

St. Matthias Ushers Ministry
Procedures - May 2014

Mission

The mission for the Ushers Ministry at St. Matthias is to provide personal service and courtesies to parishioners before, during, and after Mass. This includes welcoming, seating, helping people with special needs, and offering any assistance needed by parishioners or visitors. Through effective execution of the Ushers duties, you will help enhance your own and other's experience of the Liturgy and bring a sense of community where people view the church as a place of warmth, friendship, hospitality and where dialogue and interaction are encouraged.

Ushers also answer questions, seat late arrivals, point out restrooms, and help with emergencies. As the custodians of the church, Ushers straighten, organize, and secure the church insuring that everything is in order upon leaving the facility. Being an Usher is not simply a job, but a gift of service to prepare and enable parishioners to encounter Christ in the Mass.

General

- Arrive at church at least 20 minutes before start of Mass
- If you cannot attend your assigned Mass, arrange a SUBSTITUTE or notify another usher on the schedule for that week if you are unable to arrange a substitute
- Dress appropriately. At minimum:
 - Men: Dress slacks, dress shoes, dress shirt or nice sport shirt. Ties and jackets are OK as well.
 - Ladies: Dress, blouse and skirt or slacks, or pants suit
- When you have to speak in the church area, please keep your voice low or go to the Ministers room or into the Narthex so that those attending Mass are not disturbed

Facility Information

- There are 4 thermostats that control the church temperature
 - In the Chapel area near the Confessional and it only serves the Chapel area
 - In the Narthex area on the wall opposite the entrance to the women's restroom
 - The main nave area has two thermostats, one outside the Minister's Room door and the other outside the Cry Room door
 - Do not place the thermostats on "HOLD" - Just reset to the desired temperature and the thermostat will hold that temperature for 2-3 hours
- Switches for all church lighting are located on the panel just inside the Ministers Room
- Light switches for the Chapel are located on the wall inside the door to the Confessional
- The PA system switch is a surge protector located in the Ministers room just above the collection safe
- The first aid kit is located on the wall in the Sacristy
- Automatic External Defibrillator is mounted on the wall near the entrance to the men's restroom in the hall
- Parish enrollment forms are located in the back of the church in the literature racks
 - Completed forms can be placed in the collection bag or dropped in the safe

Before Mass

- Check off your name on the schedule in the Minister's room as being present
 - Write in your name if subbing for someone else
- Put on an ushers pin
- Review the Schedule for Collections to determine how many collections there will be at the Mass
- Check with the Mass Coordinator for information regarding special activities that impact the Ushers duties (e.g., pews to be reserved)
- Discuss with the other ushers present to agree on responsibilities (e.g., who will cover each aisle, bulletin distribution, find a family for the gifts, etc.)
- Confirm there are plastic cups for water in the Sacristy over the sink – If not, get some from the hall kitchen

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- Keep the door to the Ministers room closed prior to Mass to keep noise level down in the church
- Minimize your time in the Ministers room to only perform functions there as necessary
- Ask a family to take up the Offertory gifts
 - Ask them to come to the back of the church about half way through the first collection
 - Vary whom you ask from week to week so new people / families can experience this opportunity
 - Find a family that is dressed appropriately and with children old enough to safely carry the bread or wine
- Position the collection baskets in the back of church near the center Holy Water font out of the way
- Position the small black bags for the St. Vincent DePaul collection, if needed, in the same place
- Position the Offertory basket and bag in same area
 - Light blue bag for regular offering can be placed in the large Offertory basket
 - Dark blue for special 2nd offering
 - Black bag for St. Vincent DePaul
- Check the sign-up book for the Traveling Crucifix
 - In no one has signed up for the Mass, please ask a family to take the Crucifix and book home
 - Record their family name on the book and place it in the slot on Father's chair on the altar
 - If a family did sign up, confirm they are present prior to putting the book on the altar with their name
- Check that all necessary lights are ON (*Mass Coordinator will typically handle this*)
- Check that the PA system is ON (*Mass Coordinator will typically handle this*)
- Place a few bulletins at the side door by the chapel
- Adjust the temperature in the church if needed (*Should be pre-programmed*)
- Notify Mass Coordinator of parishioners who may need special assistance with Eucharist
- Assist parishioners to their seats as needed before Mass
- Extra seating can be positioned along the back of the church using the benches or chairs as required
 - Benches should be stacked prior to Mass no more than 2 high to avoid people using them while pews are still available
- Greet people as they arrive - Smile!
- As time permits, ushers can fill in for absent greeters (first priority is completion of all Usher duties)

During Mass

- Ushers remain visible at the back of church during Mass and participate in the Mass
 - Some ushers can sit during the homily but 1-2 ushers should be visible to monitor the congregation for possible problems, seat late arrivals, etc.
- Seat late arrivals to Mass as quietly and with as little disruption as possible
 - Do not seat people down the center aisle while the procession is underway. Direct them to the side aisles or ask them to wait for the procession to complete.
 - During the readings and homily, ask people to wait in the narthex to be seated when the reading is done
 - When pews are full, use the benches or chairs in the back of the church to seat late arrivals
 - Place benches in back only as needed and not before Mass has started
- Keep the doors at back of the church and to the cry room closed during Mass
- Assist ill parishioners as discreetly and charitably as possible
 - Call 911 if necessary using an available cell phone
 - Manage the situation minimizing disruption during Mass
- Inform the Children's Liturgy leader when the homily ends to prepare to return to church
- When the children arrive from the Children's Liturgy let them return to their seats during the announcement of the Preparation Song. If they return earlier have them wait in the Narthex until the song is announced
- Perform the Offertory collection
 - When the Offertory hymn begins, all ushers proceed down their assigned aisles simultaneously
 - Arrive at the front of the church simultaneously, bow, then begin the collection process working from first pew to last

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- Empty all baskets into the Offertory basket
- The collect baskets can either be stored in the Ministers room or prepared for the second collection
- Prepare for the Offertory procession
 - The family taking up the gifts should be waiting at the back of the church when the collection is finished
 - Give the wine, bread, and collection basket to the family members with a brief explanation of the procedure (Mass Coordinator will typically do this if present)
 - Person carrying the bread should be on the right side and person holding the bread should be on the left
 - Person carrying the collection basket can be behind the bread and wine
 - If needed, an usher may accompany the family and carry the Offertory basket
 - The procession begins either when the lead Acolyte leads it down the aisle or when Father is positioned in front of the altar
 - Father will take the wine and hosts and give them to an Acolyte
 - Father will take the Offertory basket, say a prayer, and return the basket to the family
 - All procession members bow and return to the back of church
 - The family returns the Offertory basket to the back
 - Wrap up the collection bag and, jointly with another usher, place the collection in the safe
 - When a second collection is required, the first collect can be given to the Mass Coordinator to hold while the second collection is gathered
- Perform the second collection if required
 - Follow the same process as the first collection
 - Begin the collection as soon as the first collection is placed in the safe
 - Second collection is placed in the appropriate bag and immediately placed in safe jointly by two ushers
- Assist the congregation with Communion
 - Take your position at back of your assigned aisle after the Sign of Peace is completed
 - When Father has finished taking Communion and starts to distribute the cups to the EM's, proceed simultaneously up the aisles arriving at the front of church together and bow
 - Remain standing in line with the first pew
 - When Father and EMs descend to main level, begin to release parishioners row by row
 - On the Choir side, release the choir first and, after they return to their seats, release the parishioners
 - Release the cry room as the main pews on the choir side are completed
 - In the middle aisle, if one line is significantly shorter than the other, you can suggest that some people move to the shorter line (they may not want to which is OK)
 - Ensure an EM provides Communion to any parishioners who are physically challenged
 - Join the end of a line and receive Communion as desired
- After Communion
 - Two ushers get bulletins and stand in narthex to distribute
 - Ushers may be asked to hand out special materials periodically
 - Open the back doors only after the recessional hymn has been announced

After Mass

- Check the pews after Mass
 - Straighten the missalettes in the pews
 - Lost articles are placed in the Ministers room
 - Green hymnals are returned to the racks in back of church
- Check the chapel area and return hymnals to the bookcase in the Narthex
- Place hymnal racks under the information racks on either side
- Close all outside doors
- Store any chairs or benches used during the Mass
- Turn OFF the lights if no upcoming Masses or other activities in the church

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- Return the A/C to original setting if changed during the Mass
- Turn the PA system OFF if no upcoming Masses or services in the church
- Check that candles are extinguished (*the acolytes will normally handle this*)
- Return your ushers pin to the Ministers room