

# General Instructions for Communion Assistants

Updated 6/7/2016

## Serving communion

At the time of this update, we are only robing up for special services so any reference to robing up in the following applies only to those events.

Note: It is the intent to always have 5 assistants plus one pastor give communion, **regardless of whether it is standard communion or intinction.**

1. **Arrive 15 minutes early** and check in with the Schedule Coordinator (Jacque Jecker).
2. For robing services, go to the robe room and put on a robe, a cross and cincture (rope). I am not aware of any “correct” way to tie the cincture. Just make sure it is knotted in such a way that it does not fall off.
3. For the non-robing services please pick up a cross at the sound booth. This is how I know how many people have arrived without having to look for individuals. You don’t need to get anything out of the robe room. Don’t forget to return your cross to the sound booth after the service.
4. Clean your hands just prior to walking up to the altar. Hand cleaner can be found at the communion assistant rows, at the sound booth and immediately inside the sacristy door. There is also usually a bottle on the first row where the pastor sits. Do not feel rushed, take your time. This action is appreciated. Remember, just shortly before this time in the service was the passing of the peace, where you probably shook the hands of several people who have also greeted several others.
5. **While the offering is being taken, all adults should gather at the rear of the church and discuss which person will handle which duty. If there are acolytes they will handle the 2 empty trays. The pastor will be passing out the bread on one side so that leaves one person for bread and 2 for wine.**
6. Walk to the front center of the church, just below the first step, pause and bow briefly in reverence to the altar, and then step forward to the next to the top step before the altar. The Pastor will be on the top step. **For services that have Acolytes they should be the first and last in line. Normally the 9:30 Sunday service is the only service that has acolytes.**
7. The pastor will serve communion to the assistants first.
8. **After receiving the wine, the first person on the right will pick up an empty tray from the altar, putting his/her empty cup in the tray and then pass it down the line toward the left most person to receive the empties from the others.**
9. The first **adult** on the right should then commune the pastor.
10. Words to be used by the communicants;

*Bread* “The body of Christ broken for you” or “The body of Christ given for you”.

*Children* The bread person makes the sign of the cross on the forehead and says “May the love of Jesus fill your heart”, or “Jesus loves you” or something similar.

*Wine* “The blood of Christ shed for you”.

11. After the pastor is communed everyone selects either the bread or the wine or the empty cup trays. If there are acolytes it is their duty to carry the trays to pick up the empty cups. **As a general guide, the people on each end of the line should handle the empty trays.** (Intinction will be discussed below.)
- 12. In order to assure that we do not carry over the left over pieces of bread from week to week, use the pieces from the small tray first, before using the newly broken bread.**
13. There are 2 kinds of bread offered, normal communion bread which you will carry in your hand and break off a piece no larger than a quarter and hand it to the communicant. The other is gluten free wafers that are kept in small wooden lidded bowls which can be found on either front corner of the Altar.

Note: You are not to touch the gluten free wafers with your hands because you can transfer gluten from the other bread to the wafers. **If the communicant requests the wafers you should step up to the Altar, pick up the small wooden bowl, with the lid removed, allow the communicant to pick up their own wafer and then return the bowl to the Altar before proceeding to the next person. Do not rush. It only takes a couple of seconds to do this.**

14. Pour wine into the small cups to at least half full, holding the drip cloth against the underside of the spout to avoid drips. You can also use this hand to guide their cup if too low or shaky.
- 15. Grape juice is also on the altar for those who request it or have no cup in hand. If the communicant wishes to have grape juice simply step up to the altar and pick up one of the pre-poured cups in the small tray on the right side of the altar and return to the communicant. Do NOT try to carry the grape juice cups in your bread hand or in the tray that is used to pick up the used cups. Do NOT ask the acolyte to carry the grape juice for you convenience. Their duty is only to pick up used cups. All of these are unsanitary conditions. It only takes a few seconds to step up to the altar.**
16. ALL are welcome at the altar. If you are uncertain if a child is to receive communion ask the adult that is with the child.
17. Never rush the communicant as this is the time for reflection and prayer.
18. If you spill on the floor, smile and continue to serve as the AG will clean it up after the service.
19. If you spill on the communicant, smile and use your drip cloth.
20. If you spill on your robe or if it smells, don't hang it back up. Place it on top of the rack and a member of the AG will clean it.
21. If you notice a shortage of bread or wine, go into the sacristy to obtain more. No rush.
- 22. If the pastor needs to commune someone who is still seated, 2 people should accompany him/her, one carrying the wine and one with the small tray that holds the empty cups and the grape juice. Do NOT place the used cup back in the tray. Hold it in your hand until you get back to the altar.**
23. If you are unable to serve when assigned, please try to exchange with another assistant or contact the schedule coordinator as soon as possible. My contact information is at the bottom of the schedules.

### **Notes for Intinction:**

-There are 2 stations at the front of church. All 6 people line up across the front, on the main floor, in front of the altar rail. The two in the middle will be the pastor and one adult giving out the wafers. The next on either side of those will be holding a goblet with the wine and then outside of those will be the acolytes holding the goblets with the grape juice.

-The words you use when handing out the wafers and when they dip into either of the goblets are the same as above for regular communion.

-If you run out of wafers there should be a small container on the altar or a small covered dish containing extra wafers.

**The latest version of these instructions can be found on the church website, [Desertcross.org](http://Desertcross.org).**

Hover your cursor over the “Connect” tab, then move straight down and hover over “Volunteer”, then move directly to the right and click on “Worship Assistants”. Links to all the sets of instructions can be found at the bottom of the page.