



# USHER MANUAL

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## Introduction

**T**hank you for agreeing to serve as a member of All Saints' usher ministry. It is one of the most vital aspects of our worship service as you literally serve as the face of our beloved church.

## General Information

Usher duty is a very personal responsibility. If you cannot be present, you must arrange for a substitute to take your place. Then inform the usher-in-charge of your usher group and the church office by the Wednesday prior to the service so that the correct name will appear in the bulletin. Please do not ask the office to find a substitute. It is important that a full complement of ushers be on hand to ensure the service moves smoothly.

## Overview

A few overall guidelines:

- Arrive at church early: about 25 minutes before the start of service.
- Four ushers are required at each service.
- Attire: suit or blazer and tie for men; pants suit or dress for women. Dark colors are best.
- Red usher name badges are to be worn at all times (on the right lapel); they can be found on the magnetic board on the patio. You may take your badge home or return it to the board.
- All ushers should acquaint themselves with the locations of the childcare rooms and Sunday School classrooms. A chart showing locations is in the usher cabinet.

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- Please remember that one of the most important functions of the ushers is to extend a courteous and friendly greeting to all worshipers.
- Please keep voice levels to a minimum.
- Provided assistance and information as needed. Encourage visitors to sign the Welcome Book located on the patio at the Welcome Table before or after service. Invite a visitor or newcomer for coffee on the patio after service and seek them out to say hello and offer assistance.
- Any items in need of repair or attention by the Sexton should be noted in writing and put in the green plastic envelope in the box at the Welcome Table.
- We have a continuing tradition, begun in loving memory of our colleague Roger Green, of wearing carnations at all services. These will be on top of the font at the rear of the church or should be retrieved from the flower room by one of the ushers prior to the start of the service.

## Before Service

The usher-in-charge will perform the following tasks:

- Confirms that the orange cones have been placed at each *end* of the cross-walk in front of the church.
- Reviews the service bulletin for any special arrangements for the service.
- Checks in with the clergy for any special duties.
- Rings the bell (or asks another usher to do so) 5-6 times as the processional hymn begins. Secure the rope afterward.

All ushers perform the following tasks:

- Greet those entering church and hand out bulletins.
- *Identify* those who may need communion brought to them in the pew.
- Do not open any windows and doors due to the air conditioning system.
- After processional hymn, seat latecomers. Avoid seating anyone during prayers, lessons, collects, reading of the gospel or solos.

## Attendance Count

- During or before the processional hymn, a center aisle usher will count members of the choir, clergy, lay Eucharistic ministers, acolytes, the sexton and the organist, and report the number to the usher-in-charge.
- Before the sermon, side aisle ushers will count congregation on their respective sides, and report to the usher-in-charge: waiting allows for late-comers. Please do not count earlier than the Epistle.
- These numbers will be recorded by the usher-in-charge on the attendance form found in the ushers' cabinet.

- Before the peace, an usher will go to the Parish Hall and Parish House and count all people in the nursery and Sunday School. These figures will be given to the usher-in-charge.
- This number plus the previous sanctuary and choir count is recorded on the Attendance Form. The correct number is needed for attendance, communion wafer count, and our report to the diocese and national church. It should include ushers, children, choir, and clergy. Everyone on the campus (see attached map) should be reflected. *Double check all figures for accuracy!*
- The completed form should be given to the right-side center aisle usher for delivery to the acolyte when the offertory baskets are brought to the altar.

## Collecting the Offertory

- At the beginning of the offertory, an acolyte will come forward with the offertory baskets on a tray or presentation basin. This is the signal for the two (2) center aisle ushers to walk up the center aisle and up the chancel steps to the altar rail.
- The usher on the left takes four (4) baskets first from the presentation basin, the usher on the right takes the remaining four (4) baskets and hands the attendance and communicant count form to the acolyte.
- When the center ushers come forward, so also should the side aisle ushers, who take positions at the front of their aisles to assist in collection. The lectern-side usher, using a small wicker basket found on a stand at the rear of the lectern-side aisle will collect from the chapel side and when finished, add it to the primary lectern side aisle usher's baskets.
- At the completion of the collection and any attendant music, an acolyte will again come forward with the empty presentation basin.
- This will signal the center aisle ushers to proceed again to the altar rail with the offertory baskets, stacking them, left usher first then right usher, on the basin.
- Bowing, the ushers then proceed to the right-side of the altar, pausing to allow the priest to bless the offering. Both ushers continue down the stairs to the Vesting Room for the count and return the offering basin to the preparation room. At least two unmarried and unrelated ushers should complete the count and at least one usher should remain in the sanctuary

## Counting & Securing the Collection

- Find a tan collection summary envelope and a pen - usually on the small table next to the nave door or on the floor next to the safe in the LEM Closet. Sit down at the coffee table to organize the collection.
- Separate the collection into separate baskets, one holding checks and pledge envelopes; and one each for the different denominations of bills.
- After totaling the number of bills of each denomination, note same on the envelope, place all bills and any coins into the envelope, sign, date and seal it.
- Insert the envelopes into the safe drawer; making sure that everything has fallen into the safe properly.
- Stack the baskets onto the table near the nave door and return to church via the outside patio (weather permitting - otherwise use the nave door.)
- NOTE: It is required by church canons that at least two people be with the collection at all times. Your diligence to monitor all cash/checks at all times is vital. If you have any concern about cash handling procedure, please contact the Senior Warden or Treasurer.

## Oblation Bearers

Oblation bearers are congregants chosen each Sunday to bring forward the elements - a small quantity of bread and wine - from the back of the church up to the altar just before communion. This bread and wine is added to that which is already at the altar, ready to be blessed and distributed. The elements at the back of the church represent the gifts that the people bring to be blessed.

The usher-in-charge selects two (2) bearers from the congregation at large. Please try to ask people who haven't been oblation bearers before or families.

Please proceed as follows:

- During the offertory, bearers should go to the rear of the church.
- The elements are on the sill in the baptistery window. One person carries the bread box, the other carries the wine, holding the wine cruet with its handle forward. If additional family members are present, they may walk with the oblation bearers.

- Do not begin walking until the ushers carrying the offertory baskets to the altar have reached the end of the center aisle.
- If you arrive at the chancel steps before the ushers have completed delivering the offertory baskets, wait there.
- Proceed to the altar when the clergy has unveiled the chalice and hand the oblations to the clergy, bread first, then the wine or place on the altar as directed by the clergy.
- Return to the pew.

## **Communion**

- After the LEMs have received the chalices, and while the choir is proceeding to the altar rail, center aisle ushers should move to the front of the nave, positioning themselves on either side of the aisle, even with the first row of pews. This will usually coincide with the congregation moving from the kneeling to the sitting position. As the center ushers move forward, the primary side ushers should follow on their respective sides.
- When the first choir member on either side rises from the altar rail, the two (2) side ushers should move up their respective side stairs to the altar rail to be in the first position to receive communion
- At the same time, center ushers should begin directing communicants, pew by pew, to the altar rail. Careful attention to keeping the flow of communicants constant will speed the service noticeably, especially by directing parishioners through empty aisles as required
- After receiving communion, side aisle ushers should position themselves on the bottom center (main aisle side) of the side stairs leading from the altar, facing outward and upward to assist communicants descending the stairs. Do not stand on the outside of the stairs as this blocks the path of the communicants, and makes it more difficult to react quickly if needed
- The lectern-side usher should guide the clergy-person and chalice bearer to non-ambulatory communicants in the pews
- Communicant flow should be balanced to keep the altar rail full and yet not create an excessively long line in the main aisle. Be aware of people who move slowly down the aisle and be ready to give assistance when needed
- Center aisle ushers should follow the final communicants to the altar rail



## **Return of the Children to 10 a.m. Service**

At some time during the 10:00 am service, usually coincident with the peace, the children will return from Sunday school. This is always an unscripted event of great joy and some confusion and should be handled with dignity and humor as best you can. In many ways it is the perfect test of the well-trained usher, and highlights the enjoyment of what we do.

## Post Service

**A**fter service, please take the following steps:

- During the post communion hymn, a center aisle usher will open the large front door. Side doors should be opened and secured by the side ushers
- Remove all used bulletins from bookracks and pews. Raise all kneeling benches
- Replace and properly arrange hymnals and prayer books in the book-racks. Check for any items that may have fallen to the floor
- Give any articles left by worshipers to the Welcome Table monitor
- After the church is empty, side ushers should close all doors
- After the last morning service, ushers should assist altar guild members on duty to carry heavy items to the altar guild Sacristy or Flower Room
- Pick up the orange crossing cones and return them to the rear of the nave

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## Emergency Procedures

**E**mergencies are few and far between. However, it falls to the ushers to ensure a proper response and to be aware of anything out of the ordinary. Preparation is the best way to prevent a serious situation:

Ushers should be aware of, and responsible for, the following:

- Gas shut-off valve in sidewalk in front of Parish House (wrench attached.)
- Fire extinguishers - side walls at street exits, Vesting Room and near organ.
- First Aid kit and emergency flashlights in ushers' cabinet.
- Stretcher, defibrillator and wheel chairs in Vesting Room.
- The location of all exit doors.
- Depending on type of emergency (e.g. earthquake or fire) direct congregation to take cover in pews, on floor, or to evacuate the church in a calm and orderly manner to the outside lawn or north parking lot.
- Telephone is in the Vesting Room, outside the Priests' Sacristy.
- In case of an emergency, call 911.