

THE
ACOLYTE
BOOK OF SERVICE

2016-2017 EDITION

Fairhope United Methodist Church
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Table of Contents

| | Page |
|---|-----------|
| Acolyte Ministry Volunteers..... | 3 |
| | |
| Acolyte Training Guide | |
| What is an Acolyte? | 4 |
| Worship..... | 5 |
| Terms to Know | 5 |
| Acolyte Equipment | 8 |
| Duties of an Acolyte in the Sanctuary..... | 8 |
| Sanctuary Baptism Acolyte Duties..... | 11 |
| Duties of an Acolyte in The Gathering..... | 11 |
| Seasons of the Christian Year | 12 |
| Holy Days | 14 |
| Parent Information..... | 16 |
| Usher Information..... | 17 |
| Directory..... | 18 |

Acolyte Ministry Volunteers

The Acolyte Ministry of Fairhope United Methodist Church comes under the Worship Committee oversight at the direction of the Pastors and Director of Music Ministries.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON
SENIOR PASTOR
ASSOCIATE PASTOR
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES

Helen Ingram
Dr. Ed Glaize
Rev. Laura Parker
Lisa Simon

ACOLYTE CO-CHAIRPERSON(S)

Brenda Robinson

EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE PERSON

Dorothy Sanches

Will inventory, clean, paint and make sure candlelighters, crucifer and other equipment used are in good condition. Will keep an inventory of wicks and supplies.

TRAINING SUPERVISORS

Brenda Robinson

Lisa Simon, Director of Music Ministries

Michelle Graham, Director of Children's Ministries

Will help to develop and maintain a Fairhope UMC training booklet and lead the training sessions for the acolyte candidates. Children's Ministries will support and strengthen the Acolyte Ministry by offering curriculum that focuses on the importance of worship, the Christian Year, and the role of an acolyte. The curriculum will be taught every other fall to children attending **Pier34**, our Wednesday night children's program for 3rd and 4th graders. The curriculum began in the fall of 2015.

SCHEDULE COORDINATORS

Traditional services: 8:30/11:00
The Gathering

Mary Elizabeth Brock
Donna Rodriguez

Will schedule children quarterly for all three services and will send reminder emails and/or texts to parents. You may remind a parent of an acolyte to oversee robing and preparation for a service. Schedule will be posted with acolyte robes and equipment at least one month in advance.

ROBE COORDINATORS

Jill Scott
Paula Flowers

Will repair and clean robes, as needed, through the year. Will inventory robes yearly and assist children in selecting a robe of appropriate size during training.

INCENTIVE COORDINATOR

Jennifer Roberds

Will keep up with how many times a child serves and their dependability so they can move from a wooden cross to their own engraved cross. Will prepare and distribute earned beads for their Sunday and special events participation. Will keep up with how many years an acolyte has served.

ACOLYTE PARENTS

All parents of an Acolyte

Will assist their child(ren)/youth in putting on their robes if help is needed. Place a bulletin and hymnal on the front pew before services begin for the acolyte to use during the service. Sit behind the acolyte during the service so you can remind them when to go forward to perform a duty if a reminder is needed. Make sure everything is hung back in place properly after the service to be ready for the next week. Crucifer will also assist with hanging up the robes.

USHERS

Will light the candlelighters and send the acolytes down the aisle at the correct time.

ACOLYTE TRAINING GUIDE

WHAT IS AN ACOLYTE?

Serving as an acolyte is your opportunity to contribute to worship in an important way... it is something very special that you can do for God!

The word acolyte is a Greek word that means “follower”, “attendant” or “helper”. In the early church, acolytes were apprentices, or learners, who attended to the priests. Today, the modern church requires acolytes to work closely with the worship team during the worship service.

As an acolyte, you are now part of the church’s worship team. This team includes the pastor, choir, musicians, worship leader, ushers and acolytes. Each team member plays an important role in creating an atmosphere of reverent worship each Sunday and also during other special church services. This means that you and the entire team help the congregation prepare their hearts and minds to worship God and encourage them to acknowledge and experience the presence of His Holy Spirit. This is an awesome responsibility. You will approach the worship hour with joy and reverence. Take your responsibilities seriously and remember that it is God you are serving. Colossians 3:23 reminds us, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for man”.

Although you are a young person, your role as an acolyte is an important one. As we read the story in the Bible of Samuel in 1 Samuel 1-3, we learn that as a young boy, Samuel assisted Eli, the high priest of the Tabernacle of God. His responsibilities would have included opening the Tabernacle doors each morning, cleaning the furniture, and sweeping the floors. As Samuel grew older, he probably helped Eli in offering sacrifices. But because he was Eli’s helper, he was also God’s helper. When we serve others, even in carrying out the most ordinary tasks, we are serving God; therefore, every job has dignity. Samuel was a faithful servant and follower of God and from his actions and obedience was chosen to receive an important message which directed him to greater responsibilities, like saving the Israelites from the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:10-21).

It is an honor and a privilege to serve your church and God in the capacity of an acolyte. Young boys have helped their pastors by serving in the church for hundreds of years. Now, girls are also included in this service. Referring back to the story of Samuel, when you are faithful, God may also have a significant task for you; but you must be willing to hear and acknowledge His voice. Do not let your age determine how you respond to God’s calling.

Worship

The Acolyte has the important task of lighting and extinguishing (put out, snuff) the candles on the altar, or Lord's Table, located in the chancel area at the front of the sanctuary. You will also assist in the giving and receiving of the offering plates during the offertory.

Since ancient times, light and fire have reminded people that God is here with us. Lighting the candles at the beginning of the service is a symbol of bringing the light of Christ, who is the Light of the world (John 8:2 and John 9:5), into God's house. There are two candles because Jesus had two natures: human and divine. This light also reminds God's people that He is with us at home, school, work, and especially present in the worship service. When you extinguish the candles and relight your taper, you are carrying the light of Christ out into the world to show that Jesus is for all people everywhere.

The Crucifer Acolyte is the cross bearer and will carry the cross of Christ into the service and place it in a stand at the front of the sanctuary. This reminds Christians of Jesus' death on the cross and His triumph over sin and death.

Banner Bearer Acolyte will bring a worship banner into the sanctuary on the first day of a new season in the church year or other special occasions. You will only bear a banner in the procession at the beginning of the service. The banner will remain in place and you will recess with the Crucifer and Acolytes at the end of the service.

An Acolyte may also be included in assisting the pastors during communion or baptism. On these occasions you will receive instructions for your responsibilities from the pastor. You may also be called upon to serve during other worship services and Holy Days such as Ash Wednesday, Easter, or Christmas Eve. Be prepared and willing to serve with a joyful heart in whatever possible way.

Terms to Know

- Altar: The altar symbolizes the throne of God, the presence of God, and serves as the Lord's Table
Altar Symbols - Alpha and Omega are Greek letters that symbolize Jesus as the first and the last, Revelation 1:8. IHS are Greek letters of the abbreviation for *Jesus* and also the abbreviation of a Latin phrase that means *Jesus, Savior of Man*
- Amen: Means "true" or "may it be so"
- Baptism: Is one of the two sacraments of the United Methodist Church. When performed on an infant, baptism is recognition of God's grace poured upon us even when we are unaware of that grace and

undeserving of it. At Infant Baptism, the parents and the congregation vow to raise the baby in such a manner that one day, the child will grow to claim the promises made on his/her behalf; often times through the process of confirmation.

Baptism for Youth or Adults is not only a symbol of God's Grace, but of that person's desire to change his or her ways as well as to accept the forgiveness and new life offered through Jesus Christ.

- Baptismal Font:** This piece of furniture holds the water for baptizing people into the Christian church.
- Banners:** Signify important times, seasons, and events in the life of the church.
- Candles:** Represents the light of Christ that has come into our world. The candles are visible to all as Jesus taught in Matthew 5:15-16, "to let our light shine before men so they may give praise to God." The altar candles have 3 steps on the base to represent the Holy Trinity - God the Father, Jesus the Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Chancel:** The part of the sanctuary around the altar table and includes the chancel rail. The position of the altar table is in the center of the chancel area to remind us that God is the center of all our worship.
- Chancel Rail:** This separates the main sanctuary from the chancel area. Communion is often served to the congregation as they kneel at the Chancel rail.
- Communion:** Holy Communion, the sacrament known as the Lord's Supper, is an expression of love. We come to this time of reverence to Jesus to gratefully recall His passion and death on the cross. In John 6:48-57 Jesus proclaims to be the Bread of Life. In our spirit, as we eat the bread (body) and drink the wine/juice (blood), we partake of Christ, walk away from sin, and identify our life with Christ. John 1:29 distinguishes Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The Lord's Supper is also a celebration of our hope in Christ's second coming. Each time we observe Holy Communion, we are anticipating the day Jesus will come again to receive us unto Himself.
- Communion Table:** The place from which the elements (bread and juice that represent the body and blood of Jesus Christ) of communion are delivered to the members of the congregation.
- Confirmation:** A statement of faith by a person desiring membership into the church. A confirmation class is often attended for several weeks prior to the ceremony to learn more about the church doctrine and Christian beliefs.

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|---------------------------|--|
| <u>Creeds</u> | Statements of beliefs used to help people express their faith. The creed we most commonly recite is the Apostles' Creed. |
| <u>Cross:</u> | A reminder of Jesus' sacrifice for us. |
| <u>Doxology:</u> | A brief expression of praise and gratitude to God sung during the presentation of the offering. |
| <u>Flowers:</u> | Flowers are placed in the chancel area by members as a part of worship which God's children have been doing since the time of Moses. Leviticus 23:40 requests that branches and boughs of trees be brought before the Lord in rejoicing. Perhaps the "Hanging of the Greens" during the Advent and Christmas seasons originated from Isaiah 60:13. This verse talks of the fir tree and pine tree coming together to beautify the place of the sanctuary. |
| <u>Gloria Patri:</u> | Song of praise to God |
| <u>Lectern:</u> | A podium is opposite the pulpit in the chancel area. |
| <u>Liturgical Colors:</u> | The colors symbolizing the days and seasons of the Christian year, used for stoles and other vestments, altar cloths and other paraments, and church decorations. |
| <u>Narthex:</u> | The entry way into the sanctuary. |
| <u>Nave:</u> | Where the congregation sits. Also called the sanctuary. The meaning of the word nave is "ship". This symbolizes that the church is an ark of safety which carries the faithful over the sea of life. The word worship is a combination of the words "worth" and "ship", which implies that as the Captain of a ship must be worthy of that ship, so God, as the Creator of the universe is worthy to be our ruler and to receive our praise and adoration. The act of worship is our acknowledgement of that fact. |
| <u>Paraments:</u> | These are cloths placed on the pulpit, altar, and other furniture. The color of the cloths changes with the seasons of the Christian year. |
| <u>Pews:</u> | Benches on which the congregation sits. |
| <u>Pulpit:</u> | At Fairhope UMC the scripture is read and the sermon is preached from here. |
| <u>Sacraments:</u> | Baptism and Communion. Signs or acts of faith that help people receive God's grace. |
| <u>Soldier Candle:</u> | This candle represents our active military members and their families. |

Stole: Pastors wear these on their robes as a symbol of being yoked (connected) to Christ in their service to the congregation and the world. These are usually the color of the Christian Season.

Acolyte Equipment

Candlelighter: A handheld device usually made of brass scored with a long wooden or brass handle used to light and snuff out candles.

Taper: The long wick inside of the candlelighter that carries the flame.

Bell: The brass cup on the candlelighter that is used to extinguish the candles.

Alb: A special long robe, which is usually white, worn by the crucifer

Cincture: A fabric rope that is worn around the waist as a belt while wearing the alb. It can be white or colored to coordinate with the liturgical season of the church.

Cassock: A fitted dark robe worn by the acolyte

Cotta: A short white vestment worn over the cassock.

Cross Pendant: Each acolyte and crucifer wears a cross pendant visible on the outside of the vestment robe each time they serve. Wooden crosses will be given to each acolyte as they begin their service. This will be followed by a cross engraved with your name on it after a successful period of service.

Duties of an Acolyte in the Sanctuary

1. **Be dependable.** Show up on your scheduled dates. Get a substitute if you must miss your assigned day. Call the church office to notify the change so the bulletin can be printed with the correct name. Talk to the schedule coordinator if you need to make a change. If you are not scheduled but are in attendance and willing to serve, you may go to the schedule coordinator to be sure the position is filled for that day. If the assigned acolyte has not arrived, the schedule coordinator may ask you to fill in for the missing acolyte.
2. **Arrive on time.** Arrive in the designated meeting area 20 minutes before the service dressed in Sunday clothing. Good grooming is important. Please wear appropriate closed-toed shoes: no flip flops. Make sure your hair is combed and hands and nails are clean.
3. **Never chew gum** while serving as acolyte.

4. **Put on your vestments**, (Alb, Cincture or Cassock, Cotta, and Cross Pendant) sign in on the sign-in sheet. Pray a prayer of blessing for the service before leaving the Prayer Room. An adult or acolyte may lead this prayer. There is a prayer you may use in the cross box.
5. An usher will help you light the taper before you proceed down the aisle.
6. Do not let the flame go out. If the flame does go out, the other acolyte will use his/her flame to relight your taper.
7. **When two acolytes are lighting candles, the candles should be lit and extinguished at the same time.**
If there is one acolyte lighting both candles, the candle on the right side near the pulpit (epistle side) is lit first, then the one on the left near the organ (gospel side). When extinguishing the candles, the candle on the left is extinguished first, then the one on the right.
8. If a Candelabra is to be lit also, first light the two altar candles as described in #7 above; then light the candles on the candelabra beginning with the candles near the cross, moving outward.
9. **Crucifer Acolyte:** As the organist begins to play the prelude, the crucifer will begin the processional toward the chancel. Carry the cross high and straight. Stand behind the altar rail, facing congregation and allow the candlelighters to pass by you to the altar. At the end of the prelude, put the cross in its stand and then go sit on the front pew by the window.
10. **Candlelighter Acolytes:** Follow behind the crucifer and walk in side-by-side in a dignified and unhurried, steady pace with candlelighter handle at your waist and the taper held up straight in front of you. Take short steps. Keep your head up and your eyes straight ahead. When you approach the steps to the chancel area, walk together, side-by-side, toward the altar table. Light the candles together, blow out the flame, turn, and move to your seat on the front pew. Make sure your movements are in agreement with your partner by watching out of the corner of your eye. One acolyte will sit on each front pew near the center aisle. **Hang the candlelighter over the back of the pew.** Laying the candlelighter on the floor makes the oil leak out.
11. **Banner Bearer Acolyte:** Follow the candlelighter acolytes down the aisle at the beginning of the service. Carry the banner at a 45 degree angle, with the weight resting on your left hand held in front of your chest. Use your right hand to steady and guide the pole and to hold it down low, on the right side of your body. The bottom edge of a banner should hang free, so that is possible to see where you are going. Place the banner on the stand at the end of the prelude, then go sit the end of the front pew by the door. At the end of the service, you will leave the banner in place and proceed down the aisle behind the acolytes.
12. **Sit up straight and quietly.** Pay attention during the service. Keep up with the order of the service by reading your bulletin. Stand when everyone stands and sit when instructed. Use your hymnal (found on a shelf under your seat) to sing-along with the congregation. **Go stand by the columns during the children's moments during the 11:00 service.**

13. **On the first verse of the offertory hymn**, both candlelighter acolytes stand, pick up offering plates beside you on the pew, and go to the chancel rail to distribute the plates to the ushers. **After the offertory prayer**, start with the middle ushers and work your way out. Go back to your seat after distributing the offering plates and remain seated during the choir's anthem.
As the Doxology is sung, go back to the front of the chancel rail and receive the offering plates from the ushers, then turn, and go up to the altar. Present the plates to the Lord at the altar table. **Hold the plates up at eye level to symbolize the congregation is making an offering to God. When the Doxology is finished**, place the offering plates on the altar table, turn and move back to your seat before the Honor of God and Country song. Remain standing for the scripture reading.
14. **On the first verse of the last hymn, Crucifer** will move to the cross, remove it from the stand and wait for the other acolytes to finish extinguishing the candles. **Candlelighter Acolytes** will take your candlelighter and move with your partner towards the altar table. Relight the taper from the candle then use the bell to carefully extinguish the candle. Turn and face the congregation. Wait for Crucifer to proceed up the aisle toward the narthex and follow at a steady pace. **Banner Bearer Acolyte** will wait at your seat until the Crucifer and the Candlelighter Acolytes have passed your pew. Banner Bearer Acolyte will then fall in line behind the Candlelighter Acolytes as everyone proceeds or process up the aisle. Once you have exited the sanctuary, Candlelighter Acolytes may carefully blow out the flame.
15. Proceed to the acolyte dressing room. Use the available cloths to wipe off finger prints and ash from the candlelighter bell and brass areas, then replace all in their proper area. Remove your vestments and cross pendant and hang up in the proper place inside the closet. Crucifer will assist other acolytes. **REMEMBER: Add a bead to your cross lanyard that coordinates with the Sunday you served.**
16. **Be listening at all times.** Be flexible and ready for changes in the service.
17. Notify Robe Coordinator or Equipment Maintenance person of any problems with robes or equipment as soon as possible after the service.
18. Following the communion service, acolytes may take the unused bread outdoors and feed it to the birds with assistance from the adults overseeing communion..
19. Acolytes will receive recognition for their service. There will be an acolyte Consecration service in the fall of each year. After serving 5 times, a silver cross engraved with the acolyte's name, will be provided. Beads in the liturgical colors will be added for each time the acolyte participates in a worship service.
20. Acolytes will meet with the ministers during the year for further training on sacraments, worship, church seasons, symbols, and other aspects of church ministry and spiritual growth.

Sanctuary Baptism Acolyte Duties

When there is a baptism in the sanctuary, the acolyte who will be assisting the pastor will sign up ahead of time. Meet the pastor and the child's family in the sanctuary 20 minutes before the service for instructions. Then go to the sacristy and get a "reserved" cloth for the pew the family will use and place it on the aisle end of the second pew on the pulpit side of the church. If there is a large family that needs another row, place another cloth on the third row pew.

Put on your vestments, sign in and follow the usual procedures for your duties as candlelighter or crucifer for that morning.

When it is time for the baptism, the acolyte will come forward as the pastor moves down to the baptismal font. Stand behind the pastor, to the right, and place the towel across your left arm. When the pastor says, "The Lord be with you," lift the ewer, holding it with both hands facing the handle toward the pastor. The pastor will take the ewer and pour the water into the font. After the water is poured, receive the ewer from the pastor and place it back on the table. Remain there during the baptism ceremony. After the baptism, hand the folded towel to the pastor. The pastor will return the towel to you and you will place the folded towel on the table beside the ewer. As the pastor returns to the pulpit area, you will return to your seat.

Duties of an Acolyte in The Gathering (CLC)

1. **Be dependable.** Show up on your scheduled dates. Get a substitute if you must miss your assigned day. Call the church office to notify them of the change so the bulletin can be printed with the correct name. Talk to the schedule coordinator if you need to make a change.
2. **Arrive on time.** Arrive in the designated meeting area 20 minutes before the service dressed in Sunday clothing. Good grooming is important. Please wear appropriate closed-toed shoes: no flip flops. Make sure your hair is combed and hands and nails are clean. No robes will be worn in this service. Please be dressed appropriately.
3. **Never chew gum** while serving as acolyte.
4. Candlelighters will be brought to the gym doors by an usher. Sign-in is behind the Gym Desk, in the left drawer. Get your cross out of the drawer; and there is a prayer you may use to pray, or make up your own, in the drawer. Go to the Gym doors to meet the ushers.
5. An usher will help you light the taper before you proceed down the aisle.
6. Do not let the flame go out while walking. If the flame does go out, the other acolyte will use his/her flame to relight your taper.

7. You will walk side-by-side down the aisle in a dignified and unhurried steady pace with candlelighter handle at your waist and the taper held up straight in front of you. Take short steps. Keep your head up and your eyes straight ahead. You will light the candles as the first song begins. After lighting the candles, blow out the flame, go to the first row of seats and sit in the first chair nearest the center aisle; with one acolyte, on each side of the aisle. **Hang the candlelighter over the back of the pew.** Laying the candlelighter on the floor makes the oil leak out.
8. **When two acolytes are lighting candles**, the candles should be lit and extinguished at the same time.
If one acolyte lights both candles, the candle on the left side is lit first, then the one on the right side. When extinguishing the candles, the candle on the right is extinguished first, then the one on the left.
9. If a Candelabra is to be lit, first light the two altar candles as described in #8 above. Then light the candles on the candelabra beginning with the candles near the cross, and move outward to the end of the candles.
10. **There will be no Cross Bearer or Banner Bearer for this service.**
The acolytes will be candlelighters only.
11. **At the beginning of the last song**, go up to the front with your candlelighter, and move with your partner towards the altar table. Relight the taper from the candle; then use the bell to carefully extinguish the candle. Turn and face the congregation, and proceed up the center aisle. When you get to the back of the room, carefully blow out the flame.
12. Proceed to the gym desk to replace your cross in the drawer. Use the available cloths to wipe the candlelighters. Wipe off fingerprints and ash from the candlelighter bell and brass areas, then take the candle-lighters to the altar table.
13. **Be listening at all times.** Be flexible and ready for changes in the service.
14. Notify Equipment Maintenance person of any problems with equipment as soon as possible after the service.
15. Following the communion service, acolytes may take the unused bread outdoors and feed it to the birds with assistance from the adults overseeing communion.
16. Acolytes will receive recognition for their service. There will be an acolyte Consecration service in the fall of each year. After serving 5 times, a silver cross engraved with the acolyte's name, will be provided. Beads in the liturgical colors will be added for each time the acolyte participates in a worship service.
17. Acolytes will meet with the ministers during the year for further training on sacraments, worship, church seasons, symbols, and other aspects of church ministry and spiritual growth.

Seasons of the Christian Year

The Christian year, or Christian calendar, is made up of seven seasons and 12 special Holy Days. The seasons are centered on the birth, life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the sending of the Holy Spirit to the Church, and our part in the Kingdom of God. Each season is represented by a liturgical color as well as other symbols to develop a distinction of importance to remind us of the meaning.

ADVENT

The Christian year begins with the season of Advent. This is a preparatory season of four weeks, or Sundays, leading up to Christmas Day. The term Advent is derived from the Latin word, *adventus*, meaning “coming”. The season proclaims the coming of the Lord Christ, whose birth we prepare to celebrate. The liturgical color for Advent is **Purple** or **Blue**, representing royalty. The primary symbols of Advent are the Advent Wreath and the Chrismon Tree. The Advent Wreath has 5 candles on a circle of ever-green. One candle is lit each of the four Sundays prior to Christmas and the fifth candle is lit on Christmas Eve. Each candle represents an aspect of the spiritual preparation of the coming of Jesus. The Chrismon Tree is a tree decorated in white and gold ornaments. Each ornament represents Jesus or His ministry.

CHRISTMASTIDE

Christmastide, the second season, is a season of praise and thanksgiving for the incarnation. (This means that God became human with flesh and bones when Jesus was born as a baby). It consists of Christmas, December 25, and the eleven days following (a total of 12 days), leading up to the Day of Epiphany. The liturgical color for the Christmastide season is **White** to represent the purity of Jesus and His holiness. The symbol of this season is the manger.

EPIPHANY

The third season is Epiphany, which begins on Epiphany Sunday and continues until the eve of Ash Wednesday. Epiphany celebrates the visit by the Wise Men from the east as they followed the Star of Bethlehem to find the new king Jesus. The liturgical color is **White** or **Green**.

LENT

The season of Lent lasts for 40 days. It begins on Ash Wednesday (in February or March) and ends on Easter Eve, but does not include Sundays. Lent represents the suffering and death of Jesus. It is a season of repentance (asking forgiveness of sins and turning away from sins) and self-denial. The liturgical color for Lent is **Purple**, to represent the royalty of Christ the King. On Good Friday, to represent the death of Jesus on the cross, the altar is stripped and left bare of any color, or **Black**, until Easter. The symbol of Lent is the Cross of Christ.

EASTER

Easter is the high festival of the Church, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Easter Season, also known as the Great Fifty Days, begins at sunset Easter and continues through the Day of Pentecost. The liturgical colors for Easter are **White and Gold**, representing the purity of the risen Lord. Flowers, especially lilies, are symbols of Christ's resurrection.

PENTECOST

Pentecost, meaning fifty, begins the sixth season of the Christian year. On the fiftieth day following Easter Sunday, the church celebrates Pentecost. This Holy Day represents the outpouring of the Holy Spirit onto the followers in the Upper Room, as told in the Bible in Acts chapter 2. Pentecost is also the birthday of the New Testament Church. It continues until the last Sunday in August. The liturgical color is **Red**, symbolizing the fire of the Holy Spirit.

ORDINARY TIME OR KINGDOMTIDE

This is a time to reflect on doing the work of God's kingdom and growing spiritually. **Green** is the color for this season. It is the color of growth and symbolizes our growth in faith and understanding in the general teachings of the church. Ordinary Time or Kingdomtide is uniquely a Methodist Christian season which begins on the last Sunday of August and continues until Advent. The symbol is a triangle, representing the Holy Trinity (God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or Three-in-One).

Holy Days

CHRISTMAS, December 25

This is the day we celebrate the birth of Christ. Happy Birthday Jesus!

EPIPHANY, January 6

Twelve days after Christmas, this recalls how the light (Star of Bethlehem) of Christ led the Wise Men to Jesus. We celebrate Christ being revealed to the whole world.

ASH WEDNESDAY, February or March

This is the first day of Lent. There is a special worship service on this night and at the end, the pastor draws a cross on people's foreheads using ashes, showing how we are sorry for our sins and have repented. The ashes come from the burning of the palm branches from Palm Sunday. A Burning of the Ashes Service may also coincide with this Holy Day.

PALM SUNDAY, Sunday before Easter

On this Sunday we celebrate the day Jesus rode a donkey into the city of Jerusalem as God's anointed Savior. All the people waved palm branches for him to ride on and shouted "Hosanna!" which means, "God save us!"

MAUNDY THURSDAY, Thursday before Good Friday

We remember the night that Jesus led his disciples in the Last Supper or Lord's Supper which was a symbol of the new covenant between Christ and the Church through His sacrifice on the cross. Our communion service is in remembrance of His sacrifice. On this night Jesus washed the feet of his disciples to teach them service to others. Afterwards, He was arrested before being crucified.

GOOD FRIDAY, Friday before Easter

A worship service of mourning and remembrance is conducted on this day to reflect on Jesus' death on the cross for our sins. He was crucified to take away our sins.

EASTER, March or April

Celebrate! On the third day, Christ arose from the tomb! Jesus is resurrected! Satan and sin have been defeated!

ASCENSION DAY, May

After appearing to his followers for 40 days, Jesus ascended into heaven. We remember His return to heaven on this day.

PENTECOST, May

This is the day we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit, fifty days after Easter.

TRINITY SUNDAY, June

On the first Sunday after Pentecost, we celebrate the Three-in-One God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

ALL SAINTS DAY, First Sunday in November

This is a special day in which we honor and remember all the church members, or "saints", who have died over the past Christian year.

CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY, November

This is the last Sunday of the Christian Year when we rejoice that Jesus is King over everything.

Parent Information

Parents of acolytes are very important to this ministry. You will assist your child to accomplish his/her duties in a responsible way that will not only help the worship service run smoothly, but will also increase your child's spiritual growth and understanding.

To sign your child up to Acolyte on a certain Sunday, at a certain service, you need to sign up on SIGNUPGENIUS. You will be sent an invite. Bookmark it so you can sign up at any time!

1. Check your family's schedule to be sure there are no conflicts on the date you have chosen for your child to have acolyte duty. If that date needs to be changed, guide your child in changing dates with another acolyte, informing the acolyte schedule leader, and also notifying the church office. (251) 928-1148
2. On the morning your child will serve as acolyte, be sure he/she is at the meeting place on time and dressed appropriately. He/she should arrive at least 20 minutes prior to start of the service. He/she should be dressed in Sunday best, well groomed, closed toed shoes, hair combed, hands and nails cleaned. No chewing gum.
3. Go with your child to the acolyte preparation area and if necessary assist in robing and getting his/her equipment ready.
4. Place a hymnal, bulletin, and two offering plates on the front pew next to where your child will sit during the service. The crucifer and banner bearer will not need offering plates.
5. Sit behind your child during the service so you can remind them when to go forward to perform duties if a reminder is needed.
6. After the service, assist your child in hanging up the robe, wiping fingerprints off the candlelighter with provided cloths, and placing equipment in the proper place.
7. Let them know they have done a good job and have contributed to the worship service in a very meaningful way. If mistakes were made, be positive and encouraging as they decide how they can improve the next time they serve as a Crucifer, Acolyte, or Banner Bearer.

Usher Information

Ushers will assist acolytes in getting ready for the service. You may need to help them get the candlelighters and you will light the candlelighter before they go down the aisle **at the start of the Prelude.**

Sanctuary Locate the offering plates and have them available for the acolyte parents so they can take them to the front pews. After the Acolytes have said a prayer and entered the narthex, light the taper on each candlelighter and send the acolytes down the aisle **at the start of the Prelude.**

The Gathering Get the candlelighters off the altar table. The acolytes will get their candlelighters from the ushers at the gym doors. Before the first song, you will light their tapers and send the acolytes down the aisle **during the first song.**

If for any reason there are no acolytes present, you will follow the following procedure:

SANCTUARY

As the congregation begins to sing the FIRST HYMN, 2 ushers carrying lit acolyte candlelighters, process down the aisle side-by-side and light the two candles on the altar table. Once both candles are lit, blow out the flame then process back up the aisle

As the congregation begins to sing the LAST HYMN, 2 ushers carrying unlit acolyte candlelighters, process down the aisle side-by-side and light the candlelighters from the candles on the altar table. Once both candlelighters are lit, turn the candlelighters over and snuff out the flame on the altar candles. Then process back up the aisle. When you reach the Narthex you may blow out the candlelighter flame. Then return candlelighters to the stand in the Prayer Room.

THE GATHERING

Someone will light the candles before the beginning of the service.

If you see they aren't lit by the first song, please go light them.

Sanctuary On the last verse of the offertory hymn when acolytes are in place, move to the chancel rail to receive the offering plates.

When the doxology begins, return to the chancel rail to bring the offerings to the acolytes. **Before the God and Country chorus, proceed back up the aisle to your seat. This will be before the scripture is read.**

Your role in assisting the acolytes is important for guiding these young people in their service to our church and to God.