

USHER PROCEDURES FOR 9:00 A.M. AND 11:15 SERVICES AT ST. DAVID'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

December 2019

A minimum of four ushers from a team should be present for each service. (Each team has 5-7 members) For services where large crowds are expected (e.g. Christmas), six to seven ushers will be needed (see The Offertory below). In some cases, two teams will be scheduled for a single service. When more than one team is scheduled, a leader will be designated. Throughout this document, superscripts refer to locations in the Sanctuary Block Diagram which can be found in the Appendix.

Before the Service

All ushers should arrive a minimum of 15 minutes before the service to ensure that the sanctuary has been straightened (see After the Service). The bulletin and announcements are now one publication. Looking Ahead is handed out the first week produced and are available for people to pick up in the following weeks. Please make sure 30 bulletins (from any service) and 30 Looking Ahead handouts are available in the 2nd floor lobby each Sunday, after the 11:15 service. Ushers should make sure that there is an adequate supply of the materials at both the rear of the church and the side door leading into the Foyer. Badges and worship materials will typically be stored in the large credenza in the foyer outside the main doors.¹

Two ushers should stand at the rear of the sanctuary, one on either side of the stairs, to distribute the handouts and to extend a warm greeting to each person. They should remain there throughout the service to greet late arrivals and to assist them in finding seats when necessary. Two ushers should also stand at just outside the doors to Foyer to distribute the worship materials to those entering there. Please greet worshippers quietly and if speaking to one another, do so in a quiet voice. When arriving after the service has begun, communicants should not be seated from the Foyer entrance until after the Procession (acolytes, choir, and altar party) is well into the nave, i.e., they should not be squeezed in before the Procession or become a part of it by entering immediately behind the Procession. One usher should remain at the Foyer entrance until after the service has begun to close the doors leading from the Foyer into the Sanctuary. This will indicate to late arrivals that they should proceed through Grace Chapel and enter the service from the rear of the Sanctuary. The greeter will direct them, from the Lobby through Grace Chapel.

People with luggage, very large bags, or backpacks should be asked to leave those items in our luggage check area behind the front desk.

Counting the Worshippers

It is recommended ushers use a mechanical counter:

1. Ushers count the procession (choir, clergy, acolytes, eucharistic ministers, etc) as it enters the Nave.
2. During the sequence hymn one usher walks up the east and another up the west aisle counting those in the pews.
3. Count late comers as they come in until the offertory.

The count should include all people present at the service including children.

It is important to record the full attendance count in the record book located in the Clergy Vesting Room³ and to write the attendance count on the tally sheet. (See 'Counting the Collection' below.)

Beginning and During the Service:

The bell should be rung after the clergy's welcome just before the beginning of the opening hymn or introit. It should be rung six to eight times as an announcement to those within hearing distance that worship services are beginning.

During the service, the two ushers at the rear of the Sanctuary should remain on either side at the top of the steps⁴ to greet those arriving late. One usher should remain at the main door¹ of the Sanctuary near the great doors as a safety and security monitor.

Seating late arrivals:

Late arrivals may be seated at anytime during service if done discretely and quietly. However, it is a good rule of thumb not to seat late arrivals when one person is speaking, praying, or reading Scripture. Neither should late arrivals be seated during the Prayers of the People, when the community is offering its intercessions or when the choir is offering an anthem. The most appropriate time to seat late comers, or to move around or out of the nave, is when the congregation is singing, chanting the psalm, or passing the peace.

During crowded services, ushers should move as quietly as possible up and down the west and east aisles to locate available seats and direct worshippers to those seats. If the church becomes filled, ushers should consult with the team captain regarding the plans for overflow. Do NOT set up chairs at the rear of the Sanctuary or in the aisles, the latter due to fire/safety regulations.

The Offertory

Immediately prior to the offertory, all ushers should assemble at the rear of the Sanctuary. The team leader will distribute the alms basins from the credence table. Immediately after the minister finishes speaking (do not wait for the start of the choir/music), the ushers should proceed to the first pew—two ushers in the center aisle, two in the east aisle, and one at the west aisle. (During services where only 4 ushers are present, only one usher will be used in the west aisle.) The two ushers who finish first should collect from the rear portion of the church (Pew Areas Five and Six).

For services where attendance is large (e.g. Easter and Christmas) additional offering basins may be needed in the center aisle³. In such instances, two additional ushers should assist by taking the offering in the back one-half of the church beginning at the middle pillar covering the back of each main section and the rear pews.

After collecting the offering, the ushers at the rear of the church will pick up the wine and the ciborium with bread from the credence table. Once the presider is standing at the altar ready to begin the Eucharist, four ushers, two abreast, will follow the crucifer to the altar with the offering basins, the wine, and the bread. There will commonly be a musical interlude. If so, proceed as the music begins. When there is no music, proceed when the celebrant faces the congregation from behind the altar. Upon reaching the altar, all four ushers should stand at the altar rail⁶ and deliver the alms basins, wine, and bread to the acolytes at the altar rail. The alms basins are blessed and returned to the ushers. After that the ushers should "reverence the altar," then turn to the right and move out through the sacristy door⁷ to the clergy vesting³ room to count the collection. A minimum of two ushers will remain to count the collection. Three ushers return to the back of the church through Grace Chapel to prepare for center aisle duty and stair assistance during Communion. Any remaining ushers may rejoin the service.

Counting the Collection

A minimum of two ushers take the collection to the counting area in the clergy vestry room³ (code 513). The blank tally sheets for the service have been pre-placed in the bank bag. These are removed and completed with the tally of the contributions—currency, coins, checks, and number of envelopes and the attendance. Envelopes should remain sealed. Any checks should be endorsed using the “for deposit only” stamp. The counting ushers should record the service attendance in the green ledger and print their names on the tally sheets. Both copies of the tally sheet are placed in the bag. Prayer requests and visitor cards are placed in the envelope marked “Prayer Requests and Visitor Cards” on top of the safe. The bank bag is inserted into the slot in the safe.

During Holy Communion

Two ushers move down the center aisle to the front when the priest announces “the gifts of God for the people of God.” One usher should proceed down the west aisle to a position behind the organist to assist those leaving the altar after Communion. (The Altar Guild has assumed this responsibility on the east side.)

The center aisle ushers stand at the first pew until the altar rail is closed, then move backwards down the aisle, inviting persons of each pew to come forward to Communion. The center aisle ushers must remain alert to movements of the choir, or other unusual traffic, before releasing people to the aisle. Maintain a smooth flow of communicants by keeping the waiting line between the bottom of the stairs and the first pew. It is better to have people waiting than to have people rushing to get to the altar because they were not released from their pew early enough. Those toward the rear of Sanctuary will need to be released slightly earlier to allow time to walk to the altar area. The ushers should follow the last of the congregation taking communion to the altar rail.

All ushers should be alert to anyone who is mobility impaired and may want Communion brought to them. If any such communicants are identified, the usher should notify a eucharistic minister or service clergy member (there is typically someone available for this purpose near the baptismal font).

After the Service:

At the conclusion of the service, ushers should clear the pews of waste paper, used bulletins, and other articles that may have been left behind. Hymnals, prayer books, Bibles, and visitor and prayer request cards should be straightened. Used bulletins, trash paper, etc. should be placed in boxes and discarded in the blue recycle can in the north hallway outside Sumners Hall (just past the sacristy hallway). The “Looking Ahead” and any other reusable content should be sorted and stacked neatly for use by the next service.

Coping with Emergency Situations:

Unexpected situations, e.g., medical emergencies, individuals exhibiting inappropriate behavior or requests for money or food, can and do arise and may require some action from the ushers.

In such situations, speak calmly to the individual(s) and ask them to walk with you downstairs to the entrance/reception area as quickly as possible. Do not try to physically restrain someone unless they are causing a threat of immediate harm to someone else. Sextons and staff can be paged quickly from the reception desk. Remember, the emergency response buttons and “911” are always available and should be used without hesitation when the need indicates.

In the case of fire or other emergency requiring evacuation, please encourage everyone to exit in an orderly but quick fashion from the building. Help direct people to the nearest emergency exit and exit with them as soon as practical.

There is an AED available at the entrance to Summers Hall if needed. You may use it even if you are not trained in CPR. The AED provides audio guidance for its use and will not administer a shock unless it determines it is necessary.

It is the policy of St. David’s that parishioners do not give cash to individuals at the church and do not send individuals to the food area of Café Divine. Requests for clergy, food, money, and transportation can be handled at the front desk in the lobby.

An additional handout covering Emergency Situations exists. Each usher should make themselves familiar with these additional details.

Thank you for your crucial and much appreciated service to our St. David’s church.

Appendix

Summary of Team Captain responsibilities:

- Always assign a substitute captain if you cannot attend a service.
- Know which of your usher team is certified in CPR.
- Ensure new team members are trained and ask if they have questions after the first time they serve.
- Check the credence table to be sure that the bread, wine, and sufficient alms basins are available.
- Check with the presider at the service if special instructions are required.
- Make sure there are assignments for offering collection, counting people, counting money (2), Communion “catchers” (1), and Communion center-aisle (2).
- Recruit temporary ushers to supplement if you don’t have a complete team on any given Sunday.
- Instruct when additional chairs should be brought into the nave or the foyer.

