

Ascension Church

Guidelines for Ushers

Last revised February 2014

Mission:

Ushering is a ministry. Ushers do more than hand out bulletins, take the collection and manage Communion. They are a vital part of the worship experience to all, Newcomers and life-long Ascensionites alike. The ushers are among the first church members to greet worshippers as they enter the church.

They are also the first people called upon to help if worshippers have questions or if problems occur during the service, such as when someone needs restroom directions or when a medical emergency arises. It's your job to be pleasant, patient and helpful at all times. We are the face of Christ for those walking through the doors of Ascension

Age:

7th graders to adult are welcome to serve in this ministry. If Junior High and High School age, the youth must serve with an adult.

Definitions:

Sanctuary and Nave often get confused. No big deal, just remember:

- a. Narthex = lobby, inside the front door and before the Nave's glass wall.
- b. Nave = pew seating area
- c. Sanctuary = area around the altar and tabernacle (marble area, basically)

Before the Service:

Ushers should be in the Narthex fifteen minutes before the start of the service ready to hand bulletins to people coming for worship.

Bulletins

Bulletins are sometimes called the Orders of Service and are normally in the wicker baskets in the narthex. If for some reason they are not there, check the sacristy or men's bathroom (sometimes during funerals and weddings things get moved around). Make sure the orders of service are in the narthex in advance of the service.

Latecomers

Latecomers to the service should be directed to the side doors of the Nave.

Latecomers can be admitted into the church at the end of each reading of the Holy Scriptures and during music. If someone needs to leave the church, they may not come back into the church during these times as it is disruptive to the Priest and those trying to worship.

Overview of steps from sermon to sitting

1. As an usher, you remain in the narthex until the sermon begins.
2. Take a count of the kids and children's chapel leaders heading to children's chapel.
3. Then you do the headcount from the balcony.
4. Complete the attendance sheet and tally the numbers
5. Complete the count card and keep it with you.
6. Then you may be seated with your family, preferably in the back half of the church. (You never thought you would be encouraged to sit in the back, did you?)

The attendance sheets and count cards are found in the Usher's book in the narthex, which is located on the "desk" below the flower dedication chart and next to the suggestion box. It may be on top of the desk or inside of it. Keep the count card with you when you sit down because you will need it later.

The Offertory:

At the start of the offertory anthem, the ushers proceed up the main aisle to receive the plate from the acolyte or lay reader at the base of the marble step. The ushers hand the acolyte or lay reader the worship count slip and receive the plates from the acolyte.

The Collection:

When there are two ushers

Proceed down main aisle from front to back. Hand the plate to the person on the inside aisle. They will pass it down and the plate will come back from the aisle behind. This "u shaped" process continues from front to back.

Then proceed to the side aisles in the same fashion.

When there are two ushers and a third usher/Jr. usher(s)

The two main ushers collect the main aisle, while the third or Jr. usher collects from the side aisle(s).

Children's Chapel:

An usher will notify children's chapel, during the "Prayers of the People" to get them ready to come into the church. If you are tech savvy get the chapel leader's cell phone and text them at the end of the Nicene Creed for them to come back.

Procession following the collection of the alms:

After the offerings have been collected, the Ushers stand at the back of the middle aisle waiting for their cue. The clergy stands to the side of the Altar until the ushers are done. ***If the music stops and you are not done, keep going, we will wait for you.*** The clergy gesturing for people to rise is the cue to begin moving toward the Altar via the main aisle. The acolyte will receive your collected offerings.

Distribution of Communion:

The ushers advance up the middle aisle to the first pew while the Altar party is receiving communion (after the words: "the gifts of God for the people of God). They stand there until the choir is back in the choir loft.

After the choir has assembled at the the communion rails, the ushers gesture for the people in the first pews to stand and move to the Altar rail (as space opens up). The usher procedure continues as usual from here - with the congregation lining up in the center aisle, and moving to the rail as it is emptied. **If people forget, they fill from the outside in.**

The Ushers will help the side aisle in the same way letting the back row follow behind the center pew and up the main aisle to receive communion. Ushers are the last to kneel to receive communion. At that time if the ushers think there is someone unable to come forward to receive communion due to age or infirmity let the clergy know.

Disability

While you are helping people take communion, please note if anyone seems unable to get up and receive communion. Let the clergy know and they will offer communion to those persons.

After the service is over

Ushers will stand by in the narthex to collect bulletins from the worshippers as they depart.

After people clear out

Ushers will tidy the pews – replace hymnals and prayer books, collect discarded orders of service.

Miscellaneous, including special services and funerals:

If, as an usher, you are unavailable please obtain a substitute yourself and **please don't ask the captain to find a substitute for you unless absolutely necessary.**

Ushers serve as first responders in the event of an emergency. A first aid kit is in the "usher's desk" in the narthex. If possible, Ushers should complete CPR certification.

Funerals – On the occasion of a funeral, the usher captain will send out an email asking if any ushers are available. Funerals need two ushers to function smoothly.

Special Services - Holy Days like Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day need usher ministry as well. The usher captain will make a similar call for usher by email to check for availability to serve.