

**Emanuel's Lutheran Church & Day School**  
Assisting Minister Overview

**About Worship**

- Properly speaking, our worship/service of God are the acts of justice and mercy during the week – our care of our neighbor. What we do together on Sunday is meant to shape, renew and empower our worship during the week.
- First, the worship service is what we do together as a community, not a presentation for the community.
- Second, the worship service is not what we do for God, but what God does for us.
- God does not need our praise; we need to praise God.
- Third, what we do serves God by giving expression to God's Word (God's encounter with us/God's speaking to us). This takes audible form in the scriptures, prayers and preaching, and visible form in the sacraments.
- Christ is present in the proclamation of Christ and his work.
- Liturgy – Worship: "Is the work of the people."
- Worship is not what the pastor, choir, assisting ministers and acolytes do *for* the people, worship is done *by* people when they gather: they sing, they pray, they tell the story, they break the bread, and so celebrate the promise and presence of God.
- In a very concrete way, the sermon isn't what the presiding minister does; it's what the pastor and people do together. So, too, the prayers aren't what the assisting minister does, it is what the assisting minister and people do together.
  - The task of the presiding and assisting ministers is simply to give voice to the faith and prayer of the community.

**The Assisting Minister's Role**

The Assisting Minister assists the community in this worship (you are assisting the community not the pastor) by:

- Preparing and clearing the table (setting out and clearing away the bread and wine).
- Giving voice to the prayers of the community:
  - Adapting and leading the Prayers of the people
  - Leading the appointed prayers for the offering and after communion.
- Helping to serve the meal:
  - Receiving the offering of bread
  - Distributing the wine at Holy Communion
- Dismissing the congregation to their ministries (Go in peace...).
- In addition to assisting the congregation in giving voice to their worship, the assisting minister's role is also to assist the presiding or preaching minister.
  - For example, holding the altar book during a baptism, Confirmation, turning pages during the Communion liturgy, etc.
- The presence of an assisting minister in worship reminds us:
  - That every member of the community is a minister
  - That the pastor(s), as one among many ministers, has a part to play in worship – but only a part.

**The Prayers**

- The purpose of the Prayer of Intercession is for the assisting minister to give voice to the prayers of the people. Therefore, the task is to lift to God what you see and hear to be on the hearts

and minds of the people. Prayer does not have to be “fancy” or even poetic. Good prayers are prayers from the heart that speak the concerns of the community.

- “...In short, one should pray short, but often and strongly; for God does not ask how much and long one has prayed, but how good it is and how it comes from the heart.”
  - Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2017), p. 166.

#### The Prayers’ Form

- The form of prayer we use in worship is called the collect prayer, which means the prayers offered by the assisting minister “gather or collect” the thoughts of the people and lift them to God.
  - This form of prayer uses the response, “Lord in your mercy,” “Hear our Prayer.’
  - In this form, the assisting minister offers prayers as a series of brief petitions.
- The traditional form of the collect is:
  - An address,
  - A description of God and/or the basis of the prayer, and then
  - The petition or request.

#### The Prayer’s Outline

- From the ELW, pg. 105: “Prayers reflect the wideness of God’s mercy for the whole world –
  - For the church universal, its ministry, and the mission of the gospel;
  - For the well-being of creation;
  - For peace and justice in the world, the nations and those in authority, the community;
  - For the poor, oppressed, sick, bereaved, lonely;
    - This petition almost always includes the phrase, “especially, those listed on our prayer list, military prayer list, and those we name aloud now, or in the silence of our hearts.”
  - For all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit;
  - For the congregation, and for special concerns; The normal outline for the prayers is: the whole church, the nations, the parish (our congregation and our local communities), and special concerns.
- If petitions are added, here are some general guidelines:
  - Be specific, but don’t violate any confidences.
    - Example: It is better to pray for the family in Seguin or at Emanuel’s whose child was killed than simply for “victims of accidents.” But don’t pray for healing from cancer if the person hasn’t told people they have cancer. If you are not sure what they are telling people, ask them if you can include them in the prayers.
- Ask God for what we want, but don’t be partisan.
  - Example: If we want someone to be healed, it is appropriate to ask God for healing. If we want a fair and just election, ask for a fair and just election. Remember you are speaking for the whole community. We may all agree that we want a fair a just election, but that doesn’t mean we all agree on which candidates should succeed.
  - In the same way, we will not all agree on what we should do about conflicts around the world, but we can agree that we want God to bring peace and justice.
  - Remember the prayers are not announcements nor are you giving a speech.
    - People are not listening to you; they are talking to God. They are not evaluating your skill, but letting your words speak for them. Your words are the vehicles of their prayer.

## **Worship Language**

- Orans – Latin for “praying” is a posture where the hands are held with palms up, at shoulder height, elbows bent, as if we are lifting the words we speak to heaven. This posture is held throughout all prayers offered in worship, along with many other worship elements presided over by the pastor(s).
- Alb – Latin word meaning “white” is the term given for the white “robes” worn by worship leaders, including the Acolyte, Crucifer, and Pastor(s). The white of the alb is a symbol of purity (baptism) and its use in dates to the Greco-Roman world, being retained by the Christian communities following the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE. Another word that might be used for this garment is a “tunic.”
- Cincture – The rope-like belt worn around the waist. Some denominations use a wider, belt like material with a section that hangs down. These are called “band cinctures,” but here at Emanuel’s we use braided ropes that are seasonally colored. Instructions for tying the cincture are found in the Sacristy.
- Acolyte – Derived from the Greek word, “akoluthos,” which means, “attendant,” this leadership position is normally held by one of our Confirmation students. They facilitate the lighting of the candles, receiving the offerings and placing them on the high altar, and attending to the processional and recessional needs.
- Crucifer – Latin word, “crux – cross” and “ferre – to bear,” and refers to the person appointed to carry the cross in the opening processional, gospel processional, and ending recessional. Here at Emanuel’s, this position is normally held by one of our Confirmation students and is most often seen on Sundays or holidays of great importance in the church calendar.
- Lector – Latin word for “one who reads,” and is the person appointed to read the scripture passages for each Sunday or special worship service. Their voice is notated in our bulletin by an “L.” Traditionally, this leader reads the 1<sup>st</sup> lesson, Psalm (if it is not sung), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson from the Lectern, located on the left side of the chancel.
- Cantor – The leader who guides the congregation in singing the Psalm, Communion liturgy, or other appointed liturgies within the service.

## **Sanctuary Language**

- Narthex - an architectural element consisting of the entrance or lobby area, located at the east end of the sanctuary, opposite the church's main altar, here at Emanuel’s. Traditionally the narthex was a part of the church building but was not considered part of the church proper. Historically, sanctuaries were oriented where the altar was on the east side end of the church, so that the congregation is always facing the rising sun, a symbolic gesture toward the resurrection.
- Nave – a Latin word that means “ships” describes the central part of a church, stretching from the main entrance or rear wall, to the transepts. The nave includes all areas available for the worshippers, including the side-aisles and transepts.
- Transept – The transverse part of any building which lies across the main body of the sanctuary, an area set crosswise to the nave in a cruciform (“cross-shaped”). Each half of a transept is known as a semitranssept.
- Chancel - The space around the low or high altars
- Sacristy – The room(s) for keeping vestments (such as the alb and chasuble) and other church furnishings, sacred vessels, or parish records. The sacristy is to the side of the high altar and is accessible through the door behind the pulpit.