

Acolyte Training

First United Methodist Church of Warsaw, MO

What are you doing?

When you serve God by serving as an acolyte, you are doing more than carrying a flame to the altar candles. You are symbolically bringing the light of Christ's spirit into the worship service. I hope that by serving as an acolyte, you will be filled with a sense of spiritual meaning and fulfillment. You will make new friends, have fun, and through your commitment grow in service to our church.

What exactly is an Acolyte?

An acolyte is a person who assists in the worship service. Normally, the acolyte serves by lighting and extinguishing the candles on the altar table. It is the custom in our church for acolytes to be boys and girls who are in about the third through 12th grade. DID YOU KNOW? The acolyte ministry originated from Old Testament times. The Scriptures tell us of the prophet Samuel assisting Eli the priest, and of Elijah being assisted by Elisha. The word "acolyte" comes from the Greek word "akolouthos," which means a servant or attendant who waits on another.

When you bring the flame into the sanctuary and light the candles, you are reminding the congregation of God's presence with us and the words of Jesus: "I am the light of the world." When you carry the flame out of the sanctuary at the end of the service, you are reminding the worshippers that God remains with us in all places at all times. We take God's light with us as we leave the church, and it stays with us during the week ahead

Equipment for Acolytes

A candle lighter is used to light and extinguish the candles on the altar. Inside of it is a long wick called a **taper**. The length of the taper is controlled by the **pin**. The candle lighter also includes a **bell** for snuffing out the candles. Care of the candle lighters is very important. Not only are they expensive, but they must be in good working order. If the tapers are not inserted correctly or if wax has melted down inside the barrel, they will jam. Check your candle lighter frequently to make sure the taper moves up and down smoothly.

Bringing the Light of Christ into Worship

As the music of the first song begins, you will need to light your wick. Hold the candle lighter with both hands. It should be at about waist height, with the front end angled upward. As you walk down the center aisle, keep your thumb on the pin that controls the length of the candle lighter's taper and an eye on the

height of the flame. If the flame starts to get too low or looks like it is going out, do one or more of the following:

1. Slow down a little bit. If you are walking too fast, the wind you generate can blow the flame out. Acolyte partners should try to walk at the same pace, so pay attention to what your partner is doing.
2. Slowly push the pin on your candle lighter forward. This will increase the length of the taper and give the flame more room to burn.

Notes: your candle lighter goes out, don't panic! You will need to decide what to do, depending on where you are and whether you have a partner. Here are some examples:

Problem: You are just starting down the center aisle and the flame goes out, but your partner's is still burning.

Solution: The two of you can stop, and your partner can relight your taper.

Problem: You are close to the front of the sanctuary and the flame goes out, but your partner's still burning.

Solution: Continue walking to the altar. Your partner can relight your taper there, and then the two of you can light the altar candles as usual.

Problem: You are just starting down the center aisle when the flame goes out, and you don't have a partner.

Solution: Turn around and calmly walk back down the aisle. The acolyte coordinator will relight your taper and you can begin again.

Problem: You are close to the front of the sanctuary when the flame goes out, and you don't have a partner.

Solution: Continue walking to the altar. Someone there will help you relight your taper.

Taking the Light of Christ out into the World

When the music for the last song begins, go get your candle lighter. Walk up the center aisle to the candles on the altar. Light the taper on your candle lighter off of the candle. When you are sure that your taper is lit, slowly flip the candle lighter over and put the bell over the candle to snuff it out. Leave the bell in place for a couple of seconds, until you are sure that the candle has been extinguished. You may see a little bit of smoke come out from under the bell. Walk out of the Sanctuary.

After the Service Make sure your candle lighter is in good working condition for the next service.

If you have any questions please contact, Madeline Schockmann via firstumcyouth@firstchurchwarsaw.org

