

VERGERS
GUILD

25
YEARS

For the Priest Interested in Starting a New Verger Ministry

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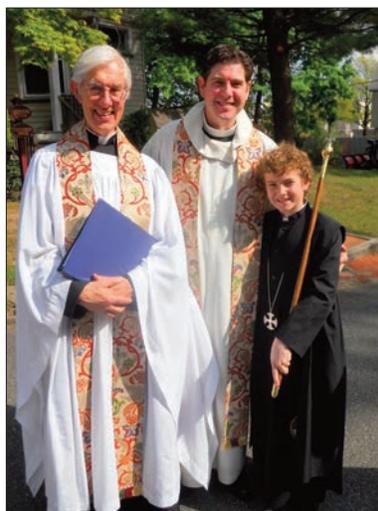
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In each parish, the verger serves at the pleasure of the rector. This is an appointed position that typically checks on details prior to a liturgy, allows the clergy to be available to greet parishioners, welcomes visitors, and responds to pastoral concerns.

The rector, vicar, or priest in charge assigns the task specific to that parish that are the responsibility of the verger. The verger's duties are about 90% behind the scenes and 10% in the service.

The ideal candidate for verger may already be supporting the clergy by checking on the set up of the chancel prior to the service. A verger typically interfaces with the altar guild and ushers to make sure everything is in place. The verger makes sure the readers are prepared and chalice or eucharistic ministers are assigned. The verger organizes the procession and may also be the acolyte master. The verger might have the responsibility to train and schedule lectors, chalice bearers and ushers. Anytime a liturgical visitor comes to assist in worship, the verger will welcome that person and shows them where vesting and seating will be. If someone does not show up the verger finds a replacement, or is always prepared to fill in at the last minute. The verger must be able to be flexible, double check everything, and have an "eagle eye." The verger is always thinking a few minutes ahead as the service progresses and is watching to see that all that was planned is indeed set to occur.



As a priest considers beginning a verger ministry in his or her parish, specific duties might be assigned to the verger. In some parishes the verger is not vested in the liturgy at first. Vesting and processing in the liturgies might be added on Feast Days initially. Over time, a verger, wearing a simple cassock, moving around the nave getting everything ready can be a real asset because that person is available as a

source of information to everyone. The visitor can ask about Sunday School offerings, or where the nursery or restrooms are located. For special groups, like pre-baptismal training, weddings or ordination rehearsals, a verger can be very effective helping in making large groups of people feel comfortable and at ease. Especially at the time of a funeral, the verger can work with the various funeral homes to assure that the church's guidelines are followed. Members of the parish often welcome the assistance of the verger in the liturgy because it allows the clergy to be more available for personal conversation and to address pastoral concerns.

Even in small parishes, a verger can be invaluable to the priest. As your parish size and number of services increase, a team of vergers may be helpful. Periodic meetings with the clergy help all vergers know what is specific to each liturgy.

The VGEC wishes to be responsive to any priest who wants to consider this ministry.

Please contact us at start@vergers.org if you have any questions.

Contact Us!

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