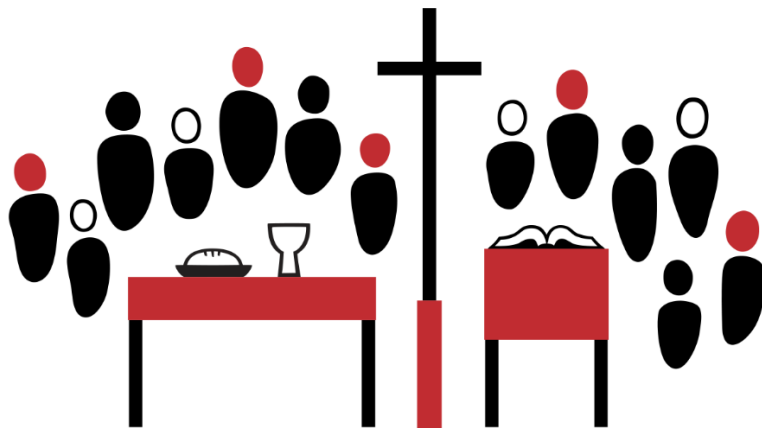




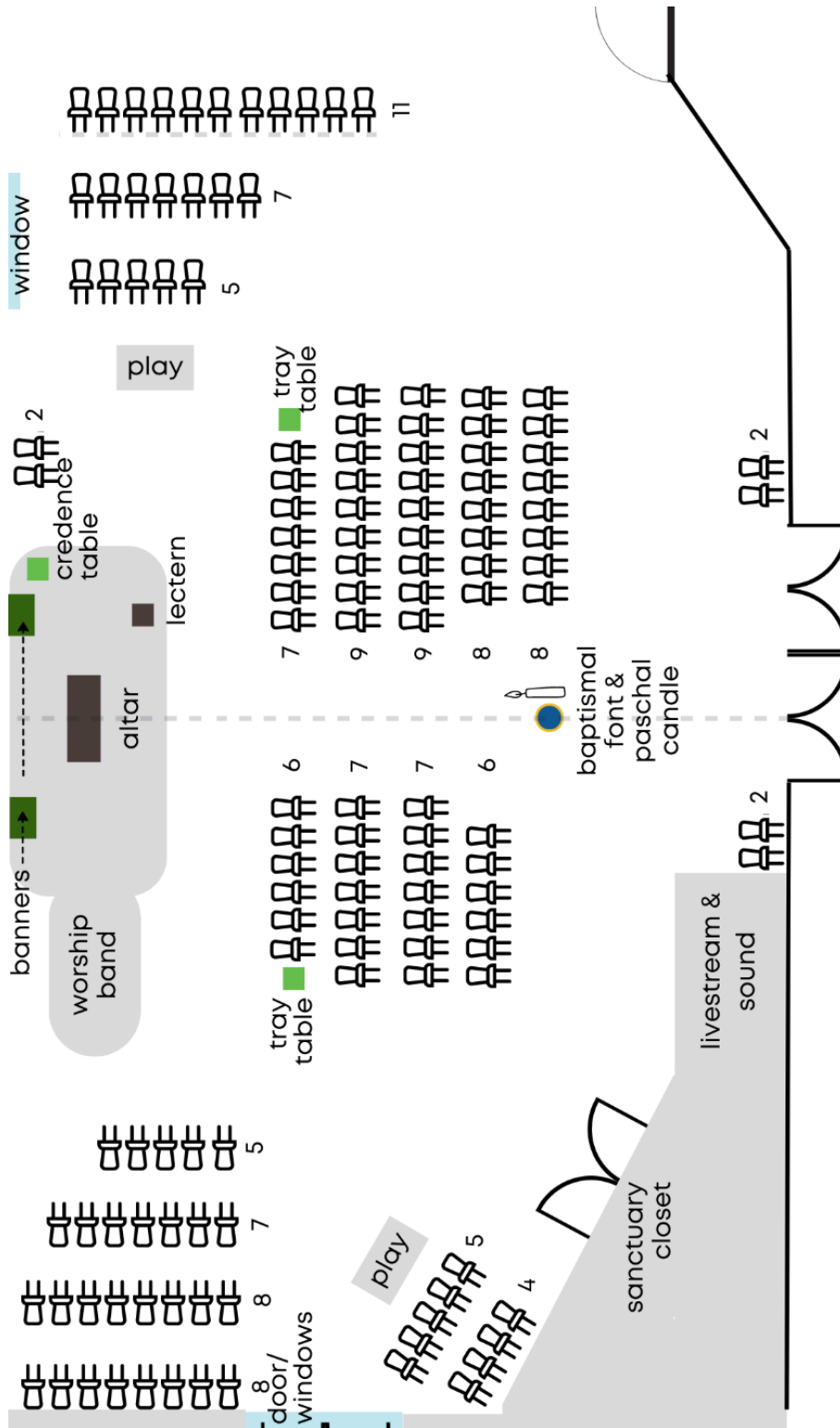
Guide to Worship Leadership: **Acolytes**

Updated September 2024



Seating Chart

View from back:



Introduction

The primary job of worship leaders is to aid in the proclamation of the Gospel and to help the people offer their praise and worship to God.

- Worship leaders are like Mary, announcing that the Lord has come into the world and bearing God's presence in (and beyond!) the act of worship.
- Worship leaders announce the Good News of Jesus Christ with a warm welcome
- Worship leaders help people to hear the Good News through the words of Scripture
- Worship leaders prepare our worship space and help create the conditions that are most conducive to hearing the Word and offering praise
- Worship leaders announce the presence of Jesus and give Jesus to our partners in Word, Bread, and Cup

Worship leadership is a big deal. It is not just fulfilling a task. Worship leadership is essential to carrying out our shared mission to proclaim Christ and to gather as God's people in worship.

In clarifying how we carry out certain leadership roles, we are setting up the conditions for people to receive the radical welcome and generous grace of the Gospel. How we greet, how we speak God's Word, how we share the sacrament ... these are all part of how we live and embody God's promises on Sunday morning at New Joy Lutheran Church.

Acolytes

In the early church Acolytes were ministers who took the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper to those who couldn't attend the church service. Today, Acolytes assist in preparing the worship primarily by lighting candles that remind us of the light of Christ, and by assisting with the preparation and serving of communion.

Arrive to church by 9:20am.

Acolytes **light candles** at the start of the service, during the first song. Make sure there is enough of a wick in the snuffer to burn during the time you need to light the candles. If the wick needs to be changed, ask for assistance from one of the ushers, Altar Guild leaders, or Pastor Chris. Walk slowly with the lit snuffer, as walking too fast may extinguish the flame.

During Advent and Christmas and other occasions, additional candles might be present. Though we usually light anything that has a wick, please ask Pastor Chris or an usher if you have any question as to which candles to light. Some special candles are lit during, rather than before, the service.



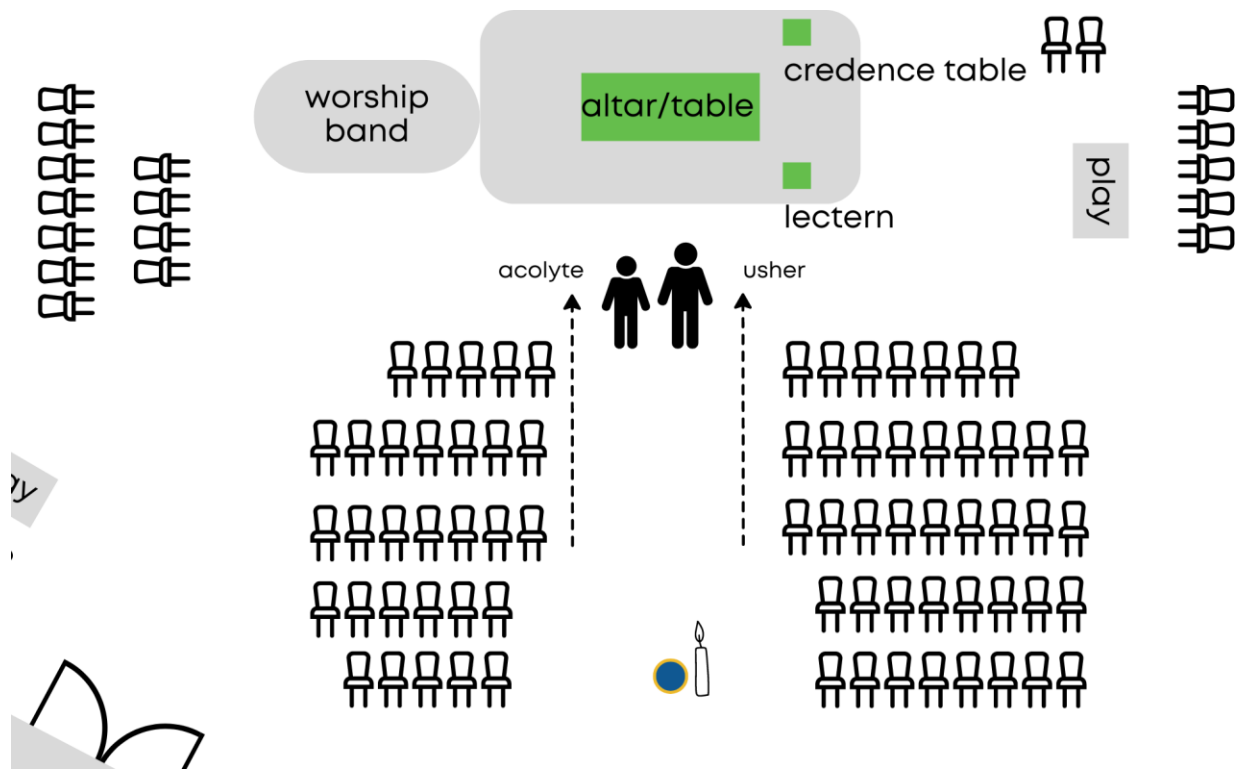


Fig. 1: Acolyte and Usher bring gifts forward and stand before the altar during the Offering Prayer

Acolytes **bring the bread and cup to the altar** when the offering is presented. As the Peace is being shared, Acolytes should go to the glass-topped table where they will find the plate and cup. Holding a plate in one hand and a cup in the other, they walk side-by-side with the usher (*acolyte at left, usher at right*), and present the bread and cup for communion. As the Usher and the Acolyte are standing on the floor in front of the altar, the Assisting Minister leads the Offering Prayer from the lectern. (see *Figure 1*)

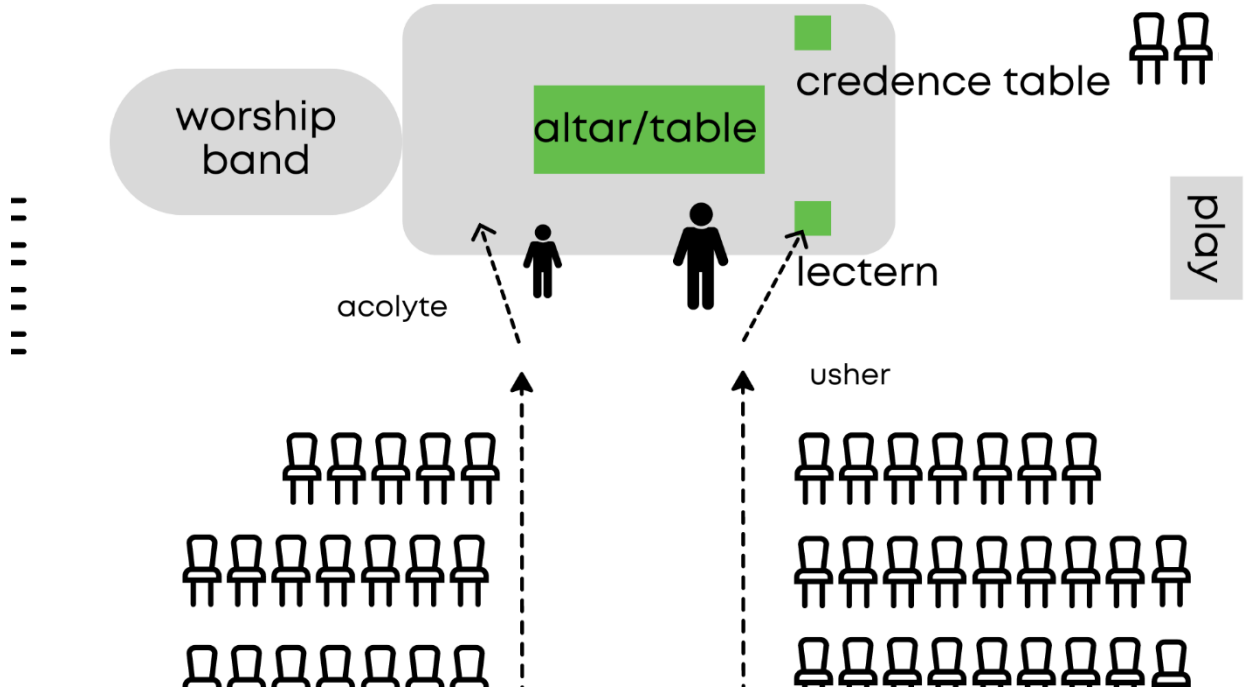


Fig. 2: Acolyte hands cup and plate to Pastor; Usher hands offering baskets to Assisting Minister.

After the Offering Prayer, Pastor meets the acolyte and takes the bread and cup. (see Figure 2).

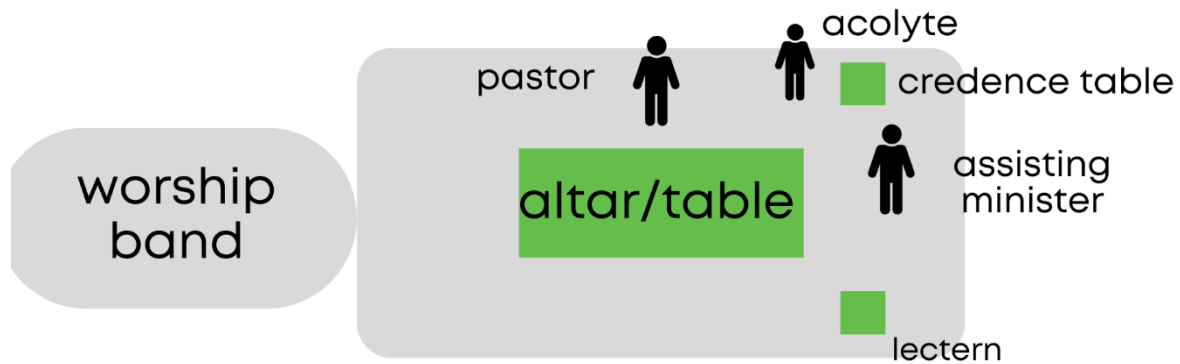


Fig. 3: During the communion prayers, Acolyte and Assisting Minister are behind the lectern.

The Acolyte then stands behind the altar toward the lectern. The Assisting Minister remains at/just behind the lectern (See Figure 3).

After the table is set, Pastor invites the congregation to stand for the communion liturgy. After the communion prayers are said and Pastor invites the people to receive communion, the Acolyte takes a tray of communion cups and follows Pastor to serve communion to the band.

Pastor and Acolyte are a communion-serving team (the Assisting Minister and Reader/Communion Server are the other communion-serving team). They will serve communion to the congregation together.

The Acolyte stands a few feet to the outside of the pastor, saying these words of promise: "The blood of Christ, shed for you." Speak slow enough, and loud enough, that you can be understood. Look the person in the eyes and smile, if possible.

Martin Luther wrote that the most important words in the sacrament are, "for you." It's not good enough that we hold in our hands the body and blood of Christ. But instead, we hold and share these gifts for a purpose – "for you" and for the world. Make your words "the Blood of Christ is shed for you" clear, so that the person receiving the sacrament can clearly hear this Good News.

After the congregation has received communion the acolyte comes behind the altar to receive communion. The acolyte also serves communion to the pastor, presenting both the bread (“the body of Christ, given for you”) and the cup (“the blood of Christ, shed for you”).

After all the servers have received communion, the Acolyte assists with returning the communion vessels to the credence table.

At the **end of the service**, during the final song, the Acolyte extinguishes the candles using the bell of the snuffer.

NOTE: Do not crush the candle wick/flame with the bell – this can damage the candle. Instead, lower the bell carefully over the flame but don’t touch the top of the bell to the candle. Count to two or three, and then raise the bell. In this way you will allow the flame to burn out without damaging the candle.

After extinguishing the candles, the Acolyte walks down the center aisle and returns the snuffer to the window counter in the back of the worship space. Then, the Acolyte waits to be high-fived by the Pastor after worship.