

ST. THOMAS EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
ALTAR CARE GUIDELINES

Revised February 2016
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The basic motivation for serving through Altar Care is Gratitude. Gratitude for all that God has done through His Son, Jesus Christ, and the ways that God continues to bless us daily. We are servants: of God; God's people; and the Worship Space. We should remind ourselves each time that we set up the altar what a joy and privilege it is to serve God in this capacity. It is a great time to spend time alone with our Lord, acknowledge his presence and offer prayers of praise and thanksgiving while you prepare the altar for worship.

Members of the altar care guild are ministers of the liturgy. This ministry involves preparing the worship space with the furnishings, appointments, vessels, linens, and paraments used in the liturgy.

PARAMENTS

Paraments are a counterpart of vestments, but paraments "clothe" or "vest" the central furnishings in the chancel. At St. Thomas, we use paraments on the altar; lectern; and pulpit. Paraments as well as vestments are in the color of the day. The color of the day is outlined on the church calendar which is located on the side of the cupboard that holds the candle oil in the working sacristy. The paraments are housed in the parament storage drawers near the organ. Care should be taken to lay flat whenever possible. Any time that the paraments are folded they tend to crease and not hang nicely on the altar, lectern and pulpit.

ALTAR VESSELS

Please note that it is necessary to wear gloves when handling the cross, candelabra and vases. Oils from uncovered skin, leave marks that turn to discolorations on the finish. Gloves are furnished for your use and are located on the shelf with the oil to fill the candles. Candelabra are placed on either side of the cross. The vases are then placed to the side of the candelabra beneath the Greek letters. If there are no flowers for the altar, the candelabra are centered under the Greek letters.

FLOWER VASES AND LINERS

The liners for the vases need to be stored in the kitchen on the small counter under the phone so that the florists can pick them up before Friday. We have two sets of liners (a metal set and a plastic set). If flower arrangements are scheduled for Sunday, make sure that the vases are on the table in the Robing Sacristy by Friday so that when the flower shop delivers the arrangements on Friday, they can be put into the vases. Ensure the vases are placed on the ret table for Sunday. Please check with the donor to see if they are taking the arrangements after the 10:30 service and if they are, remind them not to take the liners with them. The flowers should not be placed directly on the altar at any time, but on the shelf or ret table beside the candelabra. If a single vase of flowers is provided, the flowers should be on a stand to the side of the altar.

WEEKLY

The following checks should be performed each week:

- Check and fill altar candelabra with oil
- Check wick length and replace when necessary (wicks are in a box on the shelf with the oil along with instructions on how to replace them)
- Check for flower chart for flower arrangements
- Use appropriate color of paraments as defined on the church year calendar.

Thank you for being a willing servant of our Lord and St Thomas Lutheran Church.