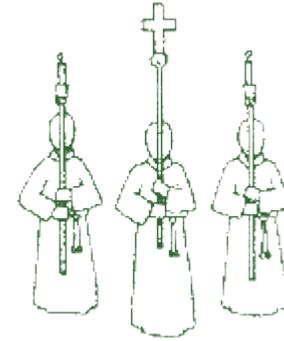




Redeemer Lutheran Church

78 John St. West
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 1B8
(519) 745-5027
redeemer@golden.net
www.redeemer-church.ca
Rev. Robert Krestick



SERVING AS AN ACOLYTE **AT REDEEMER...** **WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?**

What does the word 'acolyte' mean?

- “Acolyte” comes from the Greek word ακολουθος. This word in the Greek language means “to follow or attend,” “to accompany,” or “to be a disciple”.

A Brief History

After Jesus ascended to heaven the apostles whom he had appointed cared for the church. We learn about the leadership of the Apostles in the New Testament book of Acts. The Apostles ministered greatly but there came a time when they needed some help so they could continue to focus on the preaching of God’s Word. In Acts chapter 6 we read that seven men were appointed to be assistants to the twelve. These men were considered deacons or servants.

Eventually, the Twelve Apostles died. Since these men were appointed by Jesus Himself (except for Matthias) the church never re-appointed apostles. However, men were appointed to be Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons. Bishops were considered the overseers while the Presbyters were considered the assistants to the Bishops.

Deacons were the third type of professional ministers and they generally focused on worship and service. These three types of ministries belong to major orders.

Since these men would eventually reach a point where they could no longer serve, it was very important for the church to implement training programs. Today men who desire to serve as pastors attend seminaries but, in the early church that was not the case. In the early church minor orders existed and we learn of these orders from an early churchman named "Hippolytus. During the middle Ages acolytes became significant members of the liturgical tradition. However, the office dates back to the second century. Acolytes served as worship assistants and help the clergy of the church specifically in the lighting of candles."¹



Lighting Candles Then and Now

There was a time when electrical lighting didn't exist. Candles and torches served as the source of light when it was dark. Today we rely very heavily on electricity to provide light for us. Interestingly, in modern culture there are still some people that choose to use candles for light rather than electricity and the light bulb. Candles and the Oil lamp were crucial to the worship space in the early church. Since candles were the only source of light, it was very important that the lamps be lit and maintained so that worship services were not disturbed. This was the practical reason for acolytes. Clearly, lighting and maintaining the candles of the church was and is a great service to God.

¹ Timothy Maschke, *Gathered Guests A Guide to Worship in the Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003) 383.

Your Service as an Acolyte!

Your service to God and Redeemer Lutheran Church is needed and most appreciated. Acolytes assist in the services of God's house and as a result worship services function smoothly and in good order. Your main purpose as an Acolyte is to give glory to God and God alone. Since acolyting is a service to God and His church, you must approach it with respect, professionalism, reverence, and care. Therefore, it is very important that you say a prayer before your service and duty, thanking God for allowing the privilege to serve Him. Also, be sure that you are dressed appropriately, that you arrive early, and that you participate in ALL aspects of the Divine Service. Finally, when you are scheduled to acolyte make sure that you are present!!

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will not walk in
darkness, but will have the light of life"

Light and share the light!



The Church Interior

The Narthex – The room or hall at the entrance to the Church building. This is usually the place where bulletins are handed out and people are greeted.

The Vestry – A small room (usually) with a door leading into the chancel. This room is used for storing vestments and it is also the place where pastors, vicars, acolytes, and worship leaders prepare for the worship service.

The Sacristy – A room which stores paraments, supplies for Holy Communion, and the vessels for Holy Communion. This room is usually situated off the chancel.

The Nave – The main part of the church, where the congregation gathers for worship.

The Transept – Sometimes churches are designed in the shape of the cross. The Transepts are the “horizontal arms” of the cross.

The Chancel – The chancel is the front part of the church where the pastor and vicar lead worship. The chancel is often raised and the pulpit, lectern, altar and communion rail are in the chancel.

The Altar – The altar is usually made of wood or marble. Since sacrifices were made on the altar in the Old Testament, the altar today, reminds us of the sacrifice Jesus made for us. The altar also serves as a table for the Lord’s Supper. The altar symbolizes the presence of God and is the focal point of the worship space.

The Sanctuary – The Sanctuary is the part of the chancel where the altar is located. Sanctuary can also mean the chancel and the nave combined.

What about Acolytes today?

We have electricity so do we really need candles and acolytes? Well, first of all, acolytes served God in more ways than just lighting the candles. We know for certain that they served the clergy and assisted in other ways throughout the worship services. You will find that to be the case here at Redeemer. Your service with prove to be more than simply lighting and putting out the candles at the beginning and end of worship services. Furthermore, even though we have electricity that illuminates our church week after week the candles in our church serve another purpose. The candles of our church, which produce light, serve as a symbol and reminder to us. In Genesis 1:3, we read, *“And God said let there be light, and there was light.”* In addition to Genesis 1, the most basic and simple explanation for the use of “symbolic light” in the church is based on Jesus’ statement in John 8:12, *“I am the light of the world.”* Candles serve as a reminder to the Christian that their Lord Jesus is truly the light of the world and it is Him and only Him that is worshiped as Saviour and Lord!

Your service as an Acolyte in Christ’s church is very significant and important to the worship services conducted in God’s house. Jesus Christ is at the center of all we do here at Redeemer Lutheran. The light produced by the candles you will light Sunday after Sunday will enhance and serve as an important reminder to all worshipers; Jesus Christ is the light of the world!



A Brief Explanation of the Candles at Redeemer Lutheran Church

The six candles on the retable – Symbolic of the six days in which God created the earth.

The two tall candles on each side of the altar – These candles are also known as the Eucharistic lights. These two candles are lit on Communion Sundays and are symbolic of Jesus' human and divine natures.

The floor candelabras in the chancel – These candles are also known as the office lights. Each candelabra contains seven candles. The seven candles symbol completeness or the seven days of creation.

The Candle next to the Pulpit – This candle is called the Paschal Candle (“Pascha” means Easter). Traditionally this candle burns from the Vigil of Easter until either Ascension or Pentecost. The Paschal Candle is also lit when Baptisms and Funerals are conducted. This candle symbolizes the resurrection victory over sin, death and the devil.

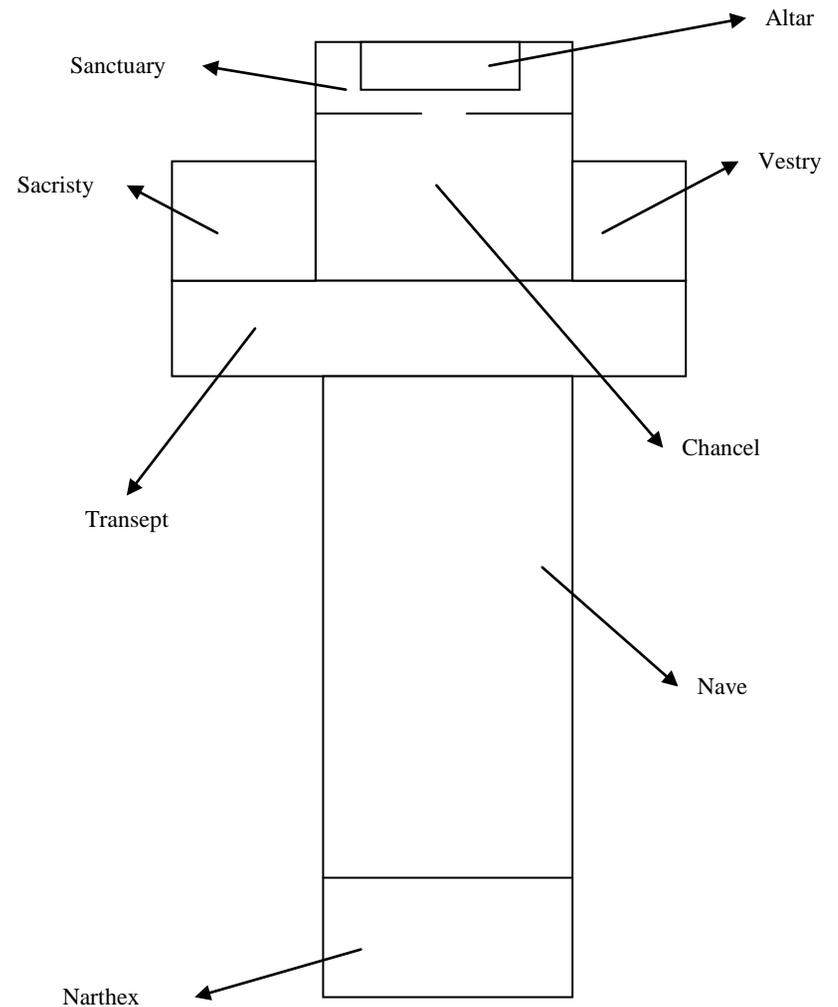
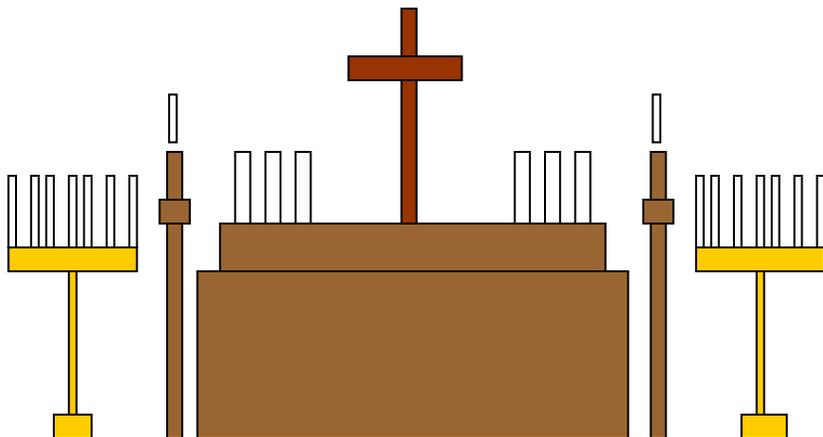
The candle hanging from the ceiling – This is known as the “eternal light” or “sanctuary lamp.” This candle is symbolic of the continual presence of God.

Lighting and Extinguishing Instructions

When lighting the candles always start at the cross and work your way down.

When extinguishing the candles start at the furthest candle from the cross and extinguish towards the cross.

If you are acolyting alone, light the candles beginning on the right side (right then left) following the instructions above. When you extinguish the candles begin on the left side (left then right) following the instructions above.



Redeemer Lutheran Church
Interior Layout