

# GUIDELINES FOR USHERS

UPDATED May 2026

This outline was written with the intent of clarifying ushers' responsibilities. The instructions below are meant as basic guidelines to help make our worship service flow as smoothly as possible. Any suggestions to improve them are welcome!

For most services, one person is assigned to usher, however it is helpful to have one usher at the front door and one by the side (transept) door, especially for special or holiday services. Bulletins and bulletin inserts with announcements are usually left on the table in the counters' room. Red folders with large print hymns are on the tables by each entrance if needed.

## **BEFORE SERVICE:**

1. Please arrive at church 15 to 30 minutes before the start of worship.
2. Until the start of worship, your primary task is to greet guests warmly and hand out bulletins; separate bulletins are available for the children, large print bulletins are also available..
3. For worshippers in need of an Assisted Listening Device, the devices along with headphones are stored in a box in the narthex at the front of the church. \*Open the box before worship and please collect them and close the box after the service.
4. If a special act, such as a baptism, is part of the service, visiting family members may need special guidance for seating. Several pews in the front of the church are usually marked "reserved" for this circumstance. The "reserved" pew markers are stored
5. The first Sunday of every month is "Name Tag Sunday." Name tags and markers are located at each entrance, extras are in the counter room. Please put them out and encourage everyone to put one on as they arrive.
6. The elevator key and instructions for use are in the elevator at all times. Before service, please make sure the elevator is at the side entrance level for people arriving at church. Offer assistance to individuals as needed, especially newcomers.
7. The front usher rings the church bell 10 times at 10 o'clock to mark the start of worship.
8. Once everyone has entered the sanctuary and the service has begun, the doors at both sanctuary entrances should be closed.
9. Be on alert for latecomers; guide worshippers to the pews in the event of overcrowding, disabilities, or arriving late.

## **DURING SERVICE:**

1. Taking the collection:
  - a. At a "regular" Sunday service, this takes place after the prayers of the church and the sharing of the peace.
  - b. Music is usually offered during this time; once that begins, please come forward to start taking the collection at the front of the church and continuing to the back.
  - c. Offering plates should be located:
    - i. on the table in the narthex
    - ii. on the side table in the transept
    - iii. If the offering plates are missing, check the table in the counters' room.
  - d. While taking the offering, it is important to count the people attending worship. You may also do this at any time, taking care to not disrupt worship service. If it is a week with Sunday School, make sure to count when children are present.
    - i. If there is more than one usher, each usher should count the people on his/her side.
    - ii. This includes pastor, the assisting minister, and the acolyte, as well as choir members and

the organist!

iii. The usher counting the transept should also count those in the nursery.

iv. Don't forget to count yourself!

- e. The offerings are brought forward to the front of the church during the offertory song and given to the assisting minister or the acolyte.
- f. There is a small green book in the drawer of the table in the narthex to record the ushers' names and the attendance for that day. Please make note of any special events that day (baptism, confirmation, Palm Sunday, etc.) When serving during a special service during the week, for example Good Friday, please note the date and reason for the service in the attendance book.

## 2. Preparing for Holy Communion:

- a. After the reciting of the Lord's Prayer, the congregation is seated to sing the "Lamb of God."
- b. At this time the communion assistants come forward to receive communion with the assisting minister and the acolyte.
- c. The ushers should also come forward at this time to:
  - i. Bring forward the tray of communion cups; these should have been placed on the table in the narthex prior to the start of worship. All cups are brought forward and can be put on the transept side table if all front pews are full.
  - ii. Place the communion rail and kneeling cushion into position. Sliding the rail into position takes some practice! The small clasps at the side should be fastened to prevent the rail from moving.
- d. Order for receiving communion:
  - i. If the choir is sitting in the seats to the right of the altar, its members will receive communion first.
  - ii. If there is Sunday school, the transept usher will get the children at the Parish House (if they have not already arrived by the start of communion).
  - iii. For the assembly: invitation to communion should begin in the front, on the right side of the sanctuary (the side nearest the organ). Communion then proceeds to the rear of the sanctuary, across the aisle to the back of the left side, and forward again to the front of the church. The people seated in the transept are next.
  - iv. On Sundays of baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, and other special services, the first people to be invited forward are those seated in the reserved area.
- e. **Front ushers:** One person should be stationed down front, in the aisle. This way, people can be guided in the proper direction, or if someone needs assistance away from the rail it can be easily given. The second person moves along the row of pews to indicate when people may come forward. Either person may hold the tray of communion cups.
- f. **Side usher:** As you invite people seated in the transept to come forward, you may provide a communion cup from your own tray, or simply guide people to come forward and receive a cup from the usher already in place.
- g. Please be alert that someone may request to have communion brought to the pew; make this request known to pastor or the assisting minister when you come forward to receive.
- h. Once everyone has been invited forward, including the choir, the ushers come forward to receive communion.
- i. After communion is finished, the front ushers should move the kneeling cushion back to the side, and remove the rail and place it on top of the cushion.
- j. Collect the trays of unused communion cups and return to the back/side of the church.

## 3. End of Service:

- a. As the final hymn is being sung, the doors should be reopened.
- b. Recycling bins are available for unused or returned bulletins.

**AFTER SERVICE:**

1. Please take five minutes to straighten up. Hymnals should be returned to the holders on the backs of the pews, and straightened when necessary. Check hymnals for “elephant ears”.
2. Worship booklets, when used, should be stacked neatly at the end of the pew.
3. All stray papers and litter should be collected and disposed of.
4. Check the liturgies- there should be 4-5 per row; if numbers are low, leave a note for Deanna.
5. Assist anyone in need of help with the elevator to the basement for coffee hour or to the side entrance level to exit.

**Other notes:**

- You should make yourself familiar with the controls for the lights, fans, and thermostats.
- In case of emergency, call the Red Bank police (use the phone number above the counters’ phone).

*Thank you for volunteering to assist in worship with this very important job!*

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