

Usher Procedures – Post COVID – Starting 6-20-2021

Ushers should try to arrive at the church approximately one half hour before the start of the service to complete preparation steps 1 – 9:

1. Get the bulletins and printed sermons from the church office
2. Place 5 or 6 copies of the bulletin on the small table at the side entry door at the back of the sanctuary
3. Check the candles on the communion table to ensure they have enough candle oil for the service. The candle oil is stored on a shelf under the pulpit. To fill the candles, unscrew the brass cap of the candle, lift the brass cap with the wick slightly (about an inch) so the wick stays in the candle. Carefully add oil to the candle to within a half-inch from the top and secure the cap. Be careful when filling the candles that you do not spill any oil on the outside of the candle itself as this would be a fire hazard.
4. (optional) Turn on the ceiling fan. In the summer it revolves counterclockwise to pull the cool air up from the floor. In the winter, it revolves clockwise to push the warm air down. Use only the **LEFT FAN SWITCH** on the wall at the left side of the rear sanctuary door. The **left switch** controls the rear ceiling fan. Push the POWER button and then push and hold the FAN button until you heard a “beep”. Pushing and holding the fan button successively will sound higher-tones of “beeps” signifying an increase to the fan speed.
5. At various times of the year, some adjustment may be needed to the heat or air conditioning so a comfortable temperature is maintained during the service. The thermostats are on the rear wall of the sanctuary. Looking at the thermostats, the thermostat on the **left side is the HEAT**. The thermostat on the **right is the AIR CONDITIONING**. It is difficult to maintain a temperature that is best for all areas of the sanctuary. The choir is usually warm because of their robes, while some congregants are cold sitting in the pews. Try to make adjustments as best you can.
6. Turn on the sound system. The sound control is located in the balcony. There are printed instructions on the front of the control box that will inform ushers how to turn on the microphone. On most Sundays, it is as easy as pushing the red switch in the upper left corner of the front panel. An usher should walk to the pulpit and make sure the microphone is working. Don’t forget to turn this off after the service.
7. **NEW!** Make sure there are collection plates visible at both rear doors of the sanctuary. Ushers will not collect the tithing envelopes in our post-COVID procedures. They will be combined into one plate and taken forward during the doxology.
8. Be prepared to hand out bulletins and printed sermons as early as 10:15.
9. (optional) The bell may be rung at 10:15 or so. The bell rope hangs at the back wall of the balcony behind the sound system.

During the Service:

1. The service begins when the organist starts playing the prelude. At this point, one usher should take a lighter – or the acolyte wand - and light the candles on the communion table if they are there. At certain times of the year, there will be no candles to light on the communion table (e.g. Advent).
2. At the first hymn, an usher should lock the doors as follows: The kitchen and side entry doors should be locked. The front **INNER door** should be locked. Do not lock the OUTER front door so a late arriving person can use the doorbell in the foyer. When the doorbell button is pressed, a buzzer will be heard in the office and a light will flash that is mounted above the rear sanctuary doors. When the light or buzzer is observed, an usher should go to the front door and let the person into the church. The reason this is done is to add a level of security to the church during a service. If the person wanting access causes any concern about church safety, do not let the person enter.

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3. Ushers are responsible for recording part of the Scripture readings and the sermon using the sound system. At the conclusion of the “Passing of the Peace”, an usher should begin recording the service by pressing the **“RECORD” button** on the sound system per the picture illustrated here. The first time you press the red record button it will flash. Press it again to begin the recording. You will see the counter advancing on the screen next to the red record button. At this point you are recording. The recording should run through the reading of the scripture, the anthem, and the sermon. When the Pastor concludes the sermon, an usher should press the **“STOP” button** on the sound system. If for some reason, the recording is not started for the scripture reading, it may be started any time prior to the start of the sermon. If it has not been started by the time the sermon begins, do not record anything.
4. At some point following the locking of the doors and before the sermon, an usher should take a head-count using the white forms located at the usher supply table beside the rear sanctuary doors. The completed census form may be placed in the offering plate so it ends up in the church office with the collection envelopes. In addition, an usher should count the number of items in the food basket and report this number in the appropriate space on the census form.
5. It is normal procedure during the second hymn (sung after the sermon) for an usher to take a yellow prayer request card from the usher supply area and slowly walk up the center aisle of the sanctuary to collect prayer request cards, if any. Then, do the same in the balcony. Completed prayer cards should be taken to the Pastor before the conclusion of the hymn. At certain times of the year, or when we have communion, the order of the service changes. ***Ushers should review the bulletin to know whether they will be able to collect prayer cards at this time or to do so at another time in the service.***
6. Typically, the collection is taken at the end of the service following “Prayers for others”. As of 6-20-2021, we will not be collecting envelopes as we used to do. The collection plate will be placed at both doors in the rear of the sanctuary and will be combined by the usher prior to this point in the service. When the doxology is played and the congregation is standing and singing, the usher will take the collection plate to the communion table. The usher will place it on the communion table until the doxology is finished. Sometimes, the Pastor may come over to the usher and take the plate to bless the tithes. Follow the cues you see from the Pastor. If none, then simply place the collection plate on the communion table.



After the Service:

1. Ushers are to clean the sanctuary following the service by checking each pew for bulletins and other trash, restock the pew holders with any hymnals and Bibles left on the pew (unless no pew rack is available), and check and tear out any guest sheets from the guest registry. The collected trash should be discarded and the guest registers should be taken to the church office. The lights and the sound system should be switched off.
2. **VERY IMPORTANT:** The ushers are responsible for locking the church after the church service even if people are still inside. At this point, the only door that needs to be locked is the OUTSIDE front door. Also, sanctuary and balcony lights should be extinguished as well as all other hallway lights that are not in use by any groups still in the church.