

*A Guide  
for*

***USHERS, GREETERS, READERS  
& COMMUNION ASSISTANTS***

*Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Pflugerville, Texas*

*Revised 2012*

# USHERS

Ushering affects not only the work of the Pastor, but the entire congregation. It may encourage a visitor to become a regular member of the Immanuel Church community or discourage them from returning.

Church ushering differs from ordinary ushering in theatres, stadiums, restaurants, etc., which is done only to serve and please the people. Church ushering is a service rendered to God and an act which plays a part in conducting the worship service, of which you are also a part.

As an usher, the following is a list of duties you will perform:

- Posting and taking down the flags
- Posting hymn numbers
- Assisting the Pastor as needed
- Assisting worshipers in finding a seat, to communion and after dismissal
- Receiving the offering
- Counting the congregation and posting the attendance
- Assisting members with ascending/descending stairs and elevator
- Gathering attendance registration forms from red attendance book
- Fill attendance books if empty and be sure each book has a pencil
- Placing the offering collection in a bank bag and putting it in the vault
- Tidying up after service, such as, straighten up the hymnals, pick up bulletins, crayons, trash, etc. left in the pews or on the floor
- Returning leftover bulletins (this is after the middle and late service) to either the workroom or the table outside the church office

## GREETERS

Greeters are the first people that church attendees encounter. With that in mind, it is extremely important that each person feel that they are truly welcome and an important part of the Immanuel Lutheran Community. A warm, friendly and helpful tone is set by those who welcome those in attendance.

As a greeter, the following is a list of duties you will perform:

- If you cannot serve during any given service, **you** are responsible for your replacement. Make certain the appropriate people are notified so that the change can be posted. Any schedule conflicts for the month or any given Sunday should be handled in the same manner.
- In last minute situations, don't call the church office on Saturday/Sunday. If possible, contact someone that is serving with you.
- Politely request that visitors sign the Guest Register
- Provide a coffee cup and brochure for visitors (cups can be found at the usher's desk/cabinet)
- Greet everyone with a smile and a handshake
- Assist worshippers up and down steps and elevator
- Answer questions, provide directions and attend to special needs
- Greet visitors as they leave
- Other special duties as may be required

## READERS

Word and Sacrament ministry is primarily the responsibility of called and ordained pastors. For the sake of good order, lay assistants help by reading the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Scripture Lessons and Psalm assigned for the day. Be sure the lessons are read over several times before the service. If you have any questions, please call the Pastor.

At most services, you may dress in your normal church attire and sit where you like. You will come to the lectern when it is time to read and then return to your seat. The Church Office will either mail a reminder card, but preferably will send an email to assigned readers, with the lessons attached, at least one week in advance. The IMAGE newsletter and weekly bulletins also post those assigned to serve.

If you cannot serve during any given service, **you** are responsible for your replacement. Make certain the appropriate people are notified so that the change can be posted. Any schedule conflicts for the month or any given Sunday should be handled in the above mentioned manner. In last minute situations, don't call the church office on Saturday/Sunday. If possible, contact someone that is serving with you.

## COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

The Church Office will email a reminder to assigned Communion Assistants at least one week in advance. The IMAGE Newsletter and weekly bulletins also post those assigned to serve.

Communion Assistants should come to the altar immediately following the Lord's Prayer and commune with the Pastor and Acolytes.

At the 7:45am service, the reader/communion assistant or Pastor will serve the bread at the communion rail in the Sanctuary. The Pastor will serve the individual chalices in the Sanctuary. The communion assistant serving communion in the Chapel will first serve the bread to each communicant at their seat, then the wine. A small basket is used to pick up the empty chalices and placed on the altar.

At the 11:00am service, one of the communion assistants will be asked to serve communion in the Chapel. He/She first serves the bread to each communicant at their seat, then the wine. Empty chalices are picked up in the small basket and returned to the altar. After communing the Chapel, stop by the Nursery and offer communion to the attendant. After the service, return all communion ware to the Altar Guild in the Sacristy.

At the 8:45 and 11:00am services, stand in order so that the communicants receive the bread first. The second Assistant offers the wine/grape juice for intinction (dipping the wafer). The third assistant offers the Common Cup. Leave enough space between each assistant so that communion will flow smoothly. Be sure choir members and musicians have the opportunity to commune. If the congregation is finished communing and the musicians are still leading a song, wait for them.

If you cannot serve during any given service, **you** are responsible for your replacement. Make certain the appropriate people are notified so that the change can be posted. Any schedule conflicts for the month or any given Sunday should be handled in the above mentioned manner. In last minute situations, don't call the church office on Saturday/Sunday. If possible, contact someone that is serving with you.

When distributing communion, speak clearly and directly to each individual, *"This is the body of Christ, given for you."* OR *"This is the blood of Christ, shed for you."*

## USHER'S GUIDE

Ushering affects not only the work of the Pastor, but the entire congregation. It may encourage a visitor to become a regular member of the Immanuel Church community or discourage them from returning. You have been invited to serve as a church usher. This guide has been prepared to familiarize and aid you with the responsibilities of the position.

Church ushering differs from ordinary ushering in theatres, stadiums, restaurants, etc., which is done only to serve and please the people. Church ushering is a service rendered to God and an act which plays a part in conducting the worship service, of which you are also a part.

### **The Goal:**

1. Establish a setting appropriate for worship.
2. Maintain order.
3. Help everyone feel at ease and a part of the worshipping congregation.
4. Work toward evangelism, making our worship attractive and appealing to visitors.
5. Promote public relations: To make a good impression on non-members, showing that we are a progressive and friendly church and interested in all who come.
6. To assist the Pastor(s), Organist(s) and Choir in the performance of their duties.

### **Performance:**

1. It is a sacred duty, an important phase in the work of the church and should not be considered as "just another job".
2. It is a great privilege for it is a service to Christ and the Church; thus, we should feel honored in this task.
3. It is an important job that requires knowledge and skill. It should not be taken lightly and we should strive to put forth our very best effort.
4. We should carry out our assignment with humility and remember that we are here to serve, not be served.

### **Conduct:**

1. Courtesy, quietness and reverence are the primary requirements.
2. Act natural (not arrogant).
3. Always be pleasant, kind and hospitable.
4. No loud talking with anyone during the service, which includes eating/drinking.
5. No huddling in a group during the performance of duties.
6. When you are on duty be on your feet. At other times, you should be seated with the congregation and participating in the worship.

7. Ushers will appear clean and neatly dressed. Please wear the Usher's Badge that is provided.
8. Care should be taken not to disturb people who are worshipping.

### **Techniques:**

1. Show genuine friendliness through facial expression and actions
2. Controlling crowds and emergencies
  - Be prepared to handle a large number of people who want to enter or leave at the same time.
  - Keep calm. If something out of the ordinary occurs, perform your duty with confidence and in a controlled manner so that worshippers will not panic.
  - In case of an emergency, the First Aid Kits are located by the Usher's desk, Parish Hall kitchen and in the workroom.
  - The defibulator is located on the wall across from the janitor's closet, which is right past the Choir Room. This is down the long hall going from the main building to the Day School.
  - Be familiar with where fire extinguishers are located and evacuation procedures.

### **Responsibilities:**

1. If you cannot serve during any given service, **you** are responsible for your replacement. Make certain the appropriate people are notified so that the change can be posted.
2. Any schedule conflicts for the month or any given Sunday should be handled in the above mentioned manner.
3. In last minute situations, don't call the church office on Saturday or Sunday. If possible, contact someone that is serving with you.

### **Before the Service:**

1. Be on Time: Ushers should arrive 30 minutes prior to the service.
2. Put on an Usher badge. They are located at the Usher's Desk.
3. Check the bulletin to see if anything special is taking place (i.e. baptism(s)).
4. Post the hymn numbers that are listed in the bulletin.
5. Post the flags on the poles located east of the cemetery.
6. Check with the Pastor to see if anything special needs to be done. This is especially important on days when the regular Pastor is not present.
7. Ring the bell prior to the start of the service. The Pastor will sound the buzzer when it is time. Pull the large rope 5-7 times.

## **During the Service:**

1. Ushering and non-ushering periods to be observed.
  - a. Assist worshippers in finding a seat, if necessary. Respect individual preferences, but fill pews in the front when possible. The last three pews on either side are reserved for parents with small children or those arriving late.
  - b. People may be ushered in during the hymn or any such part when the congregation is singing.
  - c. No one should enter while the congregation is engaged in confession, prayer, when the choir sings or when the Scriptures are being read.
  - d. At services with large attendance, one usher should post himself down the center isle and be alert to vacant seats. From this position, he can seat incoming worshippers.
  - e. During the singing of the hymn before the sermon, all ushers who have not been seated are to sit down and participate with the worship. This is with the exception of one who will remain standing and who will be alert for any emergency or any late comers. This usher should be in plain sight and available to assist the Pastor at a moments notice.
2. Receiving the Offering
  - a. Normally 4 ushers collect the offering from the congregation. Offering plates are to be retrieved from the balcony and the Chapel and put into one plate that is presented to the Pastor.
  - b. Prior to collecting the offering, allow enough time for the congregation to have their envelopes or money ready. At services when a congregational hymn is sung or the choir sings during the offering, come down immediately.
  - c. One or two ushers will bring the offering forward, usually during the offertory.
  - d. When the offering is brought to the altar, the usher(s) will be dismissed by the Pastor and may either post themselves at the first pew where they will stay until ushering the congregation for communion or return to the back of the church.
3. Counting Attendance
  - a. The most accurate method of counting the congregation's attendance is from the balcony.
  - b. All people are to be counted, including babies, organist(s), pastor(s), acolytes, choir, people in the nursery and chapel.
  - c. The total count for the service is to be written on the Attendance Tally Form found in the Usher's Desk and numbers placed on the bulletin board.

- d. The Attendance Tally Form will be placed in the blue folder along with the attendance sheets and put in the “In Box” outside the Church Secretary’s office downstairs.
4. Holy Communion
    - a. The congregation is invited to commune by rows from front to rear.
    - b. One row at a time is directed toward the front in an orderly manner ensuring that a steady flow is maintained.
    - c. The usher should end each line with eye contact rather than stepping in front of a worshipper.
    - d. Those in the balcony usually commune last. In some cases, choir members, musicians or console operators may need to commune earlier so be aware of this possibility. Should you be approached by someone from the rear, guide them in after the last person in the pew has been ushered out and before a new row is started.

### **After the Service:**

1. At least one usher should be stationed at the top of the stairs to provide assistance to anyone who requires help descending the stairs or using the elevator.
2. When the congregation has left the church, the ushers will gather the attendance registration sheets and place the pads back in the pews. If pads are empty, replace them with refills from the Usher’s Desk area and be sure a pencil is inside the pad.
3. Place all attendance sheets and tally form in their appropriate (early/middle/late) blue folder and put in the Office Secretary’s “In Box” downstairs.
4. After the middle and late services, return all leftover bulletins & announcements to either the workroom or the table outside the church office.
5. Offering collection is placed in a banker’s bag (Usher’s Desk) and **two** ushers place it in the vault located in the basement.
6. Hymnals are to be placed in the bookracks. Remove all bulletins, papers, crayons and anything left behind in the pews or on the floor. A “Lost & Found” container is located downstairs under the table outside the church office. Make certain that the area is clear of loose paper and pencils are placed in the holders.
7. Flags will be taken down after the last service, folded and placed on the bottom shelf of the brown credenza across from the workroom.
8. Normally, all doors are locked after the last service by a council member. An usher should lock the Sanctuary door after the late service.



## **CHAPEL USHERS**

The Chapel Ushers' roles and responsibilities are somewhat different from the ushers in the Sanctuary.

1. Give special attention to all elderly coming to the chapel, attending to their individual needs.
2. Before the service, light the candles. Have the offering plate, attendance pad and pencils on the table in the chapel.
3. If there is an unusually large attendance, check the communion tray to make certain there are enough filled chalices (36 chalices in a full tray).
4. Count all present in the chapel and nursery. Give the count to one of the ushers in the Sanctuary.
5. Take the offering to the church so it may be included with the rest of the offerings brought to the altar during the offertory.
6. Check for any needs of the Nursery Attendant.
7. If there are any audio or visual difficulties, all the Console Operator in the balcony on the intercom. (Note: the sound control is at the back of the chapel in the cabinet.)
8. During communion, either the Pastor or a Communion Assistant will administer communion to those in the chapel. The Nursery Attendant may desire to receive communion so remind the Pastor/Communion Assistant.
9. The usher will receive the empty chalices after the administration of the Lord's Supper.
10. After the service, extinguish the candles and place the attendance sheets in the blue folder. After the late service, place the blue folder in the "In Box" outside the secretary's office. Place pencils, offering plate and attendance book in the chapel table drawer. Return any leftover bulletins to the workroom or the table outside the secretary's office.

## **FUNERAL USHERS**

There is a separate set of ushers who are in charge of funerals

1. When a funeral is held in the church, several ushers will be required.
2. The night before or several hours before the funeral service, the funeral bulletins need to be set out and the heating or air conditioning turned on.
3. Arrive one hour before the service. Funeral Home personnel may require assistance.
4. Flags should be raised to half—mast.
5. Candles should be lit by the ushers approximately 15 minutes before the service. After the service, extinguish the candles.
6. The bell is rung at the beginning of the service and is tolled (pull the rope and release so that the bell resonates) as the procession goes to the cemetery.
10. Other specific duties are assigned to the ushers as the need arises.

## **OTHER ITEMS**

1. If you observe anything that is out of order, broken or in need of repair, please make a note and drop it in the Property Committee Box located by the Financial Secretary's Office.
2. **Baptisms:** When a baptism is scheduled, prior to the service, move the baptismal font to the center in front of the Chancel. The ushers shall move the font back to its regular place when the offering is brought to the altar. After the service, the Altar Guild members are to remove the water and dry the baptismal bowl.
3. **Weddings:** Normally, the council rep that has duty that month is in charge. They are responsible for lighting, heating and cooling, bell ringing, unlocking, locking and the sound system. Candles should be extinguished after the wedding party has finished taking photographs. Check with the Pastor to see if extra help is needed.

**The time and effort you have devoted to the service of God and our Church are most appreciated.**