

ACOLYTE ROLE AND DUTIES

The tradition of the Church using acolytes has been a long one. For more than 2000 years acolytes have been an important part of a Christian service from torches lighting the way shining on the processional cross to illuminating the dark churches so the priests could read from bible and prayer books. They also assisted the priests in preparing the communion table. The acolyte's place in the church service has always been important and necessary.

An acolyte, by his/her participation as a vested official in the procession and recession, helps to set the tone for worship. Worship is festive and celebrative because as Christians we have much to celebrate; God's continued goodness to all. It is important that the acolyte think of worship as a dignified celebration and that as he/she processes, recesses, and otherwise participates in the service, sets a good model for other worshippers.

How is the acolyte corps set up at St. Paul's?

The acolytes have 3 primary roles of responsibility.

1. Gospel Book & Torch Bearer:

- a. Carries the Gospel Book in the procession before and after the service.
- b. Flanks the Gospel reader and book during the reading of the Gospel. (Discontinued during the COVID-19 restrictions.)
- c. Collects the alms basins at the offertory. (Discontinued during the COVID-19 restrictions.)

2. Crucifer:

- a. Lights the Altar candles before the service and extinguishes them after the service.
- b. Leads the procession in and out of the church carrying the processional cross.
- c. Collects the alms basins if there are no torches assigned. (Discontinued during the COVID-19 restrictions.)
- d. Doubles as a torch bearer during the reading of the Gospel. (Discontinued for now.)

3. Server:

- a. Assists the priests setting the altar for the Eucharist.
- b. Performs any other role necessary to ensure the service runs smoothly.
- c. Doubles as the crucifer or torch bearer if necessary.

As a new acolyte what would be my role in a service?

New acolytes generally start as a torch bearer; currently the Gospel Book bearer until restrictions are lifted. We feel it is a good way to learn the mechanics of the service, the liturgy and the history of the church.

How often would I serve?

The number of times you are asked to serve can be dictated by how many acolytes we have on the roster and how many feast and or Eucharist services there are each month. We try to limit serving to no more than once a month. After the training, you will be sent a schedule showing you what days you are to serve.

If you have any question please feel free to call or email:
Stephen Peple at 804-285-0701; peplesg.va@netzero.net