

# Customary Usage for Trinity Episcopal Church,

Torrington, CT

(rev. 12/2017)

## **A what?**

A customary lays out the custom of a particular community in a particular time. It is not an exhaustive guide, and is not intended to replace the rubrics and directions of BCP. Instead, it indicates which options a particular community uses among those available in the prayer book, providing direction for adapting the liturgy to the local liturgical space. It may also fill in some of the silences in the prayer book's rubrics. This customary should therefore be read alongside the prayer book.

## Holy Eucharist II

Before the service begins, the acolyte lights the candles at the altar, and other candles as may be seasonally appropriate. At 5 minutes before the service, the altar party and choir gather in the parish hall to pray (led by the presider). Following the prayer, the choir and altar party move to the back of the church and quietly wait for the service to begin.

The order of procession is as follows (front to back):

crucifer/server<sup>1</sup>

choir

torches

[lay preacher]

[extra clergy]

[assisting presbyter(s), if preaching or concelebrating]

Deacon

Presider

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<sup>1</sup> "Crucifer" is the person carrying the cross. "Server" is one who helps the Celebrant or Deacon set the table. Often both jobs are done by the same person, and at Trinity, they are done by the Acolyte.

On the hour, the procession begins with the congregation singing the first stanza of the opening hymn.

During the opening hymn, the reader(s) move to the and sit near the lectern on the organ side of the altar.

The crucifer (Acolyte) leads, followed by the choir in pairs. The crucifer stops in front of the altar and turns around so that those following can reverence the cross and altar together before turning toward their seats.<sup>2</sup> After the altar party has revered, the crucifer goes behind alter rail, places cross next to torches, and takes a seat behind alter rail.

**A note on seating:** The choir sits in the “choir seating” to the right, the LEM sit in the two chairs to the right of the altar. The preacher sits to the left, nearest the communion rail, and the priest sits to the left of the altar nearest the organ console. If there are extra clergy, one or both of the LEM may need to sit behind the altar rail with the acolyte.

During the summer when the choir is absent, the altar party sits in the choir area.

If the collect for purity is used, it is said aloud by the priest/bishop, not the whole congregation, with everyone joining on the *Amen*.<sup>3</sup>

After the Collect of the Day, the reader will read the first lesson and then, if leading the psalm, lead the congregation in praying the psalm in unison with words such as, "Let us pray together (from) psalm X in unison." If not leading the psalm, lectors may reclaim their temporary seat up front so the cantor may chant from the lectern. The second reading follows the psalm.

During the anthem that precedes the Gospel reading, lectors may return to their seat. The acolyte will take the Gospel book off the altar and the priest will follow them into the congregation. Following the Gospel reading, they return the same way. As the preacher makes their way to the pulpit, the acolyte places Gospel book on second shelf of Credence Table.

If a guest or lay preacher is giving the homily and not reading the Gospel lesson, they may move to the pulpit or to the top of the stairs during the Gospel procession.

The sermon is usually preached from the pulpit. Following the sermon, the celebrant calls the community to recite the creed, saying something like “Now let us affirm our faith together in the words of the Nicene Creed. We believe...”

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<sup>2</sup> In this church, generally speaking, the altar (or cross, or reserved sacrament, or whatever your piety may be) only gets revered twice: once as you enter the first time, and once as you leave during the last hymn. Most of the people here do not reverence additional times during the service.

<sup>3</sup> The instructions are in the formatting. Prayers that are said in unison do not have the ‘Amen’ italicized – you can think of it as very subtle stage directions. See also the Nicene creed, confession, and prayer for absolution following the confession (BCP 359,360).

The intercessor will lead The Prayers of the People, coming to the lectern *during* the creed.<sup>4</sup>

The presider offers the closing collect, bids the confession, and offers the Peace.

After the passing of the peace (which takes a few minutes in this parish), the priest goes down the steps to the congregation to invite people to come forward to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries.

Following these, an offertory sentence is spoken by the presider to begin the second half of the service.

At the Offertory, ushers pass the offering plates through the congregation as two other people carry the bread and wine to the Altar.<sup>5</sup> As soon as the offering plates finish going through the congregation, they are brought forward: no need to wait for the choir to finish singing if they are still going. When the ushers come up to the table, the acolyte gathers the collection plates and presents them to the priest/deacon.

While the offering plates travel, the Acolyte helps the priest or deacon set the table, by bring items from the credence table<sup>6</sup>. First, the Acolyte brings the corporal, and allows the priest/deacon to unfold it on the table.<sup>7</sup> Next, the Acolyte brings the first chalice, and then the cruet with water.<sup>8</sup> When the priest/deacon is done with the water cruet, they will give it to the Acolyte to return to the credence table. The Acolyte may then go to the front of the altar to receive the rest of the gifts, and after delivering them to the priest, join the altar party around the altar.

After the Eucharistic prayer, the celebrant begins the distribution serving themselves first, then those in the altar party. After the altar party has received communion, the whole altar party moves to the high altar, with the bread, chalice, and cruet in hand before closing the communion rail. Using the cruet with the wine, the second chalice is filled, and the altar party begins serving the choir and congregation at the communion rail.<sup>9</sup> Since the bread basket is large, it is helpful if the acolyte can be on duty to help distribute the gluten free wafers. Ushers, please keep your eyes open and notify the priest if someone needs Communion brought to them at their seat after everyone has come forward.

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<sup>4</sup> This can help the priest avoid having a panic attack. Also, when leading the prayers, It is best to invite with "Our Prayers continue on page X, form Y." When possible, omit titles when praying for the church and the world, for example, "We pray for the church in Argentina..." is better than "in the Anglican cycle of prayer this week we pray for the church in Argentina..."

<sup>5</sup> If there is excessive reserved sacrament (reserved/blessed wine or bread) the Altar guild will alert the priest. Only a small amount of wine will be found in the Cruet brought forward, with the understanding that the second chalice will be filled from the reserve sacrament.

<sup>6</sup> The little table with two shelves behind the communion rail with all of the vessels on it.

<sup>7</sup> The items on credence table should be laid out in order, left to right, to make the Acolyte's job simple. Corporal, Chalice, Cruet (with water). The other items won't be touched until after the altar party receives communion.

<sup>8</sup> If there are gluten free wafers to be blessed, in addition to alerting the Priest, the Altar Guild will place a small glass dish next to the communion vessels on the Credence Table.

<sup>9</sup> A note on "handing off" a chalice with wine in it: the most spill-proof way is for the first person holding the chalice to set it down on a hard surface (like a table) and lay the purificator on top. Then, the person receiving can lift it off of the table when they are ready.

After everyone has received, the table is cleared. The offering plates are moved to the pedestal by where the LEM sit. The corporal is carefully folded in reverse of its unfolding, to minimize the little bits of Jesus that might get scattered and trampled on.

All stand at the bidding of the postcommunion prayer<sup>10</sup>

The acolyte will go stand by the cross during the blessing. During the final hymn, the choir and altar party will process to the back of the church. Shortly after the music stops, the Deacon or Celebrant does the dismissal.

### **A few notes on Incense**

Incense may be used in a thurible<sup>11</sup> or in a stationary brazier<sup>12</sup>.

When a thurible is used, the thurifer<sup>13</sup> precedes the crucifer in the processions. The altar is censed during the Gloria. The gospel book is censed before it is read. The altar and elements are censed by the presider after the table is prepared at the offertory, and then the ministers and people are censed by the thurifer.

In all cases, the presider charges<sup>14</sup> the thurible, except at the retiring procession. The celebrant adds incense to the charcoal at the Gloria (or hymn of praise). The deacon adds incense on her or his way to the ambo to read the gospel. The celebrant adds incense at the offertory, after the table is set and before the lavabo.

If incense is used at an office, incense is used in the procession in and out. The thurable is charged at the Magnificat and the altar censed. This is the only place the incense is used in a daily office.

When the stationary brazier is used, it is placed on a low table before the altar, and charged whenever the thurible would have been charged.

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<sup>10</sup> Technically, the whole assembly is standing throughout the whole celebration and distribution of communion, making an instruction to rise here unnecessary. It might be worth noting that Fr. Nik has *never* seen this practiced by a whole congregation.

<sup>11</sup> A slightly egg shaped oven held by chains, that houses hot coals and allows incense billow out.

<sup>12</sup> Basically a fire-proof bowl, that holds hot coals and incense.

<sup>13</sup> Because fire is dangerous and fun, the thurible has its own full-time babysitter to meet its needs, which include being lighted in time, having adequate air to keep the coals hot (that's why they are always swinging), and making sure it doesn't burn down the church (which happens!)

<sup>14</sup> The coals burn for much longer than the incense, so for adequate clouds of smoke, fresh incense needs to be poured onto the coals at appropriate times. Putting fresh incense on hot coals is called "charging"