

Usher Manual

(Revised February 2016 by B. Cherry)

I. Introduction

Serving as an usher at a regular Sunday service (or at a special service such as Christmas Eve) is a very rewarding, important and yet relatively simple task. While there are a number of different duties, they are mostly intuitive and can be effectively performed with very little in the way of training or orientation. The best way to learn is by doing (typically with an experienced usher for the first few times) and by becoming familiar with the contents of this manual.

II. Scheduling and Recruiting Ushers

- A. A list of prospective ushers is maintained by the Usher Coordinator (UC). Anyone can be placed on this list by speaking with an usher on duty, by notifying the UC or by contacting the church office.
- B. The UC will utilize email (until something else becomes available) to schedule ushers.
- C. Anyone who wishes to usher on a regularly scheduled basis (eg. on the 3rd Sunday of each month) may do so by informing the UC of their interest.
- D. Each month, the UC will identify the regularly scheduled ushers for that month and email that list to the prospective ushers. Any who are willing and able to cover one or more of the open spots in that month should reply to the UC, indicating their interest.
- E. On a weekly basis (typically by Wednesday), the UC will review the list of ushers scheduled for the upcoming Sunday and, if there are any spots to be filled, will send an email to the prospective usher list to recruit additional ushers.
- F. A prospective usher willing to fill an open spot should “reply to all” indicating their interest in the upcoming Sunday.
- G. If there are any open spots come Sunday morning, the UC will recruit individuals immediately prior to the service. If the UC is not in attendance, it will be necessary for the ushers in place to recruit assistance. Please note, however, that only two ushers (one on each side) are needed to man the doors and distribute the OOS. If necessary, someone can always be recruited from the congregation to assist with the passing of the collection plate.

III. Duties of Ushers

- A. The basic duties of an usher are as follows:
 1. Immediately upon arrival, ensure the availability of the Orders of Service, the collection plates and also check that the sanctuary chairs are properly positioned. Take position at the entrance to the sanctuary, welcome congregants and hand out Orders of

Service (OOS) and other items such as Activity Bags as required. Watch for any visitors, introduce yourself, offer to answer any questions and make them feel welcomed.

2. Provide assistance, as needed, to anyone with ambulatory challenges by helping them to a suitable seat and placing walkers, wheelchairs, etc. in a suitable location.
3. Be aware of any “needs” that may arise and provide assistance as necessary.
4. Provide Large Print Hymnals to those requesting them (Note: Storage and handling of these hymnals is yet to be determined)
5. In the event of a very full house, encourage congregants to move to the center to better accommodate others.
6. Control access to the sanctuary after the start of the service to ensure certain elements such as the prayer, silent meditation and some musical solos are respected. In general, congregants may be seated whenever the congregation is asked to stand.
7. Count the number of attendees.
8. Pass the collection plates during the offertory.
9. Following the service, open doors and collect OOS for recycling and other items from congregants as they leave.
10. Following the service, count the collection, complete the necessary forms and deliver the collection to the office. Also, police the sanctuary and return it to proper order.

B. Details on the performance of the above duties are as follows:

1. Ushers should plan to arrive at their station 15 minutes prior to the start of the service.
2. Upon arrival, an usher should obtain the dark grey basket from the office which contains the OOS, “usher” tags, reserved seat signs, pens, note paper, etc. and distribute material to each side of the sanctuary as needed. They should confirm that the collection plates are available and, if they are not, retrieve them from the closet in the Minister’s Prep Room and place two on each side.
3. If the chairs are not properly positioned, make adjustments as necessary. The width of the aisle between the chairs and the wall is important and should be a minimum of three(3) feet wide. Also, nothing should be obstructing the emergency exits at each side of the pulpit area.
4. Ushers should check in with each other, determine if all ushers are present and agree as to who will handle the money counting duties and who will straighten up the sanctuary afterwards.
5. Ushers should wear their TVUUC nametag and should also put on an “Usher” tag.
6. The counting of attendees is very important and should be as accurate as possible.
 - a) The count should be taken no earlier than about 10 minutes after the start time of the service (to include the late arrivers) but before the children and teachers depart after the Story for All Ages, when applicable.

- b) Typically, the ushers will count just their half of the sanctuary, make a note of the number and later use that information for the preparation of the Plate Collection Record.
 - c) Note that there may be some congregants sitting in the choir area who are actual attendees at the service and not part of the music program.
 - d) Those participating in the program (ministers, ministry assistants, choir or other musical contributors) are counted and recorded separately from congregants.
7. The ushers will pass the offering plates at the appropriate time during the service.
- a) Wait until the music has begun before starting the collection.
 - b) The pattern to be used may be determined by individual preference though some believe it is best to begin at the front row on the main level. This gives the bulk of the congregants the best view of the plate and alerts them to have their donation ready.
 - c) After taking the offering, the ushers on each side will place the plates on the wall behind the pulpit. This leaves them in full view until the ushers take them to be counted following the service.
 - d) On Sundays when the choir is singing, provide a 5th offering plate to the choir for them to distribute amongst themselves during the course of the service. This plate is to be retrieved at the end of the service and counted with the rest of the collection.

C. Following the service:

1. Counting the Money and Preparing the Plate Collection Record

- a) Two people are required to count and confirm the collected monies and to prepare the Plate Collection Record.
 - (1) If two ushers are not available for whatever reason, the board member on duty may be available. If not, any other person known to the usher may be recruited as necessary. For proper cash management, having this second person is absolutely necessary!
- b) The money is best counted in the minister's prep room. Supplies, including blank Plate Collection Records, are kept in a container on the shelf in the closet. Notify the office if forms or other materials are needed. This includes the re-inking of the check endorsement stamps.
- c) Detailed instructions for counting the plate and recording the required information are provided on the back side of the Plate Collection Record (Sample Attached).
- d) In the event that a count of the attendance was not made, make an educated guess and record that number in the space provided. Place an asterisk by this number and footnote it as being "Estimated".

- e) One person will count the money and record the amounts on the form. The other person will confirm the count and the entries. One person will perform the math and the other person will check the math.
 - f) Any sealed envelopes should be placed in the pouch without opening them. If they are inadvertently opened, then the money whether cash or check, must be handled in the same manner as the rest. If the envelope contains donor information, place the open envelope in the pouch so that the office can extract this information.
 - g) After all steps have been completed and double-checked, the money, endorsed checks, any envelopes, etc. are placed in the pouch and delivered to the office via the drop slot on the wall to the left of the Director of Administration's office door.
2. Return "Usher" tags, reserved seat signs and other materials to the dark grey basket and return it to the church office (DO NOT leave the money pouch in this basket!)
3. Policing the Sanctuary
- a) Following the service, one or two of the ushers shall inspect the Sanctuary and straighten it as needed.
 - b) Things to look for and the tasks to be performed are as follows:
 - (1) Remove scraps of trash from the seats, floors, etc. and place in trash or recycling as necessary
 - (2) Be sure to look around the pulpit area including the out-of-sight areas to the side and on the ramp. Remove any cups, glasses, etc. and take to kitchen.
 - (3) Report any cleaning needs (spills, sticky floors, cobwebs, etc.) that cannot be handled on the spot to the office.
 - (4) Check for any maintenance concerns such as lights being out, roof leaks, damaged chairs, etc. and report these to the office.
 - (5) Seat-back supplies such as visitor information cards, donation envelopes, etc. are maintained by staff. If there appear to be any shortages, notify the office.
 - (6) Collect any Large Print Hymnals and return them to their designated storage area.
 - (7) Check the chalice lighting supplies in the wooden cabinet to the right of the pulpit. There should be a reasonable supply of 91% alcohol, cans of jellied alcohol and a supply of matches. Report any shortages to the office.
 - (8) The proper placement of Hymnals is handled by the custodians but ushers should assist with this if time permits.

Appendix 1 - Sample Plate Collection Record

Front Side

TVUUC Plate Collection Record (See instructions on reverse)

Date of Service: _____
 Time: _____

- Regular Collection:
 Special Collection: _____
 Other: _____

HEADCOUNT: Attendees: _____ Program (pulpit/music/etc.): _____

Bills	X Qty.	Total	Coin	X Qty.	Total	# of checks: _____
\$100	_____	= \$ _____	\$1	_____	= \$ _____	
\$50	_____	= \$ _____	50c	_____	= \$ _____	
\$20	_____	= \$ _____	25c	_____	= \$ _____	
\$10	_____	= \$ _____	10c	_____	= \$ _____	
\$5	_____	= \$ _____	5c	_____	= \$ _____	
\$1	_____	= \$ _____	1c	_____	= \$ _____	
Total		= \$ _____	Total		= \$ _____	

Counted by: _____ Checked by: _____

Reverse Side

Ushers – Please follow these instructions for Plate Collections

- 1) Be sure a headcount is taken no earlier than about 10 minutes after the start time but before the Story for All Ages. Record this headcount in the spaces provided. Be aware that some may be seated in the choir area but not be part of the music program.
- 2) After collection, place the collection plates on the wall behind the pulpit. Immediately after the service, take the plates into the minister’s prep office and count the money.
- 3) Record the date and time of the service. Select the type of collection. Identify the Special Collection, if any. Specify any “Other” collection as appropriate.
- 4) Separate the bills and coins by their face value. Count each and record in the spaces provided. Multiply the face value times the quantity and enter the individual totals. Total all of the bills and coins and enter in the spaces provided. Add the bills and coins together and record the total.
- 5) Proper cash management requires that one person separates and counts the money as described in step 4 and that a second person does a recount. Any discrepancies must be resolved until both parties have the same count. Sign on the spaces provided.
- 6) Count the number (not value) of checks and record. Endorse every check by stamping in the indicated section of each check.
- 7) Place all money, checks and the completed record in a bank pouch and deliver to the church office. Put the pouch in the drop slot outside the administrator’s office.