

WISCONSIN FEDERATION OF LUTHERAN ALTAR GUILDS

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NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2014

GREETINGS FROM PASTOR RICKY SCHROEDER, PASTORAL ADVISOR...

Soon we will be entering the Festival half of the Church Year. It is a time of much celebrating! First comes the Advent Season which gives way to the Christmas Season which gives way to the Epiphany Season and so on.

Your labor during these seasons are immense. There is the changing of the paraments, decorating the House of the Lord not to mention all of the regular duties that are part of your service of the Lord.

It is my prayer that the Lord will give you joy during this time. What a wonderful blessing to be a part of the proclaiming of the Christ – the One Who is eternal. May He be glorified in your humble service. May your joy be made complete as you serve Him assisting in the proclaiming of the Gospel.

The Lord grant you a Christ-centered Christmas and a blessed New Year!

FLOWERS AND FLAGS....

The basic symbolic value of flowers is joyfulness and is an expression of the goodness and beauty of creation. Flowers have no liturgical function. Placement of flowers and greenery should show concern for the altar and its cross.

Real or Artificial?....Real flowers are preferred as the objects used in God's house should be genuine. However, the use of artificial plants and flowers is widespread, and their use is motivated by convenience and cost rather than deception or dishonesty.

Potted Plants?...

- should not be placed on the altar, but can be placed on the floor around the altar
- ribbons, bows and gaudy metallic paper should be removed
- protect the surface under the potted plants to ensure no water damage.

Colors..... should be in harmony with the color of the church year used on a particular day.

Vases.....

- should harmonize with the design and material related to the altar cross and candlesticks
- crystal vases blend with all metals and all flowers..
- vases should be identical.and of good scale and proportion to the altar.

Restrictions.....

If using gradine (shelf)

- flowers should not be taller than the arms of the cross or the height of the candle
- flowers should not be placed behind the cross
- flowers should be placed between the between the candlesticks and the cross.

If the altar has no gradine.....

- floor standards or shelf should be used
- flowers should not obstruct any other significant decorations.
- flowers should not interfere with the movement of the officiants.
- flowers should not be placed in or on an object of a sacred character.
- flowers should not be placed on the mensa (Latin for "table"; refers to the top of the altar on which the Communion elements and the altar book are placed)

Flowers.....which were used in the church.....

- can be given to members who are ill:
a card could read."These flowers, used in our worship service are sent to you to assure you of the prayers of the congregation and to wish you our Lord's Blessings."
- can be taken home by the person who requested and paid for them.
- should never leave in chancel to wilt.

Note: empty vases and standards should be put away in the sacristy.

Easter.....

- Flowers should be white (Easter Lilies)
- Lilies should be on the altar in vases, not potted.
- Other lilies can be used in lesser number than the Easter Lilies.
- Gold is a substitute for white so daffodils can be interspersed.
- Flowers should be arranged to lead the eyes to the cross
- Palms with their symbolism of victory are especially suitable

Christmas.....

- Trees may be placed in the chancel; greenery can adorn windows and columns. - none of the greens should detract from the altar and chancel cross.
- Red poinsettias are most popular, but white are in harmony of the celebration.
- The total effect of the decorations should not be overwhelming.

Weddings.....the service should always be reverent, dignified and worshipful. The focal point and center of worship is the altar.

- The color of the paraments reflects the liturgical season and may not be changed.
- The center aisle and chancel may be decorated with flowers
- There should be a firm policy as to who may decorate the chancel....usually the Altar Guild.
- Decorating be arranged for a designated time and must conclude 45 minutes before service.
- If a florist is engaged, they should do their work under the supervision of an Altar Guild member.
- Arrange a time restriction for photographs after the service

Funerals.....

- The paschal candle is placed where the head of the casket will be and lighted before the service.

- A funeral pall, usually white, is decorated with a cross or another sacred monogram; the pall is placed on the last pew, ready to be draped over the casket prior to the procession unless placed during the service.
- Flowers should never be placed on a coffin if a funeral pall is used.
- The pall is used to equalize the differing monetary values of caskets.
- The pall symbolizes the promise of our resurrection in Holy Baptism and directs the assembled mourners to this hope in Christ.
- Flowers and plants should follow the family's wishes. (Perhaps shut-ins or hospitalized church members).
- Floral arrangements from lodges or other non-Christian organizations must not be displayed in church, but in the narthex

Flags.....

Many Lutheran churches display flags in the chancel or nave, but this practice must be discouraged. The national flag is a symbol of the state whose values and purposes are different from, and sometimes incompatible with, those of the church. The "Christian Flag "is a piece of redundant and distracting symbolism, since the focus in the church is on the altar and cross in the chancel. These flags serve no liturgical function, but were introduced into the churches for political reasons. If congregations insist on having them, they should be displayed in the narthex or fellowship hall.

ANY QUESTIONS.....ASK YOUR PASTOR

*Sources for this article.....What An Altar Guild Should Know by Paul H.D. Lang
Altar Guild Manual by Lee A. Maxwell
Gathered Guests by Timothy H. Maschke*

THANK YOU!

*To... St. John's Lutheran Church,
North Prairie, WI
For hosting our annual meeting
On Saturday, April 20th, 2013*

*Everyone enjoyed coming together for
worship, fellowship, information, and
your gracious hospitality.*

"the Board"

PRAYER.....to use at your meetings....

O Lord, our God, quicken our hearts.
Let us serve Thee in all humility,
Let us serve Thee in all reverence,
Let us serve Thee in all obedience,

Give us clean hearts,
Give us clean hands,
Give us clean thoughts.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

OUR NEXT ANNUAL MEETING will be held on

SATURDAY, MAY 17TH, 2014

At

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

1919 WYATT AVENUE

STEVENS POINT, WI 54481

1-715-344-5664

MARK YOUR CALENDAR.....HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!