

## *Guidelines for Ushers*

Ushers are assisting ministers! The role of usher at worship is important. It is ministry. By their hospitality and helpfulness ushers welcome people into a congregation's worship.

Thank you for your willingness to serve as an usher for the Student Congregation. These guidelines should answer most of your questions about ushering. If you need more answers please ask one of the pastors, the head usher, or the sacristan.

### *Ushers should know:*

- that *all* are welcome at the Lord's Supper
- that offering money goes to support the work of the Student Congregation (often gifts of both global and local benevolence).
- where the restrooms are
- where the nearest phone is
- that we have facilities for certain special needs—there are spaces for wheelchairs, as well as listening aids (in the pastors' office) for those hard of hearing.

### *Before the Service:*

- get enough offering plates from the sacristy (more for the 'big' Sundays)
- get the Sunday bulletins from the office
- ask the pastors or the sacristan if there are any special things you should know about the service
- decide where each usher will go to receive the offering, who will bring it forward, and who will carry the bread & wine to the altar
- station yourselves in the narthex and aisles at places where you can be most helpful

### *As people arrive:*

- be gracious, speak a word of welcome
- hand out bulletins
- encourage, but do not pressure people to sit near the front
- in your welcoming, remember to look alert and ready to help

### *Visitors:*

There are visitors almost every service all year. Please be alert to give special assistance to these parents, grandparents, families of prospective students, etc. Welcome them. Either lead them to an available pew or suggest where they can find enough places. If it seems to you that they might want to visit be ready to talk about the Student Congregation, or St. Olaf, or yourself or the weather. If they just want to find a pew and sit down be sure they have the bulletin, then let them go. In short, help people feel welcome.

*During the Service:*

Station at least one member of your crew in the narthex or back pews in order to help latecomers find a bulletin and place to sit—the rest of the ushers should come up to the front pew during the Hymn of Praise. Whoever remains in the back should try to remain alert for latecomers and be ready to point out where we are in the service.

*Offering:*

As people are sharing the peace, ushers take the offering plates and station themselves at the front to be ready to pass the plates as soon as people are seated.

It is normally best to receive the offering in at least six plates, three on each side. At very large services it could be necessary to start at the front and the back simultaneously, using 10 or 12 offering plates. Normally you will finish before the end of the anthem; simply wait at the back until it is finished.

During the Offertory Hymn, two ushers bring up the offering plates, another the bread and another the wine. Simply bring the gifts forward and hand them to the ministers at the table; then return to your places.

*Communion:*

As the congregation is seated after the Lord's prayer, two ushers should station themselves at the head of the aisle. When the communion assistants have stationed themselves, direct those in the first rows of pews to come forward. The communion assistants serve in a clockwise pattern—so be alert to where spaces are opening up and direct the people to an appropriate place around the circle. If this seems a bit confusing (and there's a good chance it does) simply ask! The ushers should also help those in the short side pews to understand that they are to follow those across the aisle when they go up for communion. (On days with a very large congregation we will serve communion not around the table but from stations off to the side. In the same manner, direct people to open stations.)

Two ushers should also station themselves behind the cup podiums on either side of the sanctuary. You should simply make sure that empty trays are available for those who have finished communing. Simply place the full trays on the floor off to the side.

Ushers are welcome to commune after the rest of the congregation has finished.

*Following the Service:*

Ushers do a quick clean-up of left-over bulletins; check the pews for forgotten items and bring them to the office area; and return to the racks any worship books that have been left lying on the pews.