

Usher Guidelines

The ministry of the Ushers is vital to the worship of God and to the community of the parish. Remember genuine welcome and hospitality reflect Jesus' own actions.

Familiarity with your responsibilities and duties, along with the ease and confidence you project, are very important. Your manner of welcoming people, the joy, the caring, and the attention to detail that you show them, enables people to feel comfortable.

Your knowledge and attitude are especially vital when interacting with visitors unfamiliar with St. Matthews. In a real sense, you are the bearers of the Good News to all who come to worship.

General:

1. The dress code is business casual.
2. Please Arrive at least 20 minutes prior to the start of the service.
3. Usher name tags, ushering checklist, hearing assistance devices, and additional sign in sheets are available in the usher cabinet.
 - a. If you need a name tag, please inform the church office.
4. Each Usher Team should consist of at least 3 members with the ideal being 5 to a team.

Preparation:

1. Prepare for the service by ensuring:
 - a. All lights are on and front doors are barred open.
 - b. The audio system is on. If required, use the audio checklist in the audio desk.
 - c. The air conditioning or heating thermostats are set properly.
 - d. Narthex and fellowship and back hall TV's are on and slideshow is running.
 - e. Coffee is prepared so it will be ready by the end of service.

- f. The candles are lit. Check with the Presiding Pastor about lighting any seasonal candles.
- g. An attendance book is in each pew, including one in the choir and handbell pews.
- h. Bulletins are ready for distribution.

As Worshippers Arrive:

1. Greet all persons in a friendly manner, while giving each a bulletin. Ensure any visitors questions are answered and ask that they sign the guest register.
 - a. When possible, connect visitors directly with the Pastor or Director of Youth and Family Ministries
2. Whenever a service is crowded, you may need to help people find seats. Overflow seating may be set up in the narthex.
3. Late comers may enter during the prelude and after the confession.
4. Close all the sanctuary doors 3 to 5 minutes before the start of the service.

During the Service:

1. Take total attendance and enter the data in log book in usher cabinet.
2. Keep the area outside the sanctuary as quiet as possible during the worship service.
3. For security purposes during the service, lock back door and scan the parking lot occasionally. Within reason, investigate any suspicious activity or if necessary call 911.

Offering:

1. When the prayers and Sharing of the Peace are complete, move forward with the offering plates and receive money offerings. Begin with the front pews moving toward the rear.
2. After Collecting the offering, stand inside the center doors with the bread and wine, Offering plate, and food donation basket. As the offertory hymn begins, bring the offerings forward. The bread and wine are given to the Assisting Minister, and the offering plate is given to the acolyte. Food gifts are placed on the floor next to the altar flowers.

3. Before returning to the narthex, remove two trays of communion glasses from the box in front of the altar and place them on the top of the box.

Communion:

1. A minimum of 3 Ushers are required to support communion; one at the box for communion glasses, one in the center aisle, and one in the pulpit side aisle. Please note, during intinction Sundays the box is present.
2. Ushers will commune last and then put the remaining glass trays on the shelves in the communion glass box.

The Box:

- a. Fill the communion rail from the center working toward the sides.
- b. Individuals who request grape juice rather than wine do not need a cup. Politely ask someone who does not take a glass if they will be taking grape juice.

Pew Dismissal:

- a. When the Presiding Minister indicates, begin ushering worshippers forward to the communion rail. Start with the front pew in each section and work your way to the rear.
- b. Be on the lookout for visitors or individuals that may need help and assist them as needed.
- c. If there are worshippers who desire communion but are physically unable to walk to the communion rail, tell the Presiding Minister so that communion elements can be brought to them where they are seated.
- d. The music groups will commune after they have finished with their musical responsibilities. They do not generally require usher assistance.

Recessional – Going Forth:

1. One Usher should be ready at each door, opening them during the last stanza of the closing hymn.

After Service:

1. Clean Sanctuary and Narthex by removing bulletins and papers left the pews or in the hymnals and put them in the recycle box in the workroom, replacing hymnals in the

racks, returning attendance pads to their proper location and clearing the top of the table in the narthex.

2. Extinguish all candles.
3. Take offering to workroom and secure it appropriately or give to one of the counters.
4. Collect annotated attendance sheets and place them in the church Secretary's mail box. Ensure that each attendance book has at least one blank page and then place the book at the head of the pew.
5. If the altar flowers are not collected, remove them from the wooden vase and place them in the church office. The wooden vase should remain in Sanctuary.
6. Turn off all sanctuary lights and all sound equipment in accordance with the checklist in the audio desk.

Thank you for your willingness to serve our community of faith as an Usher.