

Lay Task Directions

USHERS – Two for each service Offering the Gift of Welcome and Worship

Purpose:

- To offer welcome and hospitality, before, during and after the worship service.

Who Can Be An Usher?

- Anyone who is willing and able to fulfill the purpose stated above.

Before The Service

- Show up at least 15 minutes prior to service time. If the pastor has any special needs, she will let you know. Do a walk-around to make sure that things are neat and pews are free of any trash, etc. Set the tone for peace and welcome to all who enter the sanctuary.
- Ushers are the first welcoming contact for worshippers coming in the door – Especially for visitors, or newer members – Smile and greet folks, and if necessary, introduce yourself. If you are able, walk with first time visitors to a pew and introduce them to a member that they might sit with during worship. It's best practice to have one usher at the ramp entrance and one at the bell entrance.
- Hand out any papers that are needed. Offer nametags and highlight coming opportunities or events.
- Help visitors find what is needed – Restrooms, nursery, etc.
- Introduce yourself to the acolyte for the day. The acolyte will assist in collecting the offering.

5 minutes before the service begins

- Assist the acolyte to light the candle-lighter (matches or lighter is behind the sliding doors on the ushers' stand near the bell entrance.)
- Ring the church bell several times—OK to invite acolyte or other young children to help

During Worship

- Greet late arrivers, assist people if they need bulletins, hymnals, or directions.
- **Counting:** At some point during the service, ushers must take a count of worshippers, including kids in the nursery. This is easiest to do when everyone is seated during the sermon. Write the totals in the white binder and fill out a small card to place in the offering plate.
- **Offering:** Beginning at the front of the church, each usher should pass a plate on one side of the aisle, handing it to the person closest to the aisle. Be ready to assist the offering plate to keep moving towards the back. When both plates have reached the back of the church, wait for the pastor to stand in front of the altar and then bring the plates to the front and hand to the pastor.
- **Communion:** As the pastor and communion assistant are serving each other, an usher should be ready to start guiding worshippers. The order for communion is to begin in the front on the left-hand side as you face the altar. Work all the way to the back and move to the right-hand side at the back and work your way forward. If there are folks who need communion brought to them in their pew, please notify the pastor when you come for communion at the end.

- Kneeling: When we kneel for communion, an usher needs to put the altar rail in place after bringing the offering plates up. When ushering people up for communion, allow about 15 people to the rail. As space opens at the rail, step back to invite the next group. This is all structured gently, since people come and go at different rates, family groups may want to tuck in together, some people will choose not to go up, etc. The goal is to keep the flow going as effortlessly as possible. When communion is complete, remove the section of altar rail.
- Standing/pilgrim-style: Though folks meter themselves into the line, you may move back and invite rows to come into the line as necessary or hold folks if the aisle gets too congested.

After the Service

- Continue to greet, welcome, introduce and invite folks downstairs for coffee and snacks. Make sure the church doors are open and the path is clear.
- After everyone has left the sanctuary, do a quick walk-through to pick up bulletins, neaten hymnals, and gather any left-behind items.

Thank you for your service.