

Even though the history of verging and vergers goes back over 700 years ago, the ministry of service and welcome from the vergers of the Episcopal Church is thriving in the twenty-first century!

Today's vergers are lay persons who **serve the church in a ministry of welcome**. Often the visitor will see the verger in a simple cassock moving about the church preparing for worship. The verger is able to respond to any inquiry concerning the upcoming service, church facilities or current program offerings.

The verger's logistical support allows the priest more time for pastoral and sacramental responsibilities. We often say that every parish has a verger whether they are identified as such. Some typical verger duties are assigning, training and checking in lectors, chalice bearers, acolytes and prayer intercessors. The verger often coordinates with the altar guild and funeral guild. In some parishes the verger checks lighting and sound.

The specific duties of the verger are specific to each parish church. In some parishes, the verger will process at all liturgies. In others, they only process on Festival days. Especially helpful with visiting clergy or special services, the verger checks on additional seating, hospitality and welcoming newcomers. Most parishes, either small or large, and clergy who incorporate the verger position wonder why that wasn't done earlier!"

The morning portion of the course will be an orientation. It will answer the basic questions about the craft of being a Verger. We will discuss how to become a verger and what additional training/support is available. The afternoon will be a period of instruction that can go as deep as the attendees want to delve into questions or talking about specific issues. A discussion of vestments and liturgical artifacts of the Episcopal Church will also be included.

The Verger's Prayer

Almighty Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named, who has called us into the fellowship of your Church, grant, we pray, that in all our churches we may fulfill the duties and enjoy the privileges of our spiritual homes. And on those who offer themselves for service as vergers in the house of God bestow the fullness of your grace, that, united in love to you, and to one another, we may show forth your glory and hasten the coming of Your Kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen