

Guidelines for Ushers

For those who have not been ushers before, ushering can be an opportunity to greet and meet people as they enter the church, maybe for the first time. Think of yourself as a "host" for the day. Your main function is to help people to be more comfortable during the church service.

Before the Service:

- Plan to arrive about twenty minutes before the service.
- Please wear your name tag. Also dress appropriately. There is no "dress code" for ushers, but remember that you are an ambassador of the North Parish to visitors.
- Make sure the Orders of Service (OOS) are stacked on the tables in back of the Sanctuary. If they are not there, check across the street in the secretary's area of OCH.
- Make sure the collection plates and flowers are up front on the chalice lighting table. If the flowers are missing, they also may be across the street at OCH or downstairs in the parish hall.
- Take a quick walk down the aisles to make sure everything is in order i.e. the hymnals are put back in the racks, the foot rests are straightened, trash is removed, old OOS are discarded or current ones are returned to the back of the sanctuary for distribution, etc.
- Lastly, open the sanctuary doors and position yourselves on either side of the doors on the foyer side with Orders of Service in your hands to distribute as people arrive.

As People Arrive:

- Greet people with a smile and a "good morning" while handing out the Order of Service.
- If newcomers arrive with young children, welcome them! Ask if they are interested in the nursery or R.E. classes. If yes, then one usher might want to escort them downstairs. Also invite them to sign the guest registry.
- If there is limited seating, offer to find seats for late arrivals by leading them to the available seats.
- Keep the back doors to the sanctuary open until the end of the first hymn and then shut them. Remain outside the doors in the foyer to assist late arrivals by handing them an OOS and to quietly open the sanctuary doors to admit them.

**** Please note:** No food or drink is allowed in the sanctuary other than water. Politely ask anyone with food or drink to finish their food or drink in the foyer before entering.

During The Service:

- **LIGHT THE CHALICE.** Lighting the chalice will be listed in the Order of Service. The minister will also give a verbal cue such as, "I now invite our ushers forward to light our chalice." Ushers then walk forward to the altar. Usually, one usher lights the chalice (using the brass lighter that rests on the altar and taking the flame from one of the already lighted candles on the altar) and the other usher *invites the congregation to join them in saying the chalice lighting words*. Make sure to pause before launching into the chalice lighting words to allow people to find them.
- **TAKE ATTENDENCE.** Taking attendance is very important. Head count should include not only the people seated in the benches but anyone on the altar (ministers, guests), and anyone performing as a singer or musician. Don't forget to count yourselves! Babies are included and don't worry if you count someone twice. The counts should be written in the small, black-covered, spiral notebook on the table just inside the sanctuary doors.
- **OFFERTORY.** At offertory time (also in the order of service), walk forward on cue from the minister to get the collection plates from the chalice table. Then pass the plates on all four sides of the aisles starting with the center aisle and then the side aisles. Always start from the front and walk towards the back of the church. Never approach someone from behind. Don't forget to collect from people who might be standing. When the collection is complete, walk forward together up the center aisle to return the full collection plates to the chalice table and then walk back down the aisle and take your seats.
- **RECORD THE JOYS AND SORROWS.** Please write the Joys and Sorrows down in the Caring Team Book, which is kept in the usher basket on the table outside the sanctuary doors.

After The Service:

- **REOPEN** the doors when the minister concludes the Benediction and the musical Postlude begins. As the congregation files out, please hold the recycling baskets to encourage people to drop in Orders of Service they don't wish to take with them.
- Take a **QUICK WALK** down the aisles before and after the service to collect any stray items left on the benches or folding chairs and to collect any left behind Order of Service.

If all this is REDUNDANT because you've done it/heard it before, thanks for your patience in reading through. Thanks again for your help. Enjoy making this important contribution to the Sunday services.

Rev. Sept. 2007