

**ACOLYTES**  
**A Ministry in Worship**

Acolytes are individuals (traditionally youth) who assist in worship by doing a variety of tasks in worship – lighting candles, assisting with communion, receiving the offering, preparing for baptism, etc.

Most confirmation students are expected to participate in this worship leadership. (In fact, the youngest members of the congregation look to the acolytes as those who model the next step in their faith journey as they assist in worship.) The learning received through this “hands-on” process is significant and is complemented by class discussions about the God whom we worship and the manner in which we worship.

Training is given in confirmation classes and required for all who participate in this ministry.

**ALTAR GUILD**  
**A Ministry of the Liturgy**

The liturgy is the church’s form of corporate worship and the “work of the people”. Members of the altar guild are ministers of the liturgy. This ministry involves preparing the worship space with the furnishings, appointments, vessels, elements, candles, linens, and paraments used in the liturgy. As these items are prepared and cared for, it is important that the altar guild understand their meaning and use in worship.

All are invited and will be oriented to a variety of tasks of preparation for worship. Seasonally the Altar Guild makes changes in the church as we move toward another season of the church year. Excellent leadership provides continuity and continuing education for the tasks to be accomplished.

In recent years Holy Communion is offered more frequently so the tasks of preparation for Holy Communion are extended to more people in the community. Preparation and clean-up is a regular, often a weekly task.

**CHURCH BUS DRIVERS**  
**A Ministry of Hospitality**

To make it possible for seniors and others with transportation needs to attend worship, a bus is provided every Sunday. A few Sundays of the year the church bus is not available because it is utilized by youth or other groups from the congregation.

A CDL license is required to drive the church bus.

All drivers must be approved by the staff at Bethlehem.

## **COMMUNION ASSISTANT / EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS**

### **A Ministry in Worship**

Communion Assistants and Eucharistic Ministers assist in serving communion to all who come to the altar and to their homes for those who cannot attend worship services. They are ministers of worship ministry.

Bethlehem takes the call of the “priesthood of all believers” seriously. In the sacrament of Holy Communion, the leadership is shared by several people: the Presiding Minister who is ordained and the assisting ministers who need not be ordained.

Communion Assistants offer the bread or wine (with a pastor presiding) for every service of Holy Communion. They are expected to seek direction from the presiding pastor.

Eucharistic Ministers are those who share Holy Communion with members of the community who are not able to attend regular worship services. They take the elements of communion – bread and wine – directly from the Sunday morning communion table to the person(s) in their home. There is a special training for this responsibility given by the pastors.

## **FOOD HOSPITALITY**

### **A Ministry of Hospitality**

Food and drink have always been a part of the ministry of welcome. The hospitable church recognizes that God comes to us through strangers and that by receiving another we open ourselves to the expanding message of an incarnate God. Ultimately at church, we are the strangers who are hosted by God.

Jesus shows grace to all. Jesus told the story of guests who were invited to a banquet but offered excuses for not attending. In response, the householder commands his servant to go out into the streets and invite the “*poor and maimed and blind and lame*” (Luke 14:15-22).

Hosted by God, we are guests at a sumptuous feast and are granted a place at the table, not on the basis of our merit, but only out of God’s mercy. A warm welcome and nourishing food and drink are a part of our ministry of welcome at Bethlehem.

Food and drink are available for all each Sunday morning. We share the responsibility of providing food (cookies, muffins, fruit and other nutritious food) for those who desire nourishment before or after the worship services and education hour.

Guidelines for food preparation and provision are suggested, but whatever is offered we receive gratefully and share with all who come to Bethlehem.

## **GREETERS**

### **A Ministry of Hospitality**

Greeting is a part of Bethlehem's Ministry of Welcome. Greeters are among the most essential servants of the community. They are the hosts to all who arrive for that special time together, acting on behalf of the community. They are ministers of welcome.

The task involves more than merely performing a function – shaking hands. Rather they are to demonstrate to the best of their ability the graciousness of our Lord who bent down and washed the feet of his disciples, “welcoming them into the kingdom of God” in a very servant-like manner. So it is with the ministers of welcome: They have been graced by being ministered to and are now called to minister to others in response.

If those who come to worship find a warm welcome, a hospitable atmosphere, and a reasonably comfortable setting, it is more likely that they will be better able to offer praise and thanksgiving to God and to receive the word of grace from our heavenly Father.

Greeters are basically concerned with a warm welcome to worship in the name of our Lord.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. What do the Greeters do?
  - a. As worshipers arrive, concentrate on being a gracious host. Do not be afraid to ask how you can assist someone who looks like they have a question.
  - b. Be hospitable, gracious, courteous, tactful, greeting people names if possible, friendly with all (showing no favoritism), and discreet.
  - c. If you see visitors, ask them to sign the guest book, give them any special materials given to visitors, and ask if they have any questions.
  - d. Parents with small children may be interested in the nursery facilities. Direct them to the nursery or – better yet – take them there and introduce them to the attendants.
  - e. Welcome them warmly.
  - f. If there are special concerns expressed, please pass them on to the ushers or the pastor (via notes).

## **LECTORS**

### **Ministry of the Word**

The readers of Holy Scripture during the service are people who have a gift for reading well so that people may hear clearly and understand. Readers typically read the first and

second lessons each Sunday. Often they will participate in the Psalm antiphonally with the pastor presiding.

The lessons for each Sunday will be mailed during the previous week so that the reader may practice the reading before coming to worship. The preferred practice is to read the lessons from the large lectionary book.

The reading should be introduced: "*A reading from .....*". At the end of the reading, the appropriate conclusion is "*This is the Word of the Lord,*" at which time the congregation will respond, "*Thanks be to God.*"

### **SOUND BOARD** **A Ministry in Worship**

The sound board provides sound enhancement for leading worship and music.

Qualified and trained members operate the sound board, do sound checks, and correct any malfunction during worship services.

Training is required.

### **USHERS** **A Ministry of Hospitality**

Ushers are ministers of welcome: If those who come to worship find a warm welcome, a hospitable atmosphere, and a reasonably comfortable setting, they will be able to offer praise and thanksgiving to God and to receive a word of grace from our heavenly Father.

The Ushers' tasks involve the responsibility of being hosts. They are decisive in creating a climate of hospitality and friendliness among the people of the assembly as they gather.

Everyone can usher at Bethlehem. Ushering is a part of our shared ministry of welcome at Bethlehem. We choose to make it possible for all ages to participate. The church appreciates competence and experience, so there is an "Usher Captain" who is in charge of the corps of ushers for each Sunday.

The task of ushering involves more than merely doing a function (such as handing out bulletins and hymnals, and collecting the offering). Like the greeters, they are to demonstrate to the best of their ability the graciousness of our Lord by welcoming others into the kingdom of God" in a very servant-like manner.

The purpose of Ushers is to serve the worshipers by being informative, directive, offering guidance, and helping to create an atmosphere that will allow the gospel of Christ to best be heard and received.

Nevertheless, questions should be asked and direction sought as ushers prepare for their ministry of welcome each Sunday. Written instruction is provided for all ushers for every Sunday. At each service there will be a head usher, or an usher who has ushered before, who will be able to supervise other ushers or direct them to others who will provide answers to questions. The pastors are always available and will answer any questions if they can respond to them 20 minutes before the worship begins (or earlier).