

Altar Guild Communion Service Duties

Pre-Service Preparation

1. Pick up the keys for the sacristy and lift from the Altar Guild mailbox. The sacristy door key is also used to unlock the cupboards where most of the communion items are stored. Juice is kept in the small refrigerator and bread is stored in the freezer in the kitchen by the lounge.
2. Prepare and place the following items on the credence table in the sanctuary.



Flagon



Chalice



Paten

8:15 Service (one service line)

- 2 flagons with wine
- 1 empty chalice
- 1 chalice with grape juice

10:30 & Summer Services (two service lines)

- 3 flagons with wine
- 2 empty chalices
- 2 chalices with grape juice

Put a thin dab of vaseline on the spouts of all vessels to break the drip.

- 1 paten with wafers

- 1 paten with a loaf of bread
(cut the loaf halfway through
& cover with a cloth napkin)

During preparation for the 8:15 service, remove a loaf of bread from the freezer for use at the 10:30 service. Place it on the counter to thaw.

Bread is typically served during the later service on two-service Sundays and during one-service Sundays in the summer.

- 3 cloth napkins

- 7 cloth napkins

- 1 paper napkin-lined basket
with 3 to 5 cups

- 1 paper napkin-lined basket
with 7 to 9 cups

These cups will be used by communing servers and acolytes.

Also set out 3 to 6 paper napkin-lined baskets for acolyte use in collecting cups during communion.

All baskets can be placed on the table in the hallway, if space is limited on the credence table.

3. Using the lift, transport the communion cup cabinets from the storage area under the credence table to the communion stations. Take out racks of cups (typically, 2 racks from each cabinet for the 8:15 service and 3 racks from each cabinet for the 10:30 and summer services), place them on top of each cabinet, and cover with a linen napkin.

A linen napkin is kept in each cabinet. If needed, additional cloth napkins are stored in the locked cupboard next to the sacristy door.

4. Ensure that the surface of the altar is clean. Move the Bible and bookstand from the credence table to the altar, if needed.

Place 2 communion cups to the right of the bookstand for use by the pastor and assisting minister.

5. Check the kneeling cushions before each service for positioning and cleanliness.
6. Check the eternal candle on the credence table. If needed, refill with oil up to the clear tape mark and relight. Oil is stored on the shelf in the storage closet and matches are kept in a glass container on the counter.
7. Light the candles by the altar 10 minutes before each service, if an acolyte is unavailable. Brass candle lighters are located behind the reedos in the sanctuary and on the wall near the closet storage door in the sacristy. Replacement wax lighting tapers are stored in the locked closet near the sacristy door.
8. Provide support to acolytes, as needed, with lighting of candles and communion service duties.
9. If members bring flowers, provide assistance with placement. Flowers are not typically placed on the altar.
10. Check the service support list posted on the sacristy door for names of members assisting with communion service. If someone listed is not available, ask a confirmed member of the congregation to help serve communion. When a guest pastor is preaching, check to see whether the guest will be assisting with communion service.

Children can be asked to assist with collection of cups, if an acolyte is absent. A back-up option, if acolytes are unavailable, is to place baskets on stands for cup collection. Monitor and replace baskets as needed.

At the 8:15 service, the pastor and assisting minister serve the wafers and wine. One member volunteer is needed to serve the grape juice. One acolyte collects cups.

At the 10:30 and summer services, when there are two service lines, the pastor and assisting minister both serve the wine. Four member volunteers are needed to serve the bread and grape juice. Two acolytes collect cups.

Communion Service

1. Go to the sacristy during the Offertory. Wash your hands and ensure that member servers do the same. Assign service by need or preference and review what to say during communion distribution.

For wafers and bread - "The body of Christ" or "Christ's body given (or broken) for you".

For wine and grape juice - "The blood of Christ" or "The blood of Christ shed for you".

2. Take the basket with communion cups and an additional empty basket, as needed, for acolyte use. Guide the servers into the sanctuary in the area near the credence table during the Offertory response. The acolyte(s) will receive the offering and carry the collection plates to the credence table.
3. After the Lord's Prayer, have each server and acolyte take a cup from the basket. Move down to the area behind the altar to receive communion. After all servers have communed, collect the used cups and give the basket(s) to the acolyte(s). The pastor and assisting minister will distribute the elements to the servers. Cloth napkins are provided for service of bread, wine and grape juice. The flagons of wine and a napkin are left on the altar for use by the Altar Guild member.
4. Communion is served in kneeling or station configuration depending on the liturgical season. The order of communion distribution is wafers or bread, followed by wine, and then grape juice. An acolyte follows with a basket to collect used cups.



8:15 Service

(one service line)



10:30 & Summer
Services

(two service lines)



Station Distribution

(two service lines)

5. The Altar Guild member oversees communion distribution from the altar. At the start of communion, place some empty baskets on the altar. During communion, replenish wine and provide empty baskets for cup collection, as needed. Baskets with used cups can be taken to the sacristy or placed on the table in the hallway. If there are a large number of communicants, monitor the wafers or bread and the grape juice, and replenish, if needed.
6. When communion is over, return all of the elements to the credence table.

Post-Service Clean-Up

1. Check the service support list posted on the sacristy door to see who has volunteered to assist with communion clean-up. Provide instruction and support, as needed.
2. Items needed for clean-up are stored under the sink, in the storage closet, and in the locked cupboard next to the sacristy door. Plastic aprons are hung on the storage closet door.
3. Prepare two tubs of water - one tub filled with hot, soapy water for washing items and the other tub containing cool water with 1 to 2 tablespoons of bleach added for rinsing and disinfecting items (i.e., add 1 tablespoon of bleach per gallon of water, which fills about one-third of the tub).

All communion ware is washed in hot, soapy water, left in the bleach rinse water for about a minute, and then placed upside down on a towel. The outside area of the cups and vessels are dried with a towel. For sanitary reasons, the rim and inside areas are left to air-dry.

4. After each service, calculate the number of communicants by noting how many cups are used - each rack holds 49 cups. Include all who assist with communion service in the count. Record the number on the paper posted on the bulletin board in the sacristy.
5. After the 8:15 service, bring the empty racks into the sacristy to be refilled with clean cups. Due to the bleach rinse, ensure that washed communion ware is not reused for the later service. Place other racks of cups on top of each cabinet, replace the wine chalice and paten, and exchange the leftover cups used by communion servers.

After the 10:30 and summer services, use the lift to transport the communion cup cabinets to the sacristy. After all of the cups have been replaced in the racks, move the cabinets back to the area under the credence table.

Leftover cups are put in a paper napkin-lined basket.

6. Store unused wafers in a plastic bag. Leftover bread can be taken home by the Altar Guild member or given to a communion clean-up volunteer.
7. After the 8:15 service, pour the unused wine from the chalice into a flagon. The flagons with unused wine and the chalice with leftover grape juice can be left on the counter for use during the later service. If wine and juice is left out, cover the flagons and chalice with a cloth napkin or paper towel.
After the 10:30 and summer services, pour unused wine and grape juice from the flagons and chalices back into their respective bottles. Label the juice bottle(s) with the date opened and store on the side shelf in the small refrigerator.
8. After discarding the paper napkins from the used baskets, wipe out each plastic liner, air-dry and reline with new napkins.

9. Return all communion service items to their designated storage areas in the sacristy. The cloth napkins and clean-up towels are to be taken home for laundering and ironing, if needed. On two-service Sundays, the Altar Guild member at the later service has this responsibility.
10. Clean the Plexiglas on the altar, if needed. Check the floor area for wine or juice spills, bread crumbs and candle wax, and clean as needed.
11. Other duties after the 10:30 and summer services
 - Move the Bible and bookstand from the altar to the credence table.
 - Before leaving the sacristy, ensure that windows are closed and locked. The storage closet door should be left open. Check that the cupboards are locked, turn out the lights, and lock the sacristy door.
 - Return the keys to the Altar Guild mailbox.