

About Altar Servers



Dear Altar Servers, you are, in fact, already apostles of Jesus! When you take part in the Liturgy by carrying out your altar service, you offer a witness to all. Your absorption, the devotion that wells up from your heart and is expressed in gestures, in song, in the responses: if you do it correctly and not absent-mindedly, then in a certain way your witness is one that moves people.

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the bond of friendship with Jesus. You are very close to Jesus in the Eucharist, and this is the most important sign of his friendship for each one of us. Do not forget it.

-excerpt from Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Altar Servers, August 2, 2006

The Altar Server's Ministry is a unique one in the Catholic Church. Other than priests and deacons, no one else is allowed to so closely play a part in the preparation of the Eucharist. Your participation as an Altar Server is special. When you serve the priests and deacons, you serve the people of God, and above all, you serve Christ.

Altar Servers must remember that everything that they do is for the Glory of God. They do it out of love for His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Ignatius of Loyola called this attitude "AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM". This means "*For the Greater Glory of God*". It is the motto of a heart of service.

Sometimes, we don't feel like doing our best. Sometimes, we just want to sleep another 5 minutes later; or we want wear our pajamas under our Albs; or we want to not have to carry the candles today; or maybe we even want to just call in sick and let someone else serve.

When we feel that way, we should ask ourselves, "Would I do it if Jesus Himself asked me?"

- ✓ Would I substitute for a sick server, if Jesus Himself asked me?
- ✓ Would I serve in a less desired role at Mass, if Jesus Himself asked me?
- ✓ Would I wear my best Sunday clothes, if Jesus Himself asked me?
- ✓ Would I put aside my daily worries and worldly concerns and instead come serve at Mass, if Jesus Himself asked me?

He did ask...

and you answered...

Now you have been chosen to be a special minister of the Mass.

As an Altar Server, you will do things that others will never do. You will learn things that others will never know. You will see the Mass in ways that others may never see it. You will do it all for the Honor and Glory of God.

Thank you for saying yes to Him, and welcome to Altar Service!

ALTAR SERVER MINISTRY

ALTAR SERVER MINISTRY

Our altar server ministry for Sundays and Holy Days at Prince of Peace consists of three (3) server roles, with an additional two (2) roles in *Duc In Altum* 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 TEAM

- 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.
- Father Andrew Gaffney/Andy Bazzelle – Lead and support *Duc In Altum* 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.

COMMUNICATIONS

Altar Server Webpage - www.popolathe.org/altar-servers

- General information/expectations of server ministry
- Upcoming training dates/signup
- Instructional Videos
- Contact Information

Contact Info – altarserver@popolathe.org; traci.bazzelle@gmail.com; jreuter@popolathe.org;

QUALIFICATIONS

- Servers' families must be registered members of Prince of Peace Parish
- Servers must actively practice the Catholic faith and regularly attend Mass
- Servers generally having completed fourth grade or older (*Exceptions considered based on ministry gap/need and readiness of the individual*)
- Altar Server Ministry has discerned the server is ready

COMMITMENT & EXPECTATIONS

The Altar Server Commitment

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: A 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: A 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: A 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.

INTENTIONS

New servers should ask themselves, "Why do you want to be an Altar Server?"

Altar servers should serve because they feel a ***personal calling*** to service at the altar. Not everyone is called to serve in this unique way. It should be a joint decision and dialogue between the server, the parent(s), and the ministry to discern this calling. If you have questions or hesitations, reach out to the ministry team to determine if this is the right time for you to begin altar service. If this is not the right time, then you can always discern to start again later when you are ready.

Servers also must be prepared to meet the commitment required of them. They should understand the principles of Devotion, Dedication, and Discipline.

COMMITMENT & EXPECTATIONS

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 serving**. After such time, clergy, ministry lead(s), and/or Lead Servers may begin looking for substitutes, and if a substitute 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 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

FUNERALS/WEDDINGS

Servers will have the opportunity to train for funeral or wedding Masses. Interest must be expressed to the Server Ministry through the yearly re-commitment, as servers will not automatically be associated with these Masses. Servers will be added to the list of recommended servers for the Prince of Peace office use. Training will be conducted by pastor/priest (typical presider), typically 20-30 minutes prior to the Mass they are serving.

BEING AN ALTAR SERVER

TRAINING

Training will be scheduled regularly to accommodate all new altar servers and to provide ongoing training to existing servers. Once servers have completed the initial training, they will be able to begin serving as a Server Apprentice and added to the regular altar server schedule. All servers continue to participate in training through:

- Server advancement process and additional role training
- Quarterly videos sent by the ministry
- Required Annual Fall Server Kickoff
- Debriefings with Lead Altar Server, Deacon or Priest after Mass
- Rehearsals for special liturgies, as required

Altar servers will be trained to handle all the tasks assigned to each specific role. Servers should also memorize the prayer responses of the Mass, know the names of the vestments and vessels of the altar, and to learn the Order of the Mass.

GENERAL CONDUCT

Altar Servers should come to Mass prepared to meet the Lord at His Holy Communion. They should remember to honor their one-hour Eucharistic fast. They should also consider whether they ought to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation ahead of time, and, if needed, make appropriate arrangements.

Once an Altar Server puts on the Alb and Cincture, their conduct always must be professional and reverent. ***An Altar Server is 'On Duty' from the time they put on their Alb and Cincture before Mass - until the time they remove it ...after Mass and extinguishing the candles.***

Altar Servers must always show respect for the sanctity of the church, server vestments, the sacred vessels, and fellow servers at all times, even when not serving a Mass.

SERVE OFTEN

We encourage you to serve often to get comfortable in your ministry. Being willing to substitute regularly, is a beautiful way to serve your ministry team. Consider coming to daily Mass and offering to serve regularly, especially over summer and school breaks. Serving often will draw you deeper into Eucharistic Amazement and the beauty of the Mass.

BEING AN ALTAR SERVER

ALTAR SERVER ROLES

As servers grow in knowledge, reverence, and maturity, there are opportunities to advance to different roles in the ministry. Advancement is not automatic, nor is it guaranteed. The full details for each Altar Server Role, can be found in the “Altar Server Role Description and Requirements” document posted on the altar server webpage. Below is a brief summary of each role.

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. These levels are meant to inspire confidence and greater involvement in learning not just the duties and responsibilities of Altar Service, but also facilitating growth and knowledge in our faith, and creating an environment that fosters spiritual maturity, and opportunities for leadership development.

SERVER APPRENTICE

The Server Apprentice is a new altar server who is still learning the procedures and how to operate in the sanctuary. They are primarily focused on posture and reverence and not expected to ‘know’ what they need to do without any prompting,. All new servers start in in this role, regardless of age.

ALTAR SERVER

The Altar Server is one who has completed his/her time as a Server Apprentice and demonstrated an appropriate level of reverence and knowledge of the procedures. They fulfill the role of candle-bearer at Mass.

LEAD ALTAR SERVER

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, knowledge of procedures, reverence, and engagement in the ministry.

“DUC IN ALTUM” (INTO THE DEEP)

The 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. 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. This path includes two (2) roles, that of Thurifer and Master of Ceremonies.

BEING AN ALTAR SERVER

SCHEDULING

Altar Servers will be scheduled for Sunday Mass using Ministry Scheduler Pro (MSP).

When you register as an Altar Server, you will specify the Mass times you prefer to serve. These can be updated/changed by logging into MSP. Ministers are assigned approximately three months at a time. **A request for your availability will be sent via email in advance each scheduling session.** Please be sure to indicate dates that you are unavailable. The emails will be sent by the Liturgy Coordinator, Suzanne Goff, sgoff@popolathe.org.

The schedule and assignments are available in several locations:

- Sent by email to you when they are assigned at the beginning of each 3 month cycle, and again the week before you are serving as a reminder.
- Posted in the Minister Book in the Ministry Room
- Online in the scheduling tool – Ministry Schedule Pro (MSP) Website or App

MSP Website: http://www.rotundasoftware.com/ministry/prince_of_peace

MSP App: <https://ministryschedulerpro.com/download>

Once schedules are posted, parents should ensure that they are serving at the Masses for which they are scheduled. Emergencies and unforeseen circumstances may arise; however, **servers are responsible for ensuring their position is covered and for submitting substitute requests.** This can be done inside the scheduling tool and/or by calling alternate servers.

ARRIVAL

All servers are **responsible for signing in when they serve.** This should be your first duty before Mass. Locate the MINISTRY BOOK in the Ministry Room. Sign in under the day's Mass. If you are substituting, then please indicate for whom you are substituting.

If attending a Mass where you are NOT scheduled to serve, please check in with the other servers and reference the ministry sign-in book when you arrive to see if a substitute is needed. This is to ensure that there will be adequate server coverage for the Mass.

Check the Note posted on the alb closet door for any Notes to Servers, Changes in Procedures, or Reminders.

Mobile Phones are strictly prohibited. If they are brought into the Ministry Room, they need to be turned off upon checking in and stored in a drawer of the cabinet of the Ministry Room (or given to a parent) BEFORE VESTING. They should not be retrieved until completion of Mass Duties. *(Preferable, these phones should be left at home or in the car if at all possible.)*

BEING AN ALTAR SERVER

APPEARANCE AND DRESS

CLOTHING

All servers are expected to wear "Sunday clothes" at the weekend Masses. Modesty should be preferred over fashion. No Jeans or shorts. Black or Khaki pants are preferred over other forms of dress.

SHOES

Shoes should be clean dress-style shoes. Black dress/casual shoes are preferred (Athletic shoes, sandals, crocs, and flip-flops are not appropriate). Closed-toe, closed-heel shoes only. Shoes should have a conservative heel, and good traction. Servers may occasionally encounter water spills or loose carpeting; therefore, worn soles and high heels present a real hazard for tripping and slipping.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Servers should not wear excessive or flashy jewelry or bracelets/bands. Jewelry should be minimal, not visible over alb, or left at home or with parent, as to not draw attention.

No perfume, scented body spray, or cologne should be worn. This is out of consideration for fellow altar servers who share vestments.

Young ladies wearing makeup should do so modestly, and be careful to keep their alb clean and free of makeup.

Hair should be very neatly presented so as to not distract from the Mass. Long hair may be best pulled back into a pony tail (primarily as a safety issue due to candles).

ALB & CINCTURE

White Albs and Cinctures are sorted in the ministry room by size. Select an Alb that fits comfortably and is long enough to cover to your ankles, but not too long that it may cause you to trip. Rely on other servers for help with your cincture, as needed. You are a 'TEAM,' as such, help and check each other out to ensure that the entire 'Team' appearance is suitable.

After Mass, return your Alb & Cincture to its original place (by size), buttoned up as to stay on the hangar. Neatly hang them, facing the correct direction. This is out of courtesy to your fellow servers.

PROCEDURE & POSTURE

PROCEDURES FOR MASS

Detailed procedures for each server role are outlined in a separate document - "Sunday Mass Quick Guide." This can be found:

- Online, on the altar server webpage,
and/or
- Printed in the ministry room (in the server alb closet or in the basket by sign-in book).

POSTURES

GENERAL

The posture of the Altar Server should be one of near invisibility. If people are paying attention at Mass, they should not even notice you. If someone looks at you, they should see a server who is reverent and paying attention. It should remind them that they, too, should be paying attention to the Mass, and not to you.

In general, your posture should be confident, but calm. You should look reverent and prayerful, but comfortable. Move smoothly, reverently, but deliberately...DO NOT RUSH.

Always face "the focus of the Liturgy." When someone is speaking or reading during the Mass, you are listening to them. When the Eucharist is being consecrated, you are looking at it. When you are called to respond, you respond.

Make no distracting motions or noises. Do not fidget or shift about. Do not wave, smile, or wink at people. Friends and family will be very proud of you. They may smile or even wave at you. Impress them further by attending to your duties at Mass without acknowledging them. You will have time to visit with them after Mass.

Coughs and sneezes should be covered with an elbow or tissue. Suppress the urge to yawn. If you do yawn, do so discretely and cover your mouth.

If you are holding anything, you are excused from the hand motions for the Mass at that time. (For example, servers holding the candles, should not cross their head/lips/heart at the gospel).

PROCEDURE & POSTURE

STANDING

When standing, stand up straight. Balance your weight evenly on both feet, but do not lock your knees.

Whenever you are not holding anything, fold your hands with palms together, in the "prayer position". Point your fingertips upward. They should be held comfortably at about the middle of your chest.

If you are holding something, hold the item firmly with one or both hands, as needed. The free hand, if you have one, should cover your heart. Grasp items firmly and deliberately. When handing something to someone else, make sure they have a firm grip so as not to drop it.



Standing Position

PROCESSING

The procession is a sacred act. It is more than just a way for the priest to get to the altar. It is a very formal way of welcoming and glorifying Christ himself into our presence.

When you process, walk at a deliberate, but respectful pace. It should be just slower than you normally walk. If you are not the lead in the procession, keep pace with the lead.

When carrying something while processing, hold it reverently with both hands and slightly in front of you, not resting on your chest. Making sure the candle or cross is straight up and down.



Processing

WALKING

Walk - Never run. You are the model of reverence, calm and grace. Walk deliberately to your station. Watch for others in your way and plan ahead to step around them. Never get in the way of the Presiders, nor of any Minister holding the Blessed Sacrament.

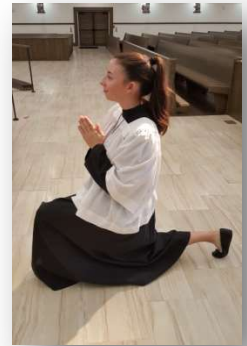
Hands are folded prayerfully or firmly grasping whatever you may be carrying.

This applies to both before, during, and after the Mass. Not just during the Mass, but even when lighting/extinguishing the candles, or on an errand anytime you are vested in an alb.

PROCEDURE & POSTURE

GENUFLECTING

Genuflecting to the tabernacle, whenever Jesus is reserved in the tabernacle, is required when processing up to/and departing the Sanctuary. All Servers (except for those carrying the cross or candles) genuflect in front of the tabernacle when processing up to the Sanctuary, and when recessing out at the end of the Mass. Our Lord's presence in the tabernacle is signified by the red sanctuary light. When it is not lit, the tabernacle is empty, as on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the start of the Saturday Easter Vigil.



Genuflecting

With your back straight and your hands folded prayerfully, from a stopped position slowly step forward with your left leg and lower yourself onto your right knee, and hold that position briefly. This will allow a smooth action as to not trip on your alb. You will NOT make the sign of the cross when genuflecting. Raise yourself up and back with your left leg, while keeping your right leg in place.

Never genuflect when carrying anything. (If you are carrying something, instead, make a Bow of the Head in place of genuflecting).

Genuflecting (or bowing when holding an object), should also be done anytime you enter the sanctuary, even outside of Mass (*i.e.*, when *lighting/extinguishing candles*).

BOWING

You should bow whenever you cross over in front of the tabernacle or altar (before, during, and after Mass). Bow to the tabernacle outside of Mass, bow to the altar during Mass. There are a few exceptions when you do not bow when you are crossing (defer to the training videos for clarification). There are two types of bows:



Bow of the Head

The bow of the head: Lower your chin to your chest and hold it there briefly. There are several times in the Mass when this is done, including when you are holding an object. Also, anytime a priest bows to you, return the bow with a brief head bow.

The profound bow (full bow): Bend at the waste and bow forward. This is used during the Profession of Faith and reposing Jesus in the tabernacle after communion.



Profound Bow

When carrying an item, only a small bow of the head is done, never a full bow.

PROCEDURE & POSTURE

SITTING

While sitting, sit up straight, not slouching. Feet should be directly in front of you. Legs should never be crossed, feet flat on the floor. Keep your legs and feet still. Hands are folded prayerfully or are resting comfortably in your lap.

Respond to prayers and sing deliberately, and fully participate in the Mass, keeping your attention even when sitting.

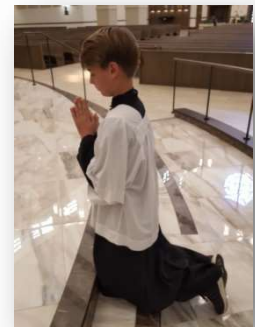


Sitting

KNEELING

While kneeling, keep your torso up straight, not slouching or resting on your feet. If kneeling behind a chair or pew, do not lean over it. Feet should be directly behind you. Keep your legs and feet still. Hands are folded prayerfully.

This takes body control, especially when you do not have something in front of you. Practice this posture at home to build stamina and strength.



Kneeling

REFERENCE APPENDIX

VESTMENTS

Detailed procedures for each server role are outlined in a separate document - "Sunday Mass Quick Guide." This can be found:

- Online, on the altar server webpage,
and/or
- Printed in the ministry room (in the server alb closet or in the basket by sign-in book).

SACRED VESSELS

GENERAL

The posture of the Altar Server should be one of near invisibility. If people are paying attention at Mass, they should not even notice you. If someone looks at you, they should see a server who is reverent and paying attention

ALTAR SERVER PRAYERS

Altar Servers are encouraged to learn these prayers and choose one to pray privately before serving.

ALTAR SERVER DEVOTION TO JESUS

*Oh Jesus, my King and Lord,
by the grace of the heavenly Father and the power of the Holy Spirit,
guide me in all righteousness as I serve You today at the Altar,
so I may be always worthy of Your presence.*

If I happen to make an error, may it be a lesson so that I improve my service tomorrow.

Sweet Jesus, I love you with all my heart ~ Amen.

ALTAR SERVER PRAYER OF THANKS

*Loving Father, creator of the universe, you call your people to worship,
to be with you and with one another at Mass.*

I thank you for having called me to assist others in their prayer to you.

*May I be worthy of the trust placed in me,
and through my example and service bring others closer to you.*

I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord forever and ever ~ Amen.

TRADITIONAL ALTAR SERVER PRAYER

*Open my mouth, O Lord, to bless your Holy Name. Cleanse my heart from all evil and
distracting thoughts. Enlighten my understanding and inflame my will that I may serve
more worthily at your Holy Altar.*

*O Mary, Mother of Christ the High Priest,
obtain for me the most important grace of knowing my vocation in life.*

*Grant me a true spirit of faith and humble obedience
so that I may ever behold the priest as a representative of God
and willingly follow him in the Way, the Truth, and the Life of Christ ~ Amen.*

REMEMBRANCE OF TARCISIUS, MARTYR

*O God, You have graciously called me to serve You upon Your altar.
Grant me the graces that I need to serve You faithfully and wholeheartedly.
Grant too that while serving You, may I follow the example of St. Tarcisius, who died
protecting the Eucharist, and walk the same path that led him to Heaven.*

St. Tarcisius, pray for us and for all servers ~ Amen.