

# **Saint Philip's Episcopal Church**

## **Customary for Ushers**

**March 2020**

The purpose of this customary is to establish a basic framework and guide for people who serve as ushers at our church services. Duties assigned to ushers are intended to allow the service to run smoothly and with consistency from service to service.

### **Services in the Main Sanctuary**

- Please arrive 30 minutes prior to the service.
- The “Head Usher” (as designated by an asterisk on the monthly schedule and the first name listed in the ushers assigned in the Sunday bulletin) will:
  - Check that bulletins are stacked in each Narthex for the appropriate service (in general, 08:00 bulletins are beige in color and 10:30 bulletins are white).
  - Check bulletins to determine the hymnal(s) to be used. If LEVAS or WLP are called for, assign ushers to pass them out with the bulletins.
  - Verify that usher red name tags are worn. Recruit additional usher(s), if necessary, from the attending parishioners.
  - Assign duties to ushers.
  - Stand in the back of the Nave prior to the service to assist with seating.
  - Complete the attendance count card and place it with the elements to be carried forward to the altar.
  - Receive communion last. Notify and escort Priest to those receiving communion in their seats.
  - Open Narthex doors, weather permitting, during the closing hymn.

- If a Priest or Deacon is not available, locate at the Moore Street exit to greet parishioners as they leave and encourage participation in the coffee hour in the Narthex.
- Usher Duties (to be assigned by the Head Usher):

## **Before the Service**

- For all church services, ushers are responsible for putting out and storing the handicap parking sign and red cones along Dry Street, between the church narthex and the parish hall. The sign and cones are located inside the gate behind the Carr-Jorgensen building. The 08:00 service ushers will put out the sign and cones and the 10:30 service ushers will return them to their storage location.
- 2 ushers locate at each narthex entrance to **WARMLY GREET** parishioners as they enter. Open outside doors for parishioners as they arrive.
- Pass out bulletins (and supplemental hymnals, if needed) as parishioners enter.
- Encourage visitors to sign the “Visitor Book” and invite them to introduce themselves to the Priest on their way out and /or attend the coffee hour to meet church members.
- Open Nave doors for parishioners as they enter and close them to prevent the noise level in the narthex from entering the sanctuary.
- Assist parishioners with food donations by placing them in the food basket(s). Remove items from plastic or paper bags.
- Assist parishioners (especially visitors) with finding a seat. If the Nave is crowded, invite arrivals to sit upstairs in the balcony.
- Assist late-comers with feeling welcome and finding a seat.
- The Head Usher will instruct each attending usher to be vigilant for parishioners who may have a medical issue during the service. The usher(s) will attend to parishioners experiencing a medical issue, and if necessary, assist in moving the affected parishioner to the narthex for additional care. If a known medical doctor or nurse is attending that service, he or she should be asked to assist with the affected parishioner. At the discretion of the attending medical assistant or Head Usher, 911 may be called as an emergency precaution. At the discretion of the Head Usher, he or she may determine that the ongoing service needs to be

suspended while medical attention is be provided to the affected parishioner. If this situation arises, the Head Usher will move to the Sacristy (left) side of the altar and provide this request to the Verger or nearest Deacon or Eucharistic Minister (UM), who in turn will provide this request to the Priest or lead Deacon.

- Direct any questions or concerns about your duties to the assigned Head Usher.

## **Offertory**

- It is encouraged that two attending parishioners be recruited (normally done by the Head Usher) to carry the elements to the altar. At the signal from the Priest or Deacon preparing communion, the two parishioners followed by four ushers (2x2) proceed to the altar. The volunteer parishioners will carry the wine and bread (wine on left and bread on right, and the attendance card prepared by the Head Usher, and hand the elements and card to the attending EM(s).
- Standing at the altar rail, six across, ushers will receive the collection plates from the EM. Once the ushers have received the offertory plates, all six attendees will bow. The two parishioner volunteers will return to their seats via the center aisle. The four ushers will proceed down center and side aisles to pass the plates to each row alternately.
- If present and as soon as announcements begin, a 5th usher should take the plate from the back of the Nave and collect the offering from the balcony. If a 5th usher is not available and a 5th usher cannot be recruited from the congregation to collect the balcony offering, one usher should be assigned to collect the balcony offering in advance of offertory services.
- Gather the offering in the back of the Nave and at the signal from the Priest during the Doxology, two ushers, with one plate each, and another usher following with the food basket (first Sunday of the month and 10:30 service only) proceed to the communion rail to give the collection plates to the EM(s). Remain at the altar rail until the Doxology is complete, then bow and return to the back of the Nave via the center aisle.

## **Communion**

- At communion, 2 ushers (Gate Keepers) stand at the center front aisles in front of the first pews to direct worshippers to the communion rail. At the 10:30 service, choir and acolytes receive communion first, followed by balcony and far left side worshippers that have moved to the center aisle. Parishioners sitting on the far left side pews and seats who have

mobility concerns may be sent directly to the left side altar rail. At the 08:00 service, parishioners sitting at the far left side pews and seats should be sent directly to the left side altar. Watch for open spaces at the altar rail, try to keep couples together, keep it flowing. Openings at the altar are filled from the outside to the middle. When the center altar rail is not used, parishioners may use this space when standing to receive communion.

- Once parishioners receive their communion, they should return to their seats via the side aisles.
- 2 ushers (Herders) position yourselves on the left and right side of the center aisle following the balcony and far left side worshippers. Once the center aisle is cleared, begin releasing rows from front to back to receive communion.
- Notify the Head Usher if you notice someone wishing to receive communion in their seat or pew. This information should be gathered by the Head Usher at the beginning of the service. The Head Usher will notify the Priest/Deacon at the communion rail (why receiving communion) of parishioners who need communion brought to them. The Head Usher will escort the Priest or Deacon to the location(s) of those receiving communion in their seat or pew. If there are parishioners on both sides of the Nave who need communion in their pews/seats, both the Head Usher and one other designated usher may notify the Priest(s)/Deacon(s) serving both sides of the altar of how many parishioners need communion brought to them. In this case, each usher may escort each Priest/Deacon to the receiving parishioner(s) on their respective side of the Nave.

## **At the End of the Service**

- The Head Usher only greets parishioners leaving the Nave when a Priest or Deacon is not available.
- Walk the pews and seats (Nave and balcony) to collect all remaining bulletins and trash, and place in the trash and bulletin receptacles. Arrange hymnal and prayer books in the correct order (prayer books in center and hymnals on outside). Balcony hymnals and prayer books should be stored under the pews.
- Remove and store Handicap Sign and red cones (10:30 service).
- Make sure all Nave doors and outside doors are closed before leaving the church.

## **Services in the Chapel of the Cross**

- Services held in the Chapel of the Cross (usually 08:00) use Rite 1. Most of the usher customary procedures remain the same. The major difference is that there are only 2 ushers provided. These ushers are responsible for the following:
  - Greet worshippers warmly outside of the Chapel. Invite them in and give them a bulletin.
  - The doors between the Chapel Narthex and the Nave should remain closed whenever possible to maintain quiet and temperature in the Chapel.
  - The elements and collection plates are located in the back of the Nave and should be processed to the altar by ushers at the appropriate times during the service.
  - During the offertory collection, one usher should pass the plate on each side.
  - At communion, one usher should be on either side of the center aisle to release rows to receive communion.

## **Funeral Services**

- Arrive 1 hour prior to the start of the service. Ushers may be asked to arrive earlier due to large attendance or special circumstances.
- Assist in setting up snacks and drinks in the parish hall. Provide copies of the funeral bulletin to the parish hall for family members. All bulletins and readings will be located in the main church Sacristy before the service.
- Install/remove Handicap Parking sign and red cones on Dry Street.
- Greet caterer (if used) and unlock parish hall (if locked). Key box lock code is available at the church office.
- Greet “family ushers”(if any) and assist them in procedures and assignments.
- Be attentive to guests outside of the church who may not be sure of where they should proceed.
- Invite family members to receive communion first. (This procedure should also be followed for baptism services).
- If there is interment in the Memorial Garden:

- If raining, ensure the grave is covered with a plastic bag. Remove the bag before the family is assembled at the grave site.
- After the service, store materials (table, silver bucket, and spade) used at the grave site in the parish hall.

## Security

- Ushers will be part of the Saint Philip's evolving security policies and procedures. These security measures are intended to counter potential threats from harmful intrusion into church services. As part of these security measures, the following usher assignments and responsibilities are assigned.
  - Magnetic locks on all external doors will activate five minutes after the start each service. After magnetic locks are activated, ushers will:
    - 1 - Place signs in all external door windows that indicate doors are locked and identify entrance into the church is available through the Bell Tower Narthex.
    - 2 - Place velvet rope stanchions at the locked doors to preclude persons from activating the magnetic lock motion sensors.
- The Head Usher will assign one usher to monitor the Bell Tower Narthex main entrance and open the Dry Street door to allow late parishioner arrivals to enter the church. Common sense judgement will be used to determine if a suspicious person or persons are denied entrance to the church. Assistance from the Head Usher should be requested, if needed.
- Parishioners who desire to leave the service early will be allowed to do so. Ushers will be required to move the velvet rope stanchions to allow parishioners to exit the church service early (in either Narthex).
- During the service, all ushers will maintain vigilance for any unusual activities outside of the church. Notify the Head Usher when such activities are observed. The Head Usher (or any usher he designates) will be responsible for calling 911 in case of a security emergency.
- During the recessional, ushers will remove all velvet rope stanchions and all door closed signs.

**Please remember, each service is unique and alterations/accommodations may need to be made. Be flexible and welcoming to all!**