

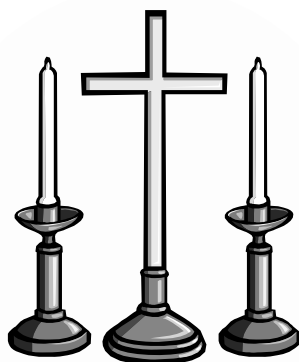
**PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE THESE!!!**

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church**

**4129 Oxford Avenue**

**Jacksonville, Florida 32210**

**904-388-2681**



**ACOLYTE MANUAL**

**2010**

*(effective date 3/7/10)*

**PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE THESE!!!**

## **The Ministry of Acolytes**

The Acolyte ministry is one of service. It is a very personal ministry in the service of the Lord. An acolyte is defined as one who assists the ordained and licensed ministers at worship service. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* says, "The duties of the acolyte are to light the altar candles, to carry the candles in procession, to prepare the wine and water for Holy Communion, and to assist in the Sacred mysteries of the Eucharist.

The acolyte ministry began in Old Testament times. The Holy Scriptures tell of the Prophet Samuel assisting Eli the priest, and of Elijah being assisted by Elisha. The early Christians continued this custom. For hundreds of years acolytes have assist priests and deacons with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and other rites (worship services such as weddings and funerals) of the Church.

The ministry of being an acolyte is an important and special one. It is crucial to the worship of the church. Acolytes, along with the other lay and ordained ministers in the Episcopal Church, are responsible for leading the congregation in wonder, love and praise of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Knowing where to go and what to do will help you better serve the Lord. It will also make you feel confident and help you to enjoy serving the Lord. This manual will help you to learn the duties and responsibilities of the ministry of acolyte.

### **Vincent, Patron of Acolytes**

Vincent, clergy and martyr, is the patron of those who serve at the altar. He and his bishop, Valerius, lived in Spain in the third century. They were arrested and put on trial for their faith by the Roman governor of Spain, Dacian. Because Bishop Valerius had a speech impediment, he asked Vincent to defend the Christian faith at their trial.

The young clergy then told the governor that he and Bishop Valerius had no intention of betraying the true God. Vincent was so enthusiastic in his Christian witness that Governor Dacian ordered that he be tortured and killed.

Because of his faithfulness and loyalty to his bishop and to God, he is the patron of acolytes and all who serve at the altar. Pray that you may serve God with the same enthusiasm and faithfulness as Vincent.

### **The Acolyte's Prayers**

#### Before the Service

Be present, Lord Jesus, be present! Grant that I may faithfully and loyally serve you in love and through my service proclaim, "In all things, God be glorified." Amen.

#### After the Service

Glory to you Lord Jesus, Glory to you! Grant that as I have served in your presence, so I may witness faithfully and loyally to your love in the world and forever proclaim, "In all things, God be glorified." Amen.

## General Instructions

Remember, it is a great privilege to assist at Holy Eucharist. Our dress and conduct must always be suitable for this honor.

1. **Dress appropriately** for the Lord's Service. For boys, dark shoes and dark socks should be worn. For girls, dark shoes should be worn. NO sneakers, open-toed shoes, or shorts.
2. **\*\*Arrive 25 minutes** before the service is to begin. Vest promptly and review your assignment for the service with the acolyte captain.
3. **Posture**

**Standing** - stand up straight. If you are carrying a torch or cross, be sure it is straight. Always carry everything with two (2) hands, even if it is not heavy. If your hands are empty, they should be folded prayerfully above your waist. Your hands should never hang at your sides.

**Sitting** - sit up straight in the chair with your knees together and feet together. Your hands should be folded in your lap or may be placed on your knees.
4. **Making a turn**, as in turning around to face the altar or turning around to face the congregation, – you always turn to the right.
5. **Stay aware and alert** during the service for anything that might go wrong and move to assist. The acolyte ministry is not a spectator sport; you are in the game!
6. **Illness**

**Please make sure that you eat something or drink fruit juice before coming to church.** If you feel sick during the service tell your captain so your duties can be reassigned and tell the parent assigned to your team so she/he can assist you to the restroom if you feel nauseous or get smelling salts if you feel faint.

**8:45 and 11:00 A.M. Sunday Service**  
**MEMBERS OF THE TEAM**

**Captain\***

Also known as the **Crucifer**, the lead acolyte during the service, has the responsibility for team assignments and performance.

**Pulpit Torch**

The Torchbearer whose duty area is the pulpit side of the altar. The pulpit is where the sermon is preached. Facing the altar, it is to the left.

**Lectern Torch**

The Torchbearer whose duty area is the lectern side of the altar. The lectern is the stand where the scripture lessons and the prayers of the people are read. Facing the altar, it is to the right.

**American Flag Bearer**

The Acolyte who carries the American flag during the Entering and Exiting Procession and carries the Gospel Book during the Gospel procession.

**Episcopal Flag Bearer**

The Acolyte who carries the Episcopal flag during the Entering and Exiting Procession and also the flagon for refilling chalice cups during communion,

**Banner Bearers**

Acolytes who carry the St. Mark's Church banners, seasonal or commission banners during the Entering and Exiting Processions and walk just behind the choir in the procession. He/she sit on the side of the altar their banner came from.

**Second Crucifer**

Acolyte who carries the baptismal font cross (with two torches, if available) in the Entering and Exiting processions directly in front of the clergy and at the Gospel procession. Second crucifer also opens and closes chancel gate at communion.

**Second Torches**

Acolytes who carry the baptismal font torches in the Entering and Exiting processions directly in front of the clergy.

**\*More complete description of Captain's duties found near the end of this booklet**

## BEFORE THE SERVICE

Fifteen minutes before the service begins the team walks in procession from the transept door to the center aisle in pairs, bows to the altar, then separates and walks outside of the altar rail to each assigned task. There will be a bulletin in your seat.

The **Captain** picks up the cross and returns with it to the center aisle and holds position waiting for the Torches to return to his/her side.

The **Torches** go to the candle lighters and light the tapers then in unison they will walk to the candles and light them starting from the bottom and working towards the top. When all the candles are lit, extinguish the tapers and hang the candle lighters in the proper place.

- If a baptism is scheduled the Paschal Candle is lighted by the Lectern Torch. The Paschal candle is also lighted on the Sundays between Easter and Pentecost.
- The Advent Wreath candles are lighted consecutively each Sunday in Advent and Christmas.

The **Torches** then walk up to the altar using the back steps and in unison remove the torches from the stands, turn and walk down the side altar steps, walk around the inside of the altar rail to position beside the **Captain**.

The **American Flag, Episcopal Flag** and the **Banners** proceed to flags and banners and return to the center aisle, forming behind the **Captain**.

When everyone is in position, the **Captain** leads the procession out of the church through the transept door. Then walk to the library and join the clergy, choir, lectors and chalice administrators for prayer.

The **Crucifer** and **Torches** will then go to the Narthex doors to light the torches. The other acolytes will prepare to line up with the rest of the worship participants and wait quietly for the priest to start the service.

### Order For Acolytes

#### Entry Procession

Torch Crucifer Torch

Episcopal Flag American Flag

Choir

Commission Banner

Church Banner

Second Church or Seasonal Banner

Chalice Administrators

Torch Crucifer Torch

Clergy

## Order of Procession

The **Verger** is the person in charge of the procession into the church. Whatever the verger says goes. If you disagree, talk about it with the verger and/or clergy after the service.

At the verger's signal the **Crucifer** (in the middle) and **Torches** (on each side) walk SLOWLY down the aisle. The Crucifer should hold the cross high.

**NOTE:** Please keep a steady but slow pace down the aisle 2-3 pews apart. Do not rush!

The **American Flag bearer** (on the right) and **Episcopal Flag bearer** (on the left) following slowly, walk side-by-side. The flags are held at an angle, not straight up, and the poles are held on the right side. The **Verger** will instruct you when to go in order to keep 2-3 pews apart.

The **Choir** (red/white robes) is next in the procession followed by the **Banners** in single file (the **Commission** banner, the **Church** Banner and the **Seasonal or Second Church** Banner). The Banner bearers should walk slowly, keeping 2-3 pews apart. Do not rush.

Behind the banners are the vested **Chalice Administrators** (black/white robes).

The **Second Crucifer** and **Second Torches** follow behind the vested chalice administrators and in front of the clergy.

## The Entering Procession

At the altar step, the **Crucifer** turns right and walks outside the altar rail around to the back and secures the cross making sure the front of the cross is facing the congregation. The crucifer goes to his/her seat in the front pew next to the sacristy door.

The **Torches** wait at the altar rail for the crucifer to walk away then they step up into the chancel and walk around the inside of the altar, up the side steps and place the torches in the holder – all of this is done in unison. Walk down the steps the same way, and go out of the side rail openings to your seats. (Either in the first pew by the sacristy door or the first pew in the Ortega Blvd. transept.)

The **Flags** stop at the first pew and the **American Flag** crosses in front of the **Episcopal Flag** and walks to the pulpit side (left side) around the outside of the altar rail. The **Episcopal Flag** crosses to the lectern side (right side). Secure the flags making sure the cross at the top of the Episcopal Flag pole and the winged eagle on top of the American Flag are facing the congregation. Go to your seats.

After the flags comes the St Mark's **Choir**. Following the choir are the banners.

The **banners** walk single file behind the choir. They also stop at the altar step, immediately turn to the side that their banner came from, walk outside the altar rail, and place the banner facing the congregation in its holder.

When all the acolytes reach their seats, they are to remain standing and open their hymnals to participate in the remainder of the hymn. If you don't like to sing, please respect the liturgy by opening your hymnal to the correct page and follow along.

**\*\*PLEASE DO NOT TALK DURING THE SERVICE\*\***

**PARTICIPATE IN THE SERVICE – PEOPLE ARE WATCHING!!**

### **The Gospel Procession**

At the start of the gospel hymn the **Second Crucifer** (if not one, the first crucifer) shall carry the cross outside the altar rail to the center aisle position at the Chancel Gate.

**Torches** walk up the side altar steps and up to the torches in **unison**. Remove the torches from their stands and walk back down the side steps. Walk inside the altar rail to the front, through the chancel gate, step down to take your positions on each side of the Captain, and turn right in unison to face the altar. Stand straight, do not look around and do not fidget.

**American Flag acolyte** walks up from the back of the altar and stands next to the preacher. Stand close to the clergy person and do not fidget. The clergy who is reading the Gospel will signal you near the end of the hymn. At that time you:

- walk to the front of the altar
- bow to the altar
- pick up the red Gospel Book (on the left) from the stand
- hold it head high
- turn to face the congregation
- walk down the aisle past the Torches
- stop and turn between the Torches.

As the acolyte carrying the Gospel Book turns to walk down from the altar, the **Second Crucifer** turns with the cross and walks to the 7<sup>th</sup> pew, then turns again to face the altar. The **Torches** stop when they get to the 3<sup>rd</sup> pew. They turn to face each other as the Crucifer turns to face the altar. Hold the candles at even height. The acolyte with the Gospel Book walks through the Torches, stops just beyond them, turns and holds the Gospel Book chest high.

The **Clergy** opens the Gospel Book to the reading. The acolyte continues to hold the Gospel Book during the reading.

At the conclusion of the reading the Gospel the clergy will step aside to allow the acolyte who is carrying the Gospel book to walk back up to the altar. The acolyte returns the Gospel Book to the front left corner, replacing it on the stand, and then goes to sit.

As soon as the Gospel Book passes, the **Torchbearers** turn, wait for the **Crucifer** to walk up close behind them, then the two torches walk forward with the Crucifer a step behind until they clear the pews, then the three walk up together to the altar rail.

The Torchbearers walk through the altar rail, separate and move to the side altar steps to replace the torches in exactly the same manner as they removed them, remembering to move in unison. Holding the torches straight up will help them slip into the holders. The **Crucifer** also returns the cross to its place by walking outside the altar rail to the proper side.

## The Offertory

### Closing the Chancel Gate

After The Peace and announcements, the clergy waits at the altar to receive bread/wine from the people (oblationers) walking down the aisle. As soon as he/she takes the break/wine and the oblationers turn, the **Second Crucifer** walks along the inside of the altar rail and stands to the side of the Chancel Gate and pulls the kneeler across to the center of the Chancel Gate.

Then close the right gate first, (*you may have to hold the gate up slightly to keep from scraping the floor*) lock it in the hole in the floor by flipping the lever along the inside of the gate. When it is securely locked in place, close the left gate. There is a latch under the lip of the top of the rail to pull to the right. Make sure the latch is all the way to the right. Wiggle the gate lightly to make sure the latch is locked into place. Return to your seat.

### Setting the Altar for Communion

While the Second Crucifer is closing the Chancel Gate the ushers start the plate collection. At the same time the **First Crucifer** walks to the credence table and if the small host box and tiny glass wine cruet are present on the table - takes them up to the altar. Walk right up to the clergy and turn sideways to face him/her. Do not be hesitant and do not stand back so the clergy has to turn and walk to you.

Return to the credence table and carry the water flagon and the wine flagon (*small grape hanging from handle*) to the altar and hand the wine flagon to the clergy first, then the water flagon with the flagon handles facing the priest. **DO NOT** place them on the altar. Wait for the water flagon to be returned and anything else the priest may hand you (burse, chalice veil, bread). \*IF the priest does not give you the Gospel book AND the stand, remind him/her to give it to you. Place both items under the credence table.

Pick up the large silver bowl with the ice pick marks and take it to the priest. Bow to the clergy and return to the credence table.

Get the alms basin, return to a front seat and watch for the ushers to gather at the back of the church after the collection is completed. Listen for the change in music (*usually a brief silence then the doxology 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow...'*) and when the ushers begin to walk down the aisle toward the altar, you carry the receiving basin, held head high with the inscription in the basin right side up, to the center of the Chancel Gate. Walk inside the altar rail. Receive the collection plates from the ushers in the large basin. Turn, walk straight-up the steps and hand the alms basin across the altar to the celebrant. Walk around the altar to the right and stand beside the priest who will hand the offering plates back to you. Place the offering plates on the front corner of the altar. Return to your seat.

### DURING COMMUNION

After the consecration of the wine and bread, the **Episcopal flag bearer** walks to the altar to receive Communion with the chalice bearers. Do not be shy about coming right up and standing with them. The Clergy will then give you the large wine flagon and a purificator (white cloth) to hold while standing in front of the altar facing the congregation. (If they do not hand it to you, pick it up and move to the front of the altar.) You will refill the chalices during Communion. Please do not fill chalices more than ½ full.

**NOTE:** Other acolytes should wait until the CHOIR has knelt down at the altar rail, then kneel to receive Communion.

After everyone has received communion, the acolyte holding the wine flagon takes it to the credence table with the used patens and chalices.

\*\*\*\*AS SOON AS the last person has gotten up from receiving communion, as the altar is being cleared, the **Second Crucifer** reopens the chancel gate.\*\*\*\*

**NOTE:** It is very important to do this promptly and quickly! The rest of the service cannot continue until you are done.

Open the left side by unlocking the latch under the top of the rail and opening all the way. Then flip the lever to unlock the right gate and open all the way. Pull the kneeler from the center of the Chancel gate to rest on top of the other kneeler. Return to your seat.

IF THE POST COMMUNION PRAYER has begun, WAIT to open the gate until it is done. Then quickly move back to your item to begin the exiting procession.

### The Exiting Procession

At the start of the Final Hymn, the **Crucifer** gets the cross and carries it to the center aisle position by walking outside the altar rail, then turns and faces the altar.

**Torchbearers** get their torches in unison and take their position on each side of the Crucifer in the same manner as done for the Gospel procession.

**Flags bearers** get their flags and walk outside the altar rail to a position where the altar rail angles to the center of the church and stand facing the Captain.

The **Banners** stand behind the American Flag on the pulpit side. The Banner bearers must allow the **choir** to go before them in the procession.

When the choir gets close to the flags, the **Captain and Torchbearers** turn together on the captain's count to three and walk SLOWLY down the aisle to the back of the church. \* IF there is no choir, the 1<sup>st</sup> Crucifer should watch the priests for the signal to turn. The **American Flag** and **Episcopal Flag** quickly walk to the center aisle, in unison, turn and follow the Captain and Torchbearers at a slow, deliberate pace with only 2-3 pews apart.

The **Banner(s)** follow the choir out of the church.

The **Chalice Administrators** are next followed by the **Second Crucifer/Torches** and the **Clergy** complete the recession.

**NOTE:** It is important that all parts of the procession keep 2-3 pews apart and **DO NOT RUSH OUT** . The First Crucifer/Torches should be no more than 4 pews ahead of the flags.

### **AFTER THE SERVICE**

All members of the Team will meet at the sacristy door. All acolytes wait until the hymn is over before entering the church.

Acolytes will enter the church quietly, return their items to the appropriate stand, the torches will extinguish the candles and then all leave the church quietly.

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### **JOBS TO BE SURE ARE COVERED BY SOMEONE:**

First Crucifer

Gospel Book – (Tell priest if fewer than 4 acolytes and the priest will carry the book.)

Close the Gate

Help set the table at Communion

Offering

Wine Flagon

Open the Gate

Lead procession out

## ST. MARK'S ACOLYTE POSITION ASSIGNMENTS

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### IF THERE ARE

11 ACOLYTES	1 <sup>st</sup> Cross, 2 torches, American Flag, Episcopal Flag, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cross, 2 torches, 3 Banners (Seasonal, Commission, Church)
10 ACOLYTES	1 <sup>st</sup> Cross, 2 torches, American Flag, Episcopal Flag, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cross, 2 torches, 2 Banners (Seasonal or Commission, Church)
9 ACOLYTES	1 <sup>st</sup> Cross, 2 torches, American Flag, Episcopal Flag, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cross, 2 torches, 1 Banner
8 ACOLYTES	1 <sup>st</sup> Cross, 2 torches, American Flag, Episcopal Flag, 2 Banners, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cross
7 ACOLYTES	1 <sup>st</sup> Cross, 2 torches, American Flag, Episcopal Flag, 1 Banner, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cross
6 ACOLYTES	1 <sup>st</sup> Cross, 2 torches, American Flag, Episcopal Flag, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cross
5 ACOLYTES*	1 <sup>st</sup> Cross, 2 torches, American Flag, Episcopal Flag
4 ACOLYTES*	1 <sup>st</sup> Cross, 2 torches, Banner
3 ACOLYTES*	1 <sup>st</sup> Cross, 2 torches
2 ACOLYTES*	1 <sup>st</sup> Cross, Banner
1 ACOLYTE*	1 <sup>st</sup> Cross

\*WHEN NO 2<sup>nd</sup> CRUCIFER –

**MAKE SURE SOMEONE COVERS THE GATE BEFORE AND AFTER COMMUNION**

5 ACOLYTES – American Flag covers the gate

4 ACOLYTES – Banner or Torch sitting on Ortega Blvd side covers the gate

3 ACOLYTES – Torch on Ortega Blvd side covers the gate

2 ACOLYTES – Banner on Ortega Blvd side covers the gate

1 ACOLYTE – First Crucifer would cross over to cover the gate

## **ACOLYTE CAPTAIN JOB DESCRIPTION**

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The captains are the lead acolytes during church services and are responsible for team assignments and performance. Captains also have leadership and advisory responsibilities and answer to the acolyte clergy advisor or another designated person.

There are three captains per team. Temporary summer teams are formed after the May training session and permanent teams are formed for the schedule in September. If you are a graduating senior in May and wish to remain as captain through the summer you may do so.

Specifically the acolyte captain is expected to:

- a. Arrive early for services and assign positions to acolytes.
- b. Know the acolyte manual thoroughly and be able and available to participate in the training of new acolytes.
- c. Needs to be able to give clear directions and be helpful to acolytes who are uncertain of the duties of the position they are assigned.
- d. Be aware of your scheduled dates. If you cannot be there, find a **captain** substitute.
- e. Able and available to meet with clergy prior to special services, such as Christmas, Holy Week, Easter to go over the services then relay to his/her team what is expected of them.
- f. Be responsible for offering advice on any problem or suggestions to clergy/acolyte leaders.
- g. Be responsible for making sure your team hangs up their vestments, close the door to the vestment closet and leave the area neat.
- h. Be responsible for the dress code of his/her team: No shorts, sandals or open-toed shoes. Boys wear dark shoes and socks. Girls wear dark, close-toed shoes. (Do NOT turn an acolyte away if they have forgotten.)
- i. Help foster a sense of teamwork, responsibility and pride in a job well done for God. Give encouragement to younger acolytes.