

St. Timothy's Guidelines for Ushers

Revised August 2019

Mission:

Ushering is a ministry. Ushers do more than hand out bulletins, take the collection and manage communion. Ushers are a vital part of the worship experience of all (newcomers and life-long St. Timothy's parishioners alike). The ushers are among the first church members to welcome worshippers as they enter the church and they are the first people to help if something unusual happens.

Ushers are also among the first people called upon to help if worshippers have questions or if problems arise during the service (such as when someone needs direction to a rest room or when a medical emergency arises). It's our job to be pleasant, patient and helpful at all times. We are the face of Christ for those walking through the doors of St. Timothy's.

Age:

7th graders to adults, man or women, are welcome to serve in this ministry. If Junior High and High School age, the youth must serve with an adult.

Definitions:

Sanctuary and Nave often get confused. No big deal, just remember:

- a. Narthex = lobby, inside the double doors and before the second set of double doors in entering the worship space.
- b. Nave = pew seating
- c. Sanctuary = area around the altar (red carpet) and tabernacle (little nice inside the back wall holding consecrated bread, wine, and oil. *If you call the Nave the Sanctuary, that is fine because 99% can't tell the difference.*

Before the Service:

Ushers should be in the Narthex fifteen minutes before the start of the service ready to hand bulletins to people coming for worship.

Name tag. If possible, please wear a name tag. If you don't have one, there is a name tag sign-up sheet on the name tag dolly in front of church.

Bulletins:

Bulletins are normally in the rectangular plastic baskets in the Narthex. As you enter the church open the door to your left to retrieve bulletins appropriate to the service you are ministering in. If for some reason they are not there, don't panic. Sometimes things move around, maybe check the Altar Guild sacristy or ask a clergy (sometimes during funerals and weddings bulletins

get moved around). Make sure the orders of service are in the narthex in advance of the service.

Please hand out bulletins to each person as they enter and welcome them.

Helping to seat people:

Always be willing to walk with person to find their seat. This is critical not only in crowded and seasonal services like Christmas and Easter, but also regular Sunday as people love to block the middle of long pews, making effective seating difficult. A parishioner is unlikely to step over someone to get middle seat by themselves, but you can be the person to ask for room to be made.

As church pews fill up, take note of open spots and direct new visitors to these open areas.

Latecomers

Latecomers to the service can come in at specific points. They can come in throughout the opening song and collect of the day. But let them come in only at the end of each reading. I.e. after the Old Testament reading, or the psalm, or the New Testament. If they come in as late as after the sermon --then it's sort of a free for all on them. One exception to this would be if late person has a disability or you feel needs assistance to pews and it a long reading. You don't have to monitor flow after the gospel, but welcome people with hospitality no matter when they come in. But please still be aware in case a disturbance or medical issue arises.

As the usher, please remain in the narthex until the sermon to greet latecomers.

Then, you may be seated with your family, preferably in the back half of the church.

(You never thought you would be encouraged to sit in the back, did you?)

The Sermon and the Head Count:

A head count needs to be taken during the sermon for the purpose of recording in the Worship Book the number of people attending the service. Any children in Sunday School, Nursery or Children's liturgy are part of the head count. Use the form found in the closet where the bulletins are, there is a plastic wall mounted holder for the head count papers. Pro tip: use a pencil, there will be people coming late.

The "flow" of passing the collection plates:

When there are two ushers - Proceed down main aisle from front to back. Hand the plate to the person on the inside aisle. They will pass it down and the plate will come back from the aisle behind them. This "u shaped" process continues from front to back. The right hand usher will also pass the plate to the rows on the side of the Altar. Don't pass to choir.

The Offertory

At the start of the "offertory anthem" the ushers will retrieve the offering plates and begin passing them. At the end, return to the double doors at the back waiting for the priest to give you the go ahead, or you are sure that the offertory anthem is being played.

Procession following the collection:

After the offerings have been collected, the Ushers stand at the back of the middle aisle waiting for their cue. The music starts and the clergy gesturing for people to rise is the cue to begin moving toward the Altar via the main aisle. This happens at the presentation hymn at 10am and from clergy gesture at 8:30am. If you jump the gun, no big deal, just know the priest's gesture for people rise and/or change of music is your clue

Children's Liturgy and Sunday School

The children's liturgy is pretty self-sufficient; however, if you can go an extra step --text the Children's liturgy leader, nursery work and/or Sunday School leader that we are at "prayers of the people". They will be on the ROTA for that particular Sunday.

Distribution of Communion:

The ushers advance up the middle aisle to the first pew after the clergy say "Gifts of God for the People of God". They stand there with choir coming in behind them. Once the choir has moved back to their spot, continue pew by pew. The usher procedure continues as usual from here - with the congregation lining up in the center aisle, receiving and returning to their seat.

Try to allocate people evenly between the 2 communion lines so they finish at the same time. You will be the last in line to receive. Please tell clergy discreetly the people who need to receive communion in their spot.

Bonus- tell the clergy their name because you found out already. The Ushers will manage the side aisle in the same way.

After the service is over

Ushers will stand by in the narthex to collect bulletins from the worshippers as they depart. You can use one of the empty plastic bins to collect bulletins.

After people clear out

Ushers will tidy the pews – replace hymnals and prayer books, collect discarded orders of service. Bonus - take a look of newcomer, stewardship and prayer cards in the pew rack they are often missing a card. Go to the closet holding bulletins and look up high on shelf to your left and grab the replacement cards. The missing cards are very easy to spot as they have stacked color yellow, green and blue along the top of the pew rack.

If you see debris on carpet in narthex or sanctuary carpet, grab one of the non electric sweepers in closet in Altar Guild area and do a quick sweep up.

Schedule

If, as an usher, you are unavailable please obtain a substitute yourself and please don't ask the usher captain to find a substitute for you unless absolutely necessary. Find the sub, and tell the office. Earlier notification is better as server schedule notification typically goes out on Wednesday or Thursday. Last minute subs happen but they do create confusion.

First responders

Ushers serve as First Responders in the event of an emergency. A first aid kit is in the “usher’s desk” in the narthex. If possible, Ushers should get CPR certification.