

St. Jude Catholic Church

Usher Guidelines

Updated September 2018

Humble Service

Every liturgical ministry is established to serve the worshiping assembly. All those who serve in special roles are servants of the assembly; their task is to help the assembly fulfill its vital role in the liturgy. The most important role that the usher serves is that of hospitality. The usher is the first person that worshipers meet when they arrive at church. The usher has the opportunity and the responsibility to represent the rest of the assembly in offering hospitality. People's impression of a parish is significantly shaped by the presence or absence of a welcoming atmosphere where they come to worship. Offering a smile and a word of welcome can have a profound impact on people as they arrive, especially if they are visitors to the parish. Welcoming people and making them feel at home is one way in which ushers help build up the church. **HOSPITALITY** is a vital element in creating a sense of community for worship. A person who feels welcomed and valued is much more likely to enter wholeheartedly into the celebration of the liturgy, giving thanks to God for the love that God pours out on us.

Safety Training

All ushers are required to go through Safe Environment Training and be safety cleared prior to ushering. Safety clearance is updated annually and must be kept current to continue to usher. Please contact Peggy Runnels for information on Safe Environment Training.

Teen Ushers

Teen ushers are welcome and encouraged to participate in the usher ministry. All of the guidelines herein apply to teen ushers. However, there are some guidelines unique to teen ushers as follows:

- Teen ushers must be a freshman in High School or older
- Teen ushers must go through the Teen Safety Training process (contact Peggy Runnels for information)
- When ushering, teen ushers must always be paired with an adult usher in whatever section of the church they are stationed
- Teen ushers may participate in the collection process, but the baskets may only be taken to the sacristy by an adult usher

Appropriate Attire

A neat and reverential appearance is in keeping with the usher's role as a visible example of welcome and hospitality. The usher should dress as if you were going for a job interview. A suit or sport coat is preferred for men or a collared shirt. No t-shirts please! Slacks or neat jeans are acceptable, no shorts please. Closed toed shoes are appropriate, no flip flops.

Usher Badge

Each Usher should wear the Usher Badges provided by the Church to be identifiable to our priests, parishioners and guests. Usher badges may be clipped over a shirt pocket, suit coat pocket, or held on with a magnetic catch. Badges will be provided to all ushers by the Church.

Scheduling

Scheduling of Ushers is done based on Mass preference. There are three usher teams for each mass, with the teams operating on a three month rotation, meaning that you would only be asked to usher every third month. A total of 12 Ushers are preferred for each Mass with the least number being 8 usher. You will be notified via email of your upcoming usher scheduled shift. If you are unavailable to work your scheduled shift, you can "Request a Sub" through this email notification. The current schedule is posted on the St. Jude website under "**Quick Links**" – **Liturgical Assignments**.

Ministry Scheduler Pro (MSP)

MSP is the software that we use to schedule ushers, Extraordinary Ministers, and Lectors. Each volunteer will receive a username and password so that they can access their information via computer, tablet, or cell phone. Within your personal profile, you can change your availability and see your serving preferences. If you cannot serve your scheduled shift, you can utilize MSP to request a substitute up until 24 hours before your scheduled service. In MSP you can also see your scheduled serving times for the entire month and also choose how often you would like to be notified of your serving times: one week in advance, a day in advance, or not at all.

Procedures Before The Liturgy

1. Arrive at the church at least 15-20 minutes prior to the start of Mass.
2. Check the pews for items that need to be removed prior to your Mass, i.e. bulletins, water bottles etc., straighten the songbooks in the book racks on the back of each pew. Also any personal or valuable items left by the parishioners place on the table in the narthex. Anything found of significant value should be given to Ann Mikelonis or Jeanne Girsch for safekeeping.
3. Check with Jeanne or Ann to see if any handouts need to be placed in the pews before the Mass starts.
4. If a parishioner needs Holy Water please direct them to the Baptismal Font at the rear of the Sanctuary.
5. Assist with seating as necessary. Point out places for wheelchairs when appropriate; wheel chairs can only be parked where the space is designated not blocking any aisle.
6. Greet and welcome the faithful as they gather for worship. Ministers of hospitality should be at each of the entrances of the church. They should avoid congregating in only one area of the church, as well as speaking with their fellow ministers to the exclusion of those who are gathering for the liturgy.

7. Meet, Greet, and Seat all parishioners.

Gathering Rite

1. Once the entrance procession has completed and the Celebrant greets the assembly, close all the Church doors. It is appropriate that at least one usher stay in the narthex during this time to inform people that we are waiting for the proper time for them to enter the worship space.
2. Have latecomers wait in the narthex during the Opening Prayer. Following that prayer, assist if necessary or have them find seats prior to the beginning of the first reading. Any seating for latecomers should be along the sides of the Nave and Transepts. Parishioners should not walk up the center aisles once the Mass has begun to avoid being a distraction to those participating and to the Celebrant.

Liturgy of the Word

1. During the Liturgy of the Word, to show respect for the Word of God among us, the following are the only appropriate times to allow people to find seats:

- ◆ Between the 1st reading and the Psalm,
- ◆ Between the Psalm and the 2nd reading,
- ◆ Between the 2nd reading and the Gospel
- ◆ Following the reading of the Gospel, before the homily begins.

1. Do not allow people to enter the worship space and walk down the aisles during any of these readings.
2. It is important to gently ask latecomers to remain in the narthex until the appropriate pause so that they do not distract the assembly from their worship.
3. One Usher should be at each aisle entry point of the worship space to be able to facilitate this process.

Collection of Gifts

1. Once the Universal Prayers are read, this is the signal for the ushers to proceed down each aisle in unison to the front pews of the Church with reverence to the altar and bow. When everyone has been seated, the ushers, with the collection baskets in hand will start the collection moving towards the back of the Church. The Ushers then will bring their collection baskets to the counter of the vesting sacristy and place the donations in the bags and into the safe.
2. If possible, the ushers should assist and give instructions to the family bringing up the gifts before the collections begin. Always have at least 2 ushers in the vesting sacristy at all times. Do not leave one usher by themselves-this is a safety issue. Teens do not enter the sacristy during the collection time.

Communion Procession

While the Extraordinary Ministers are taking communion all Ushers shall proceed to the first pew in front of the Altar, bow and wait until the Priests and Extraordinary Ministers have taken their positions to give Communion. They should also discreetly direct the parishioners as they come forward for Communion to the Priest or Extraordinary Minister on their side to ensure that the communion line does not back up and stop. The Ushers receive communion after the congregation. If anyone in your section requires that Communion be brought to him/her at their seat, inform both Extraordinary Ministers (the Bread and the Wine).

Concluding Rite

After the Post-Communion Prayer all the Ushers will take the Church bulletins to each of the doors of the Church. In order to show reverence and respect to the Celebrant and the Procession, the Ushers at the two doors in the front of the Church will stand in front of each door with the bulletins at his or her side and will not open them until the Celebrant's procession has progressed at least half way through the Church. If some parishioners need to leave early and want to use the door let them continue on their way. In no way is an Usher to encourage the parishioners to leave the Church early. After the Celebrant and the Procession has reached the middle of the Church, the Ushers at the front doors may open the doors for the parishioners and begin to hand out the Church bulletins.

Following the Liturgy

1. Each of the Ushers will assist each other to check the pews for items that need to be removed after your Mass, i.e. bulletins, water bottles etc., please put back any songbooks into the book racks on the back of each pew. Also any personal or valuable items left by the parishioners place on the table in the narthex. It will be placed in the lost and found located in the Cry room after that day's masses are complete. Anything found of significant value should be given to Ann Mikelonis or Jeanne Girsch for safekeeping.
2. If the air conditioning is on please close all doors to the Church as to conserve energy and maintain a pleasant environment for the next Mass.

Usher Check List

- Arrival: 15-20 minutes before start of Mass
- Check in-Make sure you have your Church issued Usher badges on. If you have forgotten your badge, a temporary usher badge is available (sticker type) at the desk in the narthex.
- Outside Doors- Stand and open the doors at each end of the entrances as a sign of welcoming and greet everyone as they arrive.
- Taking of the Gifts- Check to see if parishioners have been selected to take up the gifts and if not, ask if you need to select parishioners to take the Gifts to the Priest during the Preparation of the Gifts. Advise

them of the procedures to follow (i.e. wait to follow the servers, wait for the priest's blessing and bow after the blessing before returning to their pew).

- Lookout-Be aware of any parishioners who wish to receive the Body and Blood at their pew.
- Offertory-take up the collection (see procedure located in this Handbook)
- Eucharist-direct parishioners to the appropriate Eucharist Location (see procedure located in this Handbook)
- Recessional-open main inside doors and main outside doors (see procedure located in this Handbook)

Usher Captain

The Usher Captain is the Usher in charge of the other Ushers at the assigned Mass. He or She is selected by the Head Usher and is responsible for having all his assigned Ushers follow the guidelines set forth in this Usher's Handbook. The Usher Captain's duties also include following:

1. To set an example for his fellow Ushers and Parishioners by his dress, demeanor, attitude, friendliness.
2. Assisting the Priest when needed.
3. Recruiting new ushers for his or her Mass and referring them to Bill Kearns.
4. Make sure all ushers positions are filled at his/her mass.
5. Locating alternate Ushers and willing Parishioners to assist him or her in the collection and handing out Church bulletins when a regular Usher is not able to be at Mass.

In Case of Fire

1. Fire and Evacuation Plan: When the fire alarm sounds, evacuate the area.
2. The presiding Priest may request ushers to assist with removing the Blessed Sacrament from the Church.

First Aid and Medical Emergencies

For medical emergencies, check with **Ann Mikelonis** or the person in charge at the table in the narthex, and see if 911 needs to be called for an ambulance or if minor medical care can be given. Our Church address is 1515 N. Greenville Ave. One usher should meet ambulance and direct EMT's to the emergency. Other ushers should clear the aisle if necessary and open doors for easy entrance and exit of medical personnel. If the situation permits, the victim may be moved to the Narthex or hallway for privacy.

Weather Emergencies

Should a weather emergency occur, move parishioners to the hallways between:

- office area and Narthex
- office area and Parish Hall
- Church and the Chapel (both sides)

Security Concerns

Report concern to Ann Mikelonis (or the person in charge at the table in the narthex) who will make the 911 call. Allen Police Department stays visible before, during, and after the Masses. We are not to be HERO's.

Restrooms and Drinking Fountains

Restrooms and drinking fountains are located in the hallway on the southeast side of the church, and in the hallways on each side of the sanctuary.

Church Building

Familiarize yourself with the building itself. Know where the vesting sacristy, working sacristy, Cry Room, Nurseries, Holy water font, narthex, restrooms, theater, reception area, Parish Hall, and columbarium are located.

Problems

If there is an issue with sound, lighting, air conditioning/heat, or video, please see Ann Mikelonis in the narthex, she can fix it. Please do not make any adjustments to any of that equipment yourself.

Questions

For questions, please contact Bill Kearns at wckearns@yahoo.com or 972-922-3322.