

ST. EDWARD CHURCH

USHER MINISTRY

The ministry of Usher is one of hospitality, offering a friendly welcoming presence to those coming to worship, providing assistance in securing seating for latecomers, providing assistance in emergencies, providing assistance in taking up the collection, directing traffic flow at Communion, providing assistance in the dissemination of the parish bulletin and participating in the clean-up of the church after the completion of Mass. As an usher you are there to serve not to judge but to be a source of assistance, calmness and competence.

Prior to start of Liturgy:

Arrive at the church 20 minutes prior to the start of liturgy.

Assure that:

- a. Bulletins are available to distribute after mass
- b. Collection baskets large and small are available by gift table
- c. Each Usher is assigned an area to “count” the number of people in the assembly. If the number exceeds the number of hosts set up by the sacristan and brought to the gift table along with the pitcher of wine for presentation of gifts in the narthex, the ushers are responsible for adding sufficient numbers of hosts to provide for potential receivers from the altar bread supply in Usher closet. **REMEMBER TO CLEANSE YOUR HANDS WITH ALCOHOL GEL BEFORE COUNTING OR HANDLING HOSTS.**
- d. Document the attendance count for each mass on forms provided and kept in the usher closet and put the completed form in with the collection basket taken up with presentation of gifts at the 11:00 mass
- e. Your Usher badge is in place
- f. Select one Usher at each Mass to talk to members of the arriving assembly and ask if they would do us the honor of presenting the gifts. The people asked should, throughout the year, be a representation of the members of the assembly in age, race, and gender. Care must be taken not to give the impression only people who enter through a certain door or old friends are asked to present the gifts. Since people tend to sit in the same areas of the church be sure to select people from all areas during the year. This is an exceptional ministry opportunity for Ushers to engage members of the assembly more actively in this liturgy. (A minimum of 3 persons are needed to carry the wine, water, and collection basket.) If selecting a family, all family members participate in the presentation. Politely explain what they would do and instruct them to come to the back of the church and go through the double doors to the area of the gift table from where ever they are seated in the assembly when the collection begins, so that they will be ready to come forward with the gifts at the appropriate time. Assist and instruct them in the process (order they process, who they hand the gift they carry to, and that they return to their seat when finished, etc.) when they come to the gift table in the church Narthax.
- g. If the last of the baptisms for the weekend is completed by the time you leave after your scheduled Mass, be sure to turn off the heater for the baptismal font. A liturgy sheet for the weekend will be in the Usher closet and it lists the scheduled baptisms for the weekend.
- h. When you leave, if the church is not being used for any other function, set the lights as directed by instruction sheet in the Usher closet using the preset keypad outside the confessional door.

During liturgy of the Mass

Once Mass begins, it is inappropriate to be carrying on a conversation unrelated to the action of the Mass. Your full participation in the Mass is expected so that you are joining in the singing, listening attentively to the Word of God, extending a Peace greeting and showing by your entire demeanor that you are fully engaged in the Mass at which you are present. It is understood that there will be times when it is necessary for you to interact with members of the Assembly arriving late. This interaction should be short and pleasant.

Once Mass has begun no one should walk down the center aisle to be seated beyond the back three pews that have been reserved for late comers. Liturgical guidelines indicate it is inappropriate to seat latecomers during the opening prayer, while the Word of God is being proclaimed, during the homily or the prayers of the Faithful. Please ask people to remain at the rear of the Church until an acceptable time to be seated occurs, e.g. during the Psalm response, or after the homily if they cannot be seated in the reserved back pews. Remember, always treat those who are late with reverence and respect, it is not your place to judge but to be of service.

The offerings of the assembly are collected by one usher for each section of the main assembly and each of the side wing pews. The usher on the Blessed Virgin Mary wing also collects for the seats behind the altar. The collection basket is started at the front and members of the assembly pass it back and forth down the pews until it reaches the end of the last pew and is handed to the Usher who then takes it to the Narthax and empties it into the large basket used for presentation of the collection with the gifts. Once collected, the money is never left unattended until taken up with the presentation of the gifts. Ushers will direct the gift bearers on what to do when presenting the gifts. Do so quietly in the Narthax.

Ushers assist with good order at Communion time. Ushers go to the front when the Eucharistic Ministers begin to receive Communion. Two ushers stand at the first row on each side of the main aisle and Communicants go out row by row from the front to the back. Members of the assembly seated in the choir loft process after the last row of the main assembly area. Persons behind the altar process without an Usher. One usher stands at the front on the east side of each side wing of pews and communicants go out row by row from the front. Be aware of those members of the Assembly for whom processing up to Communion may be a problem. You may ask persons if they want assistance going up to communion or if they want communion brought to them. It is your responsibility to let a Eucharistic Minister know if communion must be brought to someone. Remember that your role is to be of service to the Assembly at this time so you should be offering gentle guidance and not acting as a drill sergeant. It is appropriate for Ushers to join in the communion song as it is being sung.

After Mass

Ushers should be careful to not signal it is okay to leave the celebration early by opening the doors and standing ready to hand out bulletins before the Celebrant is even off the altar and beginning the recessional. Again, if people do leave early, it is not up to us to stand in judgement of those who do.

Once the Celebrant has left the altar, ushers should go to their respective "posts" at the exits and stand ready with a warm smile to distribute the parish bulletin and say goodbye to those who came to worship.

Once the Assembly has left the celebration, the worship space needs to be cleaned up. You should assist in straightening up the pew areas by putting the missals back in the appropriate location, picking up what may be left behind in the pews and returning any stray bulletins to the appropriate locations at the doors. If any hearing aid devices were distributed before Mass be sure to see that they are returned to the sacristy.

Disruptions/Emergencies

Remember it is the role of the usher to bring about good order and to be the presence of Christ to the worshipping community and to see the presence of Christ in those members of the Assembly who have come to worship.

You may encounter situations where a member of the Assembly becomes disruptive. You are encouraged to try to handle any disruptive problem with gentle firmness that focuses on the right of the assembly to worship without undue distraction. A positive approach to a problem will be more successful than a combative exchange. Do not hesitate to call 911 for police assistance if necessary. Use the phone in the Usher closet.

Medical emergencies can occur and it is always better to err on the side of caution. Calls to 911 should be made from the phone in the Usher closet. Remain calm and cause as little distraction as possible to the members of the Assembly. CPR certification, though not required, will be offered periodically to all ushers.

In case of fire, call 911 and assist the assembly to exit in an orderly fashion through the nearest usable exit. Remember, do not use the elevator during a fire.

Again, as an usher, you are there to serve not to judge and to be a source of calmness and competence during difficult situations.

Miscellaneous information

Scheduling. The schedule for regular weekends will be mailed to you, along with a cover letter outlining any information about which you should be aware for the coming months relative to your ministry. It will also be posted in the Usher closet. Questions about scheduling should be addressed to the Chair of the Usher Ministry. Special occasions will be scheduled individually closer to the time of the celebration. These could include the Easter/Christmas seasons, confirmation/communion services etc.

Remember that it is your responsibility to secure a substitute should you have a schedule conflict.

Your respect for your ministry should be reflected in your appearance, by being clean and well groomed and in your attire. Appropriate attire includes: Men: suit and tie. Women: pant suit or skirt/slacks and blouse or dress. Please note no jeans or shorts at any time.

The chair of the Usher Ministry or a delegate handles training for new ushers. Training consists of a time of shadowing experienced Ushers until the new usher is comfortable with procedures and processes.

Ushers are scheduled at every weekend Mass and at Masses offered during the Christmas and Easter Season, the Usher Ministry is an important and valued ministry.

Usher responsibilities related to baptisms

Font Heater: Will be turned on by maintenance personnel the Friday before the baptism. When 5:15 Usher arrives please check water to see if it's warm; if not, check to see if the heater is turned on.....please turn it on if it's not and leave a note for the Liturgist to check out the communication glitch.

USHERS BEFORE BAPTISMAL MASS: Ushers will move the Pascal Candle from the back of the font to the front of the font before Mass in preparation for baptism during or after Mass. Light the candle. During the Easter Season do not move the Pascal candle from the altar to the front of the baptismal font for baptisms. That candle stays on the altar during the Easter Season (from Easter through Pentecost.)

WHEN BAPTISM DURING MASS

Usher will move the Pascal candle to the back of the font after Mass. Take the towel used to dry the hair and any other items from the baptism to the Sacristy.

If no additional baptisms after that mass return the Pascal candle to the back of the font.

If no additional baptisms the rest of the weekend turn the font heater off.

BAPTISM AFTER MASS

If the baptism is after Mass and is not over when you are ready to leave don't worry about the candle or turning off the font heater.