

ALTAR CARE HANDBOOK

The Altar Care Committee for St. John's Lutheran Church has oversight of a variety of activities. These are:

- Preparing the chancel for regularly scheduled worship services and occasional services, such as baptisms, weddings and funerals.
- Assisting the pastor with special events/services when requested.
- Coordinating seasonal decorations (e.g. Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, etc.)

GENERAL INFORMATION

All supplies needed for routine weekly altar care are stored as follows:

- Large dry goods – closet
- Small dry goods – island
- Cleaning/polishing supplies – base cabinet under utility sink
- Wine (unconsecrated) – corner base cabinet
(consecrated) – labeled bottle in refrigerator
- Wafers (unconsecrated) – wall cabinet to the right of piscina
(consecrated) – labeled container in refrigerator
(host wafers) – refrigerator door
- Communion vessels (silver) – wall cabinet to the left of piscina
- Communion vessels (pottery) – wall cabinet to the right of piscina
- Trays/individual cups (silver) – base cabinet to the right of piscina
- Trays/individual cups (wooden) – base cabinet to the right of utility sink
- Brass cup for baptismal oil, olive oil and scenting oil – wall cabinet to right of piscina
- Small glass cups – in Communion trays base cabinet to right of piscina

Other supplies, such as candle wicks, oil for candles, extra individual cups, candleholders, etc., which are needed on an infrequent or seasonal basis are stored in various cabinets and drawers. A list of these supplies and their storage areas is maintained in the sacristy and in the Altar Care Handbook.

CHANCEL PREPARATION

- Check seasonal calendar and bulletin to determine appropriate parament color and banner.
- Be sure all chancel furnishings are in place and dusted. Remove any items that will not be used in the service.
- Refresh linens before placing on altar – change as necessary.
- Polish alms basin and offering plates weekly and missal stand at least once a month. Replace offering plate inserts to match seasonal color as necessary.
- Place correct service book on missal stand. If no particular setting is specified, check with Pastor to determine which book to use. (Books are kept inside the Altar.)
- Open Lectionary book/Bible to readings for the day.
 - ***Special volunteers clean and maintain all candles, the Baptismal font and the acolyte lighter. The acolyte coordinator will maintain robes and other supplies for this group.***

AFTER SERVICE

- Remove loose papers from chancel. Discard bulletins. Pastor's sermon should be placed in the sacristy wall basket (beside door to workroom).
- Remove Eucharistic vessels and linens.
- Inspect linens – replace as necessary
- Notify Altar Care coordinator(s) of any necessary repairs or supplies that need to be replenished.

PREPARING HOLY COMMUNION

Both silver and pottery Eucharistic vessels are available to serve Holy Communion.

- Silver is used for all festival services and routinely used during ordinary times.
- Pottery vessels with wooden trays for individual cups are used during Advent and Lent. These vessels may also be used during ordinary times and at other times as directed by the Pastor (e.g. Wednesday services,

SETTING THE TABLE

- Place corporal in the center of the altar on top of the fair linen.





- If there is a cross on the corporal, it should be placed to the front of the altar



- Place chalice in the center of the corporal.



- Drape with a purificator



- Host wafer is centered on the patent. Set the patent on top of the purificator covering the chalice.



- Place pall over host wafer



- Cover all with a veil, making a tent-like covering over chalice and paten.
- Individual Cups:
 - Fill center cup of each tray with white grape juice.

- Stack trays, leaving the second tray empty to receive used cups.
 - Place filled trays in the center of the credence table (behind altar) and cover with a large veil.
- The ciborium is filled with wafers sufficient to serve the congregation.
- Immediately before the service, fill flagon.
 - ***Wine that has been refrigerated will cause condensate on the silver flagon. When possible, bring wine to room temperature before filling the vessel.***
- The flagon and ciborium are placed in the narthex on the table to the right of the double doors. Ushers will bring the elements forward with the offering.
- When a large congregation is anticipated (Easter, Christmas Eve), it is well to prepare a host box with extra wafers. The host box is placed on the credence table beside the individual cup trays.

NOTE – a box with extra wafers and an empty cup tray are always kept inside the altar

AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

- Wine:
 - Wine remaining in the chalice is discarded in the piscina. Rinse chalice in the piscina before washing in the utility sink.
 - Consecrated wine remaining in unused individual cups can be covered and stored in the refrigerator until the following week.
 - Wine in the flagon is returned to the designated bottle and stored in the refrigerator. Rinse the flagon in the piscina before washing in the utility sink.
 - Unused (consecrated) white grape juice is discarded in the piscina.

- Consecrated wafers remaining in the ciborium are stored in the refrigerator in a designed container.
- Individual glass cups should be placed in the plastic basin with warm soapy water. Add a few drops of bleach and soak for about 15 minutes. Rinse thoroughly and allow to air dry on a clean towel. When dry, return them to the Communion trays for storage.
- All vessels used for Holy Communion are washed, dried and returned to their designated space. Silver vessels should be stored in anti-tarnish bags.
- Wooden trays for individual cups are **NOT** washed. Spot clean as necessary with plain water and dry thoroughly before storing.

Re-setting Between Services

- Pour any wine remaining in the chalice into the piscina and wash cup.
- Remove used individual cups to plastic basin and soak until end of second service.
- Replace any individual cups and fill with wine.
- Replenish wine in flagon and wafers in the ciborium. Return both to the Narthex for second service.

NOTE – please leave basin of cups in the piscina, instead of on the counter. Pastor washes his hands before Communion and water with bleach could damage his/her stole

BAPTISM

- Olive oil, brass cup and essential fragrant oil are kept in the wall cabinet with pottery vessels.
- Pastor will prepare oil with essential scent before the service. A baptismal candle and certificate of baptism will be prepared by the church secretary.
- Place a small linen towel, folded in thirds, along with the scented oil and a baptismal candle on the font. Baptismal towels are stored in the linen island.

WEDDINGS

St. John's Lutheran Church has approved policies for weddings. Altar Care volunteers may assist with wedding preparations as requested by the Pastor, in accordance with established policies. It is the responsibility of the bride's family to return the nave and chancel to their original condition following the service.

Altar Care volunteers who are on duty at the time of the wedding should check to see that all is in order before the next worship service.

FUNERALS

Paraments for funerals are in the liturgical color of the season or day.

Altar Care volunteers on duty at the time of a funeral are encouraged to attend in order to assist the pastor and/or prepare Holy Communion for the service.

Palls:

- The casket pall is stored on a wooden rod in the sacristy. Check to be sure it is clean and pressed in advance of the service. The pall is draped on the altar rail in readiness for the funeral director and/or pallbearers. Pall bearers will place the pall on the casket before it enters the nave. ***Flowers are never placed on the pall.***
- An urn pall is stored in the linen island. Urns are placed on a table in the chancel. The pall is placed over the urn before the service begins.
- Check palls after the service to be sure they are clean before storing. If dry cleaning is indicated, notify the Altar Care Coordinator.