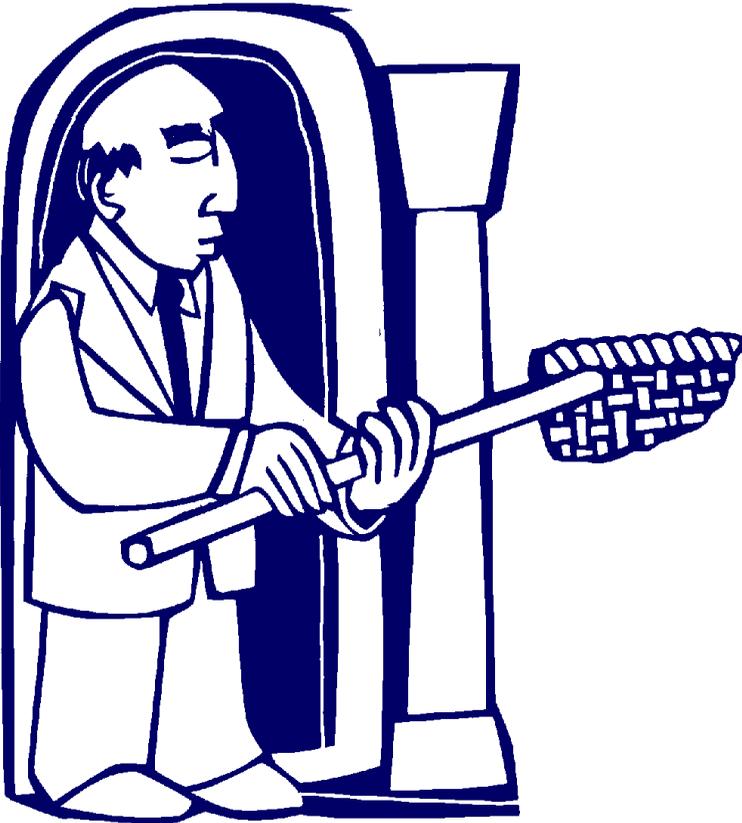


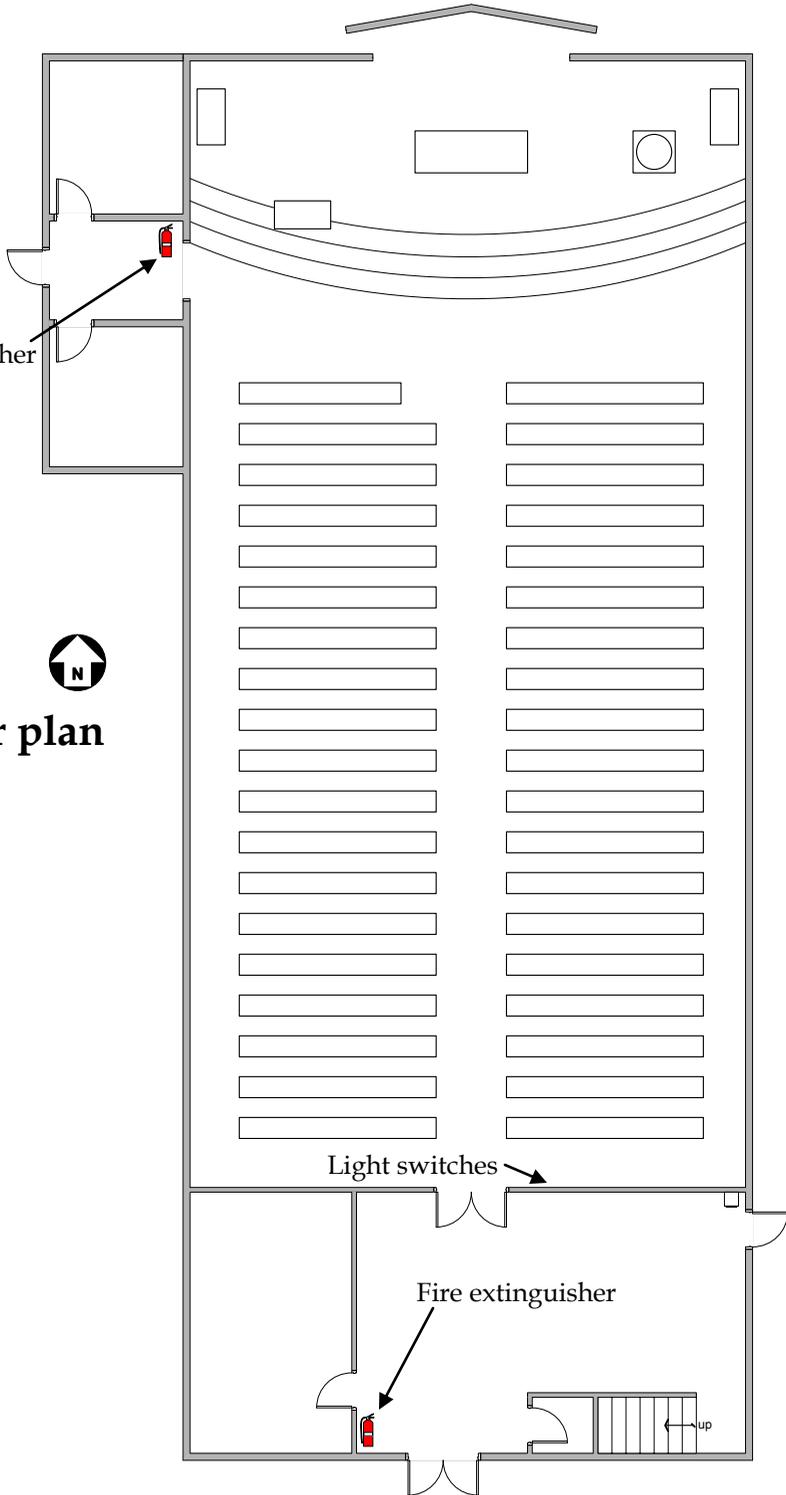
Revised January 2018

USHER HANDBOOK



*I would rather be a doorkeeper in the
house of my God than dwell in the
tents of the wicked.*

– Psalm 84:10



Fire extinguisher



Floor plan

Light switches

Fire extinguisher

up

GENERAL DUTIES AND PROCEDURES

Attire for ushering

- When ushering, you are requested to wear a shirt and tie, slacks, and dress shoes.
- Please no shorts, jeans, t-shirts, and/or tennis shoes.
- We certainly don't want attire to be a barrier to an individual serving as an usher. If you are interested in serving but cannot obtain the proper attire, please speak with one of the pastors.

Personal preparation to usher

- Remember the words of the Psalmist: I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of the wicked (Psalm 84:10).
- Please dress neatly and be well groomed.
- Be friendly. Smile! Say good morning, or greet the people with proper words for the occasion. You are welcoming people to God's house.
- Be helpful. Be alert for people who are visiting, who look uncertain or confused. Ask if you can help.
- As an usher you are a greeter, helper and goodwill ambassador all rolled into one. Go out of your way to be friendly. Introduce yourself to people you don't know – whether they are members or visitors. Always ask guests to sign the guest book. Remember, a "stranger" is just a friend you don't know yet.
- Your leadership and planning are tangible means to praise our Lord. People respond well to a well-run worship service.

Pre-service checklist

- Arrive at the church 15-20 minutes prior to the start of the first service, and at least 20 minutes before later services.
- Turn on the lights. The light switch for the sanctuary is located on the wall immediately inside the sanctuary doors to the right.
- Ensure that restroom lights are on.
- If the church is too warm or too cold, check to see that the thermostats are operating properly. They are pre-programmed; please do not change the programming.
- Check in with the service elder, as he may have special instructions from the pastor or worship committee.

- Make sure that the large-print hymnals and bulletins are available on the back counter.
- Go through the sanctuary, checking the pews and the racks on the back of each pew.
 - Remove all trash.
 - Make sure Bibles and hymnals are aligned and upright.
 - Make sure Connection Cards and pens are stocked.
- *See section on Holy Communion for additional duties after a Communion service.*

Serving worshipers as they enter

- Hand out the service folders as people enter. It is best to stand near the inside doors so that you do not interfere with the flow of traffic.
- Please keep conversation in the church entryway at a quiet level. Sound from the lobby spills into the sanctuary and may disrupt the pre-service preparation of people already seated.
- As seating becomes difficult to find, escort individuals up the aisle and assist them in finding a seat. Assist handicapped individuals with the doors and seating, if required.
- In the event that the assigned acolyte is not present, work with the service elder to assign a replacement acolyte.

During the Service

- Assist late arrivals in finding seating. Please seat people only during hymns or longer sung responses. Do not seat people during prayers, spoken responses, or Scripture readings.
- One usher should remain in the lobby to provide assistance and security.
- Check the parking lot during the service.
- Assist anyone who becomes ill or needs assistance leaving the pews.
- If ushers desire to sit during the service, they should remain toward the back of the sanctuary in case their assistance is needed.
- Offer whatever assistance may be needed with the nursery. Keep the doors closed as much as possible, to give mothers some privacy and to keep the noise from the cry room from entering the sanctuary.
- At some point before the sermon, take an accurate count of the number of people in attendance, including pastors, the organist, choir(s), those in the lobby, balcony, and nursery. Record the attendance on the sheet inside the book in the lobby.

Gathering the offering

- As soon as the creed or sung response following the sermon is done, walk to the front to collect the offering.
- After handing the plates back to the pastors, you may immediately turn and collect the Connection Cards from the person sitting on the inside aisle as you make your way to the back of the church.
- Make sure those not seated in pews have had an opportunity to give their offering and fill out a connection card.

After the Service

- If the acolyte has not already done so, extinguish the candles. (The candles should be extinguished during the singing of the final hymn, if possible. If the last hymn is too short, then as the congregation is exiting.)
- Assist guests in filling out the guest book.
- Two ushers should remove the offering from the altar and put it in one of the bags kept in the bottom of the lectern. Empty offering plates are returned to the altar. If a member of the Board of Fiscal Affairs is not available, give the pouch to the service elder to be locked up in the safe.
- Check the pews for bulletins, pick up dropped items, remove trash, and straighten hymnals, pew Bibles, Connection Cards. Place completed Connection Cards in a stack on the secretary's desk in the church office.
- Replenish Connection Cards, as needed.
- After second service, work with the service elder to make sure that the doors are locked, or will be locked by the person responsible.
- *See section on Holy Communion for additional duties after a Communion service.*

SPECIAL DUTIES AND PROCEDURES FOR BAPTISM

Before the Service

- Put about one quart of warm water in the bowl of the baptismal font.
- Make sure that when the service candles are lit the paschal candle (the tall candle next to the baptismal font) is also lit.
- Place the baptismal banner behind the baptismal font facing the congregation. Please place the banner out for all services, not just the service with the baptism.

- Place baptismal napkin and a baptismal candle at the edge of the font (napkins and candles are in the baptismal font under the bowl).
- Place two hymnals on the font.
- Introduce yourself to the baptismal party.
- Explain that during the first hymn, at the beginning of the last verse of the hymn, you will usher them to the baptismal font.
- Remind parents and participants that flash photos are not to be taken during the service. Video taping should be discreet and unobtrusive to the other worshipers in the sanctuary. Photos may be taken after the worship service.
- Usher the baptismal party to be seated at the front right of the sanctuary. Ask how many people they are expecting, and reserve enough pews. Usher all baptismal party members to their seats.

After the Service

- Empty and wipe dry the bowl. The baptismal water may be poured outside onto the earth. Please do not pour it down the drain into the sewer.
- Place the hymnals and any remaining items back in their proper location.

SPECIAL DUTIES AND PROCEDURES FOR SERVICES WITH HOLY COMMUNION

Pre-service checklist

- The altar guild usually takes care of Communion setup. If the altar guild did not set up for Communion, retrieve the Communion ware from the stainless-steel refrigerator in the kitchen off the fellowship hall.
- Set out the stands to receive the used Communion cups.

During the Service

- At the proper time, the ushers will move to the front of the church down the side aisle.
- On each side, the first usher will remain standing at the front pew, facing toward the altar.
- The second usher will let 11-12 communicants out of the first pews on the east and west sides of the center aisle. They will proceed up the side aisles and line up behind the first usher.

- The first usher will turn to face the congregation, step aside and bid the communicants to proceed to the communion step, directing them toward the center.
- If possible, try to keep family members together.
- When the pastor dismisses each group, they will proceed down the center aisle to their seats and the next group will approach the Communion step.
- This process is repeated until all communicants have been served.
- The ushers may commune with the last group before they return to the lobby.
- Point out to the pastors individuals who need to be served Communion at their seat.

After the Service

- Assist members of the altar guild with cleaning up and setting up for the next service.
- The used communion cups should be emptied in the kitchen.
- The trays with the wafers can be refilled.
- Partially empty trays can be combined if possible.
- Empty trays can be taken to the kitchen.
- If needed, additional trays can be brought in from the kitchen.
- All Communion elements on the altar should be neatly re-covered.

OTHER GUIDELINES

- If a scheduled usher does not show up for a service, ask one of the elders, councilmen, or other ushers to assist you with the collection of the offering.
- If you cannot serve on your assigned date, please make every attempt to trade with one of the other ushers. If attempts fail, contact the head usher or one of the elders.
- Remember that you are an official part of the worship service. Dress appropriately. Please do not chew gum or eat candy. When not tending to your duties you should revert to the role of a congregation member and participate in worship. Please do not talk or move around unnecessarily.
- Orient yourself to the location of the fire extinguishers and closest telephone. Watch for potentially disruptive situations, and be prepared to handle them if they develop.
- The offering from the altar should be placed in the safe in the church office. Please do not handle the offering alone! When handling the offering, invite another non-family member to observe and assist in transferring the offering into the offering bags and into the safe. At least two people should be in custody of the offering at all times.

HANDLING EMERGENCIES

Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are located in the following places:

- In the lobby near the main entrance.
- By the drinking fountain in the hallway by the restrooms.
- In the hallway by the sacristy and storage closet.

Telephone

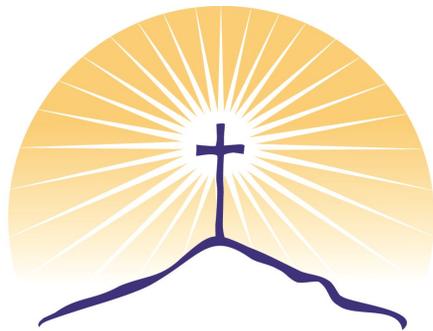
Telephones are located in the church office. Many of the members may have cell phones.

Medical emergencies

- A first-aid kit is located in the lower cupboard on the west side of the lobby.
- Keep calm but act quickly
- In case of fainting or unconsciousness:
 - Get victim to the end of the pew, seated or lying on pew.
 - Make sure victim is breathing – check airway and pulse
 - If victim is not breathing, interrupt the service to ask for help (doctor, EMT, member trained in CPR).
 - **An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is located on the south wall of the fellowship hall, right next to the door that enters the kitchen.**
 - Immediately dial 9-1-1. Stay on the phone and give as much information as possible. Direct someone outside to wait for the ambulance and to direct paramedics to the victim.
 - If the problem occurs up at the front during Communion, assist the person off to the closest pew. Act quickly according to the previous instructions.
- Remember: Be alert! Keep an eye out for possible medical emergencies, especially if the sanctuary gets warm and stuffy.

Disruptive behavior

- As much as possible, we want children to be present and to participate in the service. A disruptive child, however, not only prevents his parents from worshipping; he disturbs the people in the vicinity. Disruptions may include crying, talking out loud, temper tantrums, loud toys, etc.
- Allow parents time to handle the situation. If parents are not taking appropriate corrective measures, some gentle direction from the ushers might be helpful. Invite the parents to take the child to the quiet room located off the lobby.
- It has happened that people in attendance at worship services have tried to disrupt the service deliberately. Sometimes they do it to make a theological point. In other cases, the person may be mentally ill or under the influence of a mind-altering substance.
- Carefully approach the person and gently ask him to step outside.
- If the person will not comply, it may be necessary for two or more ushers to escort the person outside. If at all possible, please avoid physical confrontation.
- If a person isn't cooperative or engages in threatening behavior, call 9-1-1 immediately.



Emmanuel

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