

Usher Guidelines

(Updated Jan. 09)

A Few Preliminary Items:

- + Make every effort to serve when scheduled. If you are unable to serve, please arrange for a substitute and notify the church office, 598-4397. If you have misplaced your Server Schedule, you can always access the current one at www.saintlukes-cs.org.
- + Please greet worshipers with a smile, with warmth and openness. You are a frontline evangelist, as you will provide worshipers with a first impression of Saint Luke's.
- + Relax and enjoy serving your Lord in this important ministry!

Before the Service:

- + Arrive at the church at least 20 minutes before the start of the service.
- + Turn on all lights, upstairs and downstairs (if they are not already on).
- + If you are usher at early service, please make sure that entrance door's crash-bars are "locked down" for easy access. Crash bars can be locked down with allen-wrench type "key" (found above or beside metal entrance doors).
- + Adjust air conditioning/heating depending on the weather/season. Thermostats are all automatic and should not need much attention. However, turning system fans "on" to circulate air may be needed, or turning system to "heat" or "cool" during transitional seasons. Please see Pastor Dave if you are not familiar with our thermostats.
- + Ensure offering plates are on usher's table just outside sanctuary, and that bread and wine are on the credence table in the Atrium between sanctuary doors.
- + Ensure worship folders, large-print worship folders and children's bulletins are on the usher table. If not, please check office workroom.
- + Please place a worship folder on acolytes' and crucifer's chairs in the chancel, as needed.
- + Assist Greeters in making sure everyone has a nametag, both members and visitors.
- + Please keep sanctuary doors closed before services. As worshipers approach, it is hospitable for ushers to open the doors, welcoming them. However, please keep doors closed before services to keep noise contained in the Atrium, and to allow worshipers silence to prepare and to hear the organ prelude. If choir, assisting ministers, servers, or members fellowshiping in the Atrium become too loud, feel free to *gently and courteously* encourage them to become more quiet.

- + Greet members and visitors and provide them with a worship folder (or bulletin, if the complete service is not printed in a worship folder). Be sure to offer guest and visitors a pencil to fill out their visitor/member sheets so we will have a record of their visit. Large-print worship folders are available for those who may desire them.

- + Normally, you need not escort worshipers to their seats, however, in the case of handicapped or disabled people you should offer to escort them. During services with large attendance, it may be helpful to escort/assist people in finding seats as the sanctuary fills. Do not hesitate to ask worshipers to move closer, if necessary, to accommodate families and couples who would like to sit together.

- + At five minutes before any service begins, ring the small bells on the usher table, and the bell in the bell-tower a number of times (seven or more, as a general rule). At the time of service (i.e., 8:00 or 10:30 a.m., 7:00 p.m.), again ring the bells. You will need to practice ringing the bell in the bell-tower at some point, as it takes a certain “touch” to ring it confidently and without turning the bell over. Do not worry excessively about ringing the bell an exact number of times. Better to ring the bell loudly and confidently at service times, than hesitantly and softly for fear of hitting a certain number.

During the Service

- + Please be aware of "security" issues during the service. Unless you are performing a particular function inside the sanctuary, it is best for one usher to remain in the Atrium being aware of the church property--inside and outside. Watch for persons who don't appear to be worshipers, but who may have entered the building. Check on the nursery every so often. With violence against churches on the rise, it is important for ushers to also see themselves as security personnel. Please be aware of our surroundings, and who should or shouldn't be in the building. If there is a security risk, follow your instincts...call 911 immediately, then come forward quietly to inform the pastor. He will take responsibility for interrupting the service and providing instructions for worshipers.

- + Please be aware of climate/temperature during the service. Adjust thermostats as needed so that worshipers remain comfortable.

- + Hold latecomers in the rear of the church until an appropriate time for seating. Do not seat them during the confession, any prayers or scripture readings. Appropriate seating times would be during the opening hymn, Hymn of Praise or between parts of the liturgy. This situation may be a time when you want to escort or assist people in finding a seat. It is probably best not to seat latecomers in the rear choir section (when the choir is not singing), as it isolates them from the rest of the congregation. Of course, if the choir is not singing and additional seating is needed, the choir area may be used.

- + Please go downstairs after the sermon has concluded to notify the Children's Church leader that it is nearing time for the Children to return to the sanctuary. Normally they should return sometime between the end of the sermon and the offering. If children are coming up during the prayers, please hold them in the Atrium, with sanctuary doors

closed, as it is extremely disruptive to the congregation praying to have children trying to find their places.

- + During the Hymn of the Day (immediately after the sermon), walk up each aisle (side aisles and center aisle) to collect any prayer requests from worshipers. If there are any requests, take them to the assisting minister via the right side aisle (by the pulpit).
- + After the sharing of the peace when all have been seated, each usher should take one offering plate and go to the front of the center aisle. Receive the offering row by row. A musical selection by the organist or choir will take place as you are receiving the offering. When the pastor is behind the altar, ushers should come forward to present the offerings of money, bread and wine. Reverence the altar with a slight bow at the center of the communion rail, remaining on the floor of the sanctuary. Hand the offering plates to the acolytes or assistants. Before leaving the altar, again reverence the altar with a slight bow or nod of the head, then return to the rear of the sanctuary.
- + At the beginning of the communion liturgy, one usher should go outside to the bell-tower, and the other to the window at the rear of the sanctuary (in view of the bell-tower). At the beginning of the Lord's Prayer, the usher inside the sanctuary signals the usher at the bell-tower to ring the bell slowly during the praying of the Lord's Prayer. Signal again at the end of the Lord's Prayer so that the ringer will know to stop.
- + After the breaking of the bread by the pastor, as the assistants and organist are communed, ushers should come forward, one in the center aisle and one in the right aisle as you face the altar. The left side of the congregation approaches the altar from the center aisle and goes to the far left end of the communion rail. They return to their seats using the left side aisle. The right side of the congregation approaches the altar from the right side aisle and goes to the center of the communion railing. They return to their seats using the center aisle. When the last table consists only of people from the right side of the sanctuary (or choir), then they should proceed all the way to the far left end of the communion rail. As ushers you are to guide those communing to follow these procedures. A good rule of thumb on the number of people for each communion table is 12-14 total, 6-7 on each side. There is no need to split up families or couples to "fill" a table. If you misjudge the number—too many going forward, just hold the overage back (stand with them to help them feel at ease).
- + Ushers commune with the last table, after everyone else has communed.
- + If any infirmed, disabled, or handicapped persons do not, or appear unable to approach the altar for communion, please ask if they would like the pastor to come to them. Let the pastor know of their desire at an opportune and inconspicuous time during the distribution.
- + Please count the number of people attending the service. In your count, include the pastor, assisting ministers, acolytes, crucifer and choir, if they are participating. Also

include the people in the nursery (adults and children). Record this number in the attendance book (small notebook) on the usher table.

- + At the end of the service, please open all sanctuary doors.
- + Unless otherwise instructed, DO NOT stand at the back of the sanctuary to collect used worship folders. We want worshipers to take their folders home, as parish announcements and information are included therein.

Following the Service

- + Pick up all used worship folders and other trash left behind from chairs and floor.
- + Be sure all candles, with the exception of the Eternal Candle, are extinguished.
- + Check the coffee pots and make sure pots and hot plates are turned off.
- + Please turn off all lights, upstairs and downstairs, unless otherwise instructed. Be sure to check bathroom lights.
- + Please release crash-bars on upstairs and downstairs entrance doors. Be sure to leave allen-wrench type keys where you found them.
- + Check that all windows in sanctuary and downstairs are closed. Check that all doors are closed tightly—pastor's office, west sanctuary, downstairs east classroom, downstairs south playground, downstairs west hallway.

Emergencies During the Service:

- + If someone should need medical attention during the service, please assist in any way necessary. There are a number of medically trained people in the congregation who may be able to assist.
- + If a parent is needed in the nursery, attempt to locate that parent without disturbing the service.
- + In case of a life or death emergency, take a note to the pastor immediately and as discreetly as possible. Pastor will assume responsibility for interrupting the service, or taking whatever steps he deems necessary.