

Customary Usage for St. Michael's Episcopal Church

Mandeville, LA

(revised 1/27/22)

A Customary sets forth a description of the custom of a particular place, in a particular time. It is not an exhaustive guide to the liturgy, because it does not purport to replace the rubrics and directions of the rite being used. Instead, it indicates which options a particular community uses among those available in the prayer book, provides direction for adapting the liturgy to a specific liturgical space, and fills in some of the silences in the prayer book's rubrics. This Customary should therefore be read alongside the prayer book. The answer to many questions about worship can often be found by starting first with the prayer book and then turning to the Customary.

The Eucharist

Sunday Eucharist -The Sunday principal liturgy will take place in the sanctuary. It is first and always the day on which we, the church, celebrate and give public witness to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is our own mortal opportunity to celebrate in the heavenly feast. It will be streamed for those unable to attend.

Greeters

The role of the greeter is to be the face of St. Michael's - welcoming, smiling, and warm to both long time parishioners and first time visitors.

1. Please arrive thirty minutes prior to the service. Should someone who is scheduled to serve be absent, ask someone in the congregation to assist.
2. Ensure that all bulletins and other handouts are ready to be passed out and that greeters are present and at their stations. ALL GREETERS SHOULD WEAR A SMILE AND A NAME TAG.
3. Make sure the lights are turned on and adjust the HVAC as needed.
4. Remove any bulletins and other papers that might have been left from a previous service/activity.
5. Make sure the offering plate is on the pedestal in the center of the aisle.

6. Weather permitting, one greeter should be stationed at the table outside or just inside the Narthex to ensure proper check-in, to greet parishioners and visitors, and answer any questions. Additional visitor information should be handed out after the service so as not to overwhelm someone at the beginning of the service.
7. If you aren't sure they are a visitor, just say something like "I'm not sure we've met. My name is"
8. The other greeter should be stationed in the Narthex to remind parishioners to wear name tags, direct seating, and to offer answers / directions to visitors.
9. Childcare is available during the 10:30 a.m. service, children's worship bags can be found on the small table outside of the church office door, and Sunday School will be available at the 10:30 a.m. service when public schools are in session.
10. Greeters should assist visitors with seating and should seat them near a member of similar interest - young family with young family, Navy vet with Navy vet, LSU fan with LSU fan, etc.
11. Once the service begins, wait until the Gospel procession to join the congregation. More than once, a visitor has arrived after the beginning of the service without any assistance only to turn back to the parking lot. Simply opening the door can make a tremendous difference in someone's first experience.
12. After the service is over, the greeters should position themselves in the Narthex and at the outside table. Visitors should be offered more information as available, encouraged to text the visitor code (StMVisitor to or fill out , and directed to meet the clergy.

Eucharistic Minister

1. Please arrive thirty minutes prior to the service.
2. Make sure the lectern book is turned to the appropriate page. Read over the Prayers of the People for pronunciation. The prayers sheet will either be on a chair near the lectern or on Terri's desk.
3. Light all candles according to the diagram printed in the sacristy. If a candle appears to have a problem - wick is too high or out of oil - find an altar guild member for assistance.
4. Vest and retrieve the processional cross and wait in the Narthex for the service to

begin.

5. If there is an opening hymn, do not ring the Narthex bells. The sound of the organ or piano will mark the beginning of the service.
 - a. Wait until the first verse begins to enter the sanctuary. In pace with the music, lead the procession.
6. If there is no music to begin the service, reverently ring the Narthex bells. This is not the beginning of a foot race. The bells do not need to be rung as such.
7. When holding the cross, both thumbs should point up. Place your dominant hand on top and approximately a foot or two lower, your other hand. Your lower hand should be inline with your navel.
8. It is not appropriate to bow when holding anything larger than a book. Your reverence to God is indicated by the item you are holding. When you reach the top of the chancel, reverently pause at the altar before placing the cross in its stand and taking your position in front of your chair. As always, stand when the celebrant is standing.
9. If you are the lectern, skip down to #20 for those instructions.
10. Prayers of the People
 - a. As with the scripture readings, practice is key. Read through the prayers, understanding the phrasing, and clarify the pronunciation of names where applicable.
11. Kneeling should be avoided when vested. Bowing is the appropriate posture in lieu of kneeling.
 - a. During the confession, it is appropriate to remain bowed until the end of the absolution.
12. Prior to the peace, try to count the number in attendance. Communicate this figure to the celebrant as you two pass the peace.
13. After the peace (during the announcements), apply hand sanitizer and set the chalice on the altar.
14. Next, bring the wafers (ciborium - bread box), wine, and water to the clergy setting the altar. There is no need to rush. This preparation is for the most critical phase of the service.
 - a. Wafers, Wine, Water
 - b. Wafers come first - wait for the priest to place on the paten what is needed -

before returning to the credence table with the ciborium. It is wise to know how many wafers are in the ciborium, if more are needed, you can get them.

c. Wine and water are next.

15. Once the table is set, come forward to the celebrant with water, lavabo bowl in your left hand, and the lavabo towel on your left wrist to wash the celebrant's hands.

16. Smells and Bells

a. When to use the Sanctus Bells and Incense

i. The Episcopal Church offers a wide variety of ways to worship. A Sunday service in the middle of June should look and feel different than during the season of Easter or Advent. Each liturgical season of our church year has its characteristics and our worship should mimic as such.

b. Advent - Four weeks of preparation before the celebration of Jesus' birth

i. No Bells

c. Christmas - Celebration of Christ's Incarnation

i. Bells and Preferably Smells

d. Lent - A six-week period of penance before Easter

i. No Bells

e. Easter - 50 days of joyful celebration of the Lord's resurrection from the dead and his sending forth of the Holy Spirit

i. Bells and Preferably Smells

f. Ordinary Time - Divided into two sections (one span of 4-8 weeks after Christmas Time and another lasting about six months after Easter Time)

i. No Bells or Smells unless the Sunday is high holy day i.e. Feast of St. Michael's, All Saints', etc.

17. After the Eucharistic prayer, assist the priest in moving any items to where they are needed. (This instruction is vague because guidelines will change based on the pandemic.)

18. After everyone has received communion, assist the priest in clearing the table.

19. Once the table is cleared, move back to your seat.

20. Wait until the final hymn begins to move the cross in front of the altar. Process out

with the first verse or when the interlude is complete. As crucifer, you are leading the congregation in procession into the world - walk as such.

Lectern

21. As the congregation sits after the Collect, move toward the lectern to read the lessons.

- a. Preparation is key for reading the scripture and prayers.
 - i. Make sure to read the passages aloud multiple times, perhaps in front of others prior to the service. If you are unsure as to what your readings will be, check the lectionary beginning on page 888 of the Book of Common Prayer or <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>
 - ii. Take the time to study and reflect on the readings.
 - iii. As you study the reading, reflect on its fundamental nature.
 1. Is it a letter?
 2. A discourse to a crowd?
 3. A story?
 4. Is it dialogue?
 5. A poem?
 6. A song?
 7. A metaphor?
 8. A warning?
 9. What is the passage's context in its Biblical book?
 10. Who wrote or said it?
 11. What are the emotions to be conveyed?
 - iv. Read the passage again, aloud, as if you are telling the story, or reading the letter to an eagerly waiting community.
- b. Deliver your reading(s)
 1. All readings and instructions are spoken from the lectern into the microphone i.e. First Lesson, Psalm, Second Lesson, Prayers of the People.
 - ii. **Open the passage simply:** "A reading from (name of the book)" or "A reading from Paul's letter to the church of (name of city.)" The

lectern book has these phrases printed. Please do not cite the chapter and verse numbers. These are relevant for Bible study, not worship.

- iii. Tell the story, read the letter, **say it like you mean it!**
- iv. **Speak slowly and clearly**, to the people. Speak to the back pew, not the front.
- v. **Pause** at the end to allow everyone to digest the reading in **silence**.
- vi. Invite people to reflect, **“The Word of the Lord.”**
- vii. If you make a small mistake, ignore it and keep going. If you mangle the meaning of a sentence, simply back up and say it correctly. Don't apologize, don't be flustered, just clarify and go right on.