

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:

- Arrival – Come to the church at least 30 minutes prior to the service to vest, prepare the thurible, and assist in instructions if needed. Since a Thurifer is seldom used, acolytes and/or the LEM may need instructions on what you will be doing and how they will coordinate
- Lighting the thurible – About 20 minutes before the service take thurible, materials and boat (with ground incense) to the steps outside the choir rehearsal room. Hold a piece of charcoal with the tongs and light it. Place the charcoal into the thurible basin. Blow as necessary to get the charcoal going. Keep the thurible open to help with the lighting process. A few minutes before it is time to light the incense, close the thurible, bring it and the boat (with incense) around the outside of the building to the front steps.
- Carrying the thurible and boat
 - Carry the thurible in your right hand, holding the top of the chain fully extended. Place your right thumb through the top ring. Your hand should be about a foot in front of you and about six inches to the right of your 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
 - Carry the boat in the palm of your left hand (holding it securely by the base with your fingers)

Charging the thurible:

Open the thurible and lift it in front of you. Present the boat to the Celebrant. The Celebrant will spoon incense into the thurible and bless it. Once the Celebrant has blessed it, lower the top and return it to its position by your side. Begin processing in immediately as smoke is now rising.

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 altar; then cense the altar according to the instructions of the Celebrant. Proceed away from the altar to the outside stairs through the money counting room
- Place the closed thurible on concrete and go back in to attend the service. Sit on the front row of pews closest to the choir room

The Recessional:

When the Communion begins, leave the sanctuary and proceed to the outside steps through the money counting room. Light another piece of charcoal. Depending on the number in the congregation, you may be able to wait until the ministrations of communion begins. Listen for the prayer after communion while waiting in the money counting room. When the prayer is almost completed, sprinkle half a spoonful of incense into the thurible and close it. Proceed into the sanctuary when the recessional hymn begins and stand in front of the altar. The crucifer will move in front of you. When the priest signals, turn and process out slowly, Thurifer first, while swinging the thurible with your right hand. Go out the front door and proceed outside around the building, back to the steps.

Disposal:

The incense in the ashes has been blessed and must be disposed of properly. Watch for the embers to die down. If they are out, empty them onto the 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 your shoe. Empty incense and ashes into the ground, and pour the rest of the water over them. Gently stir it to make sure the fire is out, and cover with dirt. Return all materials to the sacristy.

Note: Eventually we should get a clay flower pot filled with sand to dispose of the hot coals rather than burying them in the dirt