

The Nova Scotia Board of Anglican Church Women



*Adapted for St. John's Anglican Church Wolfville, Parish of Horton*

## **ALTAR / SANCTUARY GUILD MANUAL - 2022**



**A LABOUR OF LOVE MINISTRY**

Parish of Horton, St. John's Anglican Church, Anglican Church Women, (ACW) is pleased to put together this instruction booklet to assist Altar Guild members and others to be able to carry out their sacred ministry in caring for the celebrations of the Holy Eucharist - Holy Communion being the central point of Christian worship.

We hope it will be useful for members as a guide and also as a teaching tool in the parish, church or region.

An Altar Guild is an integral part of life in the parish, when members feel a special closeness to our Lord as they prepare the Altar for services of Holy Communion. It is a time when they can put aside the cares of the day and take advantage of the quiet and peacefulness of the Sanctuary.

The Guild exists to assist clergy, so must be loyal to the Rector for the office he/she holds and to other members for the sacred work they do, which is an offering to God, to whom nothing but the best can be given.

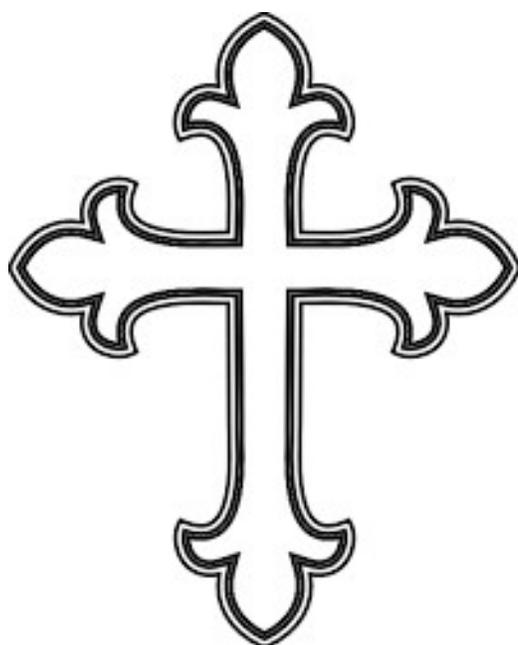
Their duties consist of taking care of all Altar linens, as well as setting up the Altar for Sunday morning, weekday services, funerals and baptisms. They clean the brass, etc. In other words, what you see on the Altar during services of Holy Communion has been lovingly prepared by a member of the Altar Guild.

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## Altar Guild Prayers

Almighty God, grant we beseech you, that we may handle Holy things with reverence, and perform our work with such faithfulness and devotion that it may rise with acceptance before you and obtain Thy blessing; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, Bless the work which this Altar Guild undertakes in Your name for the care of the Altar in our church. Grant us such love of this holy place that we may handle Your holy things with reverence and perform Your work with such faithfulness and devotion that it may be acceptable to You and a blessing to all who worship here. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

## **Welcome to Altar Guild**

Whether your group is called “Altar” Guild or “Sanctuary” Guild, the basic duty of the Guild is to prepare the necessary items for celebration of the Eucharist and any of the other sacraments and offices of the church, so that they may be conducted in decency, order and beauty.

An Altar Guild is an integral part of the life of a parish and the ladies (and gentleman) who participate consider their work a sacred duty. They feel a special closeness to our Lord as they prepare the Altar for services. It is a time when they can put aside cares of the day and take advantage of the quiet and peacefulness of the Sanctuary.

When possible, Altar Guild members work in teams of two, perhaps for one or two months of the year (depending upon your membership.) Duties consist of taking care of all Altar linens and setting up the Altar for Holy Communion. They also clean and polish the brass, silver, etc. Some groups also make the Palm Crosses for Palm Sunday.

## **Preparation for Your Altar Work**

1. Try not to be in a rush. You are doing a special and holy task for God.
2. In the church or in the place where you prepare the vessels for the service, etc. say a prayer to God to help you with your setting up of the altar for each service.
3. It is best to work with another person, especially if there is vacuuming and dusting and other duties to be accomplished.

## **All About the Altar Linens**

All worn out altar linens should be burned and the ashes poured into the picina or buried in the earth. Altar linens should be made from good quality linen. Nowadays such linen is fairly easy to maintain. All of the altar linens have a cross or other liturgical symbols embroidered on them. These linens may be purchased (see Resources and Supplies) or the talented seamstresses among you may want to make and embroider the altar linens themselves.

When making altar linen, always wash and iron the linen first, to avoid shrinkage, before measuring and cutting it. Fine pure cotton thread should be used for all hems and flat embroidery. The embroidery on all linens should be as flat as possible.

When buying or making altar linens, consider acquiring at least one extra set. In **emergency or temporary situations**, white napkins and tablecloths made of cloth or even paper may be used. Suggested Altar linens, necessary for a church with 1 weekly service, are listed below.

- 2 corporals, 18"x18," or 21"x 21"
- 6 purificators, 12"x12"
- 2 palls, 8"x 8" or 7"x7"
- 2 lavabo towels, 12" x 18"
- 1 chalice veil and burse for each season
- 1 baptism towel, 12"x18"
- 2 fair linen clothes the width of the Altar top, and the length hangs over each end 18" to 2 feet
- 2 credence cloths, big enough to cover the credence table with a little 'hanging over' allsides

### **The Fair Linen**

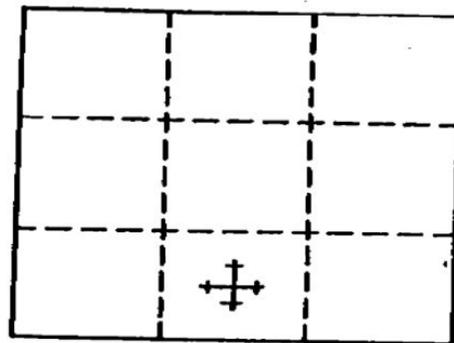
The Fair Linen is the exact width of the Altar Table, and the length should hang at least 18 inches to 2 feet over each end. The cloth should have 5 crosses embroidered on it, one near each corner of the Table, and one in the center of the Table; if making the fair linen, the hem should be about 2" and the corners mitered. The corner crosses, about 2 inches in diameter, may be a little smaller than the central 3 inch cross. The Fair Linen Cloth represents Christ's burial cloth. The Fair Linen is never folded. It is stored on a roller.

### **The Corporal**

The Corporal is a linen square with a small cross embroidered on the center front. It is the cloth upon which the Chalice is placed. The corporal is either placed on the center of the Altar before the service or, if a burse is used, it is put in the burse to be placed on the altar by the priest. If making this linen, the hem should be very narrow and the corners mitered and the small cross should be embroidered on the front center. The Corporal also represents one of our Lord's burial cloths. The Corporal is folded good side up, three folds lengthwise and three folds crosswise. Folded in this manner, the embroidered cross will not be visible until the Corporal is opened on the Altar.

Corporal Folding Diagram

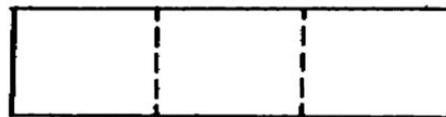
Good  
side  
UP!



fold #2

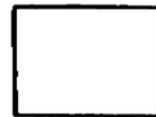
fold #1

fold #3



fold #4

Result.  
Cross is  
hidden inside.

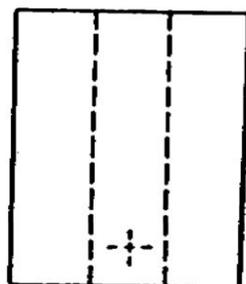


**The Lavabo Towel**

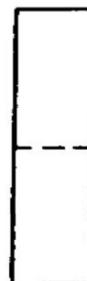
The Lavabo towel or Mundatory is the towel for the Priest's Lavabo. It should be 12 by 18 inches and made with a narrow hem on all sides. It is embroidered with a small cross or lily lengthwise on the front center. **The Baptismal towel** is the same size as the Lavabo towel, but may have a scallop shaped shell embroidered on it. Both towels are folded alike as shown below:

Lavabo Towel Folding Diagram

Good  
side  
down.



Folds 1 and 2



Fold 3

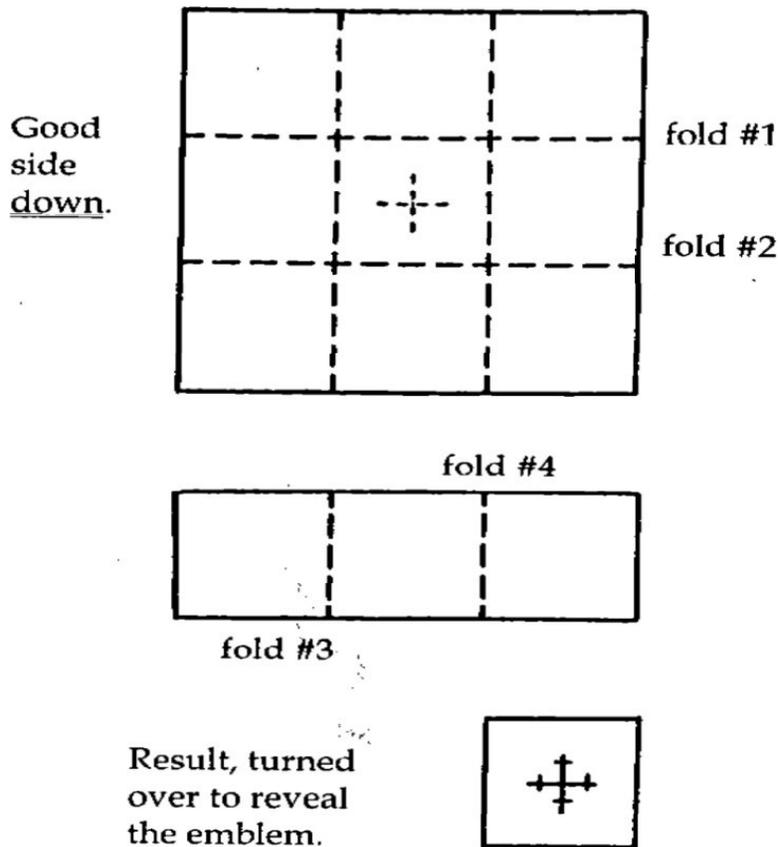


Result,  
turned  
over

## The Purificator

The Purificator is usually a 12 inch square linen which is used to wipe the lip of the chalice during the Eucharist. If making a purificator, its width and length should be 3 times the diameter of the chalice and the hem should be very narrow; a white 1 inch cross should be embroidered in the exact center of this linen. The purificator is folded in thirds and the cross in the center third is draped across the chalice during its vesting.

Purificator Folding  
Diagram



### **The Chalice Pall**

The Chalice Pall, which covers the paten, is a white linen square “envelope” into which a plexiglas square is placed. The open end of the linen has a flap to whipstitch or tuck in. The pall should be large enough to completely cover the paten. Usually a 7 or 8 inch square is sufficient. The pall may be embroidered with a cross or other symbol which is centered on one side. The entire pall and lining may be washed and, if dried in the sun, the linen pall will tighten and dry smoothly around the plexiglas square. Cardboard may also be used, but it must be removed for laundering.

### **The Chalice Veil and Burse**

The Chalice Veil and Burse, if used, are usually made of silk or satin in the colour of the season and may be quite elaborate. However, simple linen may be substituted as needed. The chalice veil is an 18 to 24 inch square which is placed over the vested chalice; it must be large enough to touch the altar on all sides. The burse is a hinged case, made of two 9 inch squares of silk with plexiglas inserts; it is placed on top of the chalice veil and may contain the corporal, the purificators, and the post communion veil. Due to their intricacy, the chalice veil and burse are often purchased.

### **The Post Communion Veil**

The Post Communion Veil, if used, is of thin light weight linen, 18 to 24 inches square, which is placed over consecrated elements remaining after communion.

### **The Credence Cover**

The Credence Cover or Cloth is a white cloth which covers the Credence table or shelf and hangs over the top a few inches. It may be plain or embroidered with a small cross in the center front. It may be trimmed in lace.

### **The Cere Cloth**

The Cere Cloth is a waxed coated cloth that is used over a stone altar to protect the altar and to keep moisture from damaging the fair linen.

### **The Underlinen**

The Underlinen, a plain linen, is placed directly on top of the altar and is the exact size of the altar top. The fair linen goes on top of the underlinen.

### **The Frontal**

The Frontal is the ornamental silk cloth covering the front of the Altar and hanging to the floor. It may be attached to the protector. Its colour should be changed with the liturgical season.

### **The Superfrontal**

The Superfrontal is a short silk ornamental cloth covering the front of the altar, hanging about 8 inches from the top of the altar. It may be used over the frontal or by itself. Its colour should be changed with the liturgical season.

### **The Protector**

The Protector is a good quality cloth to cover the fair linen between services to protect it. It usually fits the top of the altar and may be a seasonal, natural, or white colour. A cross or crosses may be embroidered on the protector.

### **The Pulpit & Lectern Fall**

The Pulpit and Lectern Fall are hangings in seasonal colour which are hung, usually by hooks, from the front of the lectern and/or pulpit.

### **The Funeral Pall**

The Funeral Pall is a vestment or hanging for a casket. All caskets in a parish are vested with the same pall or with a Canadian flag for a member of the armed forces. The pall should be made large enough to cover the casket entirely. Palls used to be black, but most are white now, symbolic of the resurrection, and can be simple or ornate, often with one large cross covering the pall. To vest a container of ashes, the white silk chalice veil may be used. We also have a smaller Pall for a cremation urn, which is white.

### **Oh, Those Troublesome Stains!**

From time to time we are bound to find stains of water or other on the altar linens.

... **Always try to handle stains promptly;** the longer they set the more difficult they are to remove. Three of the most common stains are **candle wax, win and lipstick.**

**Candle Wax** - Rub ice cubes and scrape off the excess wax with a dull knife. Place several layers of absorbent tissue or a white blotter and press with a warm iron. Pour boiling water through stained area from the wrong side.

**Wine** - Always soak or sponge fresh stains immediately with cold water. Soda and a dropper are available in the Sacristy.

**Lipstick** - Sponge with cleaning fluid (carbon tetrachloride). Rub stain area with glycerin to loosen grease. Apply dish detergent and let set for 10 minutes. If dye remains, pour boiling water through stained area from the wrong side of linen.

- You can get rid of lipstick stains by applying some toothpaste to the mark. Rub the toothpaste well into the garment then wash as normal. (Altar Guild hint; suggest you use white toothpaste, just in case and additional colour in the toothpaste might cause more problems.)
- Or try, dabbing the lipstick stain with petroleum jelly and then washing.
- Hairspray often works as a pre-wash spray for lipstick stains.

**Linens which can no longer be used** should be burned and the ashes scattered on the earth.

### **All About the Sacred Vessels**

When selecting Eucharistic vessels, precious metals such as silver and gold have been the standard historically. Simple sterling silver is always appropriate, lovely and will last forever if cared for properly. Many churches receive gifts of sacred vessels, often from parishioners in memory of or in honor of loved ones, priests or bishops, etc. Alternatively, silver plate, glass, or pottery vessels are also appropriate for use at the Lord's Table. Altar vessels generally are not made of brass.

One thing to remember when working with the sacred vessels is that metal should never touch metal and the chalice never touches metal or wood. Always use altar linen in between and underneath. For example, a purificator is always placed over the Chalice BEFORE the paten is placed on the chalice.

For new missions with few resources, for churches recovering from natural disasters, or for churches forced to reestablish their communion vessels "from scratch," a silver plate, clear glass, or pottery goblet may become a chalice. A silver plate, clear glass, or pottery bread and butter plate or salad plate may be used as a paten.

The lavabo, flagon, breadbox or ciborium may be of silver or gold, but also may be of silver plate, clear glass or pottery. In emergency situations, a small clear glass bowl with a secure lid can serve as a breadbox. The lavabo is a bowl the priest fills with water for ceremonial washing of his fingers. The flagon is an extra pitcher for wine. It is larger than the cruet. The breadbox and ciborium contain the wafers or bread for Holy Communion.

The pair of cruets may be either crystal or clear glass. One cruet contains water and one cruet contains wine. Often each cruet has a stopper with a cross on top of it. Glass salad dressing cruets may be substituted as economical alternatives.

## Preparation for Your Altar Work (Part 2)

4. Prepare chalice, bread box, paten and lavabo and place in wash bowl (kept especially for use of the Altar Guild, it is hanging behind the door) Boil water to pour over vessels. A little soap may be added to the water. If altar vessels have been "lacquered (coated with a protective finish) (all our vessels have been coated with this finish) do not use any chemicals to clean them.

### WASH HANDS AND USE CLEAN CLOTHS AND DRYING CLOTHS

Spread clean towel on area where the chalice is prepared to be set on the Altar. Wash cruets in warm soapy water. Cruets may be rinsed with a little vinegar to take off film. Rinse and polish to shine glass. Put water in one cruet and wine in the other.

5. Having filled the cruets with water and wine, place these on the credence table (water on left and wine on the right) with the bread box containing the wafers between them. If used, place lavabo with towel laid over it, to the left of cruets.
6. Remove dust clothes from altar and set up candles and service book on the fair linen. Put chalice, purificator, paten, priest's host, pall, veil and burse in center of Altar on top of corporal. Sometimes servers set up from the credence table at the time of consecration.

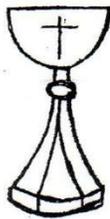
\* Check with priest where he/she likes the fold of burse to be. Inside burse a corporal and an extra purificator should be placed.

\*Also check calendar in the Sacristy to make sure the colour of hangings is correct and if there are any other things needed - example Easter, Christmas time, Saints Days' Advent, etc.

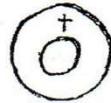
7. After the service, return washed Communion vessels to their places, (in locked cupboard there are cloth bags, each vessel goes into its own bag. Close bag and replace back into locked cupboard. Take linens home to be washed. Place dust cloths over fair linens and candles back on altar.
8. Brass and silverware: Clean as needed, usually 3-4 times a year.
9. Flowers: The flower convener takes care of ordering and placing flowers on the altar. Fresh cut flowers can be placed in the sunroom, on the floor, between Sunday services. This is a cooler room. For special services such as Christmas, Easter, funerals etc. flowers will be delivered to the church by the local florist and will typically be left on the counter beside the back door. Altar Guild is responsible for ordering palms for Palm Sunday.
10. Fair linens: Fair linens and credence table linens should always be changed and washed if they are soiled. The fair linens are best kept rolled on a cardboard cylinder rather than folded. A list is kept at the beginning of each month listing the number of each linen and counted again at the end of each month.

11. Washing linens: Soda (pop) is available in the Sacristy with a dropper for stains. Wash linens in cold water any purificators and lavabo towels which have been in contact with consecrated wine. Once the wine stain is gone, the water should be poured on the ground and the linens laundered separately. Linen should be ironed when quite damp. Finger press folds (never press with iron). Allow to dry and then fold when taking back to the church.

### Some Holy Hardware



CHALICE



PATEN



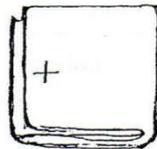
BREAD BOX



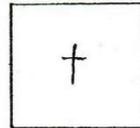
WINE OR WATER CRUET



LAVABO BOWL



CORPORAL CLOTH



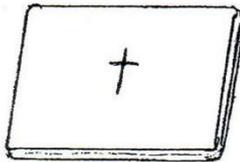
PALL



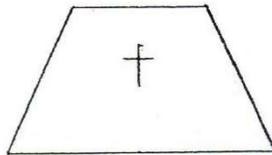
PURIFICATOR



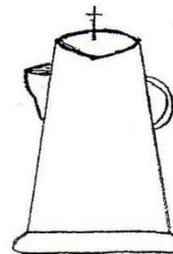
PRIEST HOST



BURSE



VEIL



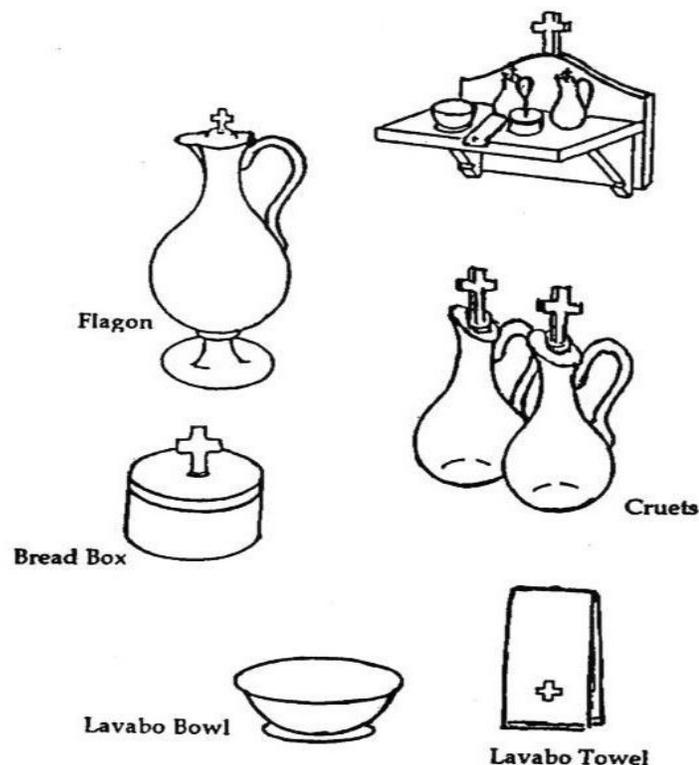
WINE FLAGON



CIBORIUM

## Preparing the Credence Table or Shelf

- Cover the Credence Table/Credence Shelf with a "Cloth".
- Place two Cruets one water (left) and one wine (right), on the Credence Table, right rear. Add cruet stoppers.
- Place the Bread Box, with its cover, filled with appropriate number of wafers, center right front.
- Add a few gluten free breads to an extra paten and cover with a linen cloth. Place on the right.
- Place the Lavabo Bowl at the left front. The Lavabo Towel is placed across the bowl itself or on the Credence Table next to the Lavabo Bowl.
- Reserved elements (blessed wine and bread) may be placed in an Aumbry in order to take Holy Communion to those in the hospital or those unable to attend church for other physical or mental illness.



## Altar Settings

Candelabra with Followers

Brass Cross

Candelabra with Followers

Taper Candle with Follower

Missal Stand  
(on left side of Chalice)

Vested Chalice

Taper Candle with Follower

Front of Altar

When using the portable altar use the heavier candles as those are heavier and sit well without moving.

Only light the Candelabra's when having a special service.

Taper candles need to be lit for every service.

## Credence Shelf or Table Setting

Water Cruet

Wine Cruet

Bread Box or Ciborium with Tongs

Lavabo with linen covering

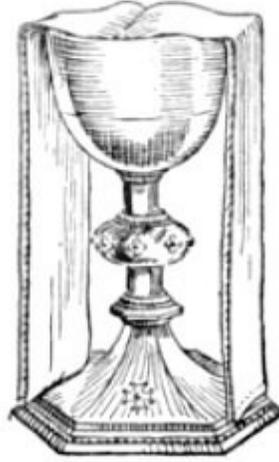
Paten with gluten free bread with linen covering

Front of Credence Table or Shelf

## Vested Chalice



The Chalice



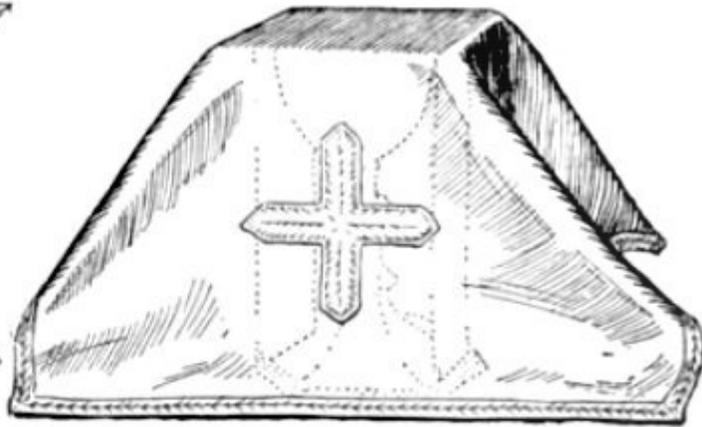
Chalice and Purificator



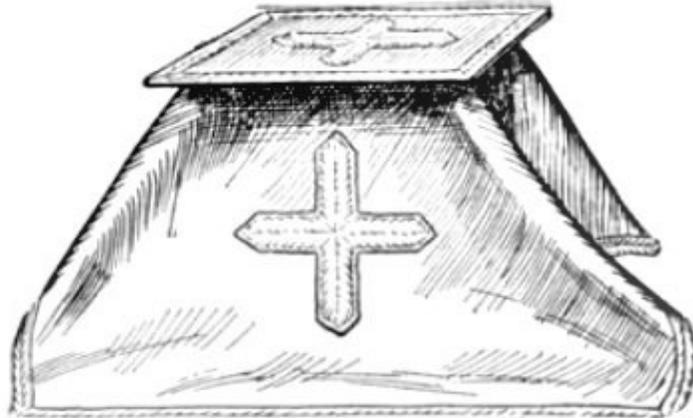
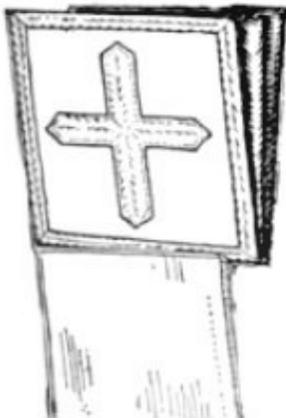
Chalice, Purificator,  
Paten with Host



Chalice, Purificator,  
Paten and Pall

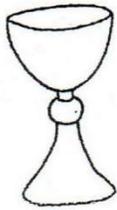


All now covered by Chalice Veil –  
note the different parts under the Veil

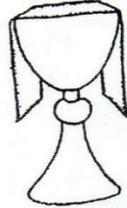


## How to Prepare the Communion Vessels

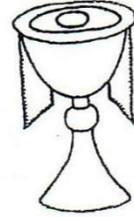
Below diagram shows the traditional way of preparing the vessels for the Eucharist.



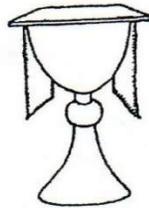
a. Take the chalice.



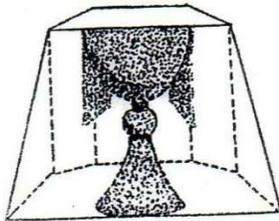
b. Over the bowl of the chalice, place the purificator, folded as shown.



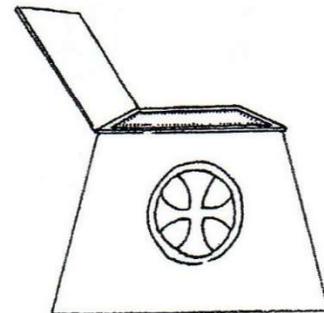
c. On the purificator, place the paten, and on the paten, a large priest's host.



d. Cover the paten with the pall, a cardboard square covered with linen.



e. Over the vessel, drape the veil of the correct liturgical colour. Fold up the back of the veil so that the priest can easily reach and hold the chalice to carry it.



f. Place the large folded linen corporal inside the burse, and place the burse, closed, on top of the vessels with its open edge to the right.

At a celebration of the Eucharist at which there is a large number of communicants, the breads are put into a vessel called a ciborium, instead of the paten. This vessel is similar to the chalice except that it has a lid.

## An Alternative Way to Prepare the Communion Vessels

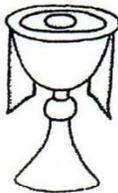
1. The breads to be handled by the priest are kept in a breadbox, and the wine and water are kept in cruets. After offering the bread and wine, the priest washes her/his hands in water poured from the lavabo bowls, or used hand sanitizer.
2. These vessels are kept near the altar on a small table or shelf called the credence.
3. It is the duty of the Altar Guild to arrange these vessels on the credence shelf before the service.
4. Notice that the handles of the cruets should face away from the front of the credence. When picking up the cruets, the server holds them so that the priest can take the handles.



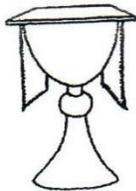
a. Take the chalice.



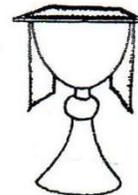
b. Over the bowl of the chalice, place the purificator, folded as shown.



c. On the purificator, place the paten, and on the paten, a large priest's host.



d. Cover the paten with the pall, a cardboard square covered with linen.



e. Place the folded corporal on top of the pall.

## Other Services

***NOTE:** An ACW calendar is hanging in the Sacristy. This calendar shows the holy dates and the colours of the hangings. If unsure what colour of hangings to use check calendar.*

### **Morning and Evening Prayer:**

Altar Guild have no duties concerning Morning and Evening Prayer.

### **Weddings:** (Hangings are white)

If Communion is to be celebrated at a wedding, check with the priest as to the size of the congregation expected and as to the colour burse and veil to be used. It is usually white. If there is no Communion, any dust cloth on the altar should be removed.

If it is the practice at your church that the register is usually signed on a small table, ensure that the tablecloth is clean and ironed. In some parishes the register may be signed on the altar.

### **Baptism:** (Hangings are white)

Pascal candle is present. Remove font cover. Put warm water in the brass ewer (baptismal pitcher). Place baptismal shell (kept in the locked cupboard in the Sacristy) and baptism towel or lavabo towel on the font.

After the service, pour water down piscina, wipe bowl and replace font cover.

Return ewer to the cupboard.

### **Funeral:** (Hangings are white)

Priest will advise if he/she wishes the Altar Guild to set up for Communion. If so a white burse and veil are to be used.

You will find the small pall (used to cover an urn) in the bottom drawer in the Sacristy. It is inside of a satin covering. Large pall used to cover a coffin is located with the hangings.

## The Christian Year in Colour

<u>Season or Feast</u> <u>Symbolizing</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Colour</u>
Advent	Our Lord's Coming	Purple: symbolizing preparation and penitence
Christmas	Our Lord's Birth	White: symbolizing love
Epiphany	Our Lord's Manifestation	Green: symbolizing nature
Lent	Our Lord's Sacrifice	Purple: symbolizing preparation and penitence
Good Friday (Paschal Candle present)	Our Lord's Death	No Colour. The altar is stripped and only the cross is left. It is veiled in black
Easter	Our Lord's Resurrection	White: symbolizing hope and joy
Ascension	Our Lord's Ascension	White: symbolizing His abiding presence
Pentecost (Paschal Candle returned to back of sanctuary)	The coming of the Holy Spirit	Red: symbolizing the fire of the Holy Spirit
After Pentecost	Our Lord's teachings	Green: symbolizing nature; growth of Jesus' ministry
All Saints Day	The Communion of Saints	White: symbolizing glory
Saints Days	Christian Life and Service in His name	Red: symbolizing the inspiration of the Holy Spirit

**NOTE:** The Canadian Church Calendar that the Anglican Church Women sell yearly is a good source for the Christian Seasons and their colours. Kept in the Sacristy.

## Commonly Used Terms

**Ablutions:** Ceremonial cleansing of the chalice and paten by the celebrant after the Eucharist.

**Acolyte:** One who assists the priest.

**Advent Wreath:** Four candles arranged in a circle, one of which is lighted on the first Sunday in Advent, and one more on each of the following Sundays in Advent. A white candle, the Christ Candle, is placed in the center of the circle and lighted on Christmas Eve, and thereafter during the Christmas season.

**Alb:** The long white robe which the priest wears for services of Holy Eucharist.

**Alms Basin:** An offering plate.

**Altar:** The Holy Table upon which the Holy Eucharist is celebrated.

**Altar Bread:** The wafers or bread used at the Eucharist.

**Altar Rail:** A railing in front of the altar that separates the chancel from the rest of the church.

**Amice:** A large oblong white neck piece worn by some priests with some albs.

**Aumbry:** The 'wall cabinet' in the sanctuary that contains consecrated bread and wine. Also referred to as a 'tabernacle'.

**Baptistry or Baptistery:** The place where the font is located, usually near the entrance of the church.

**Baptismal Towel:** The long, narrow towel which the celebrant uses to 'dry off' the newly baptized. For baptisms we put out one baptismal towel for each person to be baptized.

**Bible Markers:** The silk hangings which decorate the lectern.

**Bishop:** The highest order of the sacred ministry in the Anglican Church; the head of the Diocese, elected by the Diocese.

**Bishop Coadjutor:** A bishop elected and given jurisdiction to assist and later to succeed the diocesan Bishop.

**Bishop Suffragan:** A bishop elected to assist the diocesan bishop, but without jurisdiction or right of succession.

**Bishop's Chair:** A special chair on the gospel side of the sanctuary, reserved for the diocesan bishop on his visitations.

**Bread Boxes:** the small, round, silver 'boxes' with lids which hold the wafers for the Eucharist.

**Burse:** A square flat case used to hold the corporal, the post communion veil, if used, and purificator. It is placed on the veiled chalice at the Eucharist.

**Cassock:** The long garment which the priest wears under a white surplice for services other than the Eucharist. On Good Friday black cassocks are worn without the surplice.

**Celebration:** The consecration and administration of the Holy Eucharist.

**Censer:** A vessel for burning incense; especially, a covered incense burner swung on chains in a religious ceremony. See also 'thurible'.

**Cere Cloth:** The protective cloth which goes on the altar between the frontal and the fair linen. This protects the linen of the frontal and the altar from wine spills.

**Chalice:** The 'goblet' from which wine is served.

**Chalice Veil:** See Post-Communion Veil and Silk Chalice Veil.

**Chancel:** The area which contains the choir pews, the organ, the pulpit, the lectern, and the altar.

**Chasuble:** The 'poncho-shaped' garment which the celebrant wears for the Eucharist. On Sundays the priest puts it on at the Offertory.

**Chimere:** A long garment with arm holes, but without sleeves. It is worn by a bishop over the rochet and may be either red or black.

**Ciborium:** A chalice like cup with a cover, used for the bread at the Eucharist. It may be used in place of the bread box.

**Cincture:** A wide flat cloth belt or girdle worn around the cassock.

**Cope:** A long, elaborate cloak of coloured silk or brocade worn by a bishop or priest at festival occasions. It has a clasp at the neck called a morse.

**Cotta:** A white garment similar to a surplice, but shorter and without a cross on the front. Worn by choir and acolytes over the cassock.

**Credence Table or Shelf:** The shelf on the Epistle (pulpit) side of the Altar. This table holds the wine and wafers to be consecrated, the lavabo bowl, and the lavabo towel.

**Credence Table Cover or Credence Cloth:** The linen cover which is placed on the credence table before the table is 'set'.

**Crozier:** A bishop's pastoral staff.

**Crucifer:** The cross-bearer in a procession.

**Crucifix:** The cross with the figure of our Lord upon it.

**Cruets:** The small pitchers which hold wine and water. The cruet containing wine is always kept to the right side of the water. When the cruets are placed on the credence table, the handles are toward the wall if there is an acolyte to serve the priest, or toward the nave when the priest is alone.

**Deacon:** One of three holy orders of the ministry.

**Dean:** The chief of the clergy on the staff of a cathedral; also the head of a seminary.

**Diocese:** The see or jurisdiction of a bishop.

**Dossal:** A tapestry or curtain which hangs behind the altar.

**Dust Cover:** The linen cloth which covers the altar fair linen after the worship service is over. A dust cover is often of a coarser weave of linen than the fair linen. It is simply a dust cover, even though it may be embroidered with crosses, etc.

**Elements:** The bread, wine, and water which are used at the Eucharist.

**Epistle Side:** The right side of the chancel as one faces the altar.

**Eucharist:** The service of Holy Communion.

**Eucharistic Candlesticks:** The pair of candlesticks which are on the altar. These candles are lit only and when the Eucharist is celebrated. These are the only candles that go on the altar.

**Eucharistic Vessels:** Any or all of the containers & 'dishes' used for the Eucharist.

**Eucharistic Vestment:** The special vestments often worn at a celebration of the Eucharist or Holy Communion: alb, amice, girdle, stole, chasuble, and maniple.

**Ewer:** The large pitcher which holds water for baptisms. When there is a baptism, the ewer is filled with hot water just before the service, and placed on a small table near the font.

**Fair Linen:** The large white linen cloth which covers the altar, on top of the cere cloth. It is the altar's tablecloth.

**Flagon:** A vessel to hold wine for the Eucharist.

**Followers:** The brass 'collars' which fit the tops of the candles to protect against drafts.

**Font:** The basin where baptisms are performed.

**Frontal:** A full-length, coloured hanging for the altar.

**Girdle:** A white cotton or linen rope worn about the waist over the alb. Black girdles are sometimes worn over the cassock.

**Gospel Book:** The book which contains all of the Gospel readings.

**Gospel Side:** The left side of the chancel as once faces the altar.

**Hangings:** All of the coloured silk items that decorate the sanctuary and chancel.

**Host Wafer or Priest's Host:** The large wafer which is held up and broken by the celebrant at the Eucharist.

**Hymn Board:** The wooden board on the wall of a church which lists the day of the church season and the hymns for the day.

**IHS:** The first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek. Also the initial letters of *Jesus hominem salvator*, Latin for "Jesus the Savior of mankind".

**Lavabo Bowl:** The small silver bowl which is used by the priest for the symbolic washing of hands before celebrating the Eucharist. It is placed on the credence table with the lavabo towel.

**Lavabo Towel:** The small linen towel on the credence table, next to the lavabo bowl, with which the priest dries his/her hands after the symbolic washing of hands before celebrating the Eucharist.

**Lectern:** The podium from which the lessons are read.

**Lectionary or Text Book:** The book which contains the Sunday Bible readings for the year. Texts change from Year A, B & C beginning with the first Sunday in Advent.

**Liturgical Colours:** The appropriate colour for the day according to the church calendar. It is the colour of the hangings and the colour of the priest's vestments. The calendar on the wall of the sacristy has the days printed in the appropriate colour. The basic seasonal colours are:

Advent	Purple
Christmas	White
Epiphany	Green
Lent	Purple
Easter	White
Pentecost	Red
Trinity Sunday	White
Sundays After Pentecost	Green

**Litany Desk:** The portable kneeling bench or prayer desk.

**Maniple:** A short band or scarf worn on the left arm of the celebrant at Holy Communion as part of the Eucharistic Vestments. Most priests no longer use a maniple.

**Mensa:** The top of the altar or Holy Table.

**Missal:** Now known in many churches as the Service Book. The altar servicebook, containing the services of the Holy Eucharist, the collects, epistles, and gospels.

**Missal Stand or Service Book Stand:** The stand or desk upon which the altar service book rests.

**Mitre:** A liturgical headdress worn by bishops on formal occasions.

**Oblations:** The bread and wine brought to the altar at the offertory.

**Oblation Table:** A table which holds the bread and wine, the 'oblations', which are to be brought forward by members of the congregation during the offertory.

**Offertory:** The bringing of oblations and alms to the altar.

**Office:** A service of the church, other than Holy Eucharist, such as Morning or Evening Prayer.

**Office Candles or Office Lights:** The candles behind the altar on the retable next to the cross in the sanctuary. These candles, which are lit for some services, are often on three unbranched candle holders on each side of the cross. Some churches use three or seven branched candelabra.

**Ordination:** The conferring of Holy Orders by a bishop.

**Orphrey:** An embroidered band on a chasuble or other vestment or hanging.

**Pall:** This word means 'covering'. It refers to two quite different coverings:

1. A **pall** is the small, linen covered square of Plexiglas which we use to cover the paten and host wafer on a vested chalice.
2. The **funeral pall** is the large, embroidered silk covering which covers the casket for a funeral. (this is kept with the hangings) The small funeral pall for cremains is white and kept in the bottom drawer in a satin bag.

**Paschal Candle:** The large, decorated candle which is lit at the Easter Vigil and burns throughout the Easter season to Pentecost. The Paschal candle is also used at baptisms and funerals.

**Paten:** The silver plate from which the communion wafers are served.

**Pectoral Cross:** The large cross worn by ordained priests and bishops.

**Piscina:** A drain in the sacristy which goes directly to the ground instead of into the sewer system. It is used for the disposal of consecrated elements: wine in chalices, bread crumbs on paten, and wine rinsed from purificators.

**Priest:** The second of the three orders of the priesthood; one who has been ordained by a bishop to administer the Sacraments of the Church.

**Protector:** Another word for dust cover.

**Pulpit Fall:** The decorative silk rectangle which hangs from the pulpit.

**Purificator:** The small linen square which the priest or other minister uses to wipe the rim of the chalice; acts like a napkin.

**Rector:** A priest who is head of a parish.

**Reserved Sacrament:** Consecrated bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Christ, that has not been distributed to communicants in a service of Holy Eucharist, and is kept in an aumbry or tabernacle. A small amount of consecrated bread and wine is often reserved for use by the priest and lay ministers in visitations, or for the sick, dying, or other similar circumstances.

**Retable:** A shelf behind the altar, also called a *gradine*.

**Rochet:** A long white linen vestment with wide sleeves tied at the wrists, worn by a bishop under a chimere.

**Rood:** A cross or crucifix.

**Sacristy:** A room where preparations are made for the worship service, the Lord's Kitchen.

**Sanctuary:** The space inside the altar rail.

**Sanctuary Light:** A light, usually a candle but not necessarily so, in the sanctuary that is constantly lit whenever there is reserve sacrament present in the aumbry or tabernacle.

**Service Book or Missal:** The large 'prayer book' from which the priest reads the service at the altar.

**Service Book Stand:** See 'Missal Stand'. The stand which holds the service book on the altar.

**Silk Chalice Veil:** A square covering of silk or brocade used to cover the chalice and paten before and after the Eucharist.

**Stole:** A long narrow band of silk worn over the shoulders of the clergy at the Eucharist. It is worn over the alb, and usually matches the colour of the hangings.

**Superfrontal or Frontlet:** A short hanging for the front of the altar. It may be used over a frontal or separately, and may be made of handsome lace or silk.

**Surplice:** A white vestment with full flowing sleeves. It is longer than a cotta and has a cross on the front. Worn with the stole, it is the standard clergy vesture .

**Thurible:** A censer. A vessel for burning incense; especially a covered incense burner swung on chains in a religious ceremony.

**Tippet:** A black scarf, wider than a stole, worn about the neck, with ends hanging down the front. It is worn by the clergy at choir offices. Usually the diocesan shield and the shield of the priest's seminary are on the ends of the tippet.

**Vested Chalice:** The chalice, covered by a purificator, paten and host wafer, ready to be used by the priest.

**Vestments:** The special garments worn by the priest and other ministers of the service.

**Vicar:** A priest in charge of a mission or chapel

**Wafer:** The unleavened bread used at the Eucharist.

### **Nine Commandments for Altar Guilds**

- ❖ If it's metal, polish it (unless it is coated with a protective finish)
- ❖ If it's floral, arrange it.
- ❖ If it's cloth, iron it.
- ❖ If in doubt, wash it.
- ❖ If it has been taken care of by one person for more than ten years, avoid it.
- ❖ If it's a memorial, revere it or try to work around it.
- ❖ If it's been done only one way for more than five years, don't try to change it.
- ❖ If new rector's, vicars, curates get bright ideas, indulge them. They'll soon learn better.
- ❖ If a bishop wants all the vestments and hangings changed ten minutes before the service, smile sweetly, ask him/her to pray for a speedy recovery from your hearing loss and leave him/her to his prayers in the solitude of the Sacristy.

### **Notes**

**Need new altar linens?** One source to consider is the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, a religious community within the Anglican Church of Canada.

The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine  
233 Cummer Ave. Toronto, Ontario M2M 2E8

Phone: 416-226-2201 Email: [convent@ssjd.ca](mailto:convent@ssjd.ca)

Website: [www.ssjd.ca](http://www.ssjd.ca)

**Current Altar Guild Member (2022)**

January	Helen Shaw Patti Stuart	542-9787 542-4477
February	Camille Herbin Mary Phillips	670-7593 542-1342
March	Elaine Slauenwhite Helen Whidden	684-0430 670-6034
April	Camille Herbin Denyse Nelson	670-7593 542-9295
May	Mary Lynn Bruce Sharon Kinsman	542-3448 542-7372
June	Shirley Marston Linda Ellis Mary McMillan	542-9323 542-4466
July	Denyse Nelson Debbie MacDonald	542-9295 542-9219
August		
September	Elaine Slauenwhite Denyse Nelson	684-0430 542-9295
October	Cathy Stewart Dianne Thorpe	670-5655 542-7492
November	Karen Henniger Sharon Carey	697-2147 542-9585
December	Elaine Slauenwhite Camille Herbin	684-0430 670-7593