

Guide For Ushers

Saint Peter Lutheran Church

Updated March, 2016

The following is a guide for ushering. It is provided to answer some questions you might have about what is expected of the ushers. Following this guide will provide consistency which will help members and visitors alike feel comfortable before, during and after the service. It is important that you arrive at least 25 minutes before the service to be available when people begin to arrive, and to check with the Pastor about what preparations may be necessary on special occasions. For funerals, please be prepared to arrive about an hour ahead of time, as there will be certain procedures which differ from a regular service.

In preparation for a service, please observe the following:

- Make sure the lights are on in the sanctuary. Switches are located in the sound booth. Usually the sound technician will take care of this, but on some occasions you may be responsible.
- The sound controls should be on. ***If you are unfamiliar with the sound board, do not make any adjustments. Please find a sound technician for this.***
- The HVAC thermostats are programmed for the most desirable settings. If adjustments become necessary, usually in the spring and fall, **use only the up/down arrows**. Make sure to set all three thermostats to the same temperature: 1) rear of sanctuary; 2) west wall in chancel area; and 3) on the back wall of the choir loft. Thermostats will reset to the programmed setting at the next segment.
- Check to see that the communion elements are in place at the rear of the sanctuary before the service starts. You can find out who is serving on the altar guild by checking the charts in the office hall if a need arises.
- Warmly greet all worshipers and distribute bulletins. When people begin to gather in the narthex, please close the sanctuary doors and open as required to let worshipers in. This provides a quiet time for personal reflection and prayer before the service begins. If crowded, direct people to seats as required, especially visitors who may be in unfamiliar surroundings. The last row on the right is reserved for ushers and their spouses.

During the service:

- ***It is the usher's responsibility to take a count of all in attendance at the service.*** This may be done in any manner that is not intrusive to the service. An excellent opportunity for this is during the offering. The count can be taken by each usher, and then added together with the choir and the pastor and assistants. If there is someone in the nursery, they should be included, also. There are some tally sheets to make this easier in the sound booth. Please use the sheets and leave them for collection after the service.
- At the appropriate time, usually after the sharing of the peace, both ushers will go to the front and receive the offering plates from the worship assistant. Take up the offering, assisting if there are large gaps in seating, as necessary. **Note:** When turning to go toward the rear of the sanctuary, **both ushers should always turn toward the center.** This small detail makes everything look smoother.

Communion:

- The ushers will come forward at the appropriate time; The **left usher** will carry both collection plates, and the **right usher** will bring the communion elements forward. At the front, after handing the offering to the assistant, the **left usher** will bring the stand and the communion trays to the center and position them in the aisle. Carefully remove the cover and place it on the small stand at the end of the first pew. The trays are very light, so careful, deliberate movement when handling them is necessary. Meanwhile, the **right usher** will hand off the elements to the other assistant, and move to the end of the first pew. When both ushers are back to the aisle, address the altar and **turn toward the center**, to return to the rear of the sanctuary for the first portion of the communion service.

- When the pastor has finished preparations, allow the choir (if present) to proceed to the front. The ushers will then follow the choir, and take their positions. If no choir, try to time it to reach the front about the time the pastor is also ready. The **left usher** will take a position, sitting or standing, as desired, at the end of the first row to monitor the communion trays. When necessary, either because the glasses are gone, or the grape juice glasses are gone (more likely) , the empty tray will be removed and placed, covered, on the stand. The **right usher** will invite the rows from both sides in turn, keeping a comfortable number of communicants in the aisle. When all have communed, the ushers will take communion last. If there is any one that wishes to commune from the pew, the pastor should be informed at this time by either of the ushers. The **right usher** should be available to assist in this as required. During this time the **left usher** will be returning the trays and stand to their position at the left side of the chancel.

NOTE: NEW PROCEDURE :

- I am initiating a **new procedure** for the ushers at the conclusion of their part of the service: **After communing and returning the trays to the position at the front, each usher will proceed to the rear by their respective side aisle.** This is being done to streamline and keep the attention away from the ushers so as not to distract from the service.

After the Service:

- Ushers may be asked to direct visitors to sign the guest book, and/or invite them to the fellowship hall for coffee time.
- **VERY IMPORTANT: When everyone has left the sanctuary, please take a few minutes and check the pews for papers and bulletins, and personal articles left behind. Return hymnals to the pew racks and straighten up as needed.**

Dress

- Most of the congregation dresses in a casual manner. When ushering, a jacket and tie is preferred, since this will distinguish you from the congregation. There are also badges that are to be worn when ushering to help identify yourself as an usher. These are located in the sound booth. Please remember to return them when the service is over. We have new magnetic badges which will work for men or women. You may also wear your name tag, if you wish.

Emergencies

- Saint Peter has an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) . Several members are trained in it's use. Please familiarize yourself with where it is located to be able to facilitate it's use should the need arise. Most everyone has a cell phone now, but there are phones in the office and in the kitchen if it becomes necessary to call 911.

Fire Extinguishers

- The fire extinguisher locations are well marked. Please familiarize yourself with their location.

Please remember to get a substitute if you are unable to serve on your appointed day, and notify the secretary of the change. This can be done via e-mail to the church.

Feel free to contact me about any questions, or suggestions. My preferred contact method is email. Contact Alan Williamson at wmson@ec.rr.com.