

Instructions for Elders Serving Communion in the Sanctuary

First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, Tennessee

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Preparing to Serve

- **Please:**

- Arrive early: Check-in with the Captain in the Memorial Library (second floor near the sanctuary) no later than 8 o'clock for the 8:30 a.m. service, and 10:30 a.m. for the 11 o'clock service.
- Dress appropriately: dark suit, white shirt and tie for men; dark suit or dress for women.
- Pick up a badge from the Captain and put in on.

- **Rehearsal**

The Captain will usually want to do a "walk-through" rehearsal 20 minutes or so before church services begin. Briefly, here is how the rehearsal is conducted: We line up in the library, proceed to the sanctuary, enter the front-row pews by the side aisles, and, on signal, sit. On signal, we stand, exit the pews by the center aisle, pretend to take the bread or cup from a minister standing in front of the chancel, proceed by either the center aisle or a side aisle to locate the section of the sanctuary each of us is assigned to serve, and after doing so, step out into the center of the aisle and wait. On signal, we proceed to the foyer, line up, proceed to the front of the sanctuary by the center aisle, pretend to return to the minister the remaining bread or cup, re-enter the front-row pews by the side aisle, and, on signal, sit. On signal, we stand and return to the library.

- **Lining up before the rehearsal and eight minutes before church services begin:**

- The Captain will ask you and the other members of the serving team to line up in two columns of 8-servers each facing the bookcase located along the north wall of the library – the wall nearest the sanctuary. The left column (facing forward) is the "Pulpit-Side Column"; the right column is the "Lectern-Side Column." [Elders serving as Hosts/Greeters are assigned to the Lectern-Side Column and will take their seats in the pew no later than 15 minutes after worship services begin.]
- Don't take the first or second places in line unless you have served communion at least two times before.
- Look around you. Remember your place in line! You will line up in the same order twice in the foyer (facing the center aisle doors to the sanctuary): first time, after the bread is served; second time, after the cup is served. ***Take the same place in line each time you line up!!***

- The first person in the Pulpit-Side Column is the “Point” – the person who will stand at the right-rear of the sanctuary and signal you when you are to proceed to the foyer after serving the elements.
- **A minister will usually join the serving team in the library for prayer about eight minutes or so before church services begin.**
- **Five minutes or so before church services begin, at the Captain’s request, the Lectern-Side Column will lead the way, single file, from the library into the sanctuary, followed next by the Pulpit-Side Column, and finally by the Captain.**
- **Upon entering the sanctuary:**
 - The Lectern-Side Column will cross the sanctuary, enter the first pew **by the side aisle**, face the chancel, and remain standing.
 - The Pulpit-Side Column will enter the first pew of the Pulpit side of the sanctuary **by the side aisle**, face the chancel, and remain standing.
 - The Captain will take his place in front of the chancel near the center aisle and face the servers.
- **When everyone is in place, the Captain, will give the signal for everyone to sit in unison.**

**How the Sanctuary is divided for Serving Purposes;
Determining Your “Section” and “Starting Place”**

For serving purposes, the 29 pews on each side of the center aisle are divided into four sections of seven adjacent pews – designated Sections 1 through 4. From front to back of the sanctuary, Section 1 begins about three-quarters of the way back; Section 2, one-half of the way back; Section 3, one-quarter of the way back; and Section 4, the 2nd pew back. Look for a bronze tack near the top of the forward edge of the pew end. The tack is located an inch or so below the crown. The tack marks the first pew of the section and the servers’ “Starting Place.”

The Pulpit-Side Column serves the left side of the sanctuary (as viewed by the congregation); the Lectern-Side Column, the right side. Two servers are assigned to each section – one serves from the center aisle; the other, from the side aisle. *The server in the center aisle serves the first pew of the section. The server in the side aisle serves the second pew.* Servers then alternate serving pews until the last pew in their section has been served.

The first two people in line in each column are assigned to Section 1; the next two, Section 2; the next two, Section 3; and the final two, Section 4. If you are the 1st, 3rd, 5th, or 7th person in line, you serve from the side aisle; if you are the 2nd, 4th, 6th, or 8th person, you serve from the center aisle.

Your “Starting Place” is either the center aisle or side aisle of the first pew of your section.

Serving First the Bread and Next the Cup

- **As the ministers take their places at the bottom of the chancel steps with plates of bread or containers of cups, the Captain will motion you to stand.**

- Stand in unison and face the center aisle.
- Servers exit the pews two at a time – one from the left pew and one from the right pew – at same time, as a pair.

Do not step from your pew into the aisle until the pair of servers in front of you has turned and “cleared” the aisle either by turning to take a side aisle to their starting places or by passing the first pew on their way to their starting places up the center aisle.

- Walk to the minister standing in front of you, and take a plate of bread or container of cups.
- If you are the 1st, 3rd, 5th, or 7th pair of servers, turn 90 degrees left (if you are on the left) or 90 degrees right (if you are on the right) and take a side aisle to your Starting Place.
- If you are the 2nd, 4th, 6th, or 8th pair of servers, turn 180 degrees (“about face”) and take the center aisle to your Starting Place.

Servers alternate between “side aisle” and “center aisle.” The first pair of servers take a side aisle; the next pair, center aisle; the next, side aisle; etc., etc.

- When you reach your Starting Place, turn toward the chancel, watch the Captain, and wait for his signal for you to begin serving.
- When all servers are in place, the Captain will begin serving the ministers – this is your signal to begin serving.
- The server in the center aisle serves the first pew in the section. The server in the side aisle serves the second pew. Servers then alternate serving pews until the last pew in their section has been served.

Be careful!! Don’t serve beyond the last pew in your section. Take care while serving to watch for the bronze tack on the pew end. Don’t offer to serve that pew! It marks the beginning pew of a different section, and it will have already been served.

- When the last pew in your section has been served, step-out into the aisle opposite the last pew ***taking care to give the Point a clear sightline (i.e., don’t stand behind a column)***, face the rear of the sanctuary, watch the Point, and wait for his signal for you to proceed to the foyer.

The Point will stand at the right-rear of the sanctuary, and when he sees that all sections have been served, he will waive his arm – your signal to proceed to the foyer.

- Proceed to the foyer at the Point's signal.
- First servers into the foyer should serve the bread and cup to ushers and others in the foyer.

***Returning to the Sanctuary from the Foyer
after Serving the Bread and Cup***

- Line up in the foyer facing the center aisle doors to the sanctuary – same way you lined up in the Library – Pulpit-Side Column on the left; Lectern-Side Column on the right.
- The Captain will lead the columns, side by side, down the center aisle to the first pew.
- Don't proceed past the first pew until the server in front of you has placed his/her plate of bread or container of cups on the stack in the minister's hands and has turned away.
- Proceed to the minister in front of you and add your plate of bread or container of cups to the stack in the minister's hands. **Take care to serve yourself before walking away.**
- Turn 90 degrees left (if you are on the left) or 90 degrees right (if you are on the right), **enter your pew by the side aisle**, and remain standing.
- When everyone is in place, the Captain will give the signal for everyone to sit in unison.

Exiting the Sanctuary at the End of the Service

- **When the ministers have proceeded down the center aisle past the first pew, the Captain will give the signal to exit the sanctuary.**
 - Exit the pew one person from the left pew and one from the right pew – same time, as a pair, and exit the sanctuary.
 - Return to the library, remove your badge, and leave it with the Captain.

Thank you for your generous service in ministering to our church family!!