

# St. Philip's Episcopal Church

## Acolyte/Crucifer Customary

### **INTRODUCTION:**

*“In all services, the entire Christian assembly participates in such a way that all members of each order within the Church, lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacon, fulfill the functions proper to their respective orders, as set forth in the rubrical directions for each service.” BCP p. 13*

*“At all celebrations of the Liturgy, it is fitting that the principal celebrant, whether bishop or priest, be assisted by other priests, and by deacons and lay persons.” BCP p 322,354*

As stated above, *The Book of Common Prayer*, provides the basis for Episcopal worship. As a part of our Episcopal tradition ritual and ceremonial action have never been prescriptive. There is, throughout the church, wide variety in the conduct of worship. Such is also the case here at St. Philip's. What follows are guidelines intended to direct us in our worship. This does not mean, however, that they are inflexible or that worship here at St. Philip's is unchanging. Our guidelines are always open to further clarification, usually in response to our own sense of what works for us in this place. It needs to be said, however, that in everything we do within the context of our worship, it should be done with reverence, humility and always to the greater glory of God.

### **GENERAL**

- There is no greater service, or reward, than to assist during the conduct of public worship. To praise God with our presence, our voices, and our gifts of leadership is the highest of honors. As such we should resolve to be punctual, dress appropriately and be prepared for our assigned roles.
- Our demeanor as a minister of the service should be one that is not distracting. The less we move around the better. When sitting, sit still and pay attention to the service. When the congregation is singing, acolytes and crucifer should be singing. When we kneel in prayer, acolytes and crucifer should kneel at the altar rail.
- Always be alert for the unexpected. There will be times when exceptions to our normal practice will have to be made.
- When we move, we should move slowly and with purpose. Don't be in a hurry. When we carry the cross or processional candles they should be carried in an upright and even manner; and always reverently. We do not bow when carrying crosses or processional candles.

- As a general rule, when the congregation sits, you sit. When the congregation stands, you stand. When the congregation kneels, you kneel.
- Always hand cruets and water vessels to another person handle first. Treat the books, furniture, dishes, linens, candles, vestments and other liturgical implements with respect and care.
- Do not “mash down” on the candle wicks when extinguishing the flame. When placing the snuffer on the candle position it directly above the flame. Move up and down, not sideways. Gently place the snuffer over the wick and flame and hold it for five seconds, the flame should go out. If it does not, repeat the process by gently moving the snuffer lower on the candle.

## **PRIOR TO THE SERVICE**

Acolytes and crucifers should be vested (robed) and ready for worship 20 minutes prior to the service. Vestments (alb/cincture) are hung in the Vesting Room next to the Sacristy.

Fifteen minutes prior to the service the crucifer and acolytes are to proceed through the sacristy door, and up the ramp into the sanctuary to retrieve the cross and torches. The Crucifer lights the altar candles. Always begin with the candle on the right (Epistle side). After lighting both altar candles the acolyte returns the candle lighter to the holder. The Crucifer then retrieves the cross while the acolytes retrieve the two processional candles.

All three will return thru the sacristy to the bell tower area.

## **AT THE ENTRANCE**

The celebrant will lead the ministers of the service in a prayer just prior to the start of worship. Two minutes prior to the beginning of worship light the processional candles. Crucifer and acolytes (crucifer in the center) will lead the choir to the center aisle at the rear of the nave where they will wait until the opening hymn has begun (or the bell has rung at the early service). They will then proceed slowly down the aisle until they reach the step into the sanctuary. After a slight pause (one or two seconds) they will continue into the sanctuary where they will place the cross and processional candles in their holders. They will then proceed directly from the altar down the side ramp to their seats, remaining standing until the opening acclamation and prayers have been said.

After the Epistle reading everyone will stand for the singing of the Sequence Hymn. The crucifer and acolytes will walk up the ramp and retrieve the cross and processional candles. They will then slowly process to the middle of the nave, roughly mid-way between the second and third pew. Turning, the torch bearers will be facing each other. After the Gospel reading

the reader will step aside and the crucifer and acolytes will process back into the sanctuary (do not stop) placing the cross and processional candles back into their holder. They will then return to their seats by walking back down the side ramp.

### **AT THE OFFERTORY**

After the celebrant says the offertory sentence the assisting acolyte will proceed to the credence table behind the altar. The celebrant/deacon will then set the altar table. Remain standing next to the credence table to assist the celebrant/deacon as needed.

After the ushers bring forward the wine and bread box and they are handed to the celebrant/deacon, pass the bread and wine for the EV basket to the celebrant/deacon. Now be ready to hand the water cruet to the deacon and next the lavabo bowl and towel. If there is not deacon present, then pour a small amount of water over the celebrant's fingers (lavabo towel across left forearm, cruet of water held in right hand, lavabo bowl held in left hand).

Just before receiving bread and wine, place the second chalice on the altar. After receiving communion, return to your seat.

### **AT THE EXIT**

When the recessional hymn starts, cross and torch bearers proceed up the ramp into the sanctuary to retrieve cross and torches. Leave altar candles burning. Cross slowly leads torches out the entrance to the sanctuary, down the middle of the nave, to the area near the bell tower.

After dismissal, acolytes put the cross and torches up, extinguish altar candles, and proceed to the vesting room and properly return albs to hangers.

## **GLOSSARY**

ALB – White robe/vestment

CINCTURE – belt/rope for securing an alb

GOSPEL SIDE - the left side facing the altar

EPISTLE SIDE – the right side when facing the altar

CREDENCE TABLE – a small table or shelf used for communion hardware

SANCTUARY – the area immediately surrounding the altar

NAVE - as in a ship, the center of the church (pew area)

PATEN - a small plate, usually metal, for the bread used in communion

CHALICE - a cup, usually metal, for the wine used in communion

CRUET – a glass bottle, usually shaped like a pitcher, for water/ wine

GENUFLECT – bend at the knee in reverencing

CROOK – the curve in the shepherd's staff (Bishop's crook)

BOW – bending reverently at the waist

OFFERING PLATES – used for the collection of monetary gifts

ABLUTIONS – cleansing activity, usually with water

NARTHEX – the immediate entry area to a church proper

CIBORIUM – a small bowl used for holding consecrated bread

PURIFICATOR – small napkin/towel used at the Eucharist

LAVABO BOWL – small bowl used for ablutions/washing