

# **Usher Ministry Customary**

St. Matthias Episcopal Church, Monument

Thank you for serving as an Usher at St. Matthias. You are part of a key ministry - as you are frequently the first personal impression people get when they arrive. Thanks for helping make the arrival to our community warm for regular worshipers you know as well as for visitors.

## **The Basic Responsibilities of Ushering Are:**

- Opening up the church
- Greeting people and distributing worship bulletins
- Showing visitors and newcomers where Sunday School and Nursery are for their children
- Helping with the Offering
- Recording the number present
- Tidying up the sanctuary after worship
- Shoveling the walks, if needed
- Helping in others ways as needed

## **Detailed Instructions**

1. Please arrive 30 minutes before the service and 45 minutes early for Christmas and Easter or other major occasions.
2. Wear your nametag.
3. Open the window blinds and if it's warm, make sure the AC is on (or open some windows on both sides).
4. If there's snow on the ground, get to church early enough to shovel the walks (front stairs and ramp, emergency exit, and pad outside of downstairs entry), put out snow and ice melt on the front walk and out the back door.
5. Greet people as they arrive, hand out the bulletin and direct visitors with children to the Sunday School and nursery, if they desire. Bulletins are on a shelf of the bookcase outside the office.
6. Guests and new people: ask them to sign the guest book and link them up with a member to talk with them and show them around.
7. During the readings or sermon, count the people. Use the attendance sheet in the bookcase. There are three categories:
  - a. "Priest and other ministers"; Include the priest, chalice bearers, acolytes and the organist
  - b. "Worshippers"; self-explanatory. There may be some people downstairs setting up for coffee, count them too.
  - c. "Sunday school and nursery"; these are the teachers and children and attendants and infants in the nursery.
8. Mark on the attendance sheet the approximate number of surplus or needed bulletins.
9. At the start of the Nicene Creed, take the Prayer Sheet to the second reader.

10. During the Passing of the Peace, go downstairs and inform the teachers that they may come up at any time - that "we are ready"; they can come up as they finish after your invitation.
11. Offertory:
  - a. After the offertory sentences, walk up to the first pew with the wooden offertory plates and the wicker baskets for Tri-Lakes Cares donation requests. First offer the offertory plates, one to the people sitting on each side. Then pass the wicker baskets to each side. People are pretty good about passing them to the people in the pew behind them, so just monitor as both are passed around and assist as necessary.
  - b. After you're finished collecting the offering, ask the children to pick up the food and the food baskets, getting ready to take them up to the altar.
  - c. When the organist completes the offertory music and starts the Doxology, take the offering and help the children take the food up to the altar where the acolytes will collect them.
  - d. Remain at the altar rail for the Doxology. When the Doxology is finished, move the two kneelers into place in front of the altar rail gate, reverence the altar and return to the back of the church. NOTE: one of the acolytes will close and lock the gate, as they have been asked to do in their training.
12. Communion:
  - a. We're good about going up to the altar rail for Communion on a "regular" Sunday. However, on Christmas and Easter with lots of visitors you'll need to help people know when to move to the altar rail. Do this by walking up to the front pew after the Lord's Prayer, while the priest is breaking the bread. After the altar party has received communion and the priest is ready to start, slowly walk backward pew-by-pew signaling for people to move to the altar rail for communion. Let enough people go forward to fill the rail and about five or so to stand in the aisle. Communion goes pretty fast with two chalice bearers, so be aware of the flow.
  - b. The usher is the last person to receive communion. You're the "signal" to the priest that you're the last communicant. Inform the priest if there is a person that the priest and a chalice bearer need to take communion to because of a disability preventing that person to go to the altar rail for communion.
  - c. When you complete your communion, replace the kneelers on either side of the altar rail. Note: one of the acolytes will open the gate.
13. After the service:
  - a. Clean up the pews - collect the trash, bulletins left behind, and rearrange the books so the bindings are on the left and there's an "even distribution" of Hymnals, Prayer Books, and Bibles.
  - b. Close any open windows.
  - c. Close the blinds.
  - d. Put the "attendance" sheet on the office desk (or give it to Fr. Scott).
14. Either Fr. Scott or someone he asks will lock up the church.

If you have a question or problem, please ask Bill Clewe, Fr. Scott or another usher.  
Thank you for your ministry to St. Matthias congregation.