

St. James' Episcopal Church

Acolyte Manual



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Introduction

“In the meantime, the boy Samuel continued to serve the Lord, wearing a sacred linen apron. Each year his mother would make a little robe and take it to him when she accompanied her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice...The boy Samuel grew up in the service of the Lord.”

1 Samuel 2:18-21

Acolyte means an attendant or follower and Samuel is one of the first examples of an assistant to a priest. Your job as an acolyte is to assist the celebrant (the priest in charge of a worship service) and enhance the worship service to help glorify God. You are a minister of the church who is called to serve God. Therefore, every action you take should be done respectfully and in a dignified manner; the goal is for the attention of the congregation to be on the liturgy and not on the ministers. Serving as an acolyte is a commitment of your time and talent to the Lord’s service, which is greatly appreciated.

As described by Dennis G. Michno in *A Manual for Acolytes*:

“The patron of those who serve at the altar is Vincent, Deacon and Martyr. He lived in the late third century, was martyred in the year 304, and is commemorated in our calendar on January 22. Vincent is remembered for his love of God, his faithfulness to his bishop, and his unswerving loyalty to his responsibilities. These traits--love, faithfulness, and loyalty--are virtues that all who are privileged to serve at the altar should cultivate. Remember: our purpose is rooted in our love of God, our faithfulness is seen in our willingness to serve responsibly, and our loyalty is demonstrated in how carefully we carry out our duties. Love, faithfulness, and loyalty are the virtues we seek to perfect. The server’s aim is to be as steadfast as St. Vincent.”

Overall Responsibilities for All Acolytes

Overall responsibilities for acolytes are listed below. It is important to know your duties and be confident in your abilities. Do not worry about mistakes—they are bound to occur (even the Celebrant goofs up sometimes). Always act as if everything you do is supposed to happen that way and most people will never know whether a mistake was made or not. An acolyte’s responsibilities include:

- serving when assigned and being prompt.
- helping to get the church ready for worship (e.g., lighting candles).
- understanding the different parts of a worship service; knowing what is supposed to happen and when.
- knowing the specific responsibilities of the assigned position (e.g., crucifer).
- performing actions carefully and with reverence.

- maintaining a neat appearance.
- helping lead the congregation in worship by joining in prayers and singing and kneeling or standing at appropriate times.

Scheduling

At regular intervals, you will receive by mail a roster of acolytes and written schedules covering 2-3 month time periods. You should review a schedule when you receive it to make sure that you do not have any conflicts for the dates you are scheduled to serve. If you are not available for a scheduled date, you must arrange for a substitute; you can either trade with someone or ask him/her to fill in for you. After you identify a substitute, call the church office, at least one week ahead of the change, so that the master schedule can be updated. You will receive a reminder postcard during the week before you are scheduled to serve.

Vestments

You should be vested 15 minutes before the start of a service; which means you should arrive no later than 20 minutes before a service starts. Acolyte robes are kept in the vestry closet. Gospel and torch bearers wear red cassocks covered by white cottas. The crucifer wears a white, hooded alb (although the hood is never used), as well as a cross and cincture (a long white rope with knots at the ends) that are kept in the acolyte drawer in the sacristy. The cincture is tied in a slip knot on the left side. Robes should come down to the tops of your shoes. When serving, you should always wear black or dark shoes, with dark socks or hose. You should **never** wear sneakers.

Vestments remind us of the garments worn by Jesus and the apostles and should be treated with respect. Make sure your robe is not torn or soiled (take it home to be washed every once in a while) and always hang it up after a service. As you put on your vestments, you should focus on the job you have to do; remember that you are a worship leader and act accordingly.

When vested, your posture and actions are more noticeable than normal (and you are usually in front of the congregation). When standing, stand straight, keeping your weight evenly balanced so that you do not sway. When you are walking or standing, your hands should be folded in front of you, just above the waist, unless you are holding something. Always walk somewhat slowly with poise and your head up. When seated, sit up straight and keep your feet flat on the floor. When you kneel, keep your back straight; don't slouch down onto your heels. Whether walking or seated at the altar, if you can see the congregation then they *do* see you, so do not slouch, look bored, or become distracted.

Before Worship

Candles should be lighted no later than ten minutes before the start of a service. Crucifers should check with the Celebrant, and the other acolytes should check with the crucifer, for any special instructions for the upcoming service (for example, during Lent a special procession is sometimes used).

Prepare for worship through prayer and reflection on the service you are about to perform. One prayer to use before worship is found on page 833 of *The Book of Common Prayer*:

O Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it the spirit of grace and of supplication: Deliver us, when we draw near to you, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

As soon as the candles are lighted, gather in the rector's office for last minute instructions and prayer. From there you will go and get whatever you are supposed to carry and assemble in the narthex. When the choir arrives or at the time for the service, take your positions for the procession.

Procession

The usual order for a procession is shown below. All positions are not filled at every service. Four acolytes are used for the main Sunday service: a crucifer/server, two torch bearers, and a Gospel bearer. Only a crucifer/server is used at the early Sunday service. The duties of each acolyte position are described in following sections. The procession should never begin until the Celebrant acknowledges that he/she is ready.

Procession Order

Crucifer
Torchbearers
Choir
Flag Bearers (American flag to right of church flag)
Banner Bearer
Gospel Bearer
Altar Assistants
Celebrant

Candle Lighting Procedures

There is a traditional manner for lighting and extinguishing the candles that all acolytes should know and follow. Candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World; they also recall the days of the early Christians when candles and oil lamps were the only sources of light indoors. There will always be at least two candles on or beside the altar. As you face the altar from the nave, the right side is known as the Epistle side and the left as the Gospel side. There are some basic rules to know when lighting and extinguishing candles:

- Gospel candles never burn alone.
- Candles are lighted starting from the cross and going out to symbolize that the light of Jesus shines out from the cross; they are extinguished in reverse.
- A paschal candle is used during the 50 days of Easter and at baptisms and funerals. It is placed in front of the altar and is lighted well before the start of the service (usually by a priest or member of the altar guild who has arrived early) and is **not** extinguished at the end of the service. If a paschal candle is present and not lighted by the time you are vested, ask the Celebrant whether you should light it.
- Advent wreath candles are lighted before other candles and extinguished last. The number of wreath candles lighted corresponds to the week of Advent. A rose-colored candle represents the third Sunday of Advent.
- Use caution when carrying a candle lighter near the altar so that wax or soot does not drop on the linen.

Lighting Candles

Candles can be lighted by an individual or a team of acolytes. The procedures listed below are for one acolyte working alone. If two are doing the job, their actions mirror each other and both the Gospel and Epistle side are lighted together. When working with a partner, do not move to the next candle until your partner has finished lighting his/her candle. If your partner is having trouble lighting a candle, please assist.

Use the following procedures when lighting candles:

1. Check that the taper in your candle lighter is long enough to do the job. The white taper is visible in the space above the knob used to slide it up and down. If your taper is too short, ask a member of the altar guild to replace it.
2. Look to see whether there is a Paschal candle. If not, light your candle lighter behind the altar screen using the matches kept on the wall.
3. Walk around the Gospel side of the chancel to the end of the aisle in front of the sanctuary. Reverence the altar (by bowing) and proceed to the Epistle candle(s). To help you remember which candle to light first, remember that “light” and “right” rhyme and so you “light the right.” If there is more than one candle on each side of the altar, light the innermost candle first and proceed outward. If an

Advent wreath is present, light the appropriate number of candles before lighting the altar candles.

4. To light a candle, hold the flame from your candle lighter at the top of the candle; tip up the back end of your candle lighter to place the flame near the wick. We use oil-based candles so they light quite easily. Hold the flame in place for a few seconds, and then check whether the candle is lighted. If you cannot see the top, look for a glow under the brass ornament at the top of the candle. If you are working in a team, ask your partner to check. If you still cannot tell, walk back to the front of the sanctuary and look.
5. After lighting the Epistle side, cross the altar and light the Gospel candle(s). Reverence the altar when you cross the middle in front of the cross.
6. If there are candles on the reredos (shelf on the wall behind the altar), light them next. As on the altar, light the Epistle side first. When you cross from the Epistle side to the Gospel side while lighting reredos candles, you will be behind the altar and so you do not need to reverence it.
7. Extinguish your candle lighter after lighting the last candle, return to the end of the aisle, bow, and return the candle lighter to its holder.

Extinguishing Candles

Candles are extinguished in the reverse order as they are lighted. The Gospel side first, and from the outermost in. Altar candles are extinguished last, unless there is an Advent wreath, which is put out last.

Use the bell-shaped snuffer on the end of the candle lighter to extinguish a candle. Hold the bell down over the top of the candle until you see smoke escaping, which tells you the candle has gone out. Do not push the snuffer down on top of the candle or you will ruin the wick.

Responsibilities of Individual Acolyte Positions

Described below are the responsibilities and procedures to be performed by each acolyte position. The crucifer/server should oversee the other acolytes, answering any questions they might have and assigning positions or recruiting help should some acolytes be absent. Remain alert during the service to remind other acolytes of or assist them in their duties.

Crucifer/Server Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the crucifer/server are:

- Check with the Celebrant for any special instructions or procedures and inform other acolytes.
- Reassign positions or recruit help should some acolytes be absent.

- Lead the procession, Gospel procession, and recession.
- Assist other acolytes as needed during the service.
- Receive the elements from the congregation at the beginning of the offertory anthem/hymn.
- Assist the Celebrant in communion preparations.
- Wash the Celebrant's hands before and after communion.
- Refill the chalice(s) as needed.

Before the Service

Check to see that all the assigned acolytes are present. If not, recruit help or reassign as follows. If only two others are present, do not use a Gospel bearer. If only one other is present, do not use torches. In the sacristy before the service begins, tell the Celebrant the number of acolytes present and ask for any special instructions; be sure to pass them on to the other acolytes.

Make sure the torch bearers light the altar candles at least ten minutes before the service. If they don't, light them yourself. Check with the Celebrant for any last minute instructions. Gather in the rector's office to receive last minute instructions from the celebrant and to pray. Then get the cross from the holder and gather in the columbarium (or narthex, if it is raining). About three minutes before the service be in the narthex read. Make sure the torch bearers light their torches and that the celebrant is ready, then get in position for the procession by standing between the two wooden columns at the back of the nave. Your presence here is a queue to the organist that the procession is ready to begin so that the organist can start the processional hymn.

The Procession

When you are in position for the start of the service, the Celebrant will signal to the organist to begin the processional hymn; be ready early, the service should not wait on you. When the organist finishes the introduction to the processional hymn, proceed down the aisle slowly with dignity, as the singing begins.

Carry the cross with your right hand below and near your waist and your left hand on top in a reversed position (hand behind the cross with your palm facing forward) near your chin, or if you prefer in the same position but with your right hand near your chin and your left hand near your waist. The cross should be held high enough so that your feet and/or robe do not bump it as you walk. Be aware of low objects (such as speakers or beams) that may be in the path of the cross.

Proceed to the end of the aisle, step up on the first step, take two steps in, and turn and face the congregation. When the Celebrant has walked by you to enter the sanctuary, step down out of the altar space again and proceed around the choir side of the chancel. When you reach a position next to the cross holder, stop and let the torch and Gospel

bearers walk past you. Put the cross away and take a place in front of one of the seats in the sanctuary. Because of their special duties, crucifers and servers may not sing in the choir when they serve as an acolyte.

The Gospel Procession

At the start of the Gospel hymn, remove the cross from its holder and stand and wait for the torch and Gospel bearers to join you. When the reader of the Gospel is in position behind you, proceed around the chancel and down the aisle to the **second** pew. Turn around and face the altar, continuing to hold the cross aloft. After the Gospel has been read, the reader and Gospel bearer will step to the side of the aisle enabling you to lead the procession back around the chancel. Pause when you reach the cross holder to let everyone go by; put the cross away and return to the sanctuary for the sermon. Remain seated in the sanctuary during the sermon in case the speaker needs any assistance.

Preparation for Holy Communion

During the time of the offering, you will assist the Celebrant in preparing the elements for communion. At smaller services, the oblations (bread, wine, and water) are found on the credence table. At some services, the oblations are brought forward by members of the congregation or the ushers.

If the oblations are being processed, you and a torch bearer you select, along with the Gospel bearer with the offertory plates, should go to the edge of the chancel at the end of the aisle when the offertory anthem or hymn begins. Go as a group and wait on the last step for members of the congregation or ushers to come forward with the elements. **Do not wait for them to start moving before you assume your position;** your standing there will tell them it is time to come forward. When the elements arrive, take the ciborium of bread to the back of the altar and stand next to the Celebrant. The torch bearer will take the water and wine to the credence table on the Epistle side.

Open the ciborium, holding the lid in your right hand. The Celebrant will turn to you and take the ciborium. Take the lid to the credence table. The Celebrant may acknowledge the end of each step of the preparation process with a slight bow; if so, return the bow and proceed to the next step.

At the credence table, open the cruets/flagons and pick up the wine in your left hand and the water in your right. You should hold them on the side opposite the handles so that you can hand them to the Celebrant to pour. You will hand off with your left hand and receive with your right. When the Celebrant takes the wine, switch the water to the left hand. Depending on the number of people in the congregation, the Celebrant might not return the wine to you. When the Celebrant gives you back the water, return to the credence table.

Hold the lavabo bowl in your left hand with the small towel draped over your left arm. Hold the open water cruet/flagon in your right hand by the handle and stand by the Celebrant. When the Celebrant turns to you, pour a small amount of water over the fingers he/she holds in the bowl. Extend your arm to offer the towel and wait for it to be given back to you. Return the bowl, towel, and water to the cruets table and go back to your seat.

Following the Lord's Prayer when the Celebrant holds up the large wafer of bread and breaks it (called the fracture), the crucifer should move the extra chalice and then the intinction cups to the altar from the credence table. It is important to do this quickly because the celebrant has limited time to prepare during this step and is waiting on you! During communion, stand behind the altar with the flagon of consecrated wine to refill the chalice(s) as needed. If an extra lay Eucharist minister is needed, be prepared to administer an intinction cup or chalice during communion; in this case ask another acolyte to hold the flagon. Always use a purificator when you pour so that wine does not drip.

After all have received communion, it is time for the ablutions. Usually, the Celebrant will skip the ablutions and simply place everything on the credence table. If the ablutions are to be done, open and pick up by the handles the wine in your right hand and the water in your left and go to the altar. When the Celebrant holds out the chalice, pour in a small amount of wine, which will be used to rinse the chalice. The Celebrant will then turn toward you with his/her fingers over the chalice. Pour a very small amount of wine on his/her fingers, followed by a slightly larger amount of water. Return the water and wine to the credence table, along with anything else the Celebrant may wish to remove from the altar. Return to your seat.

The Recession

At the start of the recessional hymn, go and light the torches for the torch bearers. Then, remove the cross from its holder and stand next to the choir risers and wait for the torch and Gospel bearers to join you. (Altar candles will be put out after the service.)

As soon as the torch bearers join you, proceed around the side of the chancel. Stop at the end of the aisle, in front of the sanctuary facing the altar; you may rest the cross on the first step. When signaled by the Celebrant, turn and proceed down the aisle.

Torch Bearer Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the torch bearer are:

- Check with the crucifer for any special instructions or procedures.
- Light and extinguish the altar candles.
- Carry a torch during the processional, Gospel, and recessional processions.
- Work in synchronization with the other torch bearer.

- Receive the water and wine from the congregation and place them on the credence table, when asked to do so by the crucifer.
- Distribute and collect the offering plates when a Gospel bearer is not present.

Before the Service

Light the altar candles at least ten minutes before the service. After lighting the candles, join the other acolytes in the rector's office for last minute instructions and prayer. Afterwards, get your torch from its stand and follow the crucifer. Once the crucifer goes from the columbarium to the narthex (or three minutes before the service begins, if you are already in the narthex due to inclement weather) light the torches with the lighter kept in the drawer of the table in the narthex and get in position for the procession by standing just behind the crucifer between the two wooden columns at the back of the nave.

The Procession

When signaled by the Celebrant during the processional hymn, the crucifer will proceed down the aisle at a slow pace. Your job during a procession is to stay next to the crucifer, wherever he/she may go.

Carry your torch with your right hand below and near your waist and your left hand on top in a reversed position (hand behind the pole with your palm facing forward) near your chin, or with the opposite hand placement. The hand placement you use should match that of the crucifer. The torch should be held high enough so that your feet and/or robe do not bump it as you walk. It is important that you hold your torch at the same height as the other torch bearer. The tallest torch bearer should set the height and the other match it. Be aware of low objects (such as speakers or beams) that may be in the path of the torch.

The crucifer will proceed to the end of the aisle, step up on the first step, and turn to face the other torch bearer. Make sure you stand in front of the end of the communion rail, in front of the first wood panel, and not in the space in the middle, so that the altar party can pass between you and the crucifer. When the Celebrant has walked by you to enter the sanctuary, follow the crucifer down and around the choir side of the chancel. The crucifer will stop next to the choir risers allowing you to pass and put your torch away. Do not lower your torch nor put it out until you have passed behind the altar screen. After putting your torch away, take a place in front of one of the seats on the Gospel side of the sanctuary. If you sing in the choir, you may take your place in the choir instead of in the sanctuary.

The Gospel Procession

At the start of the Gospel hymn, remove your torch from its stand, light it, and exit from behind the altar screen to wait next to the crucifer, who will be standing by the choir. When the reader of the Gospel is in position behind you, the crucifer will proceed around the chancel and down the aisle to the second pew and turn around, facing the altar. You should stop at the first pew and turn in, facing the other torch bearer. Rest your torch on the ground and do not look around at the congregation during the reading. Look down to avoid staring into the flame as much as possible. The Gospel bearer (if present) will stand between the two torch bearers and hold the book for the reader of the Gospel. After the Gospel has been read, the reader and Gospel bearer will step to the side of the aisle. As the crucifer walks past you, turn and take your place next to him/her and proceed back around the chancel. Put your torch away as you did following the opening procession. Return to the sanctuary or choir for the sermon.

At the Offering

At the beginning of the offertory anthem, the crucifer may ask you to go to the edge of the chancel to assist in receiving the elements; go together, not one at time. The crucifer will receive the ciborium of bread. You should take the water and wine and place them on the credence table, and then return to your seat.

If the gospel bearer is absent, the torch bearer not assisting the crucifer will distribute the offertory plates to the ushers. The same torch bearer will then collect the plates when they are brought up at the end of the offertory anthem and give them to the Celebrant for blessing and to be placed on the altar.

When communion is administered, join the other members of the altar party behind the altar to receive. After receiving communion, return to your seat.

The Recession

As soon as the music begins for the recessional hymn go to get your torch for the recessional hymn. While you are moving behind the altar screen, the crucifer will light the torches. Remove your torch from its stand and wait next to the crucifer, who will be standing by the choir risers.

Follow the crucifer around the chancel. The crucifer will stop at the end of the aisle, in front of the sanctuary facing the altar. Do not step up on the step. Turn around when the crucifer does, and follow him/her down the aisle.

When you reach the narthex, put out your torch and proceed up the side aisle, holding your torch at your side; return the torch to its stand. After the recessional hymn, extinguish all the candles.

Gospel Bearer Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Gospel bearer are:

- Check with the crucifer for any special instructions or procedures.
- Light and extinguish the altar candles if the torch bearers are absent.
- Carry the Gospel book during the processional, Gospel, and recessional processions.
- Hold the book during the reading of the Gospel.
- Distribute and collect the offering plates.
- Receive the water and wine from the congregation and place them on the credence table, if the torch bearers are not present.

Before the Service

If the torch bearers are absent, light the altar candles at least ten minutes before the service. After the candles are lit, join the other acolytes in the rector's office for last minute instructions and prayer. Afterwards, get the Gospel book from the altar and follow the crucifer and torch bearers. At the time of the service, get in position for the procession by standing near the table in the narthex.

The Procession

Your position in the procession is after the choir and any flags or banners and before any members of the altar party. Hold the book vertically by the bottom edge in front of your chest with the cover facing forward. When you reach the end of the aisle, take one step to the right before the first step. When the Celebrant passes, the crucifer and torch bearers will step down; follow them around the chancel. The crucifer will stop next to the choir risers allowing you to pass and return the book to the altar. After putting the book away, take a place in front of one of the seats in the sanctuary. If you sing in the choir, you may take your place in the choir instead of in the sanctuary.

The Gospel Procession

At the start of the Gospel hymn, get the book from the altar and wait behind the crucifer and torch bearers who will be standing by the choir. When the reader of the Gospel is in position behind you, the crucifer will proceed around the chancel and down the aisle to the third pew and turn around. The torch bearers will stop and face each other at the second pew. You should stand between the torch bearers and turn around and face the altar. When the Gospel reader approaches you, hold the book up for him/her to read.

Allow the reader to open the book and adjust the height at which the book should be held. Hold the book by the bottom edge, make sure your fingers are not in the way, and stand as still as possible. Some readers may prefer to take the book from you to read and return it to you when they have finished. After the Gospel has been read, close the book if the reader did not do so, and step to your left (and a little forward so that you do not collide with the torch bearer who is there), to the side of the aisle, to allow the crucifer and torch bearers to get by. Follow the crucifer back around the chancel. Put the book away, and return to the sanctuary or choir for the sermon.

At the Offering

At the beginning of the offertory anthem, get the four small offertory plates from under the credence table and wait at the edge of the chancel for the ushers to come forward. (The crucifer and a torch bearer should already be there waiting to receive the elements—you may stand next to them. Do not wait until they leave to move forward; the ushers need to receive the plates as soon as possible.) Give one plate to each usher. If the torch bearers are absent, receive the water and wine and place them on the credence table, and then return to your seat.

At the end of the offertory anthem, get the large offertory plate and go to the edge of the chancel to collect the plates from the ushers. **Do not wait for the ushers to start moving before you assume your position;** your standing there will tell them it is time to come forward. Give the plates to the Celebrant for blessing and to be placed on the altar.

When communion is administered, join the other members of the altar party behind the altar to receive.

The Recession

At the start of the recessional hymn, get the Gospel book from the altar and wait behind the crucifer and torch bearers who will be standing by the choir. The procedure for the recession varies, depending on whether or not there is a choir.

If there is a choir and they are recessing, **DO NOT** follow the crucifer around the side of the chancel. Remember that in a procession you come after the choir and flag or banner bearers. Fall in behind the last choir member (or behind the flag or banner bearer, if present).

If there is no choir or they are not recessing, the crucifer will proceed around the chancel and stop at the end of the aisle facing the altar. You should follow and stop just before entering the aisle. When the crucifer turns around to continue the procession, fall in behind the crucifer and before the altar party.

When you reach the narthex, wait until after the dismissal and then proceed up the side aisle and return the Gospel book to the altar. If the torch bearers are absent, go up the side immediately, return the book, and then extinguish the altar candles.

Flag or Banner Bearer Responsibilities

Flags and banners are sometimes used on festive occasions, such as Christmas and Easter. They are used only in the processional and recessional processions. Both flags and banners are carried at a 45 degree angle, with the weight resting on the left hand held in front of the chest. The right hand is used to steady and guide and is held down low on the pole, which passes on the right side of the body. The bottom edge of a banner should hang free, so that it is possible to see where you are going.

The banner holder is located on the Epistle side, just off of the chancel. The American flag is displayed on the Gospel side of the chancel and the church flag on the Epistle side. In a procession, the flags are carried side-by-side, with the American flag on the right. As a result, at the end of the aisle during the processional, the American flag must be allowed to cross in front of the church flag so that the two flags can be put in the proper holders during the service. In the recessional, the American flag already will be on the right side.

Glossary

Ablutions The cleaning of the Eucharistic objects (e.g., chalice and paten) following communion.

Alb A long, white garment that covers from the neck to the feet and is tied at the waist with a cincture. The alb is symbolic of innocence and reminds us of the robe Herod put on Christ.

Aumbry A receptacle in the wall used to store consecrated bread and wine; it is identified by a burning sanctuary lamp.

Cassock A long garment that covers from the neck to the feet with snaps or buttons down the front. It symbolizes the spirit of recollection and devotion. Red cassocks are often preferred because the color is symbolic of the blood shed by martyrs.

Celebrant The priest officiating at or in charge of a Eucharist.

Chalice A large, stemmed cup that holds the wine during communion.

Chancel The area of the church in front of the nave.

Ciborium A covered, stemmed vessel used to hold the communion bread.

Cincture A long, white rope with knots in the ends that is tied around the waist; it is symbolic of the ropes that bound Christ at his trial and the whips at his scourging.

Cotta A white garment that is worn over a cassock; it has full sleeves and reaches to the waist. The white color symbolizes innocence and purity of heart.

Credence Table The small table, usually on the Epistle side of the altar, that holds vessels and items for the Eucharist. St. James' often uses a table on each side.

Crucifer The acolyte that carries the cross and leads the procession. He/she also assists the Celebrant in preparing for communion.

Cruet A small, covered pitcher used to hold wine or water.

Dismissal The words said at the end of the Eucharist.

Elements The bread and wine used for Holy Communion.

Epistle Side The right side of the altar when looking from the nave.

Eucharist The service of Holy Communion.

Flagon A large, covered pitcher used to hold wine or water.

Gospel Bearer The acolyte who carries the Gospel book.

Gospel Side The left side of the altar when looking from the nave.

Intinction Cup A small, stemmed cup used to hold wine into which the bread wafer is dipped.

Lavabo Bowl A small bowl used to wash the hands of the Celebrant.

Liturgy Public worship services of the church. Specifically, the word means the work of the people.

Narthex The entrance area to the church, inside the door and before the nave.

Nave The large part of the church where the congregation sits.

Oblations Offerings of bread, wine, and water for the Holy Eucharist.

Offertory Plates The large, brass plates used to collect the offering.

Paschal Candle A large, white candle that burns during the 50 days of Easter, baptisms, and funerals. It symbolizes new light and the resurrection.

Paten A small plate on to which the bread is placed for communion.

Purificator A small, white cloth used to wipe the chalice.

Reverence the Altar Stopping and bowing from the waist towards the altar and cross as a sign of reverence. It is not the altar we are bowing to, but God. It would be more accurate to say that we reverence *toward* the altar!

Sacring Bell The bell at the back of the nave, which is rung by the Celebrant to announce the beginning of the worship service.

Sacristy The small room behind the altar where the liturgical objects, altar linens, and Celebrant vestments are kept.

Sanctuary The area inside the communion rail surrounding the altar.

Taper A long, white wick used in a candle lighter.

Torch Bearer One of two acolytes who carry a torch and accompany the crucifer.

Vestment Any of the garments worn by those participating in a liturgy.

Vestry The room behind the altar where the acolyte and crucifer robes are kept.