

General Guidelines for Ushers



First Church of Christ Simsbury
Simsbury, Connecticut
www.1stchurchsimsbury.org

Revised 2/10

General Duties of Usher Captains

- A. Work with the assigned Elder to recruit team members.
- B. Contact and confirm ushers attendance at assigned service
 - A. A team of eight allows for full coverage recognizing there will be unavoidable absences. In the event there are too few ushers to cover a service, the Usher Captain should recruit volunteer ushers from the congregation.
 - B. The 8:30 service requires the attendance of 2 – 3 ushers, and the 10:00 service requires 6.
- C. Train assigned team members on goals of the usher program and importance of hospitality.
- D. Keep the Usher Team informed about assigned dates and any changes in the time for a service or in the General Guidelines for Ushers.
- E. Provide supervision for *ad hoc* usher groups serving in place of your team.
- F. Provide feedback to assigned Elder regarding observations and issues encountered during the service.
- G. Arrange for the physical count of the congregation for each service and record the appropriate information in the provided binder.
- H. Serve as emergency coordinator for assigned services for evacuation and emergency services.
- I. Provide immediate feedback to the assigned Elder and Office Administrator of any issues that effect public safety.

General Duties of Ushers

- A. Any Usher who is unable to usher according to the schedule should arrange for a substitute and advise the Usher Captain of the change.
- B. Ushers should arrive 30 minutes before the scheduled start of the service.
- C. All Ushers should wear name tags or, if acting as a substitute, an identifying Usher tag from the Team's bag of name tags.
- D. Each Usher should check with the Team Captain for special instructions or changes in the order of worship.
- E. Know the evacuation procedure (attached).
- F. Greet the congregation and visitors with warmth and hospitality
- G. Distribute name tags and bulletins to congregation
- H. Distribute and encourage the use of name tags
- I. Be alert for people needing assistance reaching a seat. Offer a hearing aid to those requesting one.
- J. Keep track of available seats, supplement them if possible, and direct standees to use them. Encourage people to move closer together; each pew can hold twelve people.
- K. Close doors to the worship space during the Prelude. Leave extra bulletins outside the worship space for late arrivals.
- L. Keep noise in the worship space to a minimum.
- M. Assist with attendance count as requested.
- N. Should evacuation become necessary follow evacuation plan (Appendix A or B as appropriate) and the direction of the Captain and emergency service personnel.
- O. Assemble quietly in Narthex or back of worship space before the end of the sermon in order to begin offertory collection promptly.
- P. Open doors to worship space during final hymn.
- Q. Clean and straighten the worship space removing any litter.
- R. Return name tags to Team Captain.

Before 8:30 Service:

- A. No fewer than 2 and no more than 3 ushers are needed to serve.
- B. If an adequate number of assigned ushers are not in attendance please recruit additional ushers from the congregation
- C. Arrive no later than 8:00 AM
- D. Check the cordless telephone located in the parlor and ensure it is operating for use in emergencies
- E. Ensure the heating or air conditioning systems are operating or contact emergency number listed by the telephone or adjust as necessary to keep the worship space comfortable.
- F. Retrieve the "bank bag" from on top of locking file cabinet in the Church Office.
- G. Retrieve Usher Name Tags from the "bank bag" and distribute among team.
- H. Check that "brown" baskets to be used for offering are retrieved from the bookcase immediately inside the door and placed on the table inside the doorway in Palmer Hall.
- I. Place bulletins in provided Brown rectangular basket for distribution
- J. Place the of prayer rocks on the pedestal immediately inside the door and add two (2) pitchers of water to bowl.
- K. Retrieve a supply of "children's activity bags" from galley kitchen for use by children. They are specified for ages <6 and 7<.
- L. Check to see that the lighter is working and available to the minister on the communion table
- M. Place two (2) glasses of water behind the podium utilizing the appropriate monogrammed glasses found the galley kitchen outside the chapel door.
- N. Ensure Name tag stock and a markers are available in the foyer for use by the congregation
- O. As the congregation arrives the Ushers should:
 - a. Greet all congregants
 - b. Distribute bulletins
 - c. Encourage the use of name tags
 - d. Direct newcomers to "prayer rocks" located inside door
 - e. Offer appropriate "activity bags" to younger children along with "shaker eggs"
- P. Close the worship space doors at 8:30 AM.

During the 8:30 Worship Service:

- A. Count the congregation, including the choir and children. Record the count in the space provided in the "attendance" book located on the table inside the Palmer Hall door. Note special events or services.

- B. Maintain as quiet an environment as possible asking late arrivals to wait to enter until a transition time in the service and keeping discussion among the ushers to a minimum and a reduced volume.
- C. If an evacuation is necessary, assign ushers to the midpoints of each seating area to direct the congregation to the nearest exit.
- D. Dispatch Ushers for collection of the offering before the beginning of the offertory anthem using the “brown” baskets provided. The offering will be presented to the minister upon the conclusion of the offertory music. If there are children present, the minister will invite them to join the ushers at the back. They can carry the full offering baskets forward at the minister’s signal, for the prayer of dedication. If no children are present, have one usher carry the baskets forward at the conclusion of the offertory music.

After the 8:30 Worship Service:

- A. Extinguish the candles on the communion table
- B. After the service, prayer rocks are retrieved from water, dried, and returned to the bookcase immediately inside the door to the chapel.
- C. Place the offering in the bank bag along with the usher name tags, and seal it.
- D. The Usher Captain should lock the bank bag in the filing cabinet in the church office using the key attached to the bag relocking the cabinet.
- E. Clear all items, other than the floral arrangement from the Communion table.
- F. The flower arrangement on the Communion table needs to be carried to the Meeting House and placed upon that Communion table.
- G. The water cups should be removed behind the podium, washed, and returned to the galley kitchen
- H. Encourage congregants to place any unwanted bulletins in recycling bin as they exit along with any unused bulletins.

Before each 10:00 Worship Service:

- A. Schedule and confirm no fewer than six (6) ushers to serve
- B. If less than six (6) ushers are available recruit additional ad hoc ushers from congregation.
- C. Retrieve cordless phone from the Parlor.
- D. Retrieve the "bank bag" from on top of locking file cabinet in the Church Office and place it in the Flower Room. The iPod will be in the bag
- E. Retrieve Usher Name Tags from the "bank Bag".
- F. Check that collection plates are available in the Narthex.
- G. Place a monogrammed glass of water on the shelf inside the pulpit located in Flower Room reflecting the appropriate minister
- H. Check that sound system is turned on in the Flower Room at least ten minutes before the start of the service.
- I. Connect iPod to sound system
 - a. The Recording Base snaps onto the bottom of the iPod.
 - b. As soon as this is done the screen on the iPod will say: "Voice Memo" (at the top) with "00:00:00" (for time of recording in the middle) and "Record and Cancel" (on the bottom).
 - c. The special cord from the PA system (which comes out of the back of the PA system in the Flower room) is plugged into the side of the Recording Base. (There is a label on the cord)
 - d. By spinning your finger around the control ring of the iPod you can highlight "Record" and then push the center button on the face of the iPod to start recording.
 - e. You will see the numbers escalating 01, 02, 03; etc showing the iPod is recording.
 - f. (Sometimes this doesn't work correctly so you will need to unplug the Recording Base and plug it back in again to make another attempt... usually this will do it)
- J. Review the order of worship for changes which may require the Ushers' attention such as baptisms (may require roped off seating in front rows), use of tithing box (no collection) and note timing of offering.
- K. The Captain at his discretion may rope off access to the select pews or balcony during services in light of the special needs of the service such as a baptism, special musical offering, or lower attendance anticipated.
- L. Patrol Pews to ensure they are free of debris and are stocked with hymnals, bibles, pens, and response cards
- M. The Usher Captains should assign team members to:
 - a. Serve as a Greeter at either the Narthex or Parlor entrance way

- b. Distribute bulletins and/ or name tags at the Narthex or Parlor entrance
- N. Assign ushers to each entrance to the main level of the Sanctuary.
- O. Adjust the windows as necessary to keep the Sanctuary comfortable.
- P. If no acolyte is available for the service, discreetly light the altar candles several minutes before the Prelude.
- Q. Close the sanctuary doors during the Prelude.

During the 10:00 Worship Service:

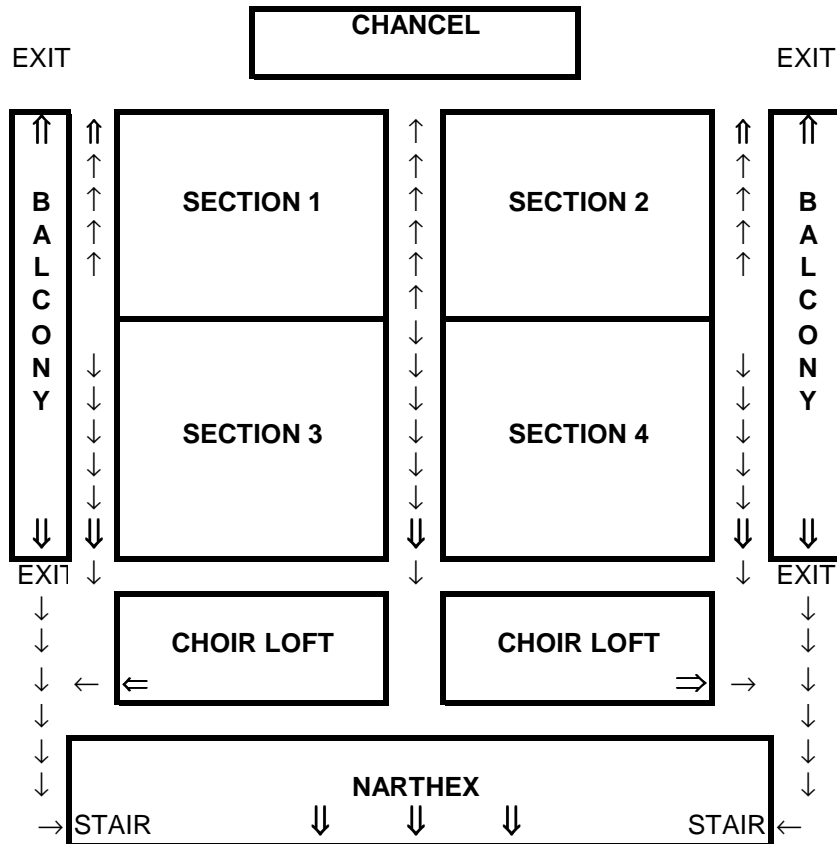
- A. Count the congregation, including the choir and children and teachers. Record the count in the space provided in the "blue" book in the Narthex table drawer. Note special events or services.
- B. If an evacuation is necessary, at the direction of the Captain station ushers to the midpoints of each seating area to direct the congregation to the nearest exit.
- C. Ushers should gather in the Narthex for the offertory collection at the conclusion of the sermon. If a special choir is standing at the head of the center aisle, send two of the Ushers down the outside aisles to avoid disruption at the front of the church.
- D. When collection is complete, press button on Narthex wall to alert the organist that the Ushers are prepared to proceed.
- E. Dispatch four Ushers with collection plates during the Doxology, beginning at the word "flow." Ushers should be instructed to present the offering to the minister(s) at the foot of the Chancel steps.

After the 10:00 Worship Service:

- A. Extinguish all candles.
- B. Use the iPod control ring to "Stop and Save" It will take a few moments then place the iPod into the "Bank Bag"
- C. Remove the offering to the Flower Room, place it in the "bank bag" along with any returned pew response cards, and usher name tags, and seal it
- D. The Usher Captain should lock the bank bag in the filing cabinet in the church office using the key attached to the bag
- E. Ushers should clean and straightening the pews on the main level and the balcony. Hymnals and Bibles should be returned to the racks or pew-ends, and litter should be removed.
- F. All unused or unwanted bulletins should be placed in the bins for recycling.

- G. The water glass should be removed from the pulpit, washed, and returned to the flower room
- H. The cordless phone should be returned to the Parlor charger.

MEETING HOUSE EVACUATION PROCEDURE



→ Denotes Exit Route

⇒ Denotes Door (Interior or Exterior)