

**Worship Program –  
Altar Guild Guidelines and Procedures**

The Altar Guild is responsible for all items on the Altar, that includes hangings, coverings, linens, candles, chalice, host and collection plates. They are also responsible to ensure the Altar is properly prepared for regular Sunday worship and for special worship services. After services, the Altar Guild clears the Altar. To ensure the items remain in good condition, the Altar Guild is responsible for the maintenance of the items. Periodically, the items need to be cleaned, laundered, polished, restocked and inventoried.

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## **Setting up the cart in the Altar Guild Room for Services**

The cart is used to transport the Altar items from the Altar Guild Room into the Sanctuary. The items are also placed on the cart when transporting the items from the Sanctuary to the Altar Guild Room.

### ***For the 8 a.m. Service***

3 service books (Service Book, Gospel Book, Lectionary Book)

Brass book holder

Linen to go under chalice (corporal)

Large chalice with purificator, paten, priest host, pall, veil, burse (one purificator inside)

Small silver cruet with water (about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full), handle faces the wall

Small silver cruet with wine (about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full), handle faces the wall

Note: the water cruet should be placed to the left of the wine cruet

Silver bread box with at least one row of wafers

1 replacement candle for sacristy light

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of month – 2 paper napkins, 2 containers with cotton and oil for healing service

### ***For the 10 a.m. Service***

#### Back of Sanctuary

Large wine flagon with one cup of wine

100 wafers in ciborium (silver container with top)

#### Shelf behind Altar

Small chalice with purificator

Water cruet, chalice, wine cruet – cruet handles should face the wall, with the water cruet to the left of the wine cruet

### ***For the Healing Service (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month)***

2 paper napkins for healing service, 2 containers with cotton and oil for healing service

### ***For the Altar***

Clean, large chalice with purificator, paten, priest host, pall, veil, burse (one purificator inside)

## **Setting the Altar for St. Mark's Worship Service**

Sundays: 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.

### ***Altar hangings and coverings***

1. The altar may or may not have hangings which reflect the color of the season or special days of the church calendar. The top is covered with a long white cloth (fair linen) which typically hangs over the ends of the Altar.

### ***Eucharistic candles***

1. Eucharistic candles are placed on the altar, one on each side of the altar a hands width from the front and from each end.

***Prepare the chalice and host*** (*directions are from the perspective of standing behind the altar and facing the congregation*):

1. **Corporal:** The corporal is a large, white square piece of linen with an embroidered cross in the center or at the bottom of one side in the middle. It should be placed in the center of the altar with the cross facing the priest. The back edge of the corporal should be no more than one inch from the back edge of the fair linen.
2. **Chalice:** The chalice is placed on the middle square of the corporal so that the priest can easily reach it. The cross on the chalice should face the congregation.
3. **Purificator:** The chalice will be covered with a small, square or rectangular piece of linen with an embroidered cross, folded along its length.
4. **Paten and Pall:** The small, flat dish (**paten**) that holds the host should be placed on top of the purificator. Put a large host (priest's host) on the paten and cover it with a square, stiff board called the **pall**.
5. **Veil and Burse:** The cloth made of heavier material, usually the color of the altar hanging, is called the **veil** and is used to cover the entire chalice. A **burse** (stiff folder made of same cloth as veil and folded to form a pocket) may be placed on top of the veil. An extra purificator is usually kept inside.
6. **Book Stand:** The stand that holds the **service book** is placed to the left of the chalice within reach of the priest.
7. **Gospel book:** The Gospel book should be placed at the front edge of the altar to the right of the chalice.

### ***Preparing the altar – Seasonal Colors or just Fair Linen***

1. Altar hangings – seasonal colors or just fair linen on altar
2. Hanging on lectern to match altar hangings
3. Check fair linen and change if needed.
4. Replace sanctuary candle – red glass holder
5. Change hymn number boards (2)
6. Slotted spoon – a slotted spoon should be included in altar preparations when bread (rather than wafers) is used for the service (e.g., during Lent, or at a Vestry retreat). The spoon can be used to remove crumbs and pieces of bread from the wine in the chalice.

### ***Preparing the Shelf Behind Altar*** (*directions are from facing the shelf – with your back to the congregation*)

1. Put a white, rectangular cloth on the right end of the shelf and place on it (left to right: Cruet of water, and a cruet of wine. Handles of cruets should face the wall.
2. A container of extra wafers (bread box) should also be placed on the cloth.
3. For the 10:00 am service, a small chalice covered with a purificator should be included on the shelf.

### ***Back of Sanctuary***

1. The large wine flagon and ciborium (silver container with top) with wafers should be placed in the back of the sanctuary for the 10:00 a.m. service.
2. For the 8:00 a.m. service, the wine cruet and bread box can be placed in the back.

### ***Collection Plates***

1. For the 8 a.m. service place one brass collection plate at the back of the Sanctuary.
2. For the 10 a.m. service place two brass collection plates on the left (lectern side) end of the shelf behind the altar and stand the large silver collection plate behind them.

### **Setting the Altar for Healing Service**

Healing is offered on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month, for 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. services.

Place two oil stocks with cotton and oil and two paper napkins on the shelf behind the altar.

## **Clearing the altar**

1. After a service, consecrated wine and wafers will be on the left side (lectern side) of the shelf behind the altar and unconsecrated wine and wafers will be on the right side (choir side).
2. Unconsecrated wine may be poured back into a wine bottle, or, at the discretion of the altar guild member, consumed or poured down the sink. Unconsecrated wafers can be stored in a baggie, labeled accordingly, for future use.
3. Consecrated wine should be consumed or poured outside on grass and ground. It should not be poured down the sink because St. Mark's does not have a sink (piscina) that can be used for this purpose. Consecrated wafers can be stored in a baggie labeled accordingly for use by the priests. They can also be used to replenish the supply kept in the aumbry behind the altar. If there is an over-supply of consecrated wafers they may be consumed or buried outdoors.
4. The aumbry should be checked periodically to make sure that it has a fresh supply of consecrated wafers.

## **San Marcos Support**

San Marcos is responsible for their service needs. Check to see if they have wine and wafers available in their cupboard and drawer.

## **Preparing for Special and Seasonal Services**

Note: Please take the lead in preparing for a special event (e.g., a baptism) if it falls on your scheduled Sunday. Holy Week and Christmas Week will require a "team effort" since there will be multiple services which must be prepared.

### ***Baptism***

Place the baptismal font with bowl in front of the center of the altar. A small wooden table should be placed nearby in front of the first pew on the choir side of the church Sanctuary. Items to be placed on the table include:

1. Silver-plated baptismal pitcher filled with room temperature water
2. A small white towel
3. A baptismal candle
4. An oil stock with cotton and chrism oil
5. A silver-plated shell (optional – this is seldom used at St. Mark's)
6. The Paschal candle should be lit and placed on the ledge behind the baptismal font and in front of the altar.

**Confirmation**

**Weddings**

**Funerals**

**Holidays: Christmas, Thanksgiving**

**Preparing for Holy Week**

***Palm Sunday – Red hangings***

1. Use silver and brass – NO CANDELABRA

***Maundy Thursday – Red hangings***

1. Service with seder meal and foot washing
2. Two stations - bowl, pitcher of water, chair and towels
3. Eucharistic service in sanctuary
4. Conclude w/stripping of altar in silence
5. Everything is removed

***Good Friday – Black hangings***

1. Nothing on altar
2. Bulletins and offering plate on table at back

**Tenebrae Service**

- a. Tenebrae services in one form or another date back to the seventh or eighth century as Holy Week devotions. The word Tenebrae means “darkness” or shadows,” and the service is characterized by the successive extinguishing of light as the service progresses. No service of the church year I more biblical – every word of Tenebrae is taken verbatim from the Scriptures – and few are as moving.
- b. Typically, the Office of Tenebrae consists of three sections, called “Nocturns,” each of which includes several readings, responses, and the Lord’s Prayer. This version, developed by the lay readers of the Church of the Holy Comforter in Richmond, Virginia, is simpler and more meditative. It consists of seven sets of readings: the last seven sayings of Jesus from the cross, taken from the three gospels that tell the story (each differently), and the Hebrew scriptures that they reference. Often, the words recorded are quoted directly from the Old Testament; Jesus was, after all, the fulfillment of Scripture.
- c. Following each lesson, there will be a silence, a time to reflect. You may wish to listen for a phrase or image on which to meditate.

- d. At the end of the lessons, the Christ candle is carried out and extinguished, for the Light of Christ has gone out of the world, to be rekindled at the Easter Vigil. The bell is tolled 33 times, once for each year of Jesus' life. At the end of the service, the lights will be raised enough for you to leave silently.

### ***Easter – White hangings***

1. Candelabra
2. Silver and brass

#### Paschal Candle

- a. The candle remains lit at all worship services throughout Easter season (or in some traditions until Ascension Day, when it is extinguished just after the Gospel), during which time it is located in the sanctuary close to the altar. After the Easter season, it is frequently placed near the baptismal font. Before 1955, the option existed of blessing the baptismal font on the Vigil of Pentecost, and this was the only time the Pascal candle would be lit at services after Ascension.
- b. The Paschal candle is also lit during baptisms to signify the Holy Spirit and fire that John the Baptist promised to those who were baptized in Christ. During the baptismal rite in many traditions, a small lit candle will be given to the newly baptized by a member of the community, with words similar to, *“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they might see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven”* (Matthew 5:16, NRSV, 1989.)
- c. The Paschal candle is also lit and placed near the casket urn during funeral services such as the Mass of Repose and Mass of Requiem. This is to signify the hope of the resurrection into which Christians are baptized.

### **Scheduling**

Scheduling is done in quarters. Dates and names should be submitted to the parish administrator about 1 month before the upcoming quarter (March, June, September and December) begins.

1. Before submitting the schedule ask altar guild members to let you know about possible conflicts. Encourage them to exchange dates or arrange substitutes.
2. The Parish administrator will include schedule information in the master schedule and publish it in the weekly bulletin.
3. Be sure each member gets a schedule by hand delivery or e-mail. Post a copy in sacristy on bulletin board.

## **Ordering – as needed**

Ask the parish administrator for directions for ordering and charging to church from catalogs or online.

1. Wine should be ordered when about 6 bottles remain. Request that the parish administrator place an order for two cases. It will take about two weeks for delivery. Service Distributors, ABC Board authorizes wholesale purchase.
2. Large priest hosts (5 ¾ dia) are scored and break into small pieces. Order 6 or more boxes of wheat hosts (two needed per Sunday). Order when only one box remains.
3. Small hosts are available at 1000 per container. (can be ordered in boxes or jars). The white with cross option is less expensive than the wheat. Need about 150 per Sunday.
4. Other supplies as needed:
5. Candles that burn for 7 days are needed for the sanctuary candle (red glass holder). Check AUTOM for price.
6. Baptismal candles order as few as possible –about 12 if available separately.
7. Liquid wax for candles - Buy about 1 gallon as it will be needed for Christmas candles

### ***Online Sources:***

1. Amazon
2. Autom -[www.Autom.com](http://www.Autom.com)
3. Cokesbury
4. Almy
5. Church Supply Warehouse

## **Silversmiths Repairs**

Lawrence Miller - Gallery of Treasures

121 South Royal Street, Alexandria 22314

703-548-0659

[www.LawrenceMiller.com](http://www.LawrenceMiller.com)

David Sisson - Metal Magic

6239 Shields Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22303

703-660-9180



## Polishing of Silver and Brass Items

All silver and silver plate items can be polished.

Do not polish brass items that have a “shiny” finish i.e., do not polish the brass book stand, the tall altar candle holders, the processional cross, the paschal candle holder or the advent wreath holders.

**Note:** Most of our brass collection plates are older and have been polished in the past which removed any protective lacquer. These plates can be lightly polished for special occasions but they will darken again quickly. **Please use polishing cloths instead of Brasso or other commercial brass cleaning products. Polishing cloths for silver and gold and for brass and other metals are located in the plastic bin underneath the sink in the Altar Guild Room.**

## Laundry

A large part of laundering altar linens is the care given immediately after the service. Keep pre-wash stain removers on hand in the sacristy. **It is not necessary for all linens to be washed by hand.**

**ALTAR LINENS SHOULD NEVER BE PUT IN THE DRYER  
FOLDS IN THE ALTAR LINENS SHOULD NEVER BE IRONED FLAT.**

Corporals and purificators should be folded in thirds with cross on top.

### FAIR LINEN

Put inside a mesh bag or pillow-case in washer to prevent tangling. The fair linen should be rolled inside-out with the 'up' side against the cardboard so that it may be rolled onto the altar with little adjustment. The fair linen can be ironed (use steam ironing), if needed, before placing on the altar. There is an ironing board and iron in the Sacristy for this purpose.

Please sign out linens you take home to launder – types of linen and date, and sign in the date when you return them.

**Please return all linens to Sacristy clean and ready for use.**