

# Customary for Thurifer

(Thurifer Instructions & Processes for High Holy Day Services  
(February, 2024))

*("They shall put incense before You." Deuteronomy 33:10.")*

*As an Thurifer, you will never be perfect, but nobody expects  
you to be perfect, but they love you and are pulling for you.  
Thank you for Serving as Thurifer!*

## **Thurifer Coordinator Contact Information**

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## **THURIFER's OVERALL DUTIES**

**OVERALL:** The Thurifer who carries and swings the thurible in which incense is burned during the eucharist and other liturgies. This is called “censing.” The thurifer uses the thurible (also called a censor) in the ceremonial censing of people or objects such as the gospel book or altar.

This Customary for AC is a supplementary document, covering duties unique to the AC

Note: The Thurifer is assumed to have familiarity with the “Customaries” describing the duties for Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEMs), Lay Readers (LRs), and Acolytes.

The Table of Contents for these related documents is later in this Customary.

### **Executing the Role of the Thurifer:**

1. The Thurifer gently swings the lit thurible or hands to the Presider to do same..
2. Thurible & Accessories
  - Thurible consists of a (see photos at end of this Customary)
  - Incense consists of certain woods and solidified resins that emit a fragrant smoke when burned
  - Incense boat or container which holds the incense that will be used during the service. A second person may be assigned as the “boat person” to carry the incense boat and assist the Thurifer in lighting/replenishing the thurible.

### **30-45 minutes prior to start of service**

3. Report to the Presider and alert the Altar Coordinator that the Thurible will be part of the service. Do not assume the Altar Coordinator knows.
4. Vest with the appropriate colored lanyard and return to the Lobby. Refer to the Customary for LEM, Page 11 for Vesting.

### **5 minutes prior to start of service, the Thurifer:**

1. Fills the Thurible with fuel and lights it in the Lobby
2. Joins the Processional, leading the Procession up the Center Aisle to the Chancel.
3. Thurifer turns toward Choir-side of Chancel to back corner of Chancel.

### **Processional:**

1. The Thurifer precedes the Crucifer and takes a seat?.

### **Gospel Reading:**

- Thurifer follows the Gospel Party (Crucifer, Torch Bearers, Gospel Book Holder, and Presider) in processing from Chancel area to Nave's center aisle (blue tape on floor) for reading of Gospel..
- The Thurifer awaits the Presider who takes the Thurible and swings it to the Altar, Sanctuary corners, Cross and Gospel Book.
- The Presider returns the Thurible to the Thurifer before reading the Gospel.
- At the conclusion of the reading the Thurifer leads the Gospel procession back to the

foot of the Chancel.

**Communion:** Typically the Thurifer does NOT have a role during Communion.

**Recessional & Dismissal:** Typically, the Thurifer does NOT recess

**De-vesting** - Refer to the Customary for LEM, Pg 11, De-Vesting

### **Detailed Instructions for Thurifer:**

**Purpose:** The Thurifer serves during services in which incense is used. The Thurifer facilitates the burning of incense before, during, and after the service. Incense acts first to provide a symbolic cleansing. Secondly, as smoke rises, it takes our prayers with it to God. Finally, smoke also suggests the mystery of God.

### **Prior to the Service:**

- Arrive at the church at least 30 minutes prior to the service to vest,
- WHERE IS THE THURIBLE & ACCESSORIES STORED? IS THERE A THURIBLE "HOLDER?"
- Prepare thurible, and assist in instructions if needed. Since a Thurifer is seldom used, others in the processional party (Crucifer, etc.) may need instructions on what you will be doing and how they will coordinate with the Thurifer.
- 20 minutes before service, take thurible, materials and boat (with incense) outside of Lobby. Light an incense pellet and place it into the thurible basin. Blow as necessary to get pellets lit. Keep the thurible open to help with the lighting process. When fully lit and smoking then close the thurible..
- 5 minutes before service, join the Processional party in the Lobby
- Charging the thurible: Open the thurible and lift it in front. Present the boat to the Presider. The Presider spoons incense into the thurible and blesses it. Once the Presider has blessed it, lower the top and return it to its position by your side. Begin processing immediately as smoke is now being emitted.
- As part of the Processional party, the Thurifer leads the procession, carrying the thurible and boat
  - Thurifer carries the thurible in right hand, holding the top of the chain fully extended by placing right thumb through the top ring. The hand should be about a foot in front and about six inches to the right of the shoulder and slightly above it. When standing or walking in the sanctuary, let the thurible swing gently back and forth. This allows smoke to escape and oxygen to enter.
  - Thurifer carries the boat in the palm of the left hand (holding it securely by the base with fingers)

### **The Procession:**

- The Thurifer processes directly in front of the crucifer. Proceed to the altar slowly and reverently, swinging the thurible with your right hand while holding the boat in your left. Pause at the center foot of the Chancel; then cense the Altar according to the instructions of the Presider. Proceed toward Choir-side of Chancel and hold behind Choir, awaiting the Gospel Party.

### **Gospel Reading**

- The Thurifer gives the Thurible to the Presider, who censes the Altar, Sanctuary, Gospel Book. The Presider then returns the Thurible to the Thurifer
- As the Presider reads the Gospel, the Thurible may be raised & lowered, according to circumstances.
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### **At End of Service - Disposal:**

- The incense in the ashes has been blessed and must be disposed of properly.
  - When embers are extinguished, these may be emptied onto ground. If still glowing or hot, fill a glass with water and take the water and the thurible to the ground. If the ground is soft enough, dig a hole with the heel of shoe. Empty incense and ashes into the ground, and pour the rest of the water over these. Gently stir it to make sure the fire is out, and cover with dirt. Optionally, a clay pot with sand may be available to dispose of the hot coals rather than burying them in the dirt
  - Return all materials to the sacristy.
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### **THURIBLE Photos with ACCESSORIES**

#### **Thurible**

#### **Thurible Accessories**

END OF DOCUMENT