

GUIDELINES FOR USHER

Christ Our Redeemer Catholic Church

The Usher Ministry plays a vital role in creating a welcoming and prayerful environment for all who come to Mass. Ushers greet parishioners and visitors with a warm smile, assist with seating, distribute and collect missalettes, and take up the collection. They also help maintain a safe and secure environment by being attentive to the well-being of the congregation. In addition, ushers prepare the church for the next Mass, ensuring that all who enter find a clean and orderly space for worship and prayer. Because ushers are often the first people worshipers encounter, they represent the spirit of hospitality at Christ Our Redeemer. This ministry is more than simply "keeping order"; it is a way of serving Christ by serving His people.

These guidelines are designed to establish clear standards, enabling ushers to carry out their duties with competence, reverence, and professionalism, while consistently applying common sense and compassion.

Ushers are volunteers, but once you accept this ministry, you also take the responsibility of carrying out these duties faithfully and with a servant's heart.

❖ Qualifications:

- Having a sincere desire to serve the Lord and his people at Christ Our Redeemer Church.
- Must be at least 18 years old.

❖ Duties:

- Serve at the discretion of the Pastor
- Ushers are assigned via the Ministry Scheduling Program (MSP). Enter your availability / non-availability during the middle of the month for the following two months. Deadline dates for schedule inputs are the middle of the following months:
 - September for October-November
 - November for December-January
 - January for February-March
 - March for April-May
 - May for June-July
 - July for August-September
- You should always be aware of any changes to your plans and consider updating your profiles accordingly. A minister can go into their profile at any time and update their "can't serve" dates. If something comes up with your schedule that will prevent you from serving, please open your MSP app and update your profile. It takes a few seconds to do it.
- Ushers are listed on the MSP alphabetically. The Mass Captain will designate the Mass Leader, who is responsible to the Pastor for all Usher Activities at that Mass. Ideally, there will be four ushers at the 10:30 Mass, three ushers at the 5:30 and 7:30 Masses. The Mass Leader is the final arbitrator on position assignments
- The MSP will schedule Holy Days ushers. Responsibilities apply to Holy Day Masses as they do to Sunday Mass.
- If you cannot keep a scheduled ushering date, it is your responsibility to get a substitute. Utilize the "REQUEST A SUB" function on the MSP, which generates a notification to all available personnel that a replacement is needed.

- If there is a shortage of ushers when you arrive at church, consider volunteering to assist with ushering.
- If you are scheduled and there is a shortage of ushers, recruit a trained usher as they arrive at church.
- For some Masses, like Christmas, five to six ushers are scheduled. The fifth and sixth ushers are there to help with seating, assist with collections, and so on-

➤ **Wear your badge.** If you forget your badge, use one of the generic badges from the left-hand drawer in the Sacristy. Return the generic badges to the drawer after church.

➤ **Before Mass:**

- Ushers should:
 - Arrive 30 minutes before Mass
 - Go to the Brides' Room and initial the COR Ministry Schedule.
 - The Mass Leader should gather the specific Mass money bag from the Sacristy and place it in the back of the church, near the baskets. Two ushers, who must be over 18 and not related, will both sign the security bag.
 - Ushers are located in the area just inside the nave entrance to greet parishioners. The Mass Leader asks a family or group of two or more people to bring the gifts to the altar at the offertory. Note the seating location of the family and inform the other ushers to facilitate the Offertory process. Try to get more parishioners involved by asking someone you don't know. Don't let a "NO" discourage you from asking someone you don't know.
 - The sanctuary doors are opened upon the arrival of the parishioners. To avoid the noise in the Narthex spilling into the sanctuary, don't hold the doors open.
 - Ushers in the sanctuary hand out missalettes and greet parishioners.
- Keep the doors closed. This will help keep the noise level in the church to a minimum.
- Ensure the eight offertory baskets are placed in the vestibule.

➤ **During Mass:**

- Once Mass begins, the Mass Leader locks the N Lakeshore Drive doors as well as the East doors adjacent to the music room. An usher MUST remain in the Narthex throughout the Mass to monitor late arrivals. See Special Note on these doors below!
- An usher MUST remain physically present in the rear of the nave at all times, either standing in the vicinity of the Baptismal Font or sitting in the rear pew, to provide situational awareness and assistance as may be required.

❖ **Seating for the Disabled:**

- Wheelchair spaces are located as identified in [Figure 1](#). Chairs from the Cry Room may be added per position, allowing a family member to sit with them. Except for the last two rows in the rear center aisle on either side, wheelchairs, whether occupied or unoccupied, are not allowed in the aisles. Ushers can assist in seating the parishioner and relocating the wheelchair to a safe area.
- When any parishioner is unable to go forward to receive communion, ask if they wish to have the Eucharist brought to them. Then, inform the EMHO, who is usually serving on the altar side, and escort the minister to those in need.

❖ **Reserved Seating:**

- At Christ Our Redeemer, we believe that when we gather for Mass, all are equal before God's table. For that reason, seating is generally open, and everyone is welcome to sit wherever they are most comfortable.
 - The only times reserved seating is used are for special occasions, such as funerals, weddings, or liturgies with visiting dignitaries or special guests. These reserved areas are always identified in advance by the COR Office Staff or Faith Life Coordinator to ensure proper hospitality and order.
 - By following this practice, we can balance both our respect for individuals with special needs on important occasions and our shared truth that in God's house, every seat is a place of welcome.

❖ **Offertory:**

- These guidelines are crucial for the 10:30 Mass. For the other Masses with only three ushers, adjust as needed.
 - Go to the Baptismal Fount, at the beginning of the Profession of Faith, collect the requisite number of baskets, and move to the back of aisles Two, Four, and Five.
 - Father will call for the children to bring forward their gifts for people in need, allow children some time to bring their gifts, and return to their seats. Don't wait for everyone to return, but wait until enough have returned to avoid congestion in the aisles. All ushers should be at the back of their aisle and then move forward together.
 - Ushers go to aisles 1-4 with two baskets each. Start a basket in the front pew. Then move to your notch, one, two, three, and four to start the second basket in the section as dictated by the initial basket flow.
 - Avoid collection from the choir.
 - Remember to pass a basket in the Cry Room.
 - Ensure that baskets are distributed through all pews and that all baskets are picked up and emptied into the large basket.
 - Ensure the selected family or group moves to the back of the church when the ushers move forward.
 - To expedite the Offertory process, the first usher prepares the family to proceed forward, even if the collection process is ongoing.
 - Hand the group the wine and the hosts. Provide brief instructions for the procedure:
 - If the family selected has only two people, an usher takes the collection to the altar behind the wine and host. Then go to the rear of the church.

➤ **Second Collection:**

- Follow the same procedures outlined above.
 - The second collection starts IMMEDIATELY following the first.
 - DO NOT wait to begin until the gifts arrive at the altar.
 - Send the gifts and proceeds from the first collection down the aisle as the second collection starts.
- The two ushers who signed the bag, who are not related, place the money into the security bag provided for each Mass, seal it, and then place it in the safe in the Sacristy. The bags are to be sealed at the end, not folded in half and then sealed. Folding hinders the banker's ability to open the bag at the opposite end.

❖ **Communion:**

- Communicants typically will file forward in an orderly fashion without specific guidance.
- After the EMOHC ministers have received their Eucharist bowls, each usher proceeds to the head of their aisle and helps in the orderly flow of communion recipients.

- In addition to facilitating the flow of communicants, keep an eye open to identify anyone who may not have consumed the sacred host. Watch to ensure the communicant consumes the host and does not take it to their pew or place in their pocket.
- Should a communicant not consume the host note where they are seated and tell the deacon or priest. DO NOT become confrontational.
- If there are people in the rear of the church who need to receive, escort the EMHC to the individuals.

❖ After Mass:

- Prop doors open for the recessional.
- Parishioners will return their missals to the book racks. Ushers 3 and 4 help place missals in the book racks.
- Make sure all exit doors remain closed.

❖ Special Situations:

➤ Baptism

- If instructed by the priest or deacon, Ushers will close the sanctuary doors and politely ask parishioners to wait until the ceremony at the rear of the church is complete. If people insist on coming in, use the single door on the right side.
- Ushers will move the missalette carts if needed to allow room for the participants.

➤ Children's and Teen Masses:

- Usually conducted monthly and at the 10:30 Mass only. Generally, two (3rd and 4th grade) children are assigned as "Junior Ushers". When they arrive, they will introduce themselves to the adult ushers who are wearing name tags.
- **They are restricted in what they are allowed to do.**
 - They can hand out and collect Missalettes, but must remain in the sanctuary; they are not allowed to go out into the Narthex.
 - If "Usher" Badges are available, allow them to wear the generic badge.
 - Their parents are asked to sit in the rear of the church to allow easy rendezvous.
 - The children and their families are to be the first choice in bringing up the Offertory Gifts, with children carrying the large collection basket, parents the wine, and hosts.
 - At the conclusion of the Mass, Ushers are to assist the children in reconnecting with their parents.

➤ Funerals:

- When Ushers are requested, duties and responsibilities are similar to those of any mass.
 - Coordinate with Father for any special instructions (communion, etc.).
 - Please be aware that attendees may include non-Catholics who may not be familiar with the Catholic Funeral Mass.
 - Be prepared to hand out cards, assist with seating, and perform other tasks as needed.
 - **Offertory collection is NOT taken.**

❖ Emergencies:

- If a person becomes ill or falls out
 - If possible, assist the person to an out-of-the-way area.

- **Call 911** from the phone in the Sacristy or your personal cell phone. Please let the dispatcher know that you are calling from Christ Our Redeemer Catholic Church, located at 1038 White Point Road, Niceville, Florida.
- If you know a doctor or nurse is attending Mass, ask them to assist.
- There are several fire alarm boxes and fire extinguishers in the church
 - In the event of a fire or structural emergency, a fire alarm box is located at each of the three exits in the Narthex, and a fire extinguisher is available in the hallway outside the bathrooms.
 - Ushers assist parishioners in moving rapidly and orderly to the appropriate exit, including the Chapel area.
- First aid kits are located in the Family Bathroom, on the wall near the sink, and in the Sacristy, near the washer/dryer.
- An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is on the wall near the cry room.
- There is no solicitation or pan-handling allowed on church property without the permission of the Pastor. Ask those involved to leave and call 911
- ❖ **If someone behaves in a threatening way while Mass is going on:**
 - Call 911 and tell them, "We have a combative person making threats at Christ Our Redeemer, 1038 White Point Road, Niceville, Florida, next to the North Bay Fire Department."
 - Approach Father from the side of Mary's statue niche and tell him.
 - Do not try to reason with the person. Do not prevent the person from leaving. If the person leaves, get a description and make of the car. If possible, get the registration plate.
- ❖ **In all situations, when in doubt, "Common Sense" prevails.**

REMINDER – AUTOMATIC DOORS

There are **three doors** in the church with automatic push-button openers for individuals with disabilities:

- **Lakeshore entrance door**
- **East door near the music room**
- **Northernmost door** of the three main West-side doors

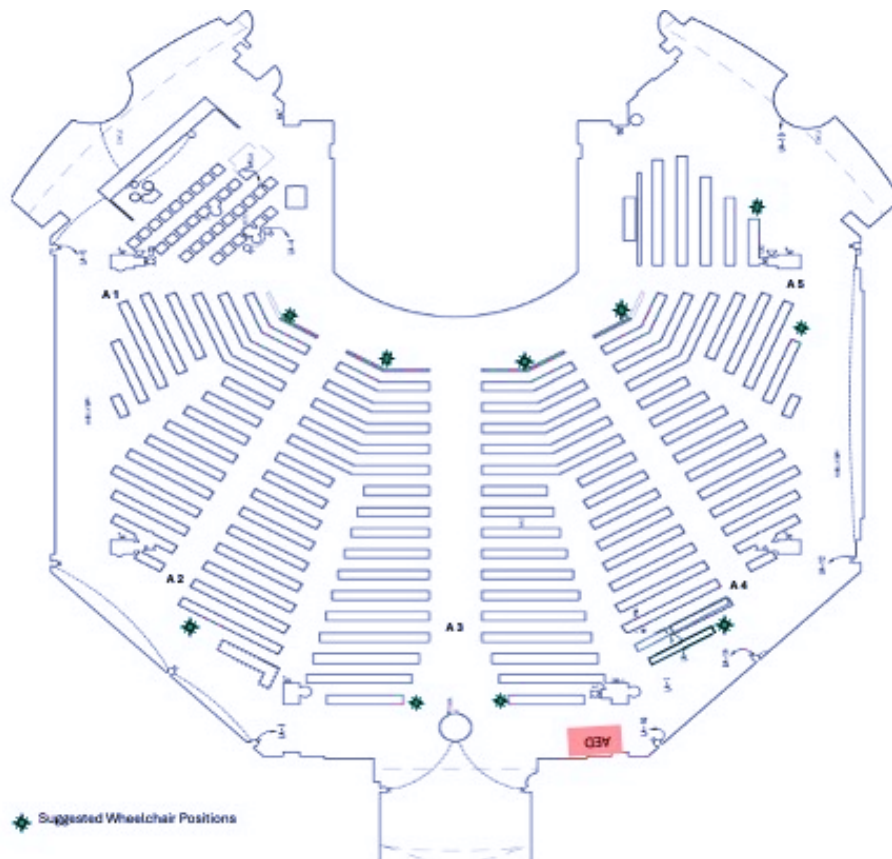
Important Instructions:

- The automatic openers are controlled by a **keyed switch** on the wall near the East door.
- While each door also has a rocker switch at the top, **do not use the rocker switches** to turn the openers on or off.
- When locking the doors ([see section “During Mass”](#)), the **keyed switch must also be turned off.**

! Why this matters:

Leaving the keyed switch on while doors are locked can cause the mechanism to keep trying to open when the button is pressed. This has already resulted in costly repairs.

 Please always ensure the keyed switch is turned off when securing the doors.



Usher Coordinator
 Bob Garcia (860) 841-7022
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Mass Captains

5:30 Mass
 Pat Willoz
patwilloz@aol.com
 850-897-2822



7:30 Mass
 Ross Maple
rmaple976@gmail.com
 850-496-3461



10:30 Mass
 Rick Spitznagel
spitzra@gmail.com
 850-974-42



Last updated 11/09/2025