



BELIN MEMORIAL
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Acolyte and Crucifer

Belin Memorial United Methodist Church
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576
843.651.5099

Worship Services:
8:45 AM and 11 AM



“I AM THE LIGHT OF THE
WORLD; WHOEVER
FOLLOWS ME
WILL NEVER WALK IN
DARKNESS BUT HAVE THE
LIGHT OF LIFE.”

John 8:12

HISTORY OF THE ACOLYTE / CRUCIFER

As a Belin acolyte or crucifer, you are joining the ranks of those who have helped with the worship service since the early Christian church. Some say that acolytes have an even longer history – that Samuel, who assisted Eli in the Old Testament temple, was really the first acolyte. The word acolyte means “attendant” or “one who helps.” Whether you light the candles, carry in the cross or are a banner bearer, you are considered an acolyte. In our church we call the person who carries the cross the crucifer and the person(s) who lights the altar candles on the Lord’s Table the acolyte(s). In accepting these positions, you will be serving as a companion and helper to your pastor, performing a number of important functions before, during, and at the close of the worship service. You will always take your lead from the pastors and need to always pay attention to them throughout the service. You are a worship leader of Belin bringing to each worship service a special ministry.

ROLES OF ACOLYTES AND CRUCIFERS

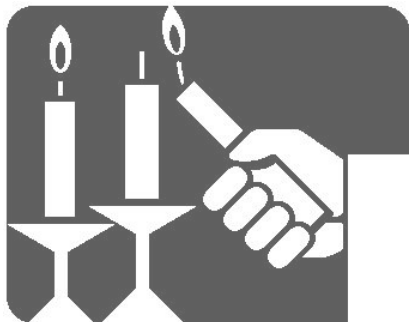
Since ancient times, light and fire have reminded people that God is here with us. Acolytes, in lighting the candles on the altar or Lord's Table, are performing a ritual that reminds us that God is here with us at home, at school, at work, as well as in the worship service. When people look at the lighted candles, they more easily think about God and feel God's presence. When you light your candlelighter again, before extinguishing the candles at the end of the worship service, you remind the people that when we scatter out into the world, God will be there with us. Lighted candles also remind us that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World.

The cross that is brought into the worship service by the crucifer reminds us that Jesus died on the cross but has been raised from the dead and is with us here and now. The cross should be carried comfortably high to signify Jesus as the head of our church and that He calls us to come into the church and worship and serve Him as His disciples.

Crucifers and acolytes are to approach the Lord's Table reverently and in a way that demonstrates the respect we feel for God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In this way, you represent and remind the congregation of the reverent way we are to behave in worship.

BEFORE THE SERVICE (Acolytes and Crucifers)

1. Arrive at least 20 minutes before the service. Report to the narthex. Put on a black robe (cassock) and the white cotta found in the narthex closet. You will also need a pair of white gloves.
2. Appearance. All worship leaders serve to honor God. Be sure your hair is combed and ***never chew gum***. Your shoes are often the only piece of clothing that shows beneath your robe so dress shoes, loafers, and deck shoes are all appropriate. Please ***no sneakers or flip flops***. Boys should wear long pants. ***Never wear shorts***.
3. Put on your gloves before handling the candlelighter and staff of the cross.



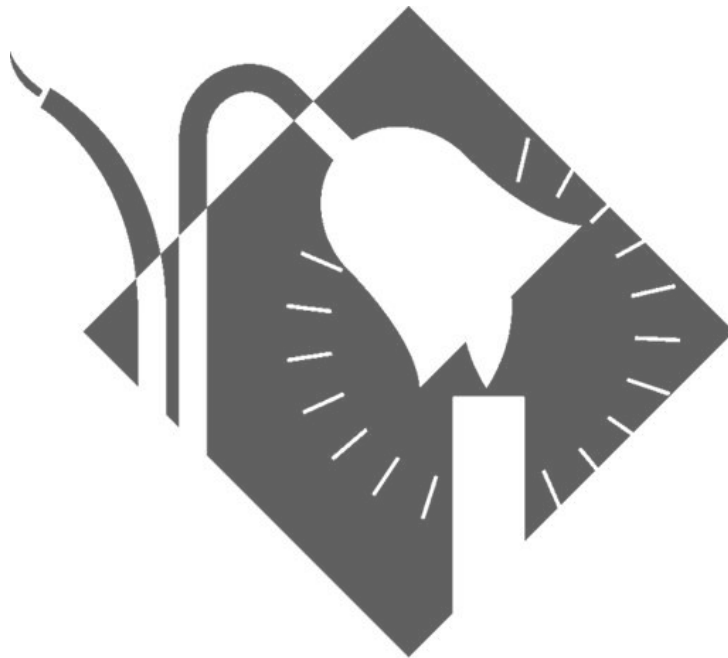
4. Acolytes should locate a candlelighter and carry it with the flame side pointing towards you. One hand should be near the bottom of the staff and the other at the midpoint.

5. The crucifer should get the cross from its stand in the narthex and stand quietly in front of the sanctuary doors.

6. Once the pastor(s) enters the narthex to begin the service, listen carefully to last minute instructions and line up: crucifer, then two acolytes, then the pastors. An usher will light the candlelighters. Once the congregation begins to sing the opening hymn, walk in a dignified, unhurried manner, side by side, up the center aisle. Keep your head up and your eyes straight ahead.

7. Put yourself in the background. Keep your focus and attention on God. Don't rush. When mistakes happen (and they will) don't panic. Look to the chancel ushers for direction.

8. If you find that you cannot be at the service when you are assigned, you and your parents should find your own substitute. Do this far in advance and let the acolyte/crucifer coordinator know.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR CRUCIFERS



1. The crucifer is the first person in the procession as the worship service begins. Remember to avoid touching the brass part of the cross and NEVER lean the cross up against anything. It is top heavy and can easily fall over.

2. Carry the cross with one hand about 12 inches above your other hand. You may rest your elbow at your waist if you need to for support. Walk reverently and not too slowly or quickly. Pause at the steps at the kneeling rail, look at the cross on the altar and bow your head once to acknowledge and honor God. After doing this, proceed in front of the railing to the left side steps and place the cross into the metal stand on the floor, facing the congregation.

3. Exit where you came in and be seated on the small pew reserved for you and the acolyte.
4. During the service, participate in all singing and responsive reading, model good listening skills, and be a worship leader for the congregation. You may remove your gloves during the service, but keep them in view and nearby in order to locate them quickly in case you have any other roles in helping with the service and at the end of the service.
5. Unless the crucifer is holding or carrying something, the proper position for hands is folded together at the waist. Whether seated, standing, or kneeling, crucifers do not slouch. Feet are together and legs are not crossed. Crucifers should never appear to hurry. They do not stare at the congregation, but pay attention at all times in case their services are needed. If you need to cough, yawn, or sneeze, please cover your mouth and nose with your arm.
6. If there is only one acolyte, please review the Instructions for Acolytes (listed later in this booklet) as you will be required to assist the acolyte with the collection.

7. When the music of the final hymn begins, put on your gloves. At the beginning of the next to the last verse of the hymn, go in the side entrance of the altar area and remove the cross from the stand. Exit and proceed in front of the kneeling rail to stand in front of the altar facing the congregation.
8. After a pastor has spoken the benediction and the music begins, walk down the aisle, leading the recessional. Walk more quickly than when you entered. Go straight to the narthex and place the cross into the stand to the left of the outside door.
9. Remove and neatly hang up your cassock and cotta. Replace your gloves, right side out with fingers straightened, into their storage place.
10. **If you find that you cannot be at the service when you are assigned, you and your parents should find your own substitute. Do this far in advance and let the acolyte/crucifer coordinator know.**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACOLYTES



1. Line up behind the crucifer and walk side by side matching your stride to stay together.
2. Once you have been given the signal to begin, walk in a dignified, unhurried manner up the center aisle. Keep your head up and your eyes straight ahead. Keep 4 - 5 feet between the crucifer and yourselves.
3. Pause once you reach the bottom of the steps in front of the altar for a moment, look at the cross on the altar and bow your head once to acknowledge and honor God.
4. Proceed up the steps to the altar with your partner and light your assigned candle. Pause until both candles are definitely lit, blow out your candlelighter to extinguish the flame, and then go back down the steps and go to your seat on the pews reserved for you. Carefully place the candlelighter in a position beside the pew so that it will not slide to the floor or fall. It should be placed so that it is easy for you to retrieve at the end of the service.
5. Unless acolytes are holding or carrying something, the proper position for hands is folded together at the waist. Whether seated, standing, or kneeling,

acolytes do not slouch. Feet are together and legs are not crossed. Acolytes should never appear to hurry. They do not stare at the congregation, but pay attention at all times in case their services are needed. If you need to cough, yawn, or sneeze please cover your mouth and nose with your arm.

6. When it is time to take up the offering you have responsibilities to get the collection plates from the altar, hand them to the ushers and then receive them back from the ushers to be placed on the altar. When the pastor completes the pastoral prayer, leads the congregation in the Lord's Prayer, and says something to the effect of: "Let us now honor God with our tithes and offerings," go immediately to the altar with your acolyte partner and take the stacked collection plates which are on top of a charger (3 plates in all). Turn and go to the ushers who are standing now at the kneeling rail entrance. Generally, four ushers will be there to receive the plates. Offer the plates and allow each usher to take one. You will keep the charger and return to your seat. Keep your gloves on. When the organist begins the Doxology and as the ushers approach the altar, go to the altar with your partner and wait on the second step to receive the offering plates on your charger. They are full now - so be sure to hold them level. Turn and walk up to the altar. Place the full offering plates and charger on the altar and wait facing the cross until the Doxology and Prayer of Thanksgiving are complete. Return to your seat.

7. When a baptism is scheduled, the pastor will invite the parents of the child to be baptized to approach the baptismal font. The acolyte seated nearest the baptismal font goes into the chancel area by the side steps, stands behind the baptismal font and assists the pastor by holding the hymnal/book or anything else assigned and handing things to the pastor as requested.
8. During the service, participate in all singing and responsive reading, model good listening skills, and be a worship leader for the congregation. You may remove your gloves during the service, but keep them in view and nearby in order to locate them quickly in case you have any other roles in helping with the service and at the end of the service.
9. When the music of the final hymn begins, put on your gloves and retrieve your candlelighter. At the beginning of the next to last verse of the hymn, go to the center entrance to the chancel area and pause. When both acolytes are together, walk to the altar, light your wick on the candlelighter from the candle, and finally extinguish your assigned candle. Turn and walk down the two steps together, pausing behind the crucifer.
10. After a pastor has spoken the benediction and the music begins, follow the crucifer's lead and begin to walk down the aisle in recession. Walk more quickly than when you entered, but space yourself approximately 4 - 5 feet behind the crucifer.

11. When you reach the narthex, extinguish your candlelighter and replace it in the appropriate storage spot.
12. Remove and neatly hang up your cassock and cotta. Replace your gloves, right side out and fingers straightened, into their storage place.
- 13. If you find that you cannot be at the service when you are assigned, you and your parents should find your own substitute. Do this far in advance and let the acolyte/crucifer coordinator know.**

Dear Acolyte Parents -

Thank you so much for involving your children in the acolyte/ crucifer ministry at Belin Memorial United Methodist Church. We appreciate your effort to impress upon your children the importance of serving God and serving their faith community. Introducing your child to their faith and to the vow of all United Methodists to offer our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness is so important as they begin this life-long journey.

We would like to take this time to make sure that you, the parents, understand that by providing this opportunity for your child to serve this congregation, you are being asked to pledge to:

- 1) help your child learn their role and duties
- 2) review the Handbook with your child just prior to their scheduled time
- 3) ensure that your child arrives, minimally, 20 minutes before their scheduled time
- 4) teach your child the importance of honoring this commitment
- 5) assist your child in choosing appropriately sized cassocks, cottas, and gloves
- 6) find a substitute if your child will not be available for their scheduled time and inform the acolyte coordinator of any schedule changes (call, text, or email).

You might even consider using the acolyte prayer, printed on the back cover of these guidelines, as your morning devotion on the Sundays your child is scheduled to serve.

Blessings to you and your family,

Your Worship Team Chair

Your Acolyte Coordinator

Your Pastors

Traditional Acolyte Prayer

Almighty God, who has called us your servants to the sacred office of acolyte in your church, we pray your great mercy to guide, strengthen, and sanctify us by your Holy Spirit, that always doing your will, we may both by our service in your house and by our daily life, please you and glorify your name through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

**Thank you for your ministry and service
to your church and to God!**



BELIN MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Mailing: PO Box 528, Murrells Inlet, SC 29576

Office: 4182 Highway 17 Business, Murrells Inlet, SC 29576

Sanctuary: 4183 Highway 17 Business, Murrells Inlet, SC 29576

PHONE: 843.651.5099 FAX: 843.651.4179

WEBSITE: www.belinumc.org EMAIL: info@belinumc.org

- A Stephen Ministry Congregation -