

# Immanuel Episcopal Church, Old Church



## Altar Guild Customary

Rev V  
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# **Immanuel Episcopal Church**

## **Altar Guild Handbook**

(Revised February 2010)

### **A Prayer Before You Begin:**

*Bless us, O Lord of hosts, as we prepare this church building for worship, and grant that as your saints and angels always serve you in heaven, so we may praise you acceptably on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **General Notes:**

1. You are engaged in a vital ministry of our church in service to our Lord and the people. May you perform it with diligence, joy and a sense of peace.
2. You are responsible for all services during your month of service. One Altar Guild member is to be present at every service to assure that things go smoothly and to assist the celebrant and other ministers and worshippers. Note: It is not necessary to be present at the early service on Sundays.
3. Set up for services when the church is empty. Setup should be completed by 30 minutes before a service. Clean up should not begin until worshippers have left the church.
4. Call the Altar Guild Chairman or the Rector with any questions or problems. Please don't be afraid to ask for assistance.

## Linens and Other Items in Use in the Church

1. **The Fair Linen** is the exact size of the Altar on top and hangs down at least 18" at the sides. The fair linen is always rolled, and not folded for storage. It is embroidered with five crosses—one in the center and one at each corner of the altar—to signify the five wounds of Christ.
2. **The Dust Cover** is the same size as the fair linen, but it is made of rougher cloth. It is used to cover and protect the fair linen between services. It also is rolled.
3. **The Credence Cover** is like a miniature fair linen made to fit the credence table. It is embroidered with a cross in the center front just above the hem. Credence covers are rolled.
4. **The Corporal** is the most sacred of all linens since it holds any consecrated host or bread which may fall. It is about 18" to 20" square with 1/2 " hem. A small cross is embroidered above the hem. This is the only linen folded wrong side out. Up from the front of altar, down from back, left over 1/3, right over 1/3. This keeps all crumbs inside until they are shaken out onto the ground.
5. **The Pall** is a stiffened linen 6" to 8" square (plexiglas foundation) with embroidery in the center. This is washed by hand, well rinsed and placed on edge to dry. Put a piece of linen under it. No ironing is necessary.
6. **The Purificator** is often a small square linen with a small cross embroidered in the center with very fine hems. They are used to wipe the chalice during communion. They are folded in thirds, then in thirds again so that the cross is on top. Don't iron the folds.
7. **The Veil**, sometimes referred to as the "chalice veil," is a square cloth that covers the chalice and paten on the altar when they are not in use. The veil is made of material that matches the liturgical color of the service, and is folded when stored.
8. **The Burse** is a clothbound envelope of two square pieces of stiff material in a liturgical color. It is used to hold the purificator placed on the altar at the time of setting the table for the eucharist. The burse will hold at least one extra purificator.
9. **Baptismal Towels** are made like small linen hand towels. They are folded in thirds and then in half. They are used for drying after baptism.
10. **Linen Napkins** are used to cover the bread on the silver bread plate. Corporals and purificators should not be used for these purposes.
11. **The Altar Book** is the large, red book with its title printed on the spine of the book. It contains the order of worship. This book is placed on the brass book stand on the altar. Be sure not to confuse it with the Gospel Book.
12. **The Gospel Book** is the smaller, red book which contains the Gospel readings for the worship service. It is placed on the altar, at the base of stack, on the congregation's side. Be sure not to confuse it with the altar book.
13. **Refillable altar and torch candles:** DO NOT CUT OR ADJUST THE WICKS. Unscrew the brass top w/ wick attached. Fill the cylinder and replace the brass top. Liquid wax is in quart bottles in the cabinet with the candles.

**Setup for  
9 a.m. Sunday  
Service of Holy Eucharist**

## Setup for 9 a.m. Sunday Service

Setup for the 9 a.m. Sunday service is the same as the setup for the 11 a.m. service, except that one of the small offering plates should be placed on the small oblation table next to the last pew in the back of the church.

About 20 people attend this service. Use one loaf of bread.

**The Service of Healing** is held on the last Sunday of the month during the 9:00 service. Place the oil stock on the altar to the right (Priest's left) of the "stack" *with an extra purificator*.

**NOTE:** ALTAR GUILD MEMBERS DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT FOR THE 9 A.M. SERVICE. ANYONE ATTENDING THIS SERVICE MAY PRESENT THE ELEMENTS.



This is how the altar should be setup for Sunday services. Note that the silver wafer box should no longer be placed on the credence shelf. Leave it out in the Altar Guild room. Also, you no longer need to use a linen on the credence shelf.

## **Presenting the Elements**

After the ushers finish passing the plates, two Altar Guild members (or other members of the congregation) pick up the flagon and the bread plate from the oblation table at the back of the church. Carry them forward up the center aisle when you hear the musical intro for "For the Fruit of All Creation." The priest may also look to you. Move together with the ushers and carry the wine and bread all the way to the altar and present them to the priest. The idea is that we bring all of our gifts to the altar together — money, prayers, bread and wine. After you present the elements, step aside and wait for the ushers to present the offering plates. Then return to your pew.

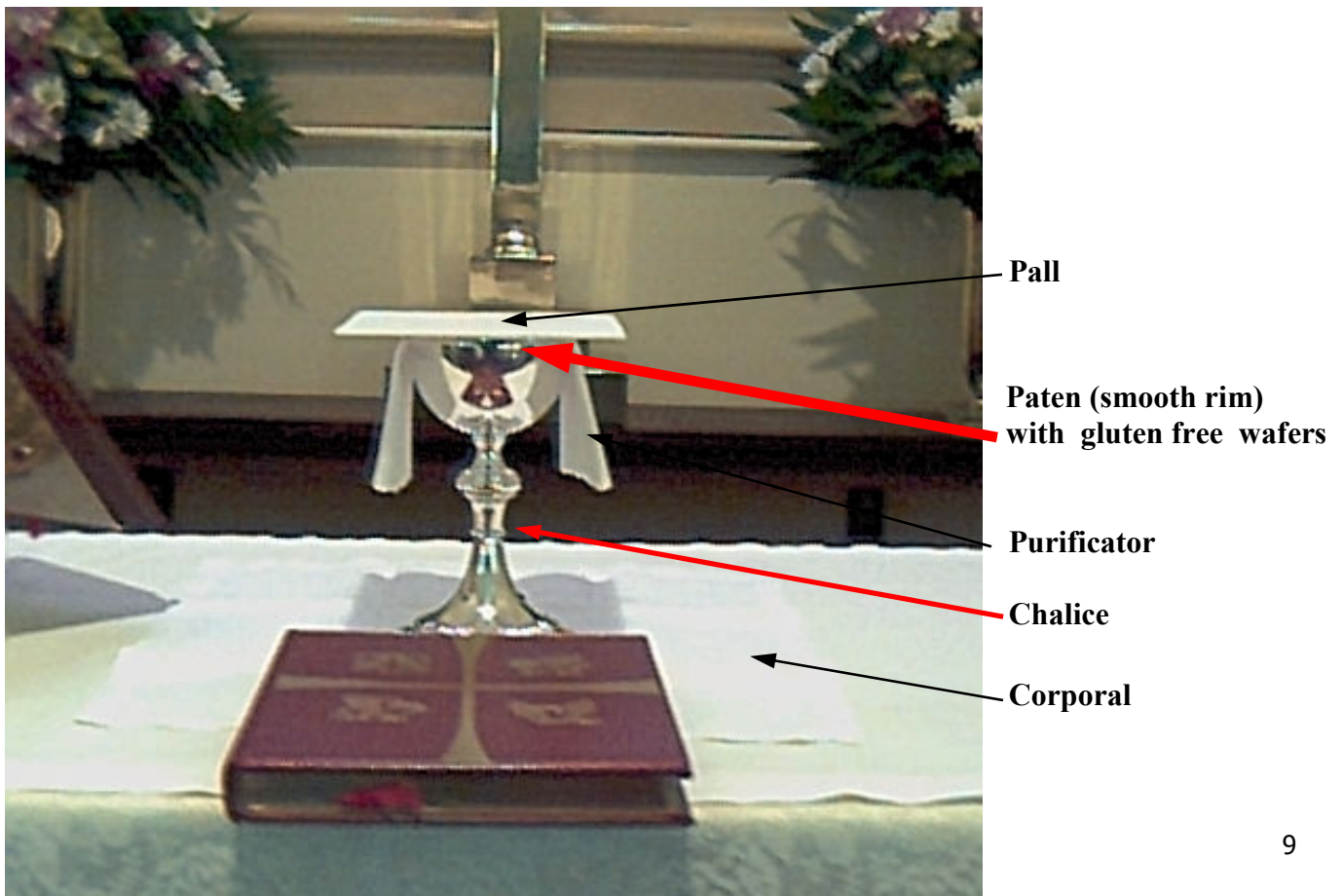
**Setup for  
11 a.m. Sunday  
Service of Holy Eucharist**



## Setup for 11 a.m. Service

1. Make necessary arrangements for flowers. Be sure that the flower arrangement is not taller than the large brass cross.
2. Use communion bread. Loaves are in the freezer in the parish house.
3. Check liturgical calendar for color of hangings. Change hangings as necessary. (Festival services listed in the "Notes for various seasons of the Church Year on page 13.)
4. Refill torch candles with liquid wax *weekly*. For instructions, see pages 4 or 20. *Do not adjust wicks.*
5. Place wax altar candles on altar and torch bearer candles in their holders.
6. With the fair linen already on the altar, place on the altar (refer to picture below):
  - a) *corporal* with cross going towards the brass cross and flowers in the retable
  - b) *silver chalice*
  - c) *purificator*
  - d) *silver paten* with three or four wheat-free (gluten-free) wafers
  - e) *linen pall*
  - f) *veil*
  - g) *burse* with an extra purificator inside
  - g) *altar book and stand* to Priest's right
  - h) *Gospel Book* in the front of the altar in the center.

### The stack before the veil and burse are put on



7. Place flowers in the brass vases on the retable (long shelf behind the altar).
8. Place two small offering plates on the window shelf in the back of the church.
9. Place a cruet of water on the credence table. Leave the silver wafer box out on a table in the Altar Guild room. Please make sure there are at least four wheat-free (gluten-free) wafers in it.
10. Set the small spoon and a purificator on the crystal plate and place on retable by the credence table.
11. On the oblation table (next to the back pew) place the flagon of wine (amount of wine depends on the number of expected participants), and the bread plate with bread wrapped in linen napkin (amount of bread depends on the number of expected participants).
12. Put a glass of fresh water on the shelf of the pulpit.
13. Just before the service make sure the spotlights behind the stained glass windows and doors, and the altar lights are on.
14. Write your service entries in the Altar Guild book (top right drawer of sink cabinet in the Altar Guild room).
15. When using the three-tiered and Paschal Candles, check the candlewicks in the brass toppers for ease of lighting by the acolyte.
16. At the end of the service wash all items and put away.
17. If there is a purificator draped over the flagon, it contains consecrated wine, which is either consumed or poured on the ground. No purificator on the flagon indicates that the wine is to be poured back into the bottle.
18. Refill the torch candle sticks (instructions in back.)
19. Place soiled purificators, napkins and corporals in the box provided in the Altar Guild room and someone will wash them. **Do not moisten them.** If you prefer, you may take them home and wash them yourself. Please do not wash church linens with other laundry, and be sure to return them promptly. If you have questions about caring for any of the church linens, please check with the Altar Guild Chairman.



**Oblation table for the 11 a.m. service. Place a small offering plate on this table along with the flagon and bread for the 9 a.m. service.**

# **Setup for Morning Prayer (Daily Office)**

## Setup for Morning Prayer

1. Remove the dust cover from the altar. Nothing is placed on the altar.
2. Place one three-tiered candlestick on each side of the cross on the retable.
3. Place flowers in the brass vases to the outside of the retable.
4. Nothing is on the credence shelf. No candles on the altar.



Standard setup for Morning Prayer at 11 a.m. Note that the offering plates are now placed on the window sill in the back of the church.

## **Notes for Various Seasons of the Church Year**

### **FESTIVAL SERVICES**

1. Festival services include all baptisms and weddings, Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, All Saints' Sunday, and the Bishop's Visit.
2. The Paschal Candle is only used at baptisms, funerals, and during the season of Easter.
3. Use **BOTH** sets of candlesticks: the two altar candles and the two three-tiered candlesticks on the retable.
4. Additional bread and wine may be needed. Check with the Altar Guild Chairman or the Rector for a "guesstimate" on the number.
5. If you change the hangings for a special service, be sure to check the calendar and then change them back to the color required for the next service date.

### **SUNDAYS in ADVENT**

During Advent an Advent Wreath is displayed in the front of the church. The Advent Wreath remains in place during the Christmas Eve services through the first Sunday of Christmas. The entire congregation is invited to participate in the "Greening of the Church" a few days before Christmas Eve. The church is decorated with greens, berries, flowers etc. for a festive Christmas Eve Service.

### **SEASON OF LENT**

Additional services during Lent include Ash Wednesday, with the imposition of ashes; Evening Service on Wednesdays at 7 p.m.; and Maundy Thursday, which typically includes the washing of feet. All of these services include the Holy Eucharist. Other special services also include Palm Sunday, which is the Sunday before Easter when palms are used in the service; Good Friday, which may include the Stations of the Cross; and the Easter Vigil on the Saturday before Easter. Check with the Altar Guild Chairman or the Rector for supplies and setup directions for these services.

The key words for Lent are simplicity and austerity. Wood and pottery replace brass and silver. Follow these guidelines:

1. Do not use hangings during Lent. Use only the fair linen to cover the altar. Use the wooden cross on the retable behind the altar.
2. Use the wooden candlesticks with tapers and brass followers on the altar.
3. Use the wooden processional cross, and the regular processional torches.
4. Use the pottery items at both Sunday services during Lent.
5. Use the wooden bookstand for the altar book.
6. Use two baskets in place of the silver offering plates.
7. Greens may be used, but not flowers. Check with the rector if you have questions.

### **SUNDAYS IN EASTER**

The paschal candle is used from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost. Place it on the top

# **Setup for Special Services**

## Setup for Celebration of Holy Baptism

Holy Baptism is set up as a festival service and it includes the Holy Eucharist.

Use **BOTH** sets of candlesticks: two altar candles and two three-tiered candlesticks on the retable.

Additional bread and wine may be needed. Check with the Altar Guild Chairman or the Rector for a "guesstimate" on the number.

**The Liturgical Color for baptism is usually white but seasonal colors from the liturgical calendar take precedence so please check the calendar for the right color of hangings.**

Place on the baptismal table (positioned to the left of the font) the following:

1. The baptismal table linen.
2. The pitcher filled 2/3 full with **warm** water
3. Baptismal towel (one for each candidate)
4. A baptismal candle for each candidate.
5. The baptismal shell.
6. Bud vase with a long stemmed rose for each candidate.
7. Oil for Chrism (small bottle marked *Chrism*)



Remove the cover from the font and place it on the windowsill. The paschal candle is placed at floor level behind the baptismal table closer to the altar. Remember the brass topper on the paschal candle. SEE PICTURE. The baptismal candles are lit from the paschal candle *during* the service.

When the service is over wash and put all things away. Be sure to take all water out of the font, dry it well and replace the cover.



## **Setup for Funerals (Burial Office)**

The Rector or office contacts the Altar Guild Chairman. When you are contacted, check with the Rector on these questions.

1. Are there any special requests?
2. Will there be communion?
3. If there is to be communion, get an estimate of the number of expected participants.
4. Will the body be cremated or will there be a casket.
5. Are there to be reserved seats? We have two signs. Right hand drawer of cabinet.
6. Who is the funeral director?
7. Does the family need information about purchasing or arranging the flowers for the altar?
8. What does the family want done with flowers after the funeral?
9. Who will be lighting the candles at the service? Rector? Acolyte?

### **HANGINGS**

Use white hangings (altar, pulpit and lectern). The funeral pall should be placed on the back pew and placed upon the casket when it enters the vestibule. If there are flowers or a flag upon the casket, they must be removed and left in the vestibule. After the service as the casket exits, remove the pall in the vestibule and replace the flowers or flag before the casket is taken to the cemetery. An Altar Guild member should sit in the back pew to take care of these duties.

### **ALTAR**

If communion is given then refer to the set up for 11 a.m. service. Ask the priest where to place the bread and wine. It is usually brought up from the oblation table at the rear of the church. If there is no communion then just take the dust cover off the altar and nothing is placed on the altar. There is no need for offering plates.

### **RETABLE**

Use the two three tiered candlesticks one on each side of the cross. Place flowers in the brass vases, one on each side of retable to the outside.

### **PASCHAL CANDLE**

The paschal candle is placed in the center of the aisle at the bottom of the steps. Remember the brass topper.

### **CREMATION**

If the body has been cremated put the baptismal table in the middle of the aisle at the bottom of steps in front of the paschal candle. The linen should be placed on the table. The funeral director or the family will place the urn or box upon the table. The cover for the urn or box is in the linen storage cabinet in a box marked funeral pall.

### **FLOWERS**

No other flowers are allowed in the sanctuary other than the two arrangements on the retable. Two small arrangements may be placed in the windows of the vestibule.

### **GUEST BOOK**

If a guest book is used, it should be placed on the wooden podium in the vestibule of the church.



## Setup for Weddings

A member of the Altar Guild will serve as director during the rehearsal and the wedding. They will attend the rehearsal, arrive at the church one hour before the wedding, direct the wedding procession, coordinating timing with the organist, and assist the Rector and the couple as needed.

1. White hangings are used for this service.
2. The set of three-tiered candlesticks is used on the retable along with the two brass vases for flowers. (Do NOT set out the paschal candle unless instructed to do so by the Rector).
3. If communion is to be included in the service the altar will be set just as it is for the 11:00 service. Refer to those directions. Ask the priest where to place the wine and bread. It is usually brought up from the oblation table at the rear of the church. If there is no communion then just take the dust cover off the altar and nothing is placed on the altar. There is no need for offering plates.
4. Determine the number of pews that need to be reserved for wedding party. Place the "reserved signs" on the appropriate number of pews.
5. FOR OTHER DETAILS REFER TO THE GUIDELINES FOR A WEDDING BOOKLET THAT IS INCLUDED WITH THIS NOTEBOOK OR AVAILABLE FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE.



**Example of setup for a wedding with the Holy Eucharist. Note the altar book holder should be on the priest's right. Place a cruet of water on the credence shelf and place the crystal plate with spoon and purificator on the retable near the credence shelf (not shown). White hangings are used.**

## **Setup in the Parish Hall (in the event that the church cannot be used)**

Keep things simple. No matter what you do, the parish hall will not look like the church, so don't worry about trying. Instead, keep things simple and dignified.

Use the white altar that is in the parish hall. Place it at the far end of the parish hall, about four feet from the wall, facing the room.

Place the torch stands and torches on either side of the altar to serve as candles.

A fair linen is not necessary, since ours do not fit this altar. Instead, simply use a corporal.

Set up the chalice and paten on the altar as usual. Place a glass of water on the shelf of the altar.

The end tables from the library may be brought out and placed behind the altar, on either side, to serve as credence tables. The cruet of water should be placed on one of these.

Place the offering plates (baskets from the kitchen may be used), flagon with wine and bread plate on a table at the rear of the room.

Small flower arrangements may be placed on the altar or on the credence tables, or one large one may be put on the floor in front of the altar.

Check with the church office to confirm that ushers will be setting up chairs in the parish hall for the congregation, the choir, as well as positioning the piano.

Four folding chairs should be set up along the wall behind the altar. Looking from behind the altar, one chair to the right of the altar for the celebrant, and three chairs to the left for the Crucifer and the torch bearers.

The piano should be placed up front on the left side as you face the altar.

Since this is a rare occurrence, we have not developed a definitive way to do it. Use your own judgment and creativity for things that are not included in this list. If you do it with conviction, as if you were certain yourself, everyone will believe it! The purpose is to worship.

# **Descriptions and Care of Altar Linens and Metalware**

## Linens and Other Items Used in the Church

1. **The Fair Linen** is the exact size of the altar on top and hangs down at least 18" at the sides. The fair linen is always rolled, and not folded for storage. It is embroidered with five crosses—one in the center and one at each corner of the altar—to signify the five wounds of Christ.
2. **The Dust Cover** is the same size as the fair linen, but it is made of rougher cloth. It is used to cover and protect the fair linen between services. It also is rolled.
3. **The Credence Cover** is like a miniature fair linen made to fit the credence shelf. It is embroidered with a cross in the center front just above the hem. Credence covers are rolled.
4. **The Corporal** is the most sacred of all linens since it holds any consecrated Host, which may fall. It is about 18" to 20" square with 1/2" hem. A small cross is embroidered above the hem. This is the only linen folded wrong side out. Up from the front of altar, down from back, left over 1/3, right over 1/3. This keeps all crumbs inside until they are shaken out onto the ground.
5. **The Pall** is a stiffened linen 6" to 8" square (Plexiglas foundation) with embroidery in the center. This is washed by hand, well rinsed and placed on edge to dry. Put a piece of linen under it. No ironing is necessary.
6. **The Purificator** is often a small square linen with a small cross embroidered in the center with very fine hems. They are used to wipe the chalice during communion. They are folded in thirds, then in thirds again so that the cross is on top.
7. **The Veil**, sometimes referred to as the "chalice veil," is a square cloth that covers the chalice and paten on the altar when they are not in use. The veil is made of material that matches the liturgical color of the service, and is folded when stored.
8. **The Burse** is a clothbound envelope of two square pieces of stiff material in a liturgical color. It is used to hold the corporal placed on the altar at the time of setting the table for the eucharist. The burse will hold at least one extra purificator.
9. **Baptismal Towels** are made like small linen hand towels. They are folded in thirds and then in half. They are used for drying after baptism.
10. **Linen Napkins** are used to cover the bread on the silver bread plate. Corporals and purificators should not be used for these purposes.
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12. **The Gospel Book** is the smaller, red book which contains the Gospel readings for the worship service. It is placed on the altar, at the base of stack, on the congregation's side. Be sure not to confuse it with the altar book.
13. **Refillable altar and torch candles** DO NOT CUT OR ADJUST THE WICKS. Unscrew the brass top w/ wick attached. Fill the cylinder and replace the brass top. Liquid wax is in the cabinet with the candles.

## **Folding Linens**

1. Always make sure you know what pieces you have and how they are folded before you begin the fold. No folds are ever ironed in. You should press gently with hands.
2. The fair linen is never folded. When soiled, roll it on a proper roller, cover with the fair linen cover and take home to launder. Return in same way after laundering.
3. The credence cover is also rolled. Treat just as the fair linen and cover with tissue paper.
4. The corporal is folded as follows: Lay flat on board with the right side up with the cross at the bottom. Fold this 1/3 up from the bottom (the underside of the embroidery will now be on top). Fold 1/3 down from the top covering the embroidery, and then fold 1/3 in from right. The right side of the center 1/3 which the chalice occupies is now on the bottom inside of the folded piece. This is very important in order to be sure that no consecrated crumbs fall on the floor. The corporal is folded that same way to remove from the altar, shake gently outside any crumbs in the corporal. Refold exactly the same way to be returned to the drawer. Reverse the procedure to unfold on the altar.
5. Purificators are laid out flat, right side down, folded up 1/3, down 1/3, over 1/3 from left and then over 1/3 from left. The Cross is on top.
6. Linen napkins for covering bread can be folded in fourths.

## **Caring for Brass and Silver Altar Items**

At the end of your month of service please polish the following items so the new team can start their month of service with bright shiny items. Polishes for silver and brass are found under the sink in the sacristy. There are a few rags for use but you might also bring some from home. Please notify Altar Guild Chairman if supplies are getting low and need replenishing. Careful washing and wiping off excess fingerprints and candle wax each week makes the end of the month polishing job much easier. Note the list that follows.

1. Silver offering plates
2. Silver bread plate
3. Silver paten
4. Silver flagon
5. Silver chalice
6. Silver wafer box as needed
7. Brass altar candlesticks
8. Brass bookstand
9. Brass flower vases
10. Brass processional torches
11. Brass candle lighter/snuffer (found in choir room)
12. Baptismal font cover as needed
13. Large altar cross (on re-table) as needed
14. Brass three tiered candlesticks if needed for service.
15. Silver oil stock (used last Sunday of month for healing service at 9:00 service) Polish after use, put in bag and it should be okay, but check.