

# Altar Guild

## **What**

Altar Guild volunteers prepare the altar for worship service each week. When Holy Communion is shared, bread, wine and grape juice are setup before worship service and cleanup occurs after worship service. If a baptism occurs, the baptismal font is filled and cleaned. The paraments are changed with the church seasons.

Communion is normally distributed on the first, third and fifth Sundays of the month and festival Sundays throughout the church year.

## **Number of Volunteers**

One volunteer is able to complete most tasks. Changing paraments and post-communion cleanup is easier with two volunteers.

## **Additional Responsibilities**

Large attendance services may require monitoring or re-supply of communion elements during the worship service.

## **Before Worship Service**

- Prepare altar as needed for worship service. See [Altar Guild Instructions](#) in this section for specific instructions.
- If a baptism is scheduled fill baptism font with WARM water.

## **Worship Service**

- One altar guild volunteer should be at each communion service, in case any problems arise.

## **After Worship Service**

- Clean altar as needed.
- Prepare altar as needed for next worship service. See [Altar Guild Instructions](#) in this section for specific instructions.
- If a baptism was scheduled empty and dry the bowl.

## Additional Notes

- **ACOLYTE ROBES:** are hung in the nursery room closet. Please check these over at least once during your month. Contact the Altar Guild chairperson if they need washing.
- **ALTAR CANDLES:** both candles use oil. The oil is stored under the lectern. Additional oil is stored in the Altar Guild closet in the music room. Always use gloves when handling brass items. Place the candles on floor to fill- it is much easier, less chance for spills and simple cleanup. Unscrew top brass ring on each candle. Do not remove wick from candle – pour oil beside it until almost full. Screw brass ring back on candle. Place the filled candles back on the altar. The candles hold enough oil for two worship services, but not three. **DO THIS WEEKLY** and more often whenever there are extra services such as a funeral, wedding or mid-week worship.
- **ALTAR LINENS AND COMMUNION CLOTHS:** are stored in drawers under the altar. Wash them when soiled, according to directions found inside the box.
- **BAPTISMAL NAPKINS:** are stored in the drawers under the altar. Check with the church office or the bulletin to see if a baptism is scheduled. Notify the Altar Guild chairperson if the napkin supply is low.
- **CANDELABRA:** are used only for special services: weddings, Easter, Confirmation, Christmas Eve, Pentecost. Pastor should notify the Ministry Team when the candelabra are to be used. Altar Guild volunteers are responsible for the candelabra setup and return to storage. Other Ministry Team members may assist as needed.
- **CHRIST CANDLE:** is normally located near the lectern. It uses the same oil as the altar candles and has similar refill instructions. The Christ Candle holds more oil and is lit less frequently. Refill it as needed.
- **COMMUNION SUPPLIES:** In the locked kitchen cupboard. The key is on the **ORANGE** key ring located in the cupboard on top of the south sink. **DO NOT REMOVE THIS KEY RING FROM THE CHURCH.**
- **EXTRA SUPPLIES:** are located in the locked closet in the music room. The **ORANGE** key ring includes a key to open this closet. Please be sure to lock the closet again after use. Notify the Altar Guild chairperson whenever supplies are used from the closet or when supplies are low and need to be reordered.
- **GLOVES:** are stored under the lectern. Always use them for handling brass items.
- **LITURGICAL PARAMENTS:** on the pulpit, lectern and altar are changed according to the seasons of the church year. A liturgical calendar is posted in the kitchen; check it weekly. If you or your Ministry Team leader are uncertain, you can also ask the Pastor or the Church Office Secretary if needed. Paraments are stored in drawers under the altar. In these drawers is a photo guide for proper layout of each color and care instructions for some of the paraments.
- **VIGIL LIGHT:** is electric and should be on. You may have to change the light bulb if it is burned out.

# Altar Guild Instructions

## Day before Worship Service

- Communion is normally setup the day before worship service, i.e. Saturday setup for a Sunday worship service.
- **Oil Candles:** need to be filled.
- **Paraments:** may need to be changed, check the church season calendar.
- **Baptism:** If scheduled, place the baptismal napkin on the baptismal font.
- **If Communion is to be served:**
  - Use good hand-washing practices. You are handling food.
  - **Wafers:** Place them on two dish patens. One paper roll (100) wafers is sufficient per paten. Cover one paten with a purificator (white cloth). Place the covered paten on the cart at the back of the church. Place the uncovered paten on the altar.
  - **Flagon:** Fill the flagon (pitcher) to the neck with wine. Cover with a purificator and place on the cart.
  - **Chalices:** Place two empty pouring chalices on the altar next to the wafer paten. Use only the dark blue chalices that match the flagon. Do not cover. Set six paper napkins and an empty dish paten next to the chalices for the servers to use in case of drips or spills. Use the dinner style napkins. A package is kept in the drawers under the altar.
  - **Linens:** Set two palls (linen board) and the 30-inch cloth on the altar. The pastor will use these after communion has been served to cover the flagon, chalices and patens.
  - **Individual Wine Cups:** Place them on two trays. Line each tray with a clean linen cloth and stack cups upside down, one or two deep. Place approximately 100 cups on each tray. Place one tray on each table. Position the tables in front of the pulpit and lectern.
  - **Grape Juice:** Use two of the dark blue chalices for grape juice. Open a new bottle of white grape juice and pour half into each chalice. Cover each grape juice chalice with a pall and place on the other end of the altar away from the empty chalices and wafer paten. Verify there is one unopened grape juice in a drawer under the altar.
  - **Baskets for used Cups:** Verify plastic liners are installed. For each basket, fold one paper towel to just fit the bottom of the basket and place inside. Place one basket on each metal stand located on either side of the altar area.
  - **Reserve Wafers:** Are located in the Host Box (small silver container with cross on top) in a drawer under the altar. Check this once a month, refill as needed.

## **In Between Worship Services**

If another service is to follow:

- Refill flagon and return to cart.
- Refill individual cup trays.
- Refill wafer patens, placing one back on the cart along with the flagon.
- Check the grape juice chalices. If one is very low, pour from the other so the two are about equally filled. Cover each with a pall and return them to one end of the altar.
- Place the wine chalices and wafer paten on the other end of the altar.
- Dispose of soiled paper napkins and put six fresh napkins on the altar.
- Dispose of soiled paper towel from baskets for used cups, wipe out liner and put in new paper towels. Return baskets to metal stands.

## **After the Final Worship Service**

- Return unused wine and wafers to their containers.
- Dispose of any unused grape juice, including the bottle in the altar drawer if it was opened.
- Wash glasses, chalices, patens and flagon and return to their storage location.  
IMPORTANT NOTE: The pouring chalices have little scratches and a thin line of silicone on the lip. These help prevent drips. Do not remove the silicone or the scratches when washing. Notify the Altar Guild chairperson if there are any chips or cracks on the pottery pieces.
- The automatic dishwasher may be used for the communion cups. Instructions are posted above the dishwasher. Some warm-up time is needed before use.
- Wash linens (follow directions) if they are soiled.
- Lock cabinet, return key to container above sink.
- If you are the last person to leave, walk through the building to ensure no one else is inside and lock all outside doors of the church building.