

Chapter G - The Ministry of Vergers

Saint Paul's Episcopal Church

Augusta, Georgia

The Holy Eucharist

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

The Verger oversees the entire liturgy; so you need to be familiar with the duties for acolytes, Altar Guild, and lectors/chalice bearers. You should even be familiar with the duties of the Priest and Deacon.

Find out where things are! During the service, you may have to find a purificator, chalice, wine, cruet, etc. The best way to prepare is to look through the sacristy and vesting room and see where everything is located (being aware that sometimes things move).

BEFORE THE 8:00 am SERVICE

1. Come to the church by 7:30 am. The Celebrant may need to give you some last-minute instructions. You also need to be there in case one of the ministers or a visitor has questions or needs assistance.
2. Prepare the church for the service:
 - a. Sanctuary
 - i. Acolyte station - check to see that there are Hymnals and Prayer Books on the seats and in the prayer desks, put a service bulletin on the prayer desks. Open the Prayer Books to the opening page for that service.
 - ii. Priest's station - see that there is a service bulletin on each prayer desk. Open the Prayer Books to the opening page for that service.
 - iii. Altar area – Make sure that the Gospel book is set for the correct reading (verify by the service bulletin).
 - iv. Eagle – Verify that the book is correctly set for the day's readings (verify by the service bulletin), leave a copy of the Psalm for the day **from the service bulletin**.
 - v. Offering Plates - make sure the 2 **brass** Offering Plates are on the left side step of the Altar (as you look towards it).
 - vi. Credence table – make sure the proper items are on it: two large chalices, the small chalice, two patens, the Altar station paten, water cruet, wine ~~cruet~~, bread box, lavabo bowl and cloth. If the Altar Guild has not prepared the table **by 7:45 am**, it is the Verger's responsibility to set it before the service. All items should be pre-prepared and located in the safe. Use the photo located on the Acolyte prayer desks for proper locations of items. If the safe is not open, consult the Celebrant for that service.
 - vii. UNLESS SUMMER SCHEDULE IS IN EFFECT - Set 9:05 am table – Items for the 9:05 am service are found in the wooden cabinet in the Sacristy. Prepare the 9:05 Credence Table on the left (looking toward the High Altar) of the 9:05 Altar. Both should remain behind the Pulpit until the 9:05 service. The Credence cloth should be on the table. Place the Altar Corporal (folded) on the right front of the table (to be placed on the Altar during the set-up for the Eucharist). Place the Altar Linen (Fair Linen) on the Altar, over the undercloth – which should be on the Altar. Fill the (crockery) wine cruet about ½ to 2/3 way full. Place a small amount of water in

the (crockery) water cruet. Bring both cruets, 2 purificators, both (crockery) chalices, both (crockery) patens, and four (4) hosts to the table. The Chalices go in the back right corner, the water cruet comes next, and the wine cruet is on the outside left. The patens sit on the front left (with all four (4) hosts), with the Corporal on the left.

b. Chancel

- viii. Acolyte / LLR stations - make sure there are Hymnals and Prayer Books in the rack; put a service bulletin on the kneeler. Open the Prayer Books to the opening page for that service.

c. Vesting room

- i. Make sure there is enough wick in the candlesnuffer (wicks are in the sacristy).
- ii. Make sure that both Crosses (the small [**brass**] one is for the 8:00 am service – no cross for the 9:05 service) and both candlesnuffers are in the vesting room.

d. Nave

- i. Walk down the aisle and check to see that there are no service bulletins in the pews and that everything is neat and in order.
- ii. Make sure that the “hearing assistance” receivers are on the prayer book table. (If not on the table, they are in the closet in the front entrance. See Sexton for key.) Check the batteries.
- iii. Make sure that the box of service bulletins are out in the back pew by the door. (If not out, they are in the closet in the front entrance).
- iv. Make sure the book for the Prayers of the People and pen are in place on the table. (If not on the table, check inside of the table.)

e. Balcony

- i. Take a service bulletin with you as you go up to set the levels for the microphones. This will tell you who will be serving that particular Sunday.
- ii. Set the public address system levels for the clergy serving at the 8:00 **and** 9:05 service, as well as the levels for the Eagle and left Prayer Desk. This is done by setting the level for the Officiant, any other clergy, and the Eagle and Prayer Desk at a level of “**20**”. The Master fader on the right should be set to “**12**”.

3. You should be vested while you are doing these chores. If there is no one in the church, you need not fully vest to do them (cassock, no surplice or Verger's Gown). If there are visitors around, however, you should be vested to identify yourself as someone who can welcome them and answer questions. It is best to vest in at least a cassock. The Verger's Gown (Chimere) can be added before the service.
4. At about 7:45 am, light the candles in the sanctuary. Do not forget to reverence the Altar as you enter and leave the sanctuary. Candles should be lit starting with the high candle closest to the Altar cross, and moving downward from there, ending with the candle on the Altar. If there is to be a Baptism, light the Paschal candle first. In Easter season, also light the Paschal candle first (if it is already lit, light the candlesnuffer from it). For candles at other services or at other times of the year (Advent, etc.), please check with the Priest for specific lighting instructions.

THE PROCESSION

Make sure the procession is in order – Verger/crucifer, lectors, Deacon, Priest/Priest. Check to verify that the Public Address switch is on (the orange light is behind the vesting room door and a blue light is by the balcony sound desk - able to be seen from the nave. **Both** lights indicate that the system is on). It is the clergy's responsibility to assure that the correct "white" button for the clergy

microphones are "on". However, the Verger should verify that the buttons are on. NOTE: If you find that one is off during the service it is the Verger's responsibility to quietly "slip out" and correct the problem.

When the procession starts, the Verger/crucifer enters through the vesting room door into the sanctuary (holding the brass processional cross), moves to the center of the isle, and processes to the front of the Altar area. Hold there for a moment, and move right to the wooden stand that holds the cross. Place the cross in the holder (crosses should be placed facing toward the organ - so as not to "compete" with the Altar cross), and move inside the chancel rail. Sit in the wooden chair to the right.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

1. The Readings, Prayers, and Psalm
Always face the action! For prayers, creeds, and the Psalm, face the Altar. In between times, face down the rail, where you can observe what goes on in the sanctuary and chancel. Remember that you are there to help out wherever needed - and it is better to anticipate the need than to react to it.
2. The Gospel
When the Psalm ends, the Verger takes the Gospel Book from the Altar, and – holding it high above your head in front of you - proceeds to the second or third step at the front of the church. The Verger then holds the Gospel book while the Priest or Deacon reads the Gospel. (The book is usually held with your elbows at your sides, otherwise it will get extraordinarily heavy.) When the Gospel is complete, return the Gospel book to the Altar – again holding it high - and return to your seat on the right.
3. The Priest or Deacon delivers the homily.
4. The Peace
Exchange the Peace. If the lectors or anyone else comes to your side of the chancel, exchange the Peace, but do not leave the immediate area, as that is where people look to find you.
5. After the announcements, the Verger makes ready to assist the Priest (or Deacon, if present) set the Altar. One of the LEMs removes the (brass) Offering Plates from the left side of the Altar, and delivers them to the ushers. The LEM receives the "count" sheet, which in turn is handed to the Priest / Deacon as the LEM returns to the front. After the offering is received, one of the Lay Readers will slowly walk to the gate, solemnly reverence the Altar, and quickly take the Offering Plates to the Sacristy. **That LEM will wait at the door of the Sacristy until it is time for the LEMs to come before the Altar.**

From this point forward in the service, NO ONE IS TO KNEEL INSIDE THE ALTAR RAIL. This is true for ALL services.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

1. Throughout the Holy Communion, pay special attention to the Celebrant. The Verger is the acolyte for this 8:00 am and 9:05 am services. You have to keep watching the Celebrant to see if he/she needs anything.
2. Once the Celebrant takes Communion, proceed to the area in front of the Altar, and stand for Communion. When all LEMs have been received communion, the Prayer and one additional LEM will move to the Pulpit Station (when more than one clergy person is available, "Preacher and Prayer" go to the pulpit station). The Verger/crucifer will then close the gate, and assist the Priest with the communion for the congregation. (This configuration can change as needed).
3. After the last communicant leaves the rail, open the gate with the same slow movements and solemn reverences as above. Take the items from the table into the Sacristy.

4. The Priest or Deacon (never a Lay person) will place “reserved sacrament” into the aumbry. Then the clergy and all LEMs will move back inside the Altar rail for post communion prayer. **The Verger will wait outside the Sacristy (closing the door), next to the processional cross, and wait until the post-communion prayer and blessing is completed.** After the dismissal, the Verger/crucifer leads the procession out of the Church with the processional cross.

AFTER THE SERVICE

1. Leave the Altar candles lit as the next service starts in about 10 - 15 minutes. If there is NO 9:05 am service (Summer Schedule, etc.), the candles should be extinguished.
 2. Still in vestments (there are still quite a few members of the congregation waiting to leave), return to the sanctuary; put everything back into place; remove the service bulletins and other items that might still be there. As the Public Address system was "set" before the 8:00 service, no changes need to be made.
 3. **Instruct the 9:05 am family** about counting the congregation and bringing this number to the front when getting the Offering Plates.
 4. Look over the Church to assure that everything is ready for the 9:05 am service.
 5. Move the 9:05 Altar into place at the top of the steps (back against the front of the carpet), and the Credence Table into place in front of the Prayer Desk.
 6. Move the Gospel Book and Service Book (with pillow) to the 9:05 Altar.
 7. Place four (4) offering baskets on the shelf under the Credence Table.
 8. Make sure that the 9:05 service leaflets are given to the “Family of the Week” to be handed out along with the standard leaflets.
 9. Explain to the “Vestry-person of the day” the proper procedure for removing the offering baskets to the Sacristy during the Service.
 10. Ask the Priest/Celebrant for any additional instructions.
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THE 9:05 am SERVICE

1. Be in the vesting room by 8:50 am or 8:55 am. The Celebrant may need to give you some last-minute instructions. You also need to be there in case one of the ministers or a visitor has questions or needs assistance. **(NOTE: At the present time the Rector has requested that there should be 3 LEMs or 2 LEMs and a Verger for the 9:05 am service - unless otherwise notified).**
2. At 9:05 am, verify that the Public Address system is on (the toggle switch will be lit as before, as well as the clergy “white” microphone switches), open the door to the Sanctuary, and lead out to the prayer desk and reader’s desk. (The Verger should be at the Prayer desk, the 2nd LEM should be in the Readers Desk, the Celebrant should be in the 1st Clergy Desk, the Deacon should be in the 2nd Clergy Desk, and any additional clergy should be in the chair by the Choir.) The hymn is sung.
3. The clergy reading the gospel then delivers the homily.
4. After the “passing of the Peace”, the Verger (or designated LEM) moves to the Altar to serve as acolyte. The other LEM takes the Offering baskets to the ushers. If only one LEM (or Verger) – take the 4 baskets from under the Credence Table and give them to the ushers, then assist the Deacon / Priest in setting the table.
5. After the offering is received, receive the Offering baskets from the ushers, place them on the front right corner of the Altar, and move to the kneeler on the Eagle side for the rest of the service.

From this point forward in the service, NO ONE IS TO KNEEL INSIDE THE ALTAR RAIL (or past the top of the stairs). This is true for ALL services.

6. Throughout the Holy Communion, pay special attention to the Celebrant. The Verger/crucifer is the acolyte for the 9:05 am service. You have to keep watching the Celebrant to see if he/she needs anything.
7. Once the Celebrant takes Communion, proceed to the side of the Altar, and stand for Communion. When all LEMs have received communion the LEMs will assist the clergy with the communion.
8. The LEM will proceed down the steps and move about 15 feet to the right or to the left of the steps. The congregation will receive communion bread from the clergy at the bottom of the steps, and move to the left or to the right to receive the communion wine.
9. When the communion is completed, the Verger and LEM will remove the elements from the Altar, and take them back to the Sacristy.
10. Then the clergy will move back to the prayer desks (in front of the Church) for prayer, and for the closing hymn. The Deacon will exit to the font, and will pronounce the dismissal from the font. Exit the Sanctuary through the side door to the Vesting Room.
11. After the service concludes, extinguish the candles (starting with the candle on the Altar, and moving up to the highest candle next to the Altar cross) and wash the 9:05 chalices, patens, and cruets. Place them, as well as the Altar cloth, into the cabinet labeled 9:05 am Service Only. The Altar linen and corporal as well as the Credence cloth should stay on the Altar and Credence Table unless dirty and in need of cleaning. Take the Gospel Book and the Service Book back to the high Altar.
12. Move the 9:05 Credence Table and Altar back into the area behind the pulpit (“nested”).
13. Look over the Sanctuary, and make it ready for the late service (11:00 am normal schedule / 10:00 am Summer Schedule). Ask the Celebrant for any additional instructions.

THE 11:00 am (or 10:00 am during the Summer) SERVICE

BEFORE THE SERVICE

1. Be in the vesting room by 10:40 am or 10:45 am (9:40 am or 9:45 am during the Summer). The Celebrant may need to give you some last-minute instructions. You also need to be there in case one of the ministers or a visitor has questions or needs assistance.
2. Prepare the church for the service:
 - a. Sanctuary
 - i. Make sure that the 9:05 Altar and Credence Table are in their proper place (“nested” behind the pulpit).
 - ii. Acolyte station - check to see that there are Hymnals and Prayer Books on the seats and in the prayer desks, put a service bulletin in the prayer desks. Open the Prayer Books to the opening page for that service.
 - iii. Priest's station - see that there are two service bulletins in the prayer desks. Open the Prayer Books to the opening page for that service.
 - iv. Altar area - if two (or four) acolytes are on duty, take the Gospel book back to the vesting room; make sure the candles are prepared and the Sanctuary candle is sufficient.
 - v. Make sure the 4 **silver** offering plates (inside of the larger plate) are on the steps to the left of the Altar. Also make sure that the proper items are on the Credence table: two large chalices, the small chalice, two patens, the Altar station paten, water cruet, bread box, lavabo bowl and cloth.
 - b. Chancel
 - i. Acolyte station - make sure there are Hymnals and Prayer Books in the rack; put a service bulletin on the chair. Open the Prayer Books to the opening page for that service.
 - c. Vesting room
 - i. Make sure there is enough wick in the candlesnuffer (wicks are in the sacristy).
 - ii. Make sure there are two Hymnals on the cabinet for the lectors to use while they process.
 - iii. Make sure that both Crosses are in the vesting room, and that the Gospel book is also there (or that an Acolyte has it).
 - d. Nave
 - i. Walk down the aisle and check to see that there are no service bulletins left in the pews and that everything is neat and in order.
 - ii. Check to see that the Altar Guild has placed the Elements on the small table by the font, and that there are no service bulletins on the table.
 - iii. Make sure that the book for the Prayers of the People and the pen are in place.
3. Vest while you are doing these chores. If there is no one in the church, you need not fully vest to do them. If there are visitors around, however, you should be vested to identify yourself as someone who can welcome them and answer questions. It is best to vest in at least a cassock. Either wear the Verger's gown over a cassock or wear lector's vestments.
4. At about 10:50 am, the acolytes will light the candles in the sanctuary. If there is to be a Baptism, they should light the Paschal candle first. In Easter season, also light the Paschal candle first (if it

is already lit, light the candlesnuffer from it). For candles at other services or at other times of the year (Advent, etc.), please check with the Priest for specific lighting instructions.

5. Check to make sure that the candles are lit.

DURING THE SERVICE

1. Make sure the procession is in order: Verger, Crucifer & Torchbearers, Flags, Choir, Crucifer, LEMs, Gospel, Deacon, and Priests.
2. When the Organist starts the processional, turn and lead the procession at a stately pace. Carry the verge - (American Style) on your right shoulder or (English Style) hold your forearm parallel to the floor (or slightly pointed toward the floor) and the virge should be tilted forward at about 45° (either style is acceptable). When you reach the gate, step into the sanctuary, turn and face the Crucifer and Torchbearers. When the second Crucifer is approaching the rail, nod to the Crucifer and Torchbearers, who will put the Cross and torches in the racks (crosses should face across the Altar, not toward the back or front of the Church). Put the verge in its holder and stand facing the congregation. The Verger sits in the small chair closest to the Altar while the Deacon sits in the large chair under the marble tablet (the Polk Memorial). Sit **after** the opening prayers.
3. Remain seated during the lesson.
4. Before the Gospel Reading - As the choir starts the Psalm (or the congregation starts the Hymn), take the verge on your shoulder, reverence the Altar, move outside the Altar Rail, turn, and stand facing the Altar, far enough down the chancel to allow the Gospel procession to form out side the rail. (The gospel procession consists of Verger, two torches, Crucifer, Gospel Book, and Deacon [when present]). When the Gloria starts, all turn together to the **left** and proceed down the steps and three paces into the Aisle. (NOTE: If a hymn is used in place of the Psalm, the Verger should "form up" when the hymn starts, look for the Deacon (if present) on the next to last verse, and move to the steps on the final verse of the hymn. If the Children are singing - please check with the ChoirMaster for instructions.) Turn, keeping the verge on your shoulder (American Style) or parallel to the ground - left to right (British Style) during the reading of the Gospel.
5. After the Gospel Reading - As the "traveling" music starts, pass between the **right hand** torchbearer and the Gospel bearer and lead the procession back to the rail. Step through the gate, turn, nod to Procession, and return to your station, replacing the verge in its holder.
6. **From this point forward in the service, NO ONE IS TO KNEEL INSIDE THE ALTAR RAIL. This is true anytime there are not enough kneelers for each person behind the rail.**

NOTE: IF THERE IS TO BE A BAPTISM, THE VERGER ESCORTS THE PROCESSION TO AND FROM THE BAPTISMAL FONT. THE PROCEDURE FOR THIS IS FOUND IN ATTACHMENT A OF THIS MANUAL.

7. Stand as the clergy and the elements approach the altar. (If there is any question about when to move), tell the acolyte when to take the Offering Plates to the steps, and when to retrieve them.
8. After the clergy have received communion, nod to the acolytes to form up before the Altar. The Verger is to be the last in line, the first to receive. When all LEMs and acolytes have received communion, the acolytes for the congregation and the "Preacher and Prayer" LEM will leave the Sanctuary to go to the pulpit station (unless the celebrant is the Preacher – in this instance, the Deacon will go with the Prayer to the Pulpit Station). The server will shut the gates and replenish the chalices as needed. When the last communicant leaves the rail, the server reopens the gates. The Verger and the LEMs help the Priests clear the Altar and carry things to the sacristy. The clergy (never a Lay person) will place "reserved sacrament" into the aumbry. The Verger or the

Priest is the last to leave the sacristy to return to the sanctuary. Close the sacristy door as you leave.

9. As the processionary hymn introduction begins, wait until the acolytes have put out the candles. Then take the verge and line up in the chancel facing the Altar with the verge on your right shoulder. **Turn and leave when everyone is in place** - *unless the Rector/Celebrant makes a change for a particular reason **BEFORE** the service - notifying the Verger **AND** Acolyte Master(s).* When it is time to turn, tell the acolytes and all turn to the **left** together and lead the procession at a stately pace. Again, the verge may be carried in the American Style or the British Style during the procession.

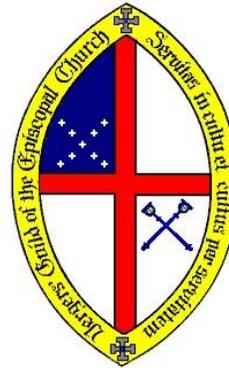
AFTER THE SERVICE

1. Confirm that the ushers are straightening the kneelers and picking up the service bulletins.
2. Check with the Priest / Rector for any other assistance you might provide before leaving.

Please note that this customary is an ever-changing document. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the Rector.



Saint Paul's Church
Augusta, Georgia



Affiliated with the
Verger's Guild of the Episcopal Church
(VGEC)

ATTACHMENT 1 - The Baptismal Procession

At the time of Presentation of the Candidates, the Verger, torches, and Crucifer move forward to the Prayer desk. The Verger stands next to the Prayer desk, while the torches and Crucifer stand across the Choir.

When the procession starts, the Verger leads the procession down the isle to the font. The Verger then continues past the font (on the right) to the rear doors, turns, and faces the congregation.

When the baptism is over, go around the font (again, on the right), and proceed back to the chancel. When you arrive at the chancel rail, you turn, and follow the same procedure used when you lead the procession at the beginning of the service.

ATTACHMENT 2 - How to set the 9:05 credence Table

- 1) Remove the Credence Table from its nested position (inside the Altar). Place the Credence Table directly to the LEFT (facing the High Altar) of the 9:05 Altar. The Altar and Credence Table will be moved into place just before the 9:05 Service.



- 2) Remove the two (2) crockery cruets from the cabinet in the Sacristy
- 3) Fill one cruet to the half-way point with water
- 4) Fill the second cruet 2/3 full with wine
- 5) Remove both patens from the cabinet, and remove four (4) large hosts from the tupperware container. RESEAL the container.
- 6) Remove both crockery chalices from the cabinet.
- 7) Remove the fair linen from the cabinet. Take it out to the table, remove from the protective bag, unroll it, and place it on the table (the undercloth should already be on the Altar). Take the protective bag back into the Sacristy, and replace in the cabinet. Take out one Corporal to be used on the Altar during the Service.
- 8) Take the two (2) cruets, and place them on the back right of the table, handles to the rear (these should be picked up so that the handles are facing the Celebrant).
- 9) Remove two (2) purificators from the cabinet drawer, and take them and the two (2) chalices to the table. Place the chalices on the left rear of the table, and drape the purificators across the top of each chalice.
- 10) Take the two (2) patens and four hosts to the table, and place them on the front **LEFT** of the table (with 4 hosts). Place the Altar Corporal on the front **RIGHT** of the Credence Table.



ATTACHMENT 3 - **How to set the 8:00/11:00 credence Table**

1. The chalices, patens, etc. are located in the safe in the Sacristy.
2. If the Altar Guild has not arrived and begun set-up before 7:45, have the Priest / Rector open the safe for you.
3. To set up the table, use the following photo:



The Priest / Celebrant should check the table before the service to determine that everything that is necessary is present.

If you are not sure how something is done, or where an item goes, **ASK THE PRIEST FOR ASSISTANCE!**
