
St. John's Episcopal Church
Usher Instructions

Scheduling/Replacements

- The schedule for all servers, including Ushers, is prepared on a monthly basis. If you know that you will not be able to serve on a certain date, please contact Vickie Duff (859-879-8402, 859-608-3940 or reads0202@aol.com), who prepares the schedule, before the 15th of the previous month.
- If you realize that you aren't able to serve after the schedule comes out, please find a replacement. Most people are happy to switch dates. Note the change on the calendar in Hosea Hall. Please also let Kathy Sparrow in the office (859-873-3481) know of the change so that she can update the bulletin if it hasn't already been prepared.
- If you find that you are not able to serve at the last minute, please call the church and let someone know. If you are the one who receives that call, please alert the Acolyte for that day as checking everyone in and finding last minute replacements is their responsibility.

Before the service

- You should arrive at least 30 minutes before the service.
- Be sure that there are bulletins on the table outside of the Chapel and at the back of the church. If they are not there, they should be in the sacristy.
- Make sure the inner doors to the church are opened and latched.
- Check to see who is assigned as Gift Bearers and watch for them. Ask them to stay in the back of the church after the peace. If they are not in attendance, you may need to draft someone if assignments haven't been switched.
- Be watchful for anyone who may be unable to negotiate the steps and need communion brought to them in their pew. Anyone in a wheelchair or needing extra room (i.e. leg in a cast, etc), may be seated in front of front pew on the left.
- Be aware of the temperature of the church. You can control the temperature using the thermostats on the back wall: the heat in the winter by adjusting the silver range of the older thermostat and the air conditioning with the newer thermostat.
- From The Book of Common Prayer, page 833
Almighty God, who pourest out on all who desire it the spirit of grace and of supplication: Deliver us, when we draw near to thee, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship thee in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Procession

- Ushers are responsible for counting those in attendance and communicating that to the Priest. As the procession begins is the good time to count the participants at the front of the church (i.e., choir, etc.) and note that number on the counter sheet.
- Remain at the back of the church, greeting guests, assisting with seating, etc.
- The small bags hanging in the vestibule contain crayons, etc. for children.

During the service

- Once the service begins, unlatch the doors and allow them to close.
- Counting those in attendance can be a bit like herding cats. People will continue to file in after the service begins. It can be helpful for each Usher to count each side and compare numbers. Also note how many children are in the nursery. This count is very important as it determines how many wafers the Priest consecrates.
- Offertory & Communion:
 - As the peace ends, assist the Gifts Bearers if they need it and hand the person carrying the bread box the attendance count.
 - As the announcements end, the Gift Bearers should be in the back of the church, ready to process, with the ushers behind them.
 - Once the Acolyte is standing at the gate, the Gift Bearers should go forward with you behind them. Follow the Gift Bearers up the steps and stand behind and on either side of them.
 - The Gift Bearers should exit between the two ushers. Once they do, step to the middle and each receive an offering plate from the Chalice Bearer, bowing in unison.
 - The ushers should hand a plate to the first people in the pews. Occasionally the first person will waive the plate off, which is fine, but each person in the pew should have an opportunity to contribute so you may need to encourage passing the plate. Wait in the back of the church with the collection plates.
 - At the end of the Offertory, the Chalice Bearer will walk to the gate with the large plate which will be your signal to bring the offering forward. The Priest may also signal you to come forward. Walk together, bow as you return the plates to the large plate held by the Chalice Bearer and return to the back of the church once you have handed off the plates.
 - At the words of invitation, the Sunday School teachers and children should begin going to the altar rail for Communion. Walk in unison to the front of the church and remain facing the altar until the altar rail is approximately 3/4 empty. Turn then to face each other as a signal for the congregation to go to the rail. You may need to use hand signals to invite them if the congregation has numerous visitors.
 - Continue to be watchful for anyone who may be unable to negotiate the steps and need communion brought to them in their pew.
 - The Choir takes communion after the congregation followed by the Ushers. It is not necessary to wait until the last choir member has left the rail, only that you proceed when you can be last and kneel at the gate. At this time, communicate to the Priest if there is anyone who needs communion brought to them.
 - Unlock and open the gates and place the center cushion on the other cushions.
 - Return to the back of the church, walking together at all times.
- Recessional:
 - As the recessional hymn begins, again open the inner doors and latch them open.

After the service

- Be available to receive bulletins for recycling as people leave.
- Tidy up pews: gather bulletins, replace pencils, discard debris and gather supplies from children's bags and return them to the hooks in the vestibule.

Thank you for agreeing to serve the body of Christ at St. John's in this very important ministry!
