

Altar Guild Report

I stepped into Altar Guild in late spring 2009 and found it was running itself in a barebones way with the helpful efforts of Anita in scheduling and reminders.

It continued that way until fall when we started meeting to prepare for the Bishop's visit and confirmation, reception and the rector's installation. Willing hands and glad hearts helped make that a memorable day. Input from Deacon Pat and Fr. Torey helped to tweak our performance.

Also with Deacon Pat's encouragement, the acolytes' vestments got a much needed washing. The bulk of this task was shouldered by Anne Phetteplace. The fulfillment of Pat's request for new bookmark ribbons is in progress.

Also this fall, the Altar Guild guides got a timely update by Barbara Aalfs. These illustrated notes help the AG members on duty prepare completely and accurately for weekly services as well as special feasts and occasions.

The Thanksgiving Altar display was executed by Jean Tufty who also manages all of the altar linens.

Lorraine Pfothenauer has donated a hot pot so that we may have a better supply of hot water for cleaning the Eucharistic vessels rather than waiting for the faucet to run hot.

We got off to a good start with planning for Advent/Christmas. The decorations are well organized and labeled (by Barbara). Jean and Anne donated some nice additions. I feel like I dropped the ball here and was bailed out by the action of more experienced members. I need to communicate better with AG members and keep track of who does what. And, it would have helped me to refer to the new guides mentioned above.

In hindsight, I would have liked to coordinate with the Epiphany celebration more.

Here's to a better Lent/Easter cycle.

Times have changed since the days when Altar Guild met quarterly in high style and signed up in two's and three's for their semimonthly duties. Today, more of us have day jobs and busy lives. Group emails take the place of meetings and save us precious time and travel. This is at the expense of getting together all at one time to share and socialize and develop the sense of oneness and sacrifice suggested by our title: Altar Guild. Duty, tradition, mystery, something ineffable draws us to this service. But sometimes it can feel like one is hanging out there all alone.

In the coming year I would like to have general meetings to foster this sense of unity and draw in others who are interested in this work. I would like to sponsor training sessions so that more of us can feel more confident about what we are doing and do it efficiently. Maybe learn about why we do things just so, what history lies behind this support of ancient rites. Altar Guild is part of many of the sacraments of the Church.

For myself, I should endeavor to communicate and manage better. Ask for help more. I still don't know who is in charge of the supplies that mysteriously appear when stores are low. I don't know how Altar Guild is funded. Dues? Budget? Bake sales? I'm sure someone will fill me in shortly. Please.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Wepner