

## ALTAR SERVER MINISTRY

Our altar server ministry for Sunday Masses and Holy Days at Prince of Peace consists of three (3) server roles, with an additional two (2) vocations path roles that overlap into the server ministry. The program has been instituted to assist in providing our servers with confidence and the opportunity to grow within the ministry by acquiring additional duties and responsibilities, and ultimately to help them grow and advance in holiness. Acceptance and advancement to different roles in the ministry is not automatic, nor is it guaranteed. It should, at all times, be considered an honor and privilege to be able to serve at the Altar of the Lord, not a right one has. Devoted altar servers play an important role for the entire Prince of Peace faith community, and through their service can help draw others to the Lord. This should be taken as a serious commitment.

## SERVER MINISTRY

Server Ministry team consists of:

- Deacon Justin Reuter – Primarily responsible for the ministry. This includes the vision, procedures, implementation, and training.
- Traci Bazzelle – Supports the ministry in the administrative function, and assists deacon in implementation (Including communication, scheduling, etc)
- Suzanne Goff (Liturgy Coordinator) – Supports the ministry through MSP. Inputs server information and roles into MSP, communicates periodic MSP date availability (in conjunction with other liturgical functions), etc.
- Father Andrew/Andy Bazzelle – Lead and support the vocations path implementation, training, meetings
- Server Parents - Considered a vital part of the ministry team through their participation in communications and encouragement of their servers in growth of knowledge of procedures, reverence, and engagement opportunities. Parents are always encouraged to come to the ministry with any questions/concerns and maintain an open dialogue.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

In general, our servers should be just that, *servants*. Their role is to help draw people to Christ during the Mass. The ideal server is one not looking to 'do' the things servers do at Mass, but to 'be' a server. They should model Christ's words, "I came not to be served, but to serve". They model the attitude of 'whatever you need me to do' when assisting the clergy. Altar servers, in a very real and visible way, are an extension of the clergy at Mass, and thus are expected to conduct themselves in such a way through:

- **Devotion (Commitment to what we believe):** A server is expected to have a love for God, the Catholic faith, and a desire to serve God and His people.
- **Dedication (Commitment to how we act):** A server is expected to fulfill their commitment by meeting the requirements of their given role and by knowing the responsibilities of their assigned role. A server is dedicated to the ministry, and always trying to help other servers excel as well for the benefit of God's people.
- **Discipline (Commitment to how we serve):** A server is expected to be able to maintain self-control and do what needs to be done the right way and with the right attitude.

## OVERALL EXPECTATIONS

While we don't expect perfection, we do strive for it. At a minimum, we expect our servers to show up when they are scheduled, maintain proper reverence, dress according to their role, and grow in their own relationship with Christ:

- **Timeliness:** Simply put, servers cannot fulfill their commitment if they are not present, placing the ministry and liturgy at a disadvantage. Servers are expected to report to the ministry room **20 minutes** prior to Mass. After such time, clergy, ministry lead(s), or Lead Servers may begin looking for substitutes, and if a sub is found the server should not expect to serve that Mass.
  - Notify the ministry and/or request a substitute for a given Mass as early as possible.
  - Consistent failure to show up for an assigned time will result in a notification and may result in the account being paused.
- **Reverence:** Inside and outside of Mass a server conducts themselves as a servant of God. A server should draw people into the Mass, not be a distraction, therefore reverence is the most important thing for a server at Mass. This includes self-control in maintaining proper posture, no meaningless talking or facial expressions, avoidance of 'squirming' around, not rushing/running to items or places, and even simple things like yawning or cracking knuckles should be avoided.
  - Unruly, disruptive, uncooperative behavior inside of Mass is not allowed. Similarly, behavior outside of Mass can place the ability of a server to stay engaged in jeopardy if the outside behavior would cause a server to be a distraction during Mass.
- **Dress:** Altar servers vest in a white alb and cincture, similar to a priest and deacon, as they are a direct extension of the clergy. Footwear should be such as to not draw attention (so avoid bright neon colors, etc.), ideally black or brown shoes.
  - The alb should reach approximately to the ankle. Too short is not in keeping with the purpose of the alb, and too long can cause an altar server to have difficulty walking, kneeling, etc.
- **Ongoing formation:** Our goal for our altar servers is to help them to grow with Christ as well. Therefore, ongoing formation opportunities may be provided for the spiritual well-being of the servers and families.
  - Mandatory annual training is required for all servers wanting to stay active in the ministry. This is intended to be an occasion for spiritual growth, a chance to provide reminders of, and changes to, procedures, and an opportunity for fellowship.
  - Short quarterly videos will be provided as ongoing formation/communication for altar servers. Servers are encouraged to watch and respond with confirmation to each video message. Other optional formation opportunities may also be offered.

## **ALTAR SERVER ROLES**

A typical Mass at Prince of Peace will consist of one (1) Lead Server, two (2) Servers, and one (1) Server Apprentice. There may be an additional role of one (1) MC and/or one (1) Thurifer. Below outlines the typical path for our servers, but there may be those that fit into a non-traditional path within the ministry.

### **SERVER APPRENTICE**

The Server Apprentice is a new altar server who is learning the procedures and operating in the sanctuary for the first time. This is a period of time where they are not expected to 'know' what they need to do without any prompting, but still participate in serving at Mass with various tasks and a reverent demeanor. Those in this role are provided the opportunity to learn by observation and following direction of more experienced altar servers in order to build confidence and become comfortable with the role of a server. All new servers start in this role, regardless of age.

#### **Requirements\*:**

- Have attended new server training through the church, with at least one parent present for the training\*\*
- Demonstrate a degree of devotion, dedication, and discipline
- Discern and communicate interest and fill out MSP form
- Receive notification of acceptance from Altar Server Ministry
- Parental confirmation provided and loaded into MSP

#### **Expectations\*:**

- Generally, males & females who have completed 4<sup>th</sup> grade
- Expect to serve in this capacity for around 6 times and/or 6 months to 1 year, though this can vary
- May be asked to fulfill the role of Server (Candle-Bearer) in the case of a role vacancy at a given Mass
- First movement to Server will include a dual role of Server Apprentice / Server to provide additional repetitions

### **SERVER (Candle-Bearer)**

The Server is an altar server who has completed his/her time as a Server Apprentice and has demonstrated requisite competency of the expectations and requirements of an altar server. As a Server, they are expected to fulfill the role of candle-bearer at Mass, and continue to grow in their skills, knowledge, and spiritual maturity in serving at the Altar of the Lord.

#### **Requirements\*:**

- Completed Server Apprentice timeframe/ reps
- Demonstrate consistent devotion, dedication, and discipline
- Receive recommendation from Server Ministry and/or parental request provided to ministry
- Notification and acceptance of position provided

#### **Expectations\*:**

- Generally, males & females who have completed 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- Most serve in this capacity, and not all servers will be expected, or approved, to advance to Lead Server role
- May be asked to fulfill the role of Cross-Bearer for a role vacancy at a given Mass, or trained as a Cross-Bearer sub
- Encouraged to continue serving thru high school if feel called

### **LEAD SERVER (Cross-Bearer)**

The Lead Server operates as the cross-bearer and is relied on as the peer lead for the servers for a particular Mass. A Lead Server demonstrates exceptional competency of the expectations and requirements, and is regularly engaged in communicating with the clergy and other servers. This role requires additional training associated with additional responsibilities. A brief demonstration of the necessary knowledge to fulfill expectations will be expected. Not all servers will advance to this stage.

#### **Requirements\*:**

- Demonstrates highest degree of devotion, dedication, and discipline and knowledge or procedures
- Accepts feedback well and incorporates it
- Possesses the attitude of a servant; less concerned with 'doing', rather with 'being'
- Regularly engaged with the ministry. Examples:
  - Watch and respond to quarterly videos
  - Reply to ministry communications/surveys
  - Accept sub-requests and check-in before Mass
  - Participate in extra liturgical activities

- Receive recommendation from Server Ministry and/or parental request for consideration provided to ministry
- Attend additional server training
- Provide demonstration of ability / knowledge after training

#### **Expectations\*:**

- Generally, males & females who are in 7<sup>th</sup> grade or older
- Will continue to operate as both Lead Server and Server
- Watch and respond to quarterly videos
- Encouraged to continue serving thru high school if feel called
- Willingness to help with special liturgies

*\* Exceptions will be considered by the ministry based on ministry gap/need and readiness of the individual. While the ministry may make exceptions, parents are also invited to reach out to discuss scenarios that may warrant an exception.*

*\*\* While server training may also be offered through the school, in order to serve at weekend Masses all servers must attend the training conducted by the Server Ministry through the church, which is offered twice per year.*

## **VOCATIONAL PATH *(Currently Under Review, with UPDATES PENDING)***

The Vocations Path is a specific opportunity as an offshoot of the altar server ministry for young men to draw close to the Eucharist to discern where the Lord is calling them, be it holy orders, husband/father, or living as a single person in the world. Staying close to the Eucharist and the Church is the best way to discern one's vocation, and serving at the Altar is often a catalyst for young men to discern the unique vocation of the priesthood. These roles are outside the regular server roles, and not intended to be seen as a direct advancement of the server roles, but rather as additional opportunities for growth from within the server ministry. The path will include invitations from clergy and/or an opportunity for parents to express interest and request consideration. There will be special training for the roles Thurifer or Master of Ceremonies, and invitations to quarterly meetings to grow in faith alongside ministry leads and clergy. Servers in the vocations path may be invited to serve at Masses and events with particular vocational aspects (i.e. Holy Thursday, events/Masses focused on seminarians, etc.). This ministry includes two (2) roles, that of Thurifer and Master of Ceremonies:

### **THURIFER**

The Thurifer is one who has demonstrated a high degree of competency of the expectations and requirements of a Lead Server, which has been demonstrated over a substantial period of time, and have an openness to vocations discernment and participation in vocations path meeting. Thurifers are given this additional role at Mass, helping nurture the discernment process unique to their vocation as young men.

#### **Requirements:**

- Demonstrate an openness to vocations discernment
- Receive recommendation from clergy and/or parental request for consideration provided to ministry
- Attend Thurifer training
- Provide demonstration of ability / knowledge after training

#### **Expectations:**

- Male only, generally in 8<sup>th</sup> grade or older
- Have served as a Lead Server
- Wear black cassock / white surplice when fulfilling this role
- Continue to fulfill roles of Server and Lead Server as needed
- Willingness to help with special liturgies/assist with trainings
- Invited to participate in regular vocations path meetings
- It is not expected, or intended, that a Thurifer will eventually advance or be invited to be an MC.

### **MASTER OF CEREMONIES (MC)**

The Master of Ceremonies (MC) role is for those who demonstrate an exceptional commitment to leadership in their service as Lead Server and Thurifer, communication with their team of servers, and have an openness to vocations discernment. An MC operates formally as a peer leader in the ministry, and has demonstrated the greatest degree of knowledge, expertise, spiritual maturity, and exhibits exceptional leadership potential. The MC prepares the servers ahead of the Mass to ensure the duties and sacred actions of the servers are carried out with decorum, order, and devotion (ref. GIRM 106), and will be given responsibilities beyond what other servers are asked or permitted to do. They advise clergy and the ministry coordinators in the conduct of the Ministry.

The role of MC is reserved for a very small population of our servers, and at times it may be the case that we have no MCs within the ministry. Therefore, it is not expected or intended that Thurifers become MCs. Those servers who are to be considered for Master of Ceremonies will be invited by a priest or deacon and participate in a period of training and discernment before installation.

#### **Requirements:**

- Have served as a Lead Server for a minimum of one-year
- Have operated as a Thurifer and demonstrated abilities to exceptionally fulfill role
- Demonstrate exceptional communication and leadership potential
- Receive recommendation from clergy, parental confirmation
- Participate in a period of training and trial
- Provide demonstration of ability / knowledge after training
- Formally installed as MC by pastor

#### **Expectations:**

- Male only, having completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- Simply completing the training for MC does not guarantee one will be installed as an MC
- When serving at Mass, expected to operate as MC
- Wear black cassock / white surplice when fulfilling this role
- Willingness to help with special liturgies
- Invited to participate in regular vocations path meetings
- Expected to help train future servers

## **ALTAR SERVER ASSIGNMENTS**

### **TYPICAL SUNDAY MASS**

Assignments for altar server roles at a typical Sunday Mass will be determined by the MSP system. MSP automatically assigns servers to roles based on availability and the roles each server has assigned to them. Some servers may serve more or less often based on which Mass times they have made themselves available for. The more servers available for a particular Mass time, the less repetitions a server can expect to have.

### **SPECIAL MASSES**

There are various Masses throughout a given year that are of the highest degree, and therefore the liturgy particular to these Masses demands special care be taken in assigning server roles. For these occasions, MSP will not make assignments to ensure we appropriately accommodate the liturgies. Prior to these Masses, an email request for availability and interest will be distributed to the server community. While it is our intention and hope that all servers interested in serving will have an opportunity to do so, we cannot guarantee that to be the case. Once availability and interest is gathered, assignments will be made giving priority to servers who consistently operate in their role to the highest degree. Younger and less experienced servers may find themselves without the opportunity to serve these Masses initially, but as they grow and mature in their roles these opportunities should present themselves. The Server Ministry will confirm assignments with parents, and the assignments will be input in MSP for tracking purposes.

#### **Special considerations are given to (but not limited to):**

- Christmas Eve/Christmas Day
- Holy Week – Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, Easter Sunday
- Corpus Christi
- Masses with the Archbishop

### **FUNERAL / WEDDINGS**

Servers will have the opportunity to be contacted to serve for funerals, weddings, or other special Masses. Interest can be expressed to the Server Ministry through the yearly re-commitment. Servers will be added to the list of recommended servers for the Prince of Peace office use. Training will be conducted by pastor/priest (typically the presider), typically 20-30 minutes prior to the Mass they are serving.