

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

ASSISTING MINISTER

HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
The Role of the Assisting Minister	1
Duties Before Service	2
Assisting Minister Participation during Service	3
Prayers Of Intercession	4
Meal (Communion)	6
General Notes	7
Exhibit A	
Prayers of the People	9

INTRODUCTION

Being an Assisting Minister is both a privilege and an opportunity to serve God from his altar and in the sharing of the Communion meal.

Sometimes people new to the role of Assisting Minister worry that there is something they might do that will be hurtful to the worship service. There is nothing that a person of good faith can do that will in any way “hurt” the worship service. That is not to say the Assisting Ministers will not make mistakes. They do on a regular basis. However, rarely are mistakes noticed by or of concern to the congregation, and they certainly are not of concern to God.

THE ROLE OF THE ASSISTING MINISTER

The main role of the Assisting Minister in the worship service is that of *intercessor*, a person to lead the congregation in prayer. The Assisting Minister is the person who prays for the concerns of the whole world, the Church on earth, and the people gathered for worship.

The Assisting Minister assists with the celebration of the Sacraments: receives the bread and wine during the offertory, sets the table with it, and helps distribute the sacrament to the congregation. The Assisting Minister also participates in the celebration of Baptism by acting as a representative of the congregation, lighting a candle from the Baptismal candle, and presenting it to the newly baptized or his/her family.

DUTIES BEFORE THE SERVICES

Before the service begins, it is the responsibility of the Assisting Minister to do the following:

- Print the prayers of the day, which will have been sent to you by email, and bring them with you. Also print and bring any announcements that you may have been emailed.
- Singing parts of the liturgy is completely optional, but if you are going to sing the Kyrie and the introduction to the Hymn of Praise, arrange a time to practice with the Director of Music. Usually this is done sometime in the week preceding your assisting.
- Plan to arrive at the church between 20 to 30 minutes early, depending on your comfort level.
- When you arrive at the church, get a robe* and a microphone. Turn on the sound system for the microphones and leave it on. The sound system controls the pulpit microphone, the Pastor's microphone, and your microphone. Check that the battery in your microphone is working, and turn it off until it is your turn to participate in the service. If your microphone needs a new battery, there should be one in the cabinet where the microphone is kept.
- DO NOT attempt to adjust the level of the sound system.
- Get a hymnal, a bulletin, a Weekly Messenger (bulletin insert), and any other inserts that may be in the bulletin that week. You may either put them on your chair

* If you are in the choir and wear one of the *new* choir robes, be sure you wear a garment with pockets appropriately placed to hold the microphone. However, should you forget and wear something without pockets, find an *old* choir robe that fits you (on the rod with the acolyte robes), and wear it.

previous to the start of the service or carry them in with you.

- At approximately 7:50 AM, go to the Pastor's office, to pray with the Pastor and the Director of Music.
- Before the 8, 9:30 and 11 o'clock services check that the scheduled acolyte is present and robed. If there is no acolyte about ten minutes before the start of the service, recruit one from the congregation.
- You may or may not need to make announcements at the end of the service.

ASSISTING MINISTER'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SERVICE

The Assisting Minister usually accompanies the Pastor into the sanctuary, walks to the altar, stops and reverences the cross by bowing his/her head for a few seconds.

If you are going to sing the Kyrie and the introduction to the Hymn of Praise, these are the first things you will lead in the service. Accompany the Pastor to the back of the altar. Right before you sing, turn on your microphone, and when you have completed your solo parts, turn it off. If you are not going to sing, simply remain by your chair.

The next thing you do in most services is lead the Prayers of Intercession. The prayers start with the Affirmation of Faith which leads into the Creed which is followed by the Prayers of Intercession. This varies somewhat when there is a Baptism or other occasional service.

The Prayers (of Intercession)

The Prayers for each Sunday and principal festival of the church year are printed in *Sundays and Seasons*, an annual publication of the ELCA. The Office Administrator will send a copy of the prayers to the Assisting Ministers well in advance of the weeks they are to serve. A sample of the petitions is included as Exhibit A. Should you forget to bring your prayers, the Pastor and the Music Director each have a copy of *Sundays and Seasons* from which you can photocopy the prayers for the day. However, you will still need to add to them as described below.

The Prayers in *Sundays and Seasons* are written to complement the Readings for the appointed day. In addition, it is important to include prayers that cover those things that are of special concern to the congregation. Such petitions will be written by the Assisting Minister. They should be *written to be parallel to the other Petitions*.

The Prayers follow an established format that varies somewhat with the seasons. The bare bones organization is:

Invitation

Silence of appropriate length (approximately
5 seconds)

Petitions

Response/Assent of Congregation

Concluding Petition(s) of Pastor

Amen

The Petitions will include prayers for the following groups which sometimes are included as addendum to the petitions in *Sundays and Seasons* and sometimes as separate petitions written by the Assisting Minister:

1. ELCA synods and their bishops, ELCA congregations in our synod and their Pastors, and from time to time prayers for our English sister congregations and their Pastors (the Anglican Congregations of Christ Church and St. Mark's Church, Watford, England and Rev. Canon Dick Lewis).
2. Those who are ill: There will be a prepared petition from *Sundays and Seasons* directed toward those who are ill, suffering, etc. containing the word "*especially...*" After "*especially...*" the Assistant Minister will add those people who are newly added to the list of prayer concerns (those in bold type) followed by the statement, "...those we name in our hearts, and those we name aloud." This statement is followed by an appropriate silence to allow people to make their petitions in their hearts and/or aloud.
3. Those celebrating their birthdays in the next week: Unless birthdays logically can be included in one of the petitions from *Sundays and Seasons* the Assisting Minister will have to write a petition for those celebrating birthdays.
4. Anything of particular interest to the parish (e.g., confirmation, summer camp, the receiving of first Bibles, national youth gatherings, new members, etc).
5. Anything of particular importance at a local, state, national, or international level (e.g., a drought/flood, election, pandemic, etc.).
6. If there is a prayer included for a particular saint, martyr, contributor to the faith, etc., you can if you want include a few words such as "defender of the faith," translator of the Bible into a common language," etc. At the back of the bulletin there are brief descriptions of these people.

7. Anyone who has died in the past week. **THIS IS ALWAYS INCLUDED IN THE LAST PETITION** that is read by the Assisting Minister.

In writing petitions, **DO NOT TELL GOD WHAT TO DO**. We know that God will accompany us on our journeys, and we can **ASK** him for special care along the way as we tell him our concerns and what is in our hearts.

To help the Assisting Ministers with the prayers, the Weekly Messenger, which contains events of special note to the congregation, can be obtained on the Yahoo web site on the Friday evening preceding the Sunday they are scheduled to serve. If you want a copy of the Weekly Messenger and are unable to obtain it from the Yahoo web site, call the Office Administrator during the week preceding your service and ask her to send it to you.

MEAL (COMMUNION)

As the gifts are brought to the altar, stand in front of the altar. It is your job to ready the table. After the acolyte has taken the offering from the ushers, take the bread and wine from the people who have brought them forward. Put the bread and then the wine on the altar. The wine will be in two vessels, a chalice and a pitcher. If you are comfortable taking both vessels at once, do so, and if not, take them one at a time.

After doing this, go behind the altar, face the congregation, and at the conclusion of the Offertory Hymn, say the Offertory Prayer. Continue to stand there while the Pastor continues with the service.

There are no hard and fast rules for how to assist the Pastor in removing the covers from the elements before the distribution of communion. Pastor Sappenfield normally takes them off, but some of the Pastors who substitute may not. Nor is there any rule about who hands the chalice or the tray of cups to the Communion Assistant, but frequently this is done by the Assisting Minister. The top tray of the trays of cups will be empty and is handed to the acolyte. As communion is distributed, the Assisting Minister offers the wine and says, “The blood of Christ shed for you,” or “The blood of Christ is shed for you.”

When all in the congregation have been served the meal, the Acolyte, Communion Assistant, and Assisting Minister, stand on the floor behind the altar. As the Pastor serves himself each element, the Assisting Minister says, “The body/blood of Christ....”

The Pastor or the Assisting Minister will cover the trays that contained the wine. Pastor Sappenfield normally covers the trays himself, but a substitute pastor might not.

Once the elements are covered and the music is concluded, the Assisting Minister asks the congregation to stand for the Post-Communion Prayers, which he/she prays. Then the Pastor gives the blessing.

This concludes the service. However, before the Dismissal, the announcements, if any, are given. If there are no announcements, the Assisting Minister concludes with the Dismissal. If there is a closing hymn, the Dismissal is spoken from the back of the sanctuary.

GENERAL NOTES

Help lead the congregation in standing and sitting appropriately by doing it yourself. If it is logical to do so as part of your participation in the service, announce the page number of the next part of the service.

If you do not know how to pronounce a name, don't guess, ask the Pastor, the Music Director, or the person whose name or family member's name you are trying to pronounce.

If you are not sure whether a certain child receives communion, ask a parent or other suitable adult.

Remember to turn off your microphone when it is not needed for your participation in the service.

During Lent and Advent there will be more silence during communion. Don't let the silence rush you in the distribution of communion.

May you be uplifted in your service as an Assisting Minister. It is a simple matter of doing the best you can and knowing that in God's eyes that is good.

EXHIBIT A

Prayers of the People
Sunday, June 24, 2007

Called, gathered, and empowered to serve, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

God of love, grant your church patience to live through frustrating times, reminding us that we are all children of God, heirs to the promise of eternal life. We pray especially for the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod and its Bishop Martin Wells, St. Peter Lutheran Church of Walburg and its Pastor Rusty Campbell and the Anglican Congregations of Christ Church and St. Mark's, Watford, England and their Pastor Rev. Canon Dick Lewis. *(The last phrase about England is optional at any service.)* Lord, in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

God of life, send rains to nourish areas of drought in our lands. Bless the growth of grains and the harvest of foods. Lord, in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

God of the earth, eliminate the barriers and distinctions that divide our world. Guide the leaders of nations to work together for justice and peace. Lord, in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

God of health, hear the cries of all who suffer illness especially(fill in the appropriate names), those who are family and friends of the members of this congregation, and those we name in our hearts or speak aloud that they might

joyfully proclaim all that Christ has done. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of hope, be with those who struggle with depression and sadness. Enable them to arise each day to see your glory. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of creation, bless those celebrating their birthdays this week, especially...(fill in the appropriate names). Help them to know the path you would have them follow. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of grace, we thank you for John the Baptist, Jane Doe, and those who have gone before us who have laid the foundations of our common faith. May their memory ignite that same spirit of faith in all who mourn. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Notes

Peace Lutheran Church
10625 RR 620 N, Austin, TX 78726 • peaceaustin@sbcglobal.net
258.2293 phone • 258.2294 fax • www.peaceaustin.org

Last updated August 2009