

History of Ushering

In the Old Testament ushers were called "gatekeepers." Their ministry was so important that they were given living quarters at the Temple. According to I Chronicles 9, their duties included the opening of the temple every morning, the care and protection of all the precious vessels, the preparation of certain food items used in ritual sacrifices, and guarding the temple. By the time of Christ, these gatekeepers had become known as the "Temple Guard." They were ordered to arrest Jesus, but according to John 7 they instead became interested in Jesus message. However according to John 18, the temple guards were part of the contingent that arrested Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Early in Christian history, the ushers became "porters" (overseers of the doors). When the church faced persecution, the ushers guarded the doors and took note of those who came and went, always guarding against spies. Later, when Christians could worship in the open, they also rang the bells. Today, ushers are involved with hospitality, worship, and evangelism.

Ushers, Ministers of Hospitality

Ushers are usually the first official representative of the church that people meet when they arrive. The ushers dress, attitude, words, demeanor, body language all speak a message to this worshipper. As God's servants to his people, ushers take care that nothing interferes with the awesome character of this encounter between God and his people at this time and place.

Ushers, Liturgical Ministers

Ushers are leaders. As such they reflect the devotion and reverence and joy of encountering God in our worship service. Ushers should not physically or emotionally absent themselves from worship. The Narthex is a "decompression chamber," a place where they rid themselves of the noise and busyness of the world and prepare to worship God in the sanctuary. Thus, an usher will take care in creating a quiet narthex. Furthermore, ushers, leading by example, should dress appropriately.

Ushers, Ministers of Evangelism

Ushers are "Exhibit A" for visitors. Some visitors are wary coming to a church and it takes very little to make their return their last return. If they feel authentically welcomed and helped by the usher, God has one less stumbling block to hurdle in bringing the Gospel to these people.

Listed below are guidelines for the Ushers to follow during Church Services. If you have an idea to improve our Usher duties don't hesitate to pass idea to the Church Office.

Duties

Before Worship starts:

Arrive to the church at **least 20 minutes** before the service is to begin.

1. **Put on the usher badge.**
2. Check for neatness in the worship area.
3. Check the bulletin to see if there are special events, special worship folders needed, or a door offering.
4. If there is a baptism, reserve the two front lectern pews with the red cord. Make sure the bulletins are out, the guest book is open, the pew cards are in place, and registration pad is fresh.

As the worshipers arrive:

1. Greet the people in a friendly manner. Don't be afraid of introducing yourself to strange faces, even though they might be lifelong members! By such a free and humble friendliness, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.
2. Hand the bulletin to them and ask if they would like to be seated. If they would like to be seated, seat them as forward as possible and comfortable for them. Especially, seat the families with children forward; let them see the action up front.
3. If the seats fill up, say a prayer of thanks to God! Then, get some folding chairs and place them in the aisle. Do not send them down to the lobby.
4. If a worshipper arrives and asks if he/she can take communion, lead them to the sacristy if there is more than five minutes left before the service begins. But if there is no time, direct them to the welcoming paragraph of the worship bulletin. They do not have to be Lutheran, but they should believe those basic points outlined in the paragraph.

Late Arrivals:

1. Greet them, hand them a bulletin, show them where the congregation is at the present moment in the order of service.
2. Inform them that they will be able to enter at an appropriate time. The appropriate times are the announcements, the Opening Hymn, and the Hymn of Praise.
3. Ask if they would like to be seated. They may be seated in the rear if you feel they would be uncomfortable going to the front.

During the Worship:

1. The usher is the messenger between the pastor and the organist.
2. The ushers are given permission to regulate the temperature by setting up fans, opening windows, turning up the heat.
3. I cannot over emphasize the need for the Ushers to be alert and respond quickly to all emergencies. Know where the telephone is located in case Rescue Squad, Fire Department or Police need to be called (911). Be aware of all fire extinguisher location. Be aware of people entering or leaving the Church during Service.

4. Feel free to reign in unsupervised children. They should not be wandering around the lobby.
5. Please join the Congregation during the Service. Sit in the back on the 4 chairs provided by the sound booth wall. Do not remain in the Narthex during Church Service.

Taking the Offering:

1. As the offering begins, each usher should take his/her spot in the aisle and walk up in line with the other ushers.
2. As the plate is passed back and forth, count the number of people in the pews to which you are passing the plate. The usher opposite you are counting the people in the pews to which he/she is passing the plate. After the plate has been passed, meet together in the narthex behind the closed doors and tally the numbers.
3. Two ushers holding all the plates will stand in the back waiting for the pastor to come to the center. As the pastor faces the congregation, come forward up to the kneeler and transfer the plates to the pastor. If there is communion, remain standing in the center aisle at the front pews. If there is no communion, exit down the center aisle.

Holy Communion:

The two center aisle ushers take positions at the center aisle immediately after they present the offering at the Altar. As the communion service begins, the side aisle ushers will admit the choir first. When the choir has communed, the side aisle ushers will join the center aisle ushers and beginning with the front pew, admit the worshippers to the communion rail in groups of 10-12. The center aisle ushers will assist with this, maintaining their positions at the front. Offer to help the elderly and the handicapped to and from the communion rail. After everyone else has communed, the ushers may commune.

After the Closing Hymn:

Two ushers dismiss people from the center aisle. Take time in ushering them out. They would rather sit than stand in line. Besides, the postlude is playing. The remaining two ushers should serve as "greeters" at the two side aisles. As the people dismiss themselves using those aisles, make sure they don't sneak away without a "good morning," or "God's peace." If there are door offering, the two remaining ushers will instead occupy space in the Narthex

After the Service:

1. During the last song of the Service open center aisle and outside doors.
2. If there are things to hand out, hand them out to people as they leave.
3. If there is a door offering, take two positions holding offering plates somewhere in the narthex.
4. Remain after Service to pick up bulletins left on pews and removal of old bulletins from pews.

5. General clean up of the Sanctuary.
6. Make sure the hymnals are in place.

Usher Chairperson Duties:

1. As new members come in to our church, ask them if they would like to serve as ushers.
2. Provide training.
3. Create and maintain the name tag inventory.
4. Create a quarterly schedule of ushers. Mail it to them and the church office. On the preceding Wednesday call them up and remind them. If they say they can't, tell them that they must find a substitute and call the church office before Thursday noon with the changes.
5. Arrive to church 15 minutes early before each service and see if there are enough ushers. If desired, train a "d

One Usher to remain near entrance during the Service insuring that those leaving seating do not disturb others on their return. If Pastor or Reader has started the Sermon or Reading and someone enters from outside the Sanctuary, then Usher is to ask this person to be seated in the second row from back or remain in hall until the Sermon or Reading is completed.

Do not let the children play in the Sanctuary area before or after the Church Service.

Thank you to all our Ushers