

## Worship Ministry

### Flower Guild Guidelines

The Flower Guild ensures the flowers are set up for Sunday worship services and may be called upon to set up the flowers for special occasions.

In the arranging of flowers, remember to take pleasure in the glories and gifts given to us by God. The flowers are a sacrifice to God and an offering to his glory, let them be a joy to the arranger. Always pray first and arrange second. For many years at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Sidoux Mitchell provided flower arranging workshops to teach new volunteers. Information obtained from her workshops was a basis for these guidelines. Sidoux also brought in beautiful flowers from her garden for many Sunday arrangements.

### The Basics

1. All arrangements should reflect the season of the church and of the year.
2. Check the church calendar to see what altar drapes will be used (i.e. red, green, white). This will affect both the style and the color of the flowers. You might want to check with the altar guild to see if there is some special need. Sometimes the Rector will call with a special request as to color or type of flower.
3. There are **NO** flowers during Lent or Advent. These are times of penitence, desolation, and waiting for Christ. It is possible to create an arrangement which will reflect those themes using bare branches, seasonal greenery or budding branches. **BUT NOT FLOWERS.**
4. Flowers are considered a "nice to have" but not a need. Many churches will not have flowers unless there is a donor or special occasion for the flowers. However, when there are gardens in bloom, it is right to bring the gifts of the season into the church. The beauty and bounty of spring and summer is occasion enough.

### Flower Sources

1. Mid-Atlantic Virginia Wholesale Flowers - The flowers are purchased and a bill is sent to St. Mark's Episcopal Church (St. Mark's) or a request for reimbursement is provided. In order to pay the bill or reimburse the purchaser, the parish administrator needs the receipt from the purchase of the flowers. Flowers purchased at this location, should have an inch cut off of the flower stems and put into a deep bucket of water. These flowers are purchased here can be arranged the day of purchase.
2. Gardens – You or members of the church may want to volunteer some of their garden flowers. Cut the day before you do the arrangement. Strip away lower leaves and put the flowers in a deep bucket of water.
3. Roadside stands – Flowers purchased at these stands are cut the day before you arrange the flowers. Again, strip the lower leaves off of the stems and put in a deep bucket of water. This is also the place to purchase branches for line and flowers for fill.
4. Farmers Markets – Town Hall Square in Alexandria on early Saturday mornings. There are nice flowers in season, cut the stems and put in deep bucket of water.
5. Cost of flower arrangements should be about \$40 or less. Exception is Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.

## **HARDWARE SOURCES**

1. Hollin Hall Variety Store on Fort Hunt Road between Belle Haven and Fort Hunt Park.  
This store has vases, wire, 98 cent blocks of oasis, florist tape, florist clay and pin holders
2. Any Pier One store has unusual and large vases if necessary.
3. Most hardware stores have clippers and wire.

## **Nitty Gritty of Arrangements**

1. To be seen, the finished arrangement should fit somewhere between 27 and 34 inches in height and 21 inches or so at the widest point. This size is not a rule, but a suggestion.
2. For large arrangements, you will need about 3-5 stems of material for line, 3-5-7 stems of main color material, 3-5 stems of secondary material, filler (big bunch), and greenery (big bunch). Not a rule, just a starting point.
3. Vases should be between 9 and 13 inches high with 5 to 12-inch openings. Again, this is a suggestion, not a rule.
4. Vases may be crystal, pottery, china, baskets, brass, silver or glass. Suit the season:
  - a. Baskets in spring and summer,
  - b. pottery for less formal occasions,
  - c. brass and silver for holidays.
5. Colors are a problem in a nave as large as St. Mark's.
  - a. Blues, purples and many reds will not be visible from the middle of the church.
  - b. Whites, yellows, gold, powder blue, light pinks, chartreuse greens, grey and clear reds tend to be most easily seen.

## **Glory of Arrangements**

1. When one is new to arranging, it helps to decide on a container for the flowers and then acquire the flowers. Having the vase beforehand lets you organize the equipment necessary for holding the flowers upright and in the vase. Usually, florist foam, known as oasis, taped, stuffed or wired in place is the easiest to use.
2. Soak the oasis for about 15 minutes before placing in a vase and beginning to arrange. Have extra oasis because sometimes the arrangement does not work and you will have to start over. By that time, the oasis is a sodden green mass of holes and offers no support.
3. Clip the base of each stem before you use the material, strip leaves away, remove dead leaves and flowers and gently prune the extra little branches or the excess flower bracts for cleaner line.
4. Work initially with triangles. All material should be of different heights and different angles. Keep the face of the flowers out. Try to create a 3-sided arrangement that is nice from a distance and improves on a closer look.
5. With clippers in hand, wire nearby, and oasis or pin holder firmly set in the bottom of the vase, you are ready to start. One can work at the altar in the Sanctuary or in the Sacristy. When you are familiar with the space the flowers need, you can even arrange them at home and bring them in on Saturday. Remember that the flowers rarely last beyond 3 days but a teaspoon of bleach in the water will help prolong their life.

Reference the Flower Guild Basics pages linked on the website for pictorial view.

## All Things in Their Due Season

1. Materials in Winter:
  - a. Line:
    - i. Sweet gum branches, red twig maple, tortured willow, camellia, red pine, mugo pine, some junipers, dogwood, magnolia, wisteria.
  - b. Color
    - i. Camellia, chrysanthemum, roses, poinsettia, and the imported exotics such as protea, anthurium, orchids.
  - c. Fill
    - i. Azalea, pine, boxwood, yew, hemlock, purchased bakers fern, winterberry, holly
  - d. Greenery
    - i. All of the fill can function as covering for the wire and oasis.
2. Materials in Spring
  - a. Line
    - i. All of the winter line materials plus budding forsythia, quince, azalea, viburnum, redbud, cherry.
  - b. Color
    - i. Dutch iris, daffodils, tulips, camellia, peony, lilies, sweetpea, larkspur, delphinium, allium, snapdragons, lilac, full roses
  - c. Fill
    - i. Peruvian lilies, little carnations, short stems of flowering branches, bleeding heart, columbine
  - d. Greenery
    - i. Peony leaves, hosta, ferns
3. Materials for Summer
  - a. Line
    - i. Grape, iris fronds, queen anne's lace, daylily bud, viburnum, mock orange
  - b. Color
    - i. Lily, hydrangea, Japanese iris, daisies, phlox, gerbera, zinnia, sunflowers, goldenrod, yarrow, gerbera daisies, just about anything that blooms and is big
  - c. Fill
    - i. Artemisia, queen anne's lace, goldenrod, feverfew, bee balm, baby's breath, false dragonhead
  - d. Greenery
    - i. Hosta, ferns, honeysuckle
4. Materials for Fall
  - a. Line
    - i. Tall grasses, cattails, dried goldenrod and yarrow, branches of colored leaves
  - b. Color
    - i. Dahlia, chrysanthemum, aster, zinnia, cosmos, bittersweet, nandina
  - c. Fill
    - i. Wild asters, baby's breath, miniature chrysanthemum, daisies
  - d. Greenery
    - i. Forsythia, ferns, hosta, azalea

