

ASSISTING MINISTER GUIDELINES

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

February 2019

Thank you for your service to God and Good Shepherd congregation! In Lutheran worship, members of the congregation are encouraged to deep involvement in worship, and to share in the assisting roles of worship as their abilities allow, in addition to the clergy of the parish. Assisting Ministers are important to our understanding of worship and should approach their responsibilities with prayer, practice and preparation. Assisting ministers are not just helpers in the absence of ordained people; they have their own rightful role to fill, steeped in the early history of the church itself.

Schedule:

Scheduling is done by a computer program administered in the church office. The schedule for the month is posted online at <http://gslutheran.org> and paper copies are available in the information rack in the narthex.

- Check the schedule to see when you are assigned to serve.
- If you know a month in advance that you are unable to serve for a specific date or dates, please do contact the church Office Coordinator, so you will not be scheduled.
- If you cannot serve your assigned time, please first try to switch with another Assisting Minister, either one scheduled that month or any other Assisting Minister. Call the church Office Coordinator with your replacement so that the verger can be informed.
- The church office can help if you can't find a replacement. However, keep in mind that there are approximately 30 Sunday servants each Sunday. Please make every effort to find your own replacement.
- You will receive an email reminder.

A Tiny History of the Minister's Role in the Church:

In the early church, the primary minister or priest was the assembly of believers. Through baptism and the power of the Spirit, disciples become Christ's body in the world, and share his mission and ministry as "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9), who offer their sacrifice of praise to God in worship and of service in mission to the neighbor in need. In 1 Corinthians 14:26b Paul states: "when you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up." Early in the church's life, the presiding minister's functions were primarily focused on preaching and offering the prayer of thanksgiving at the table. All other aspects of worship were carried out by other ministers and by the assembly itself. Acts 6:1-6 notes the apostles' call to "prayer and to serving the word", while the deacon's call was to "wait on tables." Both are called out of the multitude of the disciples, each for specific ministries of service, or *diakonia*, on behalf of the church's mission.

As those who served the table for the sake of the poor, deacons were a natural intermediary between the assembly's offering, the presiding minister's prayer over the offering, and the subsequent distribution of the offering to the needy. The deacon's role developed in worship leadership to include:

- Reading scripture
- Leading the prayers of intercession
- Receiving the offering
- Setting out bread and wine for the Lord's supper
- Sending the assembly to go and serve the neighbor in love

These responsibilities of the deacon in the early church should look familiar to you as a member of this congregation; they are seen in the duties of both the assisting minister and of other ministers, whom we have chosen to call Sunday Servants.

Who Is The Assisting Minister?

The assisting minister's role is varied, even within our own congregation. You may be asked to perform a variety of tasks, or even to react in the moment. The dynamic of the assisting minister role is shaped by its dual responsibilities of assisting the congregation in its worship and assisting the presiding minister in her or his leadership. The assisting minister is called to a "holy presence": an awareness that God is at work with and through you in the midst of the assembly. While we first receive God's grace and mercy as a gift, we also respond to it by our worship. We proclaim God's mercy and love not only with words – scripture, prayer, song – but also through our patterned ritual actions. Worship leaders – the presiding minister and assisting minister - model graceful, shared action in their work together.

The assisting minister need not be able to sing parts of the liturgy to be effective. You are engaged in and with the presiding minister and other servants, in contributing towards a worship experience full of meaning, and heartfelt communion with other members and with our Savior. Through practice and experience, gaining both confidence and competence, this connection deepens and benefits the whole.

Nuts and Bolts: Guidelines for Assisting Minister Duties: [8:30 am]

Preparation for assisting ministry begins with some "nuts and bolts", which will initially include spending a bit of your time in the sanctuary in actual training: going over the "nuts and bolts" of coming in, going out, where to sit or stand, and so on. The guidelines below help to prepare you for this and other elements of your duties, but are not a replacement for training. Even if you are experienced in another congregation, or even this one, it is important to attend scheduled training to ensure all assisting ministers are "on the same page" and are given consistent instruction in preparation for service.

When You Arrive For the Worship Service: (arrive 15 minutes before service starts).

- Put on an alb from the sacristy (be dressed and ready at least 10 minutes before service).
- Pick up the Assisting Minister Binder in the Sacristy.
- Let the pastor know if you are *not* singing, but if you *are*, and need help with the Kyrie or other music, arrive early enough to meet with the organist to get the help you need.
- Let the vergers know that you are present, and check briefly with the pastor just before service in the event that some last minute change has occurred.

During the Service:

- During the "Opening Hymn" process with the pastor, and be seated behind the altar.
- When it is time for the "Greeting" go with the pastor to the altar, to the right of the pastor.
- After the "Greeting" lead the "Kyrie" and stay at the altar and lead the "Hymn of Praise" with the pastor.
- Following the "Prayer of the Day" return to your seat.
- You will lead the "Psalmody" if it is scheduled that day. Following the "First Reading", stand and move to the altar. The Psalm will be spoken responsively with the congregation.
- After the "Hymn of the Day", go to the altar on the right of the pastor.
- The Pastor may note specific "Prayer Concerns" before "The Prayers of Intercession" begin. You will begin the prayer with those petitions of "The Prayers of Intercession" marked "A".

- When the prayers have concluded, “Share the Peace” with the congregation and then invite them to “Sharing the Peace “ with each other. During contagious flu season “Sharing the Peace “ may be omitted.
- During the offering, assist the pastor in preparing the Holy Communion and then sit or stand with the pastor. Sanitize your hands.
- During the “Offertory Response”, after the pastor has returned the offering plates to the credence table, follow the pastor to the altar. Remain at the pastor’s right side.
- Lead the “Offertory Prayer.” Return to your seat location while the pastor begins the “Great Thanksgiving.”
- “Communion” will be by the common or individual cups or by intinction.
- “Communion” by cup begins with the pastor communing you first and then you commune the pastor. Follow the pastor with a tray to commune the other worship servants.
- When communing the congregation, the communion assistant will distribute individual glasses first, followed by you with the chalice.
- Offer the chalice to those who have not taken an individual glass. As they drink say to them clearly and individually, **“The blood of Christ shed for you.”** *These words are as important as the words the pastor is saying for in them the person hears the declaration of Christ’s grace, and they should be said to each person communing individually and distinctly.* Wipe the lip of the chalice with the linen purificator after each person drinks from it and turn the chalice slightly after each person.
- “Communion by intinction takes place in front of the altar. You will be given a chalice of wine and a chalice of grape juice and will stand next to the pastor(s).
With a single pastor, stand next to the pastor on the side of the nave being communed. Switch to the other side of the pastor to commune the other side of the nave.
- Those communing will dip the wafer they have received from the pastor in one of the chalices. Do not let them drink from the chalice. If they have already put the bread in their mouth do not let them remove it and dip it in the chalice—the pastor can give them another wafer.
- When two people are to distribute wafers and there is only one pastor, you may be asked to distribute wafers along side of the pastor. To each person communing you give a wafer and say, **“The body of Christ given for you”.**
- At the conclusion of the communion help the pastor clear the altar and return to the altar at the pastor’s right hand.
- Following the “Table Blessing” pray, the “Post-Communion Prayer.”
- After the “Benediction” you and the pastor return to your seats.
- If present the Crucifer leads the recess during Sending Song, followed by the choir when present.
- Recess with the pastor to the back of the nave at the sanctuary doors.
- When the hymn is concluded, speak the words of the “Dismissal” as printed in the bulletin.
- Stand with the pastors to greet the congregation.

Before you leave, return the alb and Assisting Minister Binder to their proper places in the Sacristy.

Nuts and Bolts: Guidelines for Assisting Minister Duties: [10:45 am]

Preparation for assisting ministry begins with some “nuts and bolts”, which will initially include spending a bit of your time in the sanctuary in actual training: going over the “nuts and bolts” of coming in, going out, where to sit or stand, and so on. The guidelines below help to prepare you for this and other elements of your duties, but are not a replacement for training. Even if you are experienced in another congregation, or even this one, it is important to attend scheduled training to ensure all assisting ministers are “on the same page” and are given consistent instruction in preparation for service.

When You Arrive For the Worship Service: (arrive 15 minutes before service starts).

- Pick up the Assisting Minister Binder in the Sacristy.
- Let the vergers know that you are present, and check briefly with the pastor just before service in the event that some last minute change has occurred.

During the Service:

- During the “Call to Worship” process with the pastor, and be seated on the front row.
- After the “Song of the Day”, go to the altar and stand to the right of the pastor.
- The Pastor may note specific “Prayer Concerns” before “The Prayers of Intercession” begin. You will begin the prayer with those petitions of “The Prayers of Intercession” marked “A”.
- When the prayers have concluded, “Share the Peace” with the congregation, and then invite them to “Sharing the Peace “ with each other. During contagious flu season “Sharing the Peace “ may be omitted.
- During the offering, assist the pastor in preparing the Holy Communion and then sit or stand with the pastor. Sanitize your hands.
- During the “Offertory Song”, after the pastor has returned the offering plates to the credence table, follow the pastor to the altar. Remain at the pastor’s right side. Lead the “Offering Prayer.”
- “Communion” will be by the common cup or individual glasses or by intinction.
- “Communion” by cup begins with the pastor communing you first and then you commune the pastor. Follow the pastor with a tray to commune the other worship servants.
- When communing the congregation, the communion assistant will distribute individual glasses first, followed by you with the chalice.
- Offer the chalice to those who have not taken an individual glass. As they drink say to them clearly and individually, **“The blood of Christ shed for you.”** *These words are as important as the words the pastor is saying for in them the person hears the declaration of Christ’s grace, and they should be said to each person communing individually and distinctly.* Wipe the lip of the chalice with the linen purificator after each person drinks from it and turn the chalice slightly after each person.
- “Communion by intinction takes place in front of the altar. You will be given a chalice of wine and a chalice of grape juice and will stand next to the pastor(s). The pastor, assisting minister and communion assistants will commune each other after the congregation is served.
- With a single pastor, stand next to the pastor on the side of the nave being communed. Switch to the other side of the pastor to commune the other side of the nave.
- Those communing will dip the wafer they have received from the pastor in one of the chalices. Do not let them drink from the chalice. If they have already put the bread in their mouth do not let them remove it and dip it in the chalice—the pastor can give them another wafer.
- When two people are to distribute wafers and there is only one pastor, you may be asked to distribute wafers along side of the pastor. To each person communing you give a wafer and say, **“The body of Christ given for you”.**
- At the conclusion of the communion help the pastor clear the altar and return to the altar at the pastor’s right side.
- Following the “Table Blessing” by the pastor, pray the “Post-Communion Prayer.”
- After the “Benediction” exit with the pastor down the center aisle.
- When the “Sending song” is concluded, speak the words of the “Dismissal” as printed in the bulletin.
- Stand with the pastor to greet the congregation.

Before you leave, return the Assisting Minister Binder to its proper place in the Sacristy.