

Christ's Church Ushering Guidelines

The Role of the Usher

Thank you for volunteering to serve the church in this important ministry, we cannot say enough just how important this role is to the church. The usher is the representative of Christ and of our Church image and is an awesome responsibility. The usher is the people's first impression of who and what Christ and this church body is. We are Christ's ambassadors with a mission to bring people to God. In us the hospitality of God is seen. We are important because we are the Church. Our role is important because it is the Lord we serve. We must welcome people to the Lord's House with a smile that speaks more than a thousand words. We help reach and keep people coming to church.

The usher duties can be summed up in a few words – making people feel welcome at church, assisting pastors and teachers with people management, assisting with seating, collecting offering, and maintaining a safe environment. This short document outlines how we perform those duties. Please review this material carefully and feel free to ask questions and bring up issues that you feel need addressing.

Appearance

Be presentable—dress well for God's house, it shows respect. Where it would be preferred that one wear a coat and tie, dressing for the business office is acceptable. Never be attired in T-shirts or revealing clothes. Wear shoes and not slippers.

Wear your name tag. Eat lots of breath mints. Always SMILE and have a good word for everybody.

Safety

Maintaining a safe environment and maintaining control of a crowd is an important aspect of the ushering duty. Whereas, ushers are not church security, ushers should be observant of the environment and cautiously investigate suspicious behaviors. Using those cellular camera phones to record events and calling 911 can be helpful.

Ushers should insist that adults and kids maintain a proper decorum in and on the church property, including smoking, drinking, and bad behavior. It is ok to stop kids from running and horseplay. What may be cute in a toddler becomes a problem when they become larger and can trip an elderly person or provide a poor impression for visitors.

Ushers should report noteworthy incidents and accidents to the pastor. Reportable incidents include all injuries, difficult interactions with people, and crimes.

Christ's Church has developed a child safety policy that each worker that has interactions with children is required to read and follow. Ushers need to understand and follow the policy because ushers may be called upon to assist teachers, interact with the nursery, and to at times manage children's behaviors. Read the appropriate section in the Christian Education manual at: <http://www.christschurchag.org/> Navigate to "Member Information" then scroll down and click on "Child Protection Policies and Information" to see the document.

Serving

Ushers work on teams and are assigned a set week of the month to serve. Ushers usher for the entire week for all services including special services and church events (not private events such as weddings). The usher team should stay informed on the service schedule including Children's Church and Youth Services so that proper ushering coverage is ready.

If you cannot make your assignment, you should arrange for your coverage replacement. In most cases swapping assignments with a member of another team works for covering absences. Please inform your team when such a change is made.

As a general rule, ushers are required in both the Worship Center and Education Center when open and a service is in progress. Only one usher is needed at the Sunday 8:30 AM service since attendance is light and the Education Center is not open. The team should decide who will cover the early service.

Ushers should observe the parking lots periodically and deal appropriately with suspicious activities.

Before the service:

- Arrive and be on duty a minimum of 15 minutes before the service.
- Check with the Pastors to see if there are any special events during the service, such as a Baptism or special offerings that may require additional duties of the ushers.
- Distribute the offering plates for the Sunday morning 10:30 service only. Pastor may indicate a special change for offering collection such as special offerings for guest speakers and special causes. Be flexible and manage the situation by communicating to the offering collectors the changes required.
- The ushers station themselves outside the Sanctuary door (greeters are at the entrance doors). Keep the sanctuary doors closed before and during service. Assume that people in the sanctuary are preparing for worship.
- Greet with a smile when the worshippers arrive, and hand out the bulletins if no greeters are present.
- Be informed. You will be asked about the different programs of the church such as Children's Church, Wednesday night classes, and the nursery—do you know what the ages for the nursery is?
- Help keep the public areas tidy, pick up trash and straighten the handouts.

During the service:

- Encourage people in the halls to go into the service. Intervene to minimize activities in the halls that would be disruptive to the service.
- Assist with the seating of latecomers.
- Supervise the offering collection and take to the office and place in the designated place. For your safety do not go alone with the offering, take someone with you. It is not necessary to organize the offering for the counters, let them do that.
- Assist in the counting for attendance in all services on Sunday and Wednesday. The count should include the pastors, musicians, nursery personnel, infants, people loitering in the halls, and ushers. Generally, counting should not happen until after worship is completed and after latecomers have finished arriving. A rule of thumb is 30-45 minutes after the service begins.
- Help keep the public areas tidy, pick up trash, and straighten the handouts.
- During altar calls, NO ONE IS TO COME INTO THE AUDITORIUM. Please stop them and tell them that Pastor is doing an altar call and could they please wait to enter the auditorium.
- Answer the telephone, if it rings during the service with a professional greeting that includes the name of the church.

After the service:

- While ministry is still going on stay at the doors. Do not prop the doors open when ministry team are still praying with individuals.
- After service many people will leave for home, but there will be others who will stay behind for fellowship. Seek out the “shy” and the visitor, and introduce them to other persons. Help people connect to people in the church.

Ushering Best Practices

Concentrate on the people. Seat the people as near the front pews as it seem appropriate. The back seats can then be filled with latecomers. But if people insist on seating in certain places let them be.

Be alert to available seats and be ready to lead worshippers to the vacant seats. Approach with the phrase “May I show you to a seat?” Never usher worshippers to their seats by waving your hands.

Do not allow worshippers to enter the Church Sanctuary when prayers are being said from the pulpit. Politely tell them to wait at the entrance until after the prayers are over.

Drunks, panhandlers and other types of characters sometimes drift into the Church especially to reap the benefits of Christian kindness. These situations must be handled with Christian kindness without having disruption of the service. The genuinely needy will wait until after the service to speak to a pastor.

Ushers should help prevent unnecessary activities during the service so as not to distract the members during worship. These include people talking on cell phones (inside and outside the sanctuary), children making multiple trips to the restrooms, etc.

Humility is key in an usher. Ushers are required to be punctual and time conscious as they are required to be at church far earlier than the rest of the congregation.

We should always offer to seat people, and while you are doing this, introduce new guests to someone and hopefully they will offer to come and sit with them. Don't just offer them a seat, but find someone they can sit with.

Once service begins, especially when Pastor is teaching, it does not matter who it is, ushers need to seat everyone. People come in and look for their friends and wander around and it is horribly distracting. Seat them. Tell them that in order to help cut down on distractions, you want to help them be seated.

Please ask guests that have children if they would like to see our nursery and take them and introduce them to the nursery staff. If a child is really noisy, please intervene. Simply say, could I please show you where the nursery is. They may get offended about that but the situation needs to be dealt with. This may sound harsh but in reality that the distraction is affecting others in a greater way than what they may realize.

When it is your Sunday, be on the job. Set aside conversation with good friends, and put your focus on those you are ministering to. Be aware of those whom you are working with. If someone you do not recognize them, stop and greet them.

DO NOT.....

- Chew gum in church
- Force a hug when greeting
- Separate families when seating them
- Point when seating guests
- Raise your voice at anyone including children