

PROCEDURES FOR USHERS

University Presbyterian Church

The role and responsibilities of ushers in worship are very important. Ushers have the responsibility of acting as hosts to members and guests at the worship services of the church. The initial impression people will have of what will happen during the worship hour is established by the ushers. Our style of ushering should reflect the fact that something significant and important is about to happen. Personal appearance is important, but the spiritual and social attitude of the ushers is what really counts. Ushers should always seek to be attuned to the needs of people and should constantly be aware of what is happening in the Sanctuary as worship begins and proceeds. Ushers incarnate the hospitality of this church. Our goal is to enable people to feel comfortable, accepted and befriended as they enter the Sanctuary for worship.

To this end, the following procedures are established in order to carry out the task of ushering:

A minimum of five ushers is usually preferred for a regular service of worship. The Team Captain will assign positions. Ushers are to notify the Team Captain (preferably on the previous Sunday) if they cannot serve on a given day. The absent usher is responsible for arranging for a substitute.

Two ushers should be present by 10:20 a.m. All other ushers should be present by 10:30.

Upon arrival, the Team Captain is responsible to see that the following tasks are performed:

1. All lights turned on. If lights are not on by 10:20, please check with the pastor.
2. Pick up the bulletins, Automated External Defibrillator (AED), one attendance form and one Offering summary sheet from the Church office and take to the Narthex.
3. Remove the cover from the piano and place the cover in the "control room" on the north side of the Chancel. The piano lid should be raised to its lowest position.
4. Light the candles (unless the Acolytes are participating). The candles should not be moved, either before or after the service. Matches or a gas lighter should be available in the cabinet in the Narthex. Please check to make sure each candle has enough fuel to last the entire service. One candle should be placed on the pulpit side and three on the lectern side. Should both sides not be available, the use of one or three candles on either side is acceptable.
5. One attendance register book is to be located at the center aisle end of each pew.
6. Verify that an adequate number of offering plates are available in the table in the Narthex.
7. For air conditioning conservation purposes, it is important to keep the outside doors and the Narthex doors closed as much as possible. The door from the sanctuary into the educational building hallway should also be kept closed except to admit worshippers.

Ushering Process:

One usher should be stationed at each of the three Narthex doors into the sanctuary (two in the middle). The usher at the door should warmly greet all that enter and give them the morning bulletin. Blue bags containing crayons, pictures to be colored, etc. are available for children under the age of 12 years. In the event the supply in the Narthex runs out, more may be available at the north hallway door and vice versa. Ushers should return them to the racks when cleaning up after worship.

One usher should be stationed at the north door to the Educational wing. The usher should warmly greet worshippers, open the door, and give them a worship bulletin as they enter. When the organist begins the prelude, the entrance door to the north hallway should be closed, which indicates the worship service has begun, and re-routes all latecomers to the Narthex. The usher should then return to the Narthex.

1. When the choir begins the introit, the ushers at the Narthex doors are to step in front of the closed doors and request of persons arriving late that they please wait to be seated during the first hymn. Thereafter, late arriving worshippers should only be seated at the times specifically marked in the program. **(During the Introit and Call to Worship, no one should be seated. No one should ever be seated or admitted to the Sanctuary during a prayer or reading of the Scripture).** It is important to note that when one usher allows worshippers in at the wrong time, it makes it more difficult for other ushers to properly control the late arrivals at their door.
2. The ushers are responsible for counting attendance. The best time for this seems to be during "The Time for the Younger Church." The count should be separated into staff members (including the pastors, choral director and organist), choir, children, congregation and ushers. List and total the attendance on the attendance sheet and turn it in to the office.
3. The offering should be received by four ushers – two in the center aisle, one in each side aisle, working in teams of two with each usher having two offering plates. Ordinarily, the center aisle ushers should start the plates on the first two occupied rows with the side aisle usher taking the third and fourth occupied rows. One or more ushers should also collect the offering in the balcony. Immediately after collection of the offering and during the singing of the Doxology, four ushers will bring the offering forward for the Prayer of Dedication and thereafter return to the Narthex. The exceptions are on the Sundays when Communion is served or on other occasions when there is no Prayer of Dedication. Ordinarily, two ushers then retreat to the library to count the offering.
4. In processing the offering, the checks and pledge envelopes are first separated from the currency. The currency, number of checks and number of envelopes are then counted and verified on the form supplied by the church office. The currency, checks, pledge envelopes and offering summary sheet go in the zippered bag. The bag is then taken to the church office and deposited in the safe.

5. When Communion is served, two ushers should be stationed on each side of the center aisle to indicate to worshippers when it is time for their pew to receive the elements in celebration of the Lord's Supper.
6. During the choral response following the benediction, ushers should open the doors from the Sanctuary into the Narthex. Both sections of the door leading to the courtyard should be opened. Only one panel of the door on the south side of the narthex needs to be opened.

Upon conclusion of worship:

1. Extinguish all lighted candles.
2. Pick up all bulletins and trash.
3. Replace all hymnals in the pew racks spine down.
4. Return Bibles to the center and ends of each pew (four per pew).
5. The used slips from the attendance registers are to be collected and delivered to the church office. Any attendance register pads that have been depleted should be replaced.
6. Any personal belongings left behind by worshippers should be taken to the church office and placed in the lost and found.
7. Gather the Communion cups from the pew holders (left by those worshippers that chose to not come forward) and throw them away. Ushers are asked to vacuum up the pieces of bread that fall on the carpet when Communion is served. The vacuum cleaner can be found in the store room behind the organ.
8. The water in the Baptismal Font should be removed to prevent corrosion to the copper basin. There is a pitcher, turkey baster and towel in the table in the Narthex for this purpose. The water should then be used to water a plant in the courtyard.
9. The pencils in the pews and in the Attendance Registers should be checked and broken ones should be sharpened or replaced at least monthly.
10. Return the children's bags to the racks.
11. Close the piano lid and replace the piano cover.
12. Close all doors.
13. Turn out the balcony stairwell lights and lights under the balcony.
14. Return the AED to the office and place in the filing cabinet drawer.