ablutions at the altar.
- *Special notes concerning Baptisms.*
  - Unless otherwise noted, the vergers are the ones to read/lead the prayers for the candidates printed in the bulletin.
  - This priest likes to pour the water himself. The vergers or an acolyte should hand him the vessel of water at the "Thanksgiving Over the Water." Who does this will be at the direction of the vergers.
  - The vergers should assist the priest at the font during Baptisms. This means anticipating what comes next. Stand very close to the font, and next to the small table where the oil, small baptismal candle, water, and towel are located. It is at the vergers' discretion if s/he wants the help of an acolyte to do the next three steps.
    - When the priest takes the baby (or asks the person to stand at the font), pick up the towel in anticipation of a wet head.
    - While the water is being poured on the baptized, pick up the oil and remove the stopper in anticipation of the priest asking for it immediately after the baptism.
    - When the oil is being put on the baptized person's head, pick up the candle in anticipation of handing it to the baptized (if not an infant) or to the parents/godparents of an infant. Light the small baptismal candle from the Paschal candle when the priest indicates, and then hand it to the appropriate person.

- The verger is to hand the baptismal certificate and the sponsor certificates to the appropriate person (usually the parent, who will distribute the documents at a more appropriate time).

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**Reader Duties**

For the purposes of this training, we will refer to three categories of readers: “lectors” and “epistolers,” and “psalmist-Pray-ers.” The “lectors” are those who read the Old Testament (first) reading and the “epistolers” are those who read the New Testament (second) reading. The lectors and epistolers come from the pews. “Psalmist-Pray-ers” are the LEMs who lead the psalm at the 8:30 a.m. service (or anytime there is a spoken psalm) and the prayers of the people at both services. .

**Lectors**

- If you are reading for someone else (substituting) you *must* tell the verger *before* the service.
- The lector should compare the readings posted in the lectern and/or mailed during the week with the Sunday bulletin. If the reading in the lectern or the copy that was mailed do not agree with the bulletin, *always* read from the bulletin. It is prudent to keep the bulletin with the reading with you when you go to the lectern.
- Immediately after the collect of the day, the lector should rise from her/his seat and step behind the lectern. At that time, immediately verify that the lectern mic is pointed at your head and not straight up or somewhere else.
- When you come to the front and leave the lectern, it is traditional to reverence the cross. When you do this, do so mostly with your head, rather than from the waist; a deep bow from the waist, while very reverential, also shows your posterior to the congregation.
- When you step behind the lectern, immediately verify that the lectern mic is pointed at your head and not straight up or somewhere else.
- Read thoughtfully, and do not rush.

Epistolers

- If you are reading for someone else (substituting) you must tell the vergers before the service.
- The lector should compare the readings posted in the lectern and/or mailed to you during the week with the Sunday bulletin. If the reading in the lectern or that were mailed to you do not agree with the bulletin, always read from the bulletin. It is prudent to keep the bulletin with the reading with you when you go to the lectern.
- The epistoler needs to be ready to come to the front when the psalm is finished. Do not wait – stand up and proceed immediately toward the center aisle. If you delay, the vergers or the lector may read for you.
- When you come to the front and leave the lectern, it is traditional to reverence the cross. When you do this, do so mostly with your head, rather than from the waist; a deep bow from the waist, while very reverential, also shows your posterior to the congregation.
- When you step behind the lectern, immediately verify that the lectern mic is pointed at your head and not straight up or somewhere else.
- Read thoughtfully, and do not rush.

Psalms-Prayers

- Verify that the psalm posted in the lectern and/or mailed to you during the week with the Sunday bulletin. If the psalm in the lectern does not agree with the bulletin, always read from the bulletin. It is prudent to keep the bulletin with the reading with you when you go to the lectern.
- When leading the prayers, proceed to the lectern right after the conclusion of the Nicene Creed or Renewal of Baptismal Covenant, as appropriate.

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**Eucharistic Minister Duties**

Eucharistic Ministers (LEMs) are those persons who serve wine to the parishioners in the church.

- LEMs may also be responsible for closing of the altar rail for communion, depending on whether acolytes are or are not present for the service. If the LEM is serving as the “alter rail gate keeper,” the altar gates are to be closed *only after* the invitation for communion has been given by the priest at the 8:00 a.m. service (i.e., after the words, “The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts, with faith and thanksgiving”). At the 10:30 service, the gates may be closed during the fraction anthem – but wait until near the end of the piece. *Under no circumstances are the gates to be closed during or before the words of invitation.*
- The ushers will transmit information to the vergers about who in the congregation was not able to come up for communion. The vergers will then indicate to the priest that there are persons in the congregation needing communion. The LEM serving on the side of the church where the organ pipes are located will bear the chalice into the congregation. After serving the wine, the LEM will walk back to the altar on the priest’s right, and hand the chalice to the vergers on the right side of the altar while the priest proceeds to the altar on the left side.

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# **APPENDIX A:**

## **Vergers Duties**

**2/9/05 – Revised 11/28/07**  
**VERGER RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES**

A Verger's tour of duty begins on Monday morning and ends at Midnight the following Sunday, except when Christmas Eve falls on Sunday. The following is a list of some of the Vergers' duties.

1. Attend Liturgy Committee Meetings.
2. Coordinate with applicable committees with regard to, find volunteers for and oversee funerals held during your week.
3. Coordinate with applicable committees with regard to, find volunteers for and oversee weddings held during your week.
4. Line up volunteers for all special services held during your week.
5. On Sundays you are responsible for the following:
  - a. Unlock the Parish Hall side door next to the office, step through the door, turn to your left and immediately enter XXXXXX on the beeping key pad, which turns off the security system to the Parish Hall.
  - b. Step back through the door and pick up the Church Mail, to be left on the Church Secretary's chair and proceed to turn on the hall lights. The lights in the Church School Wing will be turned on as needed by those responsible for Church School.
  - c. Unlock the Church Office door, turn to your right and immediately enter XXXXXX on the beeping key pad, which turns off the security system to the Church Office and turn on the lights in the Church Office waiting area.
  - d. Unlock the Dutch door with the Church Office key, turn on the lights to your right, drop the mail off and proceed down the Church Office Hall to the closet at the end of the Hall.
  - e. Unlock the Hall closet and enter XXXXXX on the key pad to your right, which turns off the security system to the Church.
  - f. Go back to the Church Office work area and pull out the second drawer in the counter to your left next to the copier and take out the 1<sup>st</sup> reading, psalm, 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and prayers to the people. Also, if we have a visiting Priest, you will find a check for the services of the visiting Priest. Hold this check until the visiting Priest signs the Church Registry (red book on counter over the drawer with the check).
  - g. Pick up the Bulletins located on the shelf of the bottom part of the Dutch door to your right.
  - h. Proceed out of the Church Office and through the Nursery School Wing, turning on the hall light as you pass through the glass door at the end of the hall.
  - i. Turn left, turn on the entry way light on your right, open the last door on the left (janitor's closet) and pick up the Hex Wrench on the top shelf to your left.
  - j. Take the Hex Wrench and insert it in the left end of the bar that opens the side door, squeeze the bar in the open position while turning the Hex Wrench.
  - k. Then open the side door Bolt and leave open.
  - l. Proceed through the kitchen, turning on the lights, into the Parish Hall meeting area.
  - m. To your right are a series of light rheostats, rotate them to the bright setting.

- n. On the glass door side of the meeting area will be the Coffee Maker, which has been pre-filled, plug it into wall socket behind coffee table (**this is crucial**).
- o. Proceed to the First Avenue doors and rotate the light rheostats located to the right and left of the doors to the bright setting. Unlock the First Avenue doors exit.
- p. Proceed to the back door of the Church, unlock it and proceed through the back door of the Church and turn on all the light switches in the short hall on your right.
- q. Leave the Bulletins and readings, etc. on the rail and go back and get the Altar Flowers from the Church Office waiting area.
- r. Place the Altar Flowers on the Altar.
- s. Perform the following duties in whatever order you wish:
  - 1. Take the cloth covering off the Altar.
  - 2. Make sure the hangings correspond with the appropriate Church Season, see calendar for the proper color.
  - 3. Fill up the artificial candles with the clear fluid found on the first shelf over the sink and, if necessary, replace the “real” candle hanging over gates in front of the Altar.
  - 4. Place Bulletins in the appropriate chairs or desks for the participants and take the remaining Bulletins to the Bulletin counter in the Foyer at the main entrance to the Church then turn on the lights over the desks and in the center of the Foyer.
  - 5. Unlock each set of Church entrance doors and the inside and outside doors to the Sacristy.
  - 6. Turn on the lights for the Altar, Lectern, Pulpit, Sacristy and Organ. If you are standing behind the Organ bench, the switches are located immediately behind and to your right. If the service is held at night, turn on the big lights behind the Altar. The switch for which is located behind the organ door to the Sacristy.
  - 7. Using the photos, set up the credence table next to the Altar and assess the reserve inventory of blessed wafers and wine, in the back of the Altar, to determine what is available for the two services and any other services to be held later on in the week.
  - 8. Place the Flagon of wine on the right and the intinction cup with wafers or real altar bread on the left of the top of the cabinet located next to the Pine Street Church doors.
  - 9. Place the silver water cup on the Pulpit under the book holder.
  - 10. Place the readings, etc. in the plastic holders.
  - 11. Insert the appropriate Sunday and Hymn Numbers for that Sunday in the Bulletin Board.
  - 12. If the Priest so desires, place the Priest’s vestment, corresponding with the Church hanging colors, on the rail for the Priest to put on during the Collection.
  - 13. Turn on the Sound System.
  - 14. If necessary, puts fresh wicks in the candle lighters.
  - 15. Make sure the artificial fire starters (barbeque starters) in the Sacristy and the Foyer are operational.

16. Assess inventory of unblessed wine and wafers, candle fluid, wicks and real candles for ordering purpose.
  17. Read Bulletin and set Gospel ribbon to appropriate reading. **DO NOT SET THE ALTAR BOOK.** This priest prefers to do that himself. Further, read Bulletin to see which Lems, Acolytes and Readers are scheduled to serve for both services.
  18. Light the reredos candles, the Communion candles (light the left one first and extinguish the right one first), and if in place, the candelabras and the Big candle, if it is the appropriate season.
  19. As you exit, shut both doors to the Sacristy and the door next to the rail on the right.
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- t. Go back to the Parish Hall and determine if those parties scheduled for the service are in attendance and have Lems determine which Lem will read the Psalm and Prayers and, if necessary, take the place of an errant reader.
  - u. At the eight o'clock service, approximately 3-5 minutes before the service is to begin, gather the participants at the back door of the Church for a short prayer.
  - v. At the eight o'clock service, lead the participants, Verger, LEM, LEM, Server and Priest(s) to the area in front of the Altar. During the service observe the participants to make sure everybody is in the proper place, is doing what they are supposed to be doing or have the proper items to perform their duties and, if not, correct the situation and follow the Customary until the end of the service.
  - w. At the end of the service, reset the credence table, if Altar Guild is not in attendance, refill the candles.
  - x. Between services determine if you have readers, Lems and Acolytes for the ten o'clock service. The Acolytes are needed in the following order, Crucifer/Server, Torches, Book Bearer, Banners and Flags. Of course, when you do not have the requisite number of Acolytes, then find at least three (can be made up of you and two Lems if necessary), the Crucifier/Server, two torches/gate closer. What ever number of Acolytes you have, use them, do not do everything yourself, they came, let them do their job.
  - y. Have the Acolytes light the candles then gather in the foyer with the Cross, Torches, Banners (and Flags) and Gospel Book. Light the Torches approximately 3 minutes from processional and have participants line up in the following order: Verger, Crucifer, Torches, 1<sup>st</sup> Banner, Choir, 2<sup>nd</sup> Banner, (Flags), Lems, Server, Book Bearer and Priests. During the service observe the participants to make sure everybody is in the proper place, is doing what they are supposed to be doing or have the proper items to perform their duties and, if not, correct the situation and follow the Customary until the end of the service.
  - z. At the end of the service, reverse the order of the applicable duties set out in paragraphs a.-s. above, making sure the flowers are taken to the kitchen and that all the bathroom lights are turned off.

The easiest way to set the Church security systems is to first lock up the Church then, after locking up the Parish Hall, go to the hall closet in the Church Office (see 5. d. above) and enter # 2, then go to the Church Office waiting area, lock the door, close the door and enter # 2, exit

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through Church Office door to Parish Hall side door across from Church Office, lock the door, close the door and enter # 2 and exit through Parish Hall side door.

## **APPENDIX B:**

# **Greeter Brochures**