

## Minister of Ceremonies (Emcee) Customary Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration

### *General*

The Emcee is one of the three Sacred Ministers in a Solemn Eucharist (along with Celebrant and Deacon), with extremely important roles to play before, during, and after all liturgies.

The Emcee should be a calm and confident presence in the liturgy. They must move reverently and efficiently, but never hurriedly. An anxious Emcee is a distraction to the Celebrant and the congregation. The Emcee should have mastery of the various actions being performed by all ministers, so as to anticipate problems or mistakes.

The Emcee helps ensure that all participating liturgical ministers for a service have arrived and are prepared for their role. A check-in sheet for all participating ministers is kept in the Acolyte Sacristy to help the Emcee in this task.

The Emcee should know the service extremely well, and possess comfort and familiarity with each part of the liturgy.

Before a Solemn Eucharist, the Emcee should go through an extensive checklist included in the Emcee's customary.

The Emcee always stands and sits at the left hand of the Celebrant. This is a safe rule of thumb, no matter where the three Sacred Ministers may be located in the church during the liturgy.

The Emcee holds the book/binder for the Celebrant whenever they are not standing at the altar. This is true at the sedilia when praying the concluding collect of the prayers of the people, at the font for the rite of baptism, at the casket in the rite of burial, and all other moments when the Celebrant prays apart from the altar.

While notes or written instructions are permitted, it is preferable to have all roles mentally mastered, so there is not the need to consult sheets during the service. Questions should only be directed to the Celebrant in the case of last resort, and under no circumstance should you make "chit chat" during the service.

Thought should be given *in advance* to how potential problems may be solved so as to generate the least possible distraction to the congregation and other ministers.

### *Vesting and Comportment*

Vest in hooded alb and use the cincture in the liturgical color of the season which should have been laid out for you by the Altar Guild. Cincture is located in top drawer of the vestment cabinet.

In most seasons, vest in Tunicle that matches the set worn by other ministers.

The Emcee should be a calm and confident presence in the liturgy. When standing at the Altar, an Emcee should be quiet in body, and especially with their hands, so as to not draw attention

to herself, and foster a focused, prayerful environment for the Celebrant. If an Emcee has busy or fidgety hands, shifts back and forth, or is not focused on being quiet in body, they can easily become a distraction.

During the liturgy, when gathered behind the Altar, the Emcee should be gently inclined in body direction toward the action. That is, they should not face straight ahead but should be directed at a gentle angle toward the Celebrant.

### *Preparation*

Arrive at least 30 minutes before the service time.

Check the Notices for the names of participating ministers, including acolytes, lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, and clergy. Also check for Sound Technician.

- All ministers should check in with you 15-20 minutes before the service begins.
  - At the 9:00, there are typically 5 youth acolytes, 4 Eucharistic Ministers, and 2 Lectors
  - At the 11:15, there are typically 3 adult acolytes, 4 Eucharistic Ministers, and 2 Lectors
- You are responsible for seeing that replacements are found for any ministers who do not show.

Check the Liturgical Calendar in the Clergy Sacristy for any special notes on the day. This is found in a binder on the top of the vestment cabinet.

Check with Celebrant for any special instructions.

Check the Ambo

- Check location in front of the Altar at the center of the top step, about four inches back from the edge.
- Check Scriptures are correctly pointed, using small taped sticky notes to mark both the first and second readings. If you are concerned that the readings are incorrect, verify using the Bulletin, or ask the Celebrant for guidance.
- Check that sermon text is in correct order.

Check the Intercession Book and compare the printed prayers to be sure they match those in the bulletin.

Check to make sure the black service binders used by the Altar Party contain correct bulletins and are in the Sacristy. Place Deacon's binder in the Deacon's chair, and the Children's Chapel Priest binder in the middle chair next to the Preacher.

Check Oblations table. It should contain silver ciborium, two small silver cruets, one large silver flagon, and the Gospel Book.

Check that Gospel Book is correctly marked with ribbon.

Check to be sure that the correct Eucharistic Prayer card is next to the Sanctus Bell for the acolyte. Cards for various prayers are located in the top right drawer of the Vesting Cabinet.

Check that candles are lighted properly. If not, direct acolyte(s) to do so. The “Big Six” are always lighted at Solemn Eucharists.

Check that a bread box containing 50 extra host and a small glass cruet of wine is located in the Niche. This is used in case of a larger-than-expected congregation.

Check the Missal. Ribbons typically mark

- Opening Acclamation and Collect for Purity
- Collect of the Day (corresponds to the specific day, as specified in bulletin)
- Confession and Absolution
- Proper Preface (sung or said): The Proper Preface corresponds to the day, and may be determined by turning to the Collect of the Day in *The Book of Common Prayer* (specified preface is listed below each collect). During Ordinary Time, we use the prefaces “Of the Lord’s Day” as follows: God the Father (June, July), God the Son (August, September), God the Holy Spirit (October, November). The only exception is on Transfiguration Sunday, when we use the Preface of Epiphany.
- Eucharistic Prayer
- Post-communion Prayer

*Note 1:* There may be a special offertory sentence and closing blessing “clipped” into the Missal. If so, make sure these are not left over from a previous service.

*Note 2:* When possible, see that the Song of Praise (Gloria, hymn, canticle) is clipped into the Missal for use by the Three Ministers. It may be removed from the black service binder and moved to the Missal.

Check that all ministers have the correct black service binder.

### ***Immediately Before the Service***

10 minutes before the service begins, usher all ministers and acolytes to the hallway of the South Building. Typically, exit by the door at the end of the Sacristy, exit through the South Transept doors, and enter the (unlocked) South Building. The Procession should line up in this hallway.

(Thurifer)  
Cross  
Torches  
Choir  
Banner/First Server (9:00 only)  
Second Server  
Eucharistic Ministers  
(Assisting Clergy)  
Preacher  
Emcee  
Deacon  
Celebrant

7-8 minutes before the service begins, a member of the clergy will lead the ministers in prayer. Then the Procession will move to the Narthex.

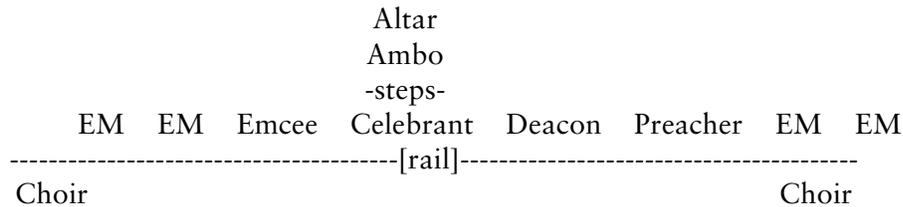
Ensure the Deacon retrieves the Gospel Book. When there is no Deacon, the Preacher carries the Gospel Book.

After the Rector finishes the announcements, chime the Sacring Bell *three* times.

- At the 9:00, if the announcements finish beyond 9:00, wait 10 seconds before chiming the bell.
- At the 9:00, if the announcements finish before 9:00, wait until 9:00 to chime the bell.
- At the 11:15, wait until the Rector (or person doing the welcome and announcements) arrives at the Narthex and gives you a cue to chime the bell.

### *Liturgy of the Word*

When the procession has arrived at the front of the church, you should be in this position:



It is important that the Emcee stand close to the Celebrant at the center of the Chancel. The Three Sacred Ministers form a unit together, practically and symbolically.

After reverencing with a deep bow at the cue of the Celebrant, Emcee moves to the sedilia. These are the three seats to the left of the Altar. Emcee is always to the left of the Celebrant, so the Emcee’s chair is the one closest to the back wall.

During the final stanza of the opening hymn, and at the cue of the Celebrant, Emcee leads the Three Ministers to the Altar. The Celebrant says the Opening Acclamation and Collect for Purity. Do not bow at the closing of the Collect for Purity at the words “through Christ our Lord.” Please see section of Liturgical Manual on “Bowing” for guidance.

When incense is used, the Celebrant censes the Altar at the Song of Praise. The Emcee should step back and away (toward the Preacher’s chair) to make room for the censing.

After the Collect of the Day, turn the Missal to the ribbon marking the Confession/Absolution and the Peace. Then move back to sedilia and be seated with Celebrant and Deacon.

During the Psalm, visually confirm that acolytes move to the torches for the Gospel Procession. If they do not, quietly move around to cue them.

At the Gospel Procession

- At the first note of the Alleluia or Gospel Tract (Lent), stand and lead the torchbearer down the steps, around the south-side of Chancel, to the center of the altar rail.

- Stand directly in the center and wait for Deacon to move down the steps to begin the Gospel Procession.
- Lead the procession to be parallel with the middle set of aisle columns (roughly the seventh pew). Turn and face the Deacon. Torches should be on either side of the Gospel Book, to “light” the Book.
- Hold the Gospel Book for the Deacon, being aware that the Deacon may take the book to elevate it at the introduction and conclusion.
- Deacon leads the procession back. Emcee turns left to follow the torchbearer around the Chancel, up the steps and back to the sedilia. Emcee does not move into the Chancel through the center rail gates.

Observe the Celebrant to know when to be seated following the retiring procession, as the Preacher may say an introductory prayer before beginning the sermon.

After the Sermon, as the Nicene Creed begins, notify the Children’s Chapel of place in the service. Move behind the Altar wall, through the side aisle of north transept, to the Nursery wing. Try not to interrupt the Children’s Chapel service, but instead try to get attention of the assisting clergy person through the window. Return quietly and resume place standing at sedilia.

After Deacon introduces the Confession, kneel on cushion next to the Sanctus Bell. Stand after the Absolution and remain there for the announcement of the Peace.

At the Peace and Offertory

- At the 9:00,
  - Exchange the Peace with the Celebrant and Deacon
  - Check to see that Intercessions Book is on the far left of the Altar (with Gospel Book in the middle, and empty space for the offering plates on the far right).
  - Remove the Ambo and carry down the steps into the Sacristy. Be sure the mic is turned off.
  - Take Stack from the Niche (chalice, paten, purificator, pall) and carry to the Altar. Place in the center of the corporal. The Deacon will disassemble and prepare the Altar for communion.
  - If you do not return with the Stack before the Celebrant begins the Offertory Sentence, wait to the side until he/she finishes. Do not interrupt the Offertory Sentence, or set the Stack on the corporal *across* the Celebrant.
  - After delivering the Stack, move to sedilia and wait for Celebrant to be seated.
  - During the Offertory Anthem, move behind Altar wall, retrieve large Offertory Basin, carry down steps and around north-side of Chancel. Wait until the Anthem finishes, then immediately move inside the railing to the center to collect the plates from the Ushers (and child).
  - Bow to Ushers, then turn around, carry the stack of plates to the Altar, placing on far right.
- At the 11:15,
  - Exchange the Peace with the Celebrant and Deacon
  - Check to see that Intercessions Book is on the far left of the Altar (with Gospel Book in the middle, and empty space for the offering plates on the far right).

- Take Stack from the Niche (chalice, paten, purificator, pall) and carry to the Altar. Place in the center of the corporal. The Deacon will disassemble and prepare the Altar for communion.
- If you do not return with the Stack before the Celebrant begins the Offertory Sentence, wait to the side until he/she finishes. Do not interrupt the Offertory Sentence, or set the Stack on the corporal *across* the Celebrant.
- Then move to sedilia and wait for the Celebrant to be seated. Stand and sing the Offertory Hymn, but be ready to assist the Deacon if needed.
- Crucifer should remove the Ambo, and an acolyte should collect the plates.

**Note:** When incense is used, the Celebrant will cense the Altar. The Emcee should remain at sedilia until censuring is completed, then, after the Celebrant returns the thurible to the Thurifer, the Emcee and Deacon move to their places behind the Altar, next to the Celebrant, to receive censuring.

### ***Great Thanksgiving***

During the Eucharist, it is the Emcee's job to turn the pages and ensure the Celebrant can easily find his/her place when lost. There is no need to "point" the Missal, but the Emcee should be ready to help if needed.

Please consult the introductory instructions about a quiet body/hands, bowing, and making the sign of the cross.

At the Fraction, it is important that the Emcee be absolutely quiet in body during the extended silence, and not physically anticipate the next action with any movement.

Once the Fraction Anthem begins, move to the Niche to retrieve one chalice and two patens. Bring them back to the Altar (patens in left hand, chalice in right hand), setting the two patens on the corporal for the Celebrant to prepare, then handing the chalice to the Deacon (behind the Celebrant). Then resume position at the book, next to the Celebrant.

### ***Receiving and Administering Communion***

After the Celebrant says the words of presentation ("The gifts of God for the people of God..."), step back and take place next to the Altar. Leave room for a EM to stand to your right, next to the Reredos (shelf with flowers).

Once you have received in both kinds, turn and go to the Niche to retrieve two more chalices. Bring them to the Altar, but wait until the area behind the Altar is clear of the Celebrant and Deacon before setting them down.

Fill the two chalices with wine from the large flagon. Be careful to not overly fill them, which makes them difficult for the EMs to carry and administer. Set the matching purificators next to each chalice, and then step back to allow the EMs to take them.

Give the flagon and extra purificator to an acolyte, who will stand with it in the middle at the top of the chancel steps.

During communion, Emcee does the following in a reverent, efficient, but unhurried manner:

- Return Intercessions Book to its place, being mindful not to interrupt those approaching for communion
- Carry plates to the wall (Niche in wall on northside of Sanctuary)
- Observe clergy, EMs, and acolyte to ensure adequate Sacrament. If there will be a shortage of either, retrieve either bread box or cruet of wine from the Niche and set on Altar. Notify Celebrant of need to consecrate additional Sacrament. The prayer for this additional consecration is found on the page immediately before the page with the Post-communion prayers.
- Turn to the appointed Post-communion Prayer in Missal
- At the 9:00, set out the Eucharistic Visitor kits, found in the Niche, on the south end of Altar. Set out the EV Commissioning Prayer for the Celebrant, which is usually found behind the Missal on the Missal Stand.

### *After Communion*

Assist the Deacon in clearing the Altar. Deacon will hand the Emcee vessels to carry to the Niche. All four chalices, ciborium, patens, flagon and all linens will be taken to Niche.

After the Altar is clear, follow the direction of the Celebrant for where to go. If the People are singing a hymn, you may be seated at the sedilia and sing. If there is no music, and the Celebrant is ready to begin the Post-communion Prayer, take your place at the Missal.

After the Dismissal, close the Missal.

Follow the Celebrant around the Altar, standing in front of the Altar (facing the triptych) at the left-hand of the Celebrant. Bow when directed by Celebrant. Turn to your right (always turn toward the Celebrant), and wait for your place in the procession. The order of the procession mirrors that of the beginning of the service.

### *After the Service*

Collect the black binders from all ministers and the Gospel Book from the Deacon. Receive the count sheet from the Ushers. Books should be carried to Clergy Sacristy and set on vesting cabinet, and count sheet should be set next to the Service Register.

Follow the acolytes around the hallway, via the Tower Cloister, to the north transept. No ministers should re-enter the church until the hymn is concluded and the organ voluntary has begun.

Assist the EMs in performing Ablutions, following the section in the Liturgical Manual titled “Ablutions” and using the prescribed form.

Check that all candles are properly extinguished.

Dispose of all bulletins and papers in the EM boxes.