

Congregational Acolyte

Definition of Office

“The Renewed Moravian Church has taken from the Ancient Church the title of *Acolyte* and has transformed it into a discipleship in the congregation and the Church.” (*Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum, 2016, para. #692.*) Members of the Moravian Church who exemplify the teaching of Christ and are respected by fellow members of the Church may be received as Acolytes.

A Congregational Acolyte is selected by the local congregation’s board(s) and approved by the Provincial Elders’ Conference. Reception takes place in the presence of the assembled congregation by the right hand of fellowship given by the presiding pastor. The duties may include assisting the pastor in pastoral duties, special supervision for specific areas of service within the congregation, and assisting in serving the elements in Holy Communion when an ordained minister is present to consecrate the elements and preside at the sacrament. (*2018 Book of Order, Church Life in the Southern Province, Ch. 13, The Ministry, Section 4. Acolytes*)

Election to Office

- (a) Acolytes are to be nominated by the Board of Elders (or Church Board) and elected by a three-fourths majority of the Joint Boards (Church Board) by secret ballot.
- (b) Acolytes will be elected for three-year terms, subject to no limitation on re-election.
- (c) The Acolyte’s initial election must be approved by the Provincial Elders’ Conference. The Board of Elders (or Church Board) shall submit a letter informing the Provincial Elders’ Conference of an individual’s election, and requesting orientation of that person by a member of the Conference, and formal reception by the PEC of the individual as an Acolyte.
- (d) Prior to the conclusion of any three-year term, the Board of Elders (or Church Board) shall review the service of an Acolyte. If desired, the Joint Board (Church Board) may re-elect that individual to an additional three-year term. The PEC will be immediately notified of such re-election, or the discontinuation of service as an Acolyte.

Duties of Office

All duties of an Acolyte are to be assigned by the pastor in agreement with the Church Board(s). These duties may include those authorized by Unity Synod and our Book of Order (see “Definition of Office” above).

In serving the elements of the Holy Communion, the Acolyte shall not wear the surplice, but may wear an appropriate gown. At the pastor’s discretion, the Acolyte may take the consecrated elements from Holy Communion to homebound or hospitalized members. An approved liturgy for this is available from the PEC.

An Acolyte may be duly elected to any Church Board, appointed to any committee, and serve in any other capacity of a member in good standing. If an Acolyte is not an elected

member of the Church Board(s), he or she may be invited to attend meetings, but without privilege of vote in the actions of the Board(s).

All duties and responsibilities of the Acolyte will automatically be suspended upon the installation of a new pastor, in which case duties and responsibilities may be reassigned by the new pastor. An Acolyte's appointment is terminated if the Acolyte ceases to be a member of the congregation.

NOTE: Congregations electing Acolytes must incorporate rules in harmony with the above provisions in their own congregational Rules and Regulations.

Approved by the Provincial Elders' Conference, January 30, 1969.

Revised: Revised May 19, 1987; Feb. 2 1999; March 4, 2008; Nov. 7, 2011; Nov. 2, 2015