

The Anglican Diocese of Willochra



Locally Authorised Ministry

Assisting at Worship – A Handbook

Compiled August 2016

by

**The Reverend Gael Johannsen
Ministry Development Officer
The Anglican Diocese of Willochra**

ministry@diowillochra.org.au 0499491859

INTRODUCTION

It is a joy and a privilege to assist at worship. Often we understand the Liturgical Assistant to be THE ASSISTANT. In fact, they are one of many. Those who help prepare for the service, as well as those who assist in the ministry of hospitality after the service are all part of the team of 'assistants'.

This booklet has been compiled to encourage the various people who participate in making our worship meaningful and welcoming.

PREPARING THE WORSHIP SPACE

Sanctifying Time and Space

Since earliest times, every culture and race has assigned special meaning to moments and periods of time through rituals, songs, and art. *“At its heart, the journey of each life is a pilgrimage through unforeseen sacred places that enlarge and enrich the soul” - John ODonohue.* In the life journey of the Christian Community we sanctify or make holy certain life events, seasons of the year, times of day, and places that are important to our story.

In the Anglican Prayer Book we see the sanctification of life in such rites as baptism, confirmation, marriage, and burial. The sanctification of time is most evident in the seasons of the year and holy days, and in the office of daily prayers. We live out our sanctification of space in our church through our vestments and hangings, liturgical colours, the placement of symbols such as crosses, and the use of candles and flowers.

In preparing for a service of worship it is important to choose the appropriate elements that sanctify our time and space for that date and day. Those involved in this ministry need a good understanding of the components that comprise this sanctification.

Church Calendar

The Seasonal Sundays of the church year are listed in A Prayer Book for Australia, beginning on page 464, *Sundays and Seasonal Holy Days*, following a three year cycle. Holy Days are found from page 608 onwards. Although those who prepare for worship should be aware of this, it is sufficient to look up the day in the Revised Common Lectionary, where the colour of the day will be listed. There will be occasions when the Seasonal Sunday will fall at the same time as a Holy Day or a National Event (ANZAC DAY or REMEMBRANCE DAY) necessitating a decision as to which “Day” is celebrated.

There are two kinds of seasons and holy days in the church year: solar and lunar. The solar days are fixed dates such as Christmas Day which is always the 25th of December. Lunar dates are determined in relation to the phases of the moon. Easter Day, for example, falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Autumn Equinox (March 21st). Consequently, the date of Easter changes each year.

These two great seasons, Christmas and Easter, determine where the rest of the seasons and holy days appear on the calendar. As the date of Easter varies each year, certain other seasons - Epiphany and the Season after Pentecost - will be longer or shorter, based on the date of Easter.

The church year begins with the first Sunday of Advent with the last Sunday being The Last Sunday after Pentecost or Christ the King Sunday. Within that year there are six distinctly different seasons, each with its own emphasis and rhythm. In addition to the changing colours of the seasons, scripture selections and hymns also change focus. A reading appropriate to the season of Advent would not ‘fit’ on Easter morning. Accordingly, the Prayer Book offers cycles of readings and prayers for each liturgical season.

Seasons are:

- Advent (Sunday After Christ the King – Sunday before Christmas)
- Christmas (Christmas Day – Epiphany (Jan 6 or Sunday nearest to that date))
- Epiphany – Epiphany – Shrove Tuesday (Last Tuesday before Lent)
- Lent – Ash Wednesday – Saturday of Holy Week
- Easter – Easter Sunday – Pentecost Sunday
- The Season after Pentecost – The day after Pentecost – Saturday before Advent 1
- The Season of Creation may also be celebrated- First Sunday in September – St Francis of Assisi (October 4)
- The month of November is sometimes called “Remembrance” During this month we celebrate All Saints, All Souls and Remembrance Day

Those who prepare the church for worship should be aware of seasonal variations so that the worship space may be prepared as is appropriate.

Colours of the Seasons



Please note: Blue is sometimes used for Advent as distinct to Purple. Local custom is usually purple.

Saints Days – Red for Martyrs, White for All Saints Day and all other Saints and Holy People.
Red is also used for Pentecost Sunday

Flowers should **NOT** be in the church during Advent and Lent. During Advent the focus is on the Advent wreath. Appropriate symbols may be used during the Sundays of Lent.

Preparing the Altar for Holy Communion (ref - www.drshirley.org/churches/linens)

Linens used during the Eucharist

The Altar Cloth

This is a cloth of fine linen that covers the top of the altar and hangs down at each end. It is embroidered only in white, traditionally with a cross in each corner and one in the centre, representing the five wounds of Christ, in His hands, His feet, and His side.

The Burse

- The word derives from the Greek "byrsa" meaning, "a bag". The burse is the folding case made from two squares of rigid material covered in cloth. The burse is placed on top of the chalice, paten and veil, and serves to hold a corporal and/or an extra purificator. The Burse and Veil should be in the colour of the Season.

The Corporal

The word derives from the Latin "corpus", meaning "body", because it is used to catch any pieces of the consecrated Host (regarded as Christ's Body) which might fall from the paten during the Eucharist. It is also symbolic of the Lord's grave cloths. The corporal should be a piece of linen, about 12 to 18 inches square, with a cross in the centre of the front edge. It is laid on top of the altar cloth at Communion, and the chalice is placed in its centre. It should be folded and ironed inside-out, so that when it has been used at the Eucharist it can be folded up with the right side inwards, to hold any fragments of the Host.

The Credence Cloth

This is the cloth that is placed on the credence table.

The Lavabo Towel

This is a piece of white material, usually about 12 inches by 8 inches which is used to dry the celebrant's hands after the ablutions. A Lavabo Towel is folded and ironed in thirds parallel to the long side, then folded and ironed in half again. It is usually embroidered with a cross in the centre of one short edge.

The Pall

This is the stiff cover, about 6 inches square, made of a rigid centre and covered with white material, sometimes with a cross or other symbol embroidered in the centre. The pall is put over the Paten on the Chalice when preparing the Altar for Communion. It is then covered by the Veil.

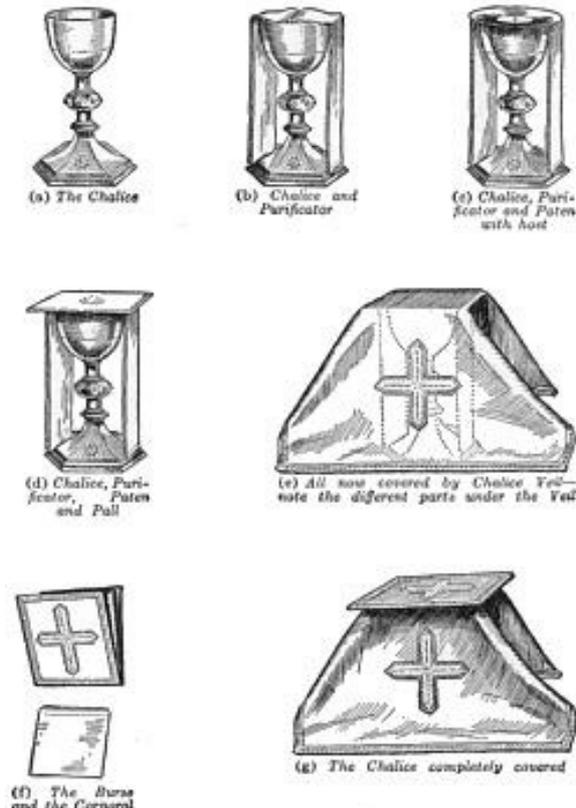
The Purificator

The word derives from the Latin "purus" (pure) and "facare" (to make). The purificator should be a piece of white linen, about 8 to 12 inches square (or three times the width of the chalice), with a small cross in the centre. It is folded and ironed into thirds, right side out, to give a square with the cross in the center. When preparing the altar for Communion, a purificator is opened half-way and put over the chalice so that its sides hang down either side. The paten, with a Priest's wafer, is then placed on the purificator, and the pall is placed on top. A spare purificator should also be put in the burse. Purificators are used to clean the chalice, by wiping the rim of the chalice with the purificator.

The Veil

The word derives from the Latin "vela": a curtain or sail. The veil is the large cloth square used to cover the Chalice, Paten and Pall at the Eucharist. The Burse and Veil are often part of a matching set, along with altar and pulpit hangings, in the colour of the Season.

When setting up the Altar for Communion, the Altar Cloth is placed on the Altar, and the Corporal is opened and placed in the centre back of the Altar. The Chalice is placed in the centre of the Corporal, and a Purificator is opened half-way and draped over the Chalice. The Paten is put on top of the Purificator, and a Priest's Host placed on the Paten. The Paten and Host are covered with the Pall, which is then covered with the Veil. The Burse, containing a spare Purificator, is placed over the Veiled Chalice.



The people's wafers, wine and water are placed side by side on the Credence Table. An empty bowl, a (separate) container of water and a lavabo towel are also placed on the credence table.

Lights

The use of candles is traditional at public worship, but it should be noted that not all candles are used at all services. The candles on the altar are considered “Eucharistic lights,” and are meant to be used at a service of Holy Communion. Candles behind the altar, or on the wall behind the altar, or free standing candelabra are considered “office lights” for use at Morning or Evening Prayer. If the church only has candles on the altar and the service is that of Morning or Evening Prayer, then they should be lit rather than light no candles at all.

If the service takes place in the Easter season the Paschal candle is always lit first and extinguished last.

CHOOSING THE HYMNS/SONGS

Most congregations are familiar with the Australian Resource “Together in Song”, as well as the “All Together” collection, Scripture in Song and various other music books. Traditional or contemporary, there is an abundance of choice. How then to choose? Here are some tips:

Choose according to the place in the Service

The opening hymn sets the mood for the Service – it should have a familiar, uplifting tune. (eg Praise My Soul the King of Heaven)

Similarly, the closing hymn should generally be one which gives praise to God, or reinforces the call of the sermon, or encourages people to go out into the world as Christian disciples. (eg God Gives Us a Future)

The Hymn before the Gospel (Gradual) should not be overlong and ideally should summarise the theme of the previous readings. If this proves difficult there are many hymns and songs which praise God’s Word. (eg Thy Word, Break Thou the Bread of Life)

The Pre- Communion or Offertory Hymn can have a theme specific to Holy Communion (eg Let us Break Bread Together With the Lord) or a theme of thanksgiving and offering (eg Take My Life)

If there is a hymn after receiving communion, it may be quiet and meditative, or express joyful thanks. (eg Give Thanks With a Grateful Heart)

Solemn occasions such as Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, funerals, days of penitence etc. call for slower and more reflective choices

Choose according to the Liturgical season and the theme of the service

The hymns in Together in Song are grouped according to the major seasons and themes of the Church year. Similarly with As One Voice. The Source and other contemporary song collections often have a Biblical index as well as a list of seasonal themes.

Choose according to frequency of use

Try to avoid using the same hymn several Sundays in a row, or to over-use old favourites. It may be helpful to keep a record of songs used each week.

Choose according to what the congregation can sing

If you have a very small congregation, or you know that half of your attendees are going to be away with the flu, you will want to avoid the more challenging of the hymns. Choose well known hymns and songs that are easy to sing. If necessary, use CDs with vocal backing.

Choose from a maximum of two sources

One hymn book and one prayer book is preferable. You will probably get away with a hymn book and a song book, but multiple books just don’t work. Of course the use of a Powerpoint presentation solves all problems, but that’s not always possible or affordable. If you are using material from several sources have a song booklet made up for the service. If you do this, please acknowledge copyright and print your CCLI number beneath each song that is not Public Domain.

WELCOMING

The Welcomer is part of the Hospitality Ministry of the Church, but they could also be classed as an Evangelist. Not only does he welcomes the people who come to worship, the Welcomer shares the love of Christ. There are many stories of people who have come to a service of worship because they have a personal need, and have found Christ because of the warmth of their welcome. They were made to feel that they belonged, and thus came to belong to Christ himself.

Here are some encouraging tips for those who are part of this very special ministry.

Do smile and show personal warmth.

Do be aware of your body language. A smile will go nowhere if your arms are folded and your body stance is 'closed'. Look like you enjoy welcoming people to your church.

Do take the initiative and be the first to greet.

Do be aware of people's comforts. If someone obviously hasn't been to the church before, it is helpful to let them know where Children's Activities happen, where the toilets are and where morning coffee will be served.

Don't ask, "Are you new?" or "Have you been here before?"

Do say, "Hello, I'm..... I don't think I've met you before..."

Don't stand in the doorway talking to your friends.

Do stay at your post until the Processional Hymn is finished.

Do sit near the back so that you can easily get up and greet latecomers.

Do follow up newcomers after the service. As they leave, thank them for joining your congregation for worship and invite them to morning tea.

Do introduce newcomers to other members of the congregation.

READING THE SCRIPTURES

A copy of the week's readings can be found on the Diocesan Website. Always prepare by reading the passage out loud, several times, before the service. Words should be spoken clearly, in as natural a speaking voice as possible. Words should be spoken loudly (use a microphone if you think your voice won't carry) without straining the voice and still allowing the people in the back pew to hear clearly. Words should be spoken slowly to enable the hearer to grasp their meaning. Generally, when you think you are speaking too slowly, the pace is about right.

The readings will often offer the challenge of pronunciation, especially proper names and place names. Numerous pronunciation guides are available online. There is even a YouTube presentation that will help you 'get' the way the Hebrew and Greek names are pronounced (<https://EasyBibleNamesGuide.com>).

LEADING THE INTERCESSIONS

Constructing Prayers of Intercession

(New Patterns of Worship, www.churchofengland.org, modified for A Prayer Book for Australia)

A Prayer Book for Australia outlines the areas for which we are encouraged to pray

The prayers usually include these concerns and may follow this sequence:

Creation, human society, the government and those in authority

The Church, local, diocesan and worldwide

The local community

Those who suffer

The communion of saints

Several forms of intercession are provided' (pages 172-173, 183-187 APBA), but other suitable forms may be used. They need not always conform to the sequence indicated above. You may choose to write your own intercessions or use one of many available resources (*See appendix 2 of this Handbook*).

Please note the importance of a congregational response, which enables worshippers to participate in the prayers without needing to have the full text of the prayers in front of them.

Two things are of particular help to a congregation:

First, making the response unvarying, short and memorable, introduced each time with the same 'cue line'. (Suggested responses are on page 124 APBA)

Second, taking care over how the response and its cue line are introduced to the congregation at the beginning of the prayers. This may be done by saying, 'Each section of the prayer concludes [the words of the cue], and the response is [the words of the response].'

For example:

Each section of the prayer concludes 'Lord in your mercy,' and the response is 'hear our prayer':

We pray for all people everywhere.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Another perfectly acceptable way of constructing the prayers is to use a series of short prayers or biddings, followed by silence and one of the congregational endings. An example of a bidding is...(Let us pray for our Diocese, Bishop John Stead and Jan, and all who minister in this vast and diverse region.....SILENCE)

A variety of patterns can be used, for example:

bidding - silence – collect (APBA) or own prayer

bidding - set words of one of the APBA litanies - silence - response

series of biddings with silences.

Whatever pattern is used should be used throughout the Prayers of Intercession. It is important to keep the distinction between biddings (addressed to the congregation) and prayer (addressed directly to God and not referring to him in the third person) and not to slide from one to the other without realizing it.

Other points to note:

In planning the prayers, remember that the rubric on page 124 directs that the service should include thanksgiving as well as intercession. Remember to give thanks.

How to Lead the Prayers (Some Do's and Don'ts)

(New Patterns of Worship, www.churchofengland.org, modified for A Prayer Book for Australia)

DO read the readings. Sometimes they might be used as a basis for prayer ('Gracious God, thank you for . . . [what the verse says]; now please help us to . . .').

DO discover the main theme of the service: is it based on the readings, the season or day? If you are not preaching yourself, ask the preacher if there is something specific to pray for from the message of the sermon.

DO find out about particular needs - who is ill (see Pastoral Matters on page 7) or what church meetings or organizations need prayer this week. Watch the news, and vary the way in which international topics are prayed for.

DON'T be political or get on your hobby horse. Pray for fair and just government, by all means, but don't name the inadequacies of the governing party.

DON'T be out of date! However, remember also the need for balance and breadth. The prayers of intercession are normally broadly based, expressing a concern for the whole of God's world and the ministry of the whole Church.

DO be aware of special events like baptisms, marriages or community events.

DO remember what was prayed for last week: should there be thanksgiving for prayer being answered? What other thanksgiving should there be? '....intercession frequently arises out of thanksgiving'.

DO decide what pattern of intercessions will be best, given what has been discovered and the pattern of the rest of the service. (Try to look at a variety of resources for the day for which you are preparing)

DON'T cram so much in that you have to rush.

DON'T forget about the need for silences, and how and whether to introduce them.

DON'T preach at people ('We pray we may all give generously on Stewardship Sunday').

DO pray the intercessions out loud before the service. Watch the speed: will the congregation have time to pray, or be overwhelmed by the variety of images and topics? Will they know when to come in with the response? Is the response short enough to remember?

Pastoral Matters Pertaining to Prayer

Sometimes people who don't come to church will ask for prayer. They may desire to have their name read out in the prayers without any detail about what their need is. You, as the intercessor, may know the need but you are aware that the other person wants you to keep their confidence. It is sometimes unsatisfactory to the congregation to hear a name... Bill or Julie or whoever and be unable to identify who or what they are praying for. It is important that the intercessor understands the need for confidentiality in spite of the potential curiosity of the congregation. To make this clear, you could pray.... "Lord, we bring before you Bill, whose needs you know, asking that you enfold him with your love"... "we bring before you Julie, asking that you respond in grace and mercy to her needs, known only to you". At times I have had a prayer diary with names of those who have asked for prayer. I have placed the book on the altar before the service. At the time when we pray for individual needs, I have used these or similar words... "Lord, now we bring before you those whose names lay upon your altar, asking that you will reach out to them with your steadfast love and mercy." Remember, if you have any concerns about confidentiality please consult your priest.

It is important to be sensitive to where people are at and avoid prayers that could embarrass them. If we know that someone in our congregation is going through a tough time, we cannot name them in public prayers without their permission. ALWAYS ask before you pray publicly for someone. They may be happy to have their name mentioned without a description of their current situation.

It is also important to allow people in the congregation time and space to bring before God their own needs and those of their family, which they may not wish to speak out loud. A prayer like... "Now, in a moment of silence, we bring before you the prayers of our hearts, for ourselves and those we know and love..."

Finally, pray with confidence and expectation that God hears your prayers and will in his grace and mercy, answer them.

ASSISTING AT HOLY COMMUNION

When you see the celebrant enter the sanctuary (at the beginning of the Offertory hymn) make Your way to the Credence Table. The celebrant will remove the burse and veil from the chalice and Paten and lay the corporal on the altar. Then they will come to you with the paten. You should have, during the earlier part of the service, have done a head count so that you know how many wafers the celebrant will need. Hold out the vessel that holds the wafers while the celebrant takes the necessary number. He or she will then return the paten to the altar and bring the chalice to you. By this stage you should have the cruets containing the wine and water unstoppered and in your hands (wine – right, water- left). When the celebrant takes the wine cruet, move the water to your right hand and receive the wine back with your left. In some cases the celebrant will expect you to pour the wine and water into the chalice. He or she will indicate when you have poured sufficient of each. When the action is completed, return both cruets to the Credence table and stopper them.

Unfold the lavabo towel and place it over your less used arm. With your good arm hold the water cruet. Pick up the washing bowl and hold it with your towel arm. When the celebrant approaches pour the water over the celebrant's hands, collecting the water in the bowl. Let the celebrant take the towel and wait until the towel is returned to your arm. The celebrant will then give a slight bow which you return. This signifies that the action is over. Place the bowl, towel and water neatly on the Credence table.

Remain reverently by the Credence table during the Prayer of Consecration. When the celebrant has communicated themselves, come forward to receive Holy Communion. When the celebrant gives you the chalice, keep it in your hands and he or she will hand you the purificator.

When you use the purificator on the chalice, loop it over the first finger of your right hand and hold it with your thumb. Wipe the chalice along the edge. Rotate the chalice a little after each person has drunk from it.

Make sure you use the same form of administration as the celebrant..

eg The body of Christ, the bread of heaven; The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.

The body of Christ keep you in eternal life; the blood of Christ keep you in eternal life.

After the celebrant returns to the altar you should remove the covers from the water cruet and carry it to the altar for use in the purification of the chalice and paten. Pour the water over the celebrant's fingers (they will be held over the chalice) as directed. Bow when done and return to the credence table and stopper the cruet. The celebrant will then cleanse the vessels and cover them again with veil and burse. These will be handed to you to place on the credence table. Do so and return reverently to your seat.

HOSPITALITY – THE MORNING TEA

The time spent together after the service should never be underestimated. "Fellowship is one of the four pillars of the Church (*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' **teaching** and the **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and the **prayers**. Acts 2:42*) Your Morning (or Afternoon) Tea will say a lot about your welcome, generosity, care and concern for others and the vitality of your congregation.

In our Diocese we are blessed with excellent cooks and wholesome country food. As you prepare the morning tea, remember those people with special needs. Keep in stock – herb tea (peppermint or lemon and ginger are usually well received), an alternative to milk – soy or rice milk (almond milk is also very nice), something gluten free – rice crackers and gluten free dips or good quality gluten free biscuits.

Quite a few people are both gluten and lactose free. There are some very easy recipes to be found under Paleo on the web or Pinterest. For instance, a blend of ground almonds or cashews, medjool dates, raw cacao or chocolate powder, coconut oil and shredded coconut make delicious raw energy balls that can be kept in the fridge for several weeks.

It is also good to remember that coffee drinking has become a 'culture'. Cheap and tasteless instant coffee doesn't cut it anymore. If the budget will stretch, offer a good quality coffee, or, even better, invest in a 'pod' machine.

It's great to catch up with friends over morning tea, but when newcomers or guests are with us, it's important to include them in the conversation. Try to avoid 'in house' conversations and particularly 'church politics'. Ask your guests about themselves, share positive things about your church and your area, and make it clear that they are very welcome to join in any of the activities of your church. It's a good thought to have handouts/church magazines in the morning tea area so that your guests will have something to take away with them.

APPENDIX 1 – PRAYER RESOURCES

Diocese (Ministry Development)*Alternative Worship*

Jonny Baker, Doug Gay, Jenny Brown

Australian Prayers

Bruce D Prewer

Be our Freedom Responsive Prayers and Readings for Contemporary Worship

Terry Falla

Glimpses of Glory Prayers for the Church Year C

David Adam

Hunger for the Word Lectionary Reflections on Food and Justice Year B

Larry Hollar

Let us Pray Intercessions Following the Revised Common Lectionary

Janet Nelson

Living Stones All Age Resource Book For the Common Worship Lectionary (Year A, Year C)

Susan Sayers

Prayers to Share Year B

David Sparks

On Line Resources.*Text Week* (www.textweek.com)

Multiple links to lectionary based liturgy, sermons, graphics and music.

The Billabong (www.TheBillabong.info/steppingstones)

An Australian Guide that offers multiple links to lectionary based liturgy, sermons and music

Worship Blog Spot (www.re-worship.blogspot.com)

Lectionary based Calls to Worship, Confessions, Prayers, Credal Statements and Benedictions

Wild Goose Worship Publications – Iona Community (www.ionabooks.com)

Celtic prayers, liturgies, songs and reflections from the Iona Community. Available for download as E books/E liturgy or can be purchased as hard copy.