

Usher Customary

Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration

Before the Service

Arrive 30 minutes prior to the start of the service.

Bulletins

Check that correct bulletins are out, as sometimes there are different bulletins between the 9:00 and 11:15 services. Bulletins are located in the Usher Closet.

Place 30 bulletins at entrance to North Transept. Place 15 bulletins at entrance to South Transept

Comportment

Wear nametags and be dressed handsomely.

Smile and greet each person in a friendly manner.

Focus on assisting each person arriving and entering the church, rather than conversation between one another.

Offer helpful information about Nursery to anyone who has small children, and be willing to personally walk with guests to show them the way to Nursery or any other amenity

Review “Today” section in the Notices, so you can be helpful if people ask about particular things (e.g. blood pressure screening, breakfast, formation classes, etc.)

When Rector begins announcements, politely encourage all people still in Gathering Space to move into church or quiet their voices

Follow the direction of the Emcee concerning the opening of the doors for the procession.

Ushers seating is at rear of church, and Ushers should remain respectfully quiet during the service.

Be helpful to those arriving late in finding an available seat. Be helpful to those who may be seeking restrooms, nursery, or other needs.

Be helpful to Choir after opening procession as they depart the church and head to balcony (e.g. open doors to Narthex and Gathering Space).

Location

Two ushers stand in Gathering Space to distribute bulletins and open the outer glass doors to the Narthex.

1-2 ushers stand in Narthex to open doors to church and direct people to side doors beginning 5 minutes before the service.

One usher should be located at the entrance to the North Transept.

One usher, if available, may float.

Counting the Congregation

During the Creed, two ushers move down side aisles to count congregation in nave and transepts, one usher goes upstairs to count Choir, and one usher counts Nursery and Children's Chapel. The count is tabulated using the attendance sheet found in the Usher's Closet. This sheet is presented to the Emcee at the conclusion of the service.

Oblations and Offering

9:00 a.m. Eucharist

- a. During the Peace, Ushers gather in their places in the aisle at the rear of the church
 - a. One Usher holds the two small cruets.
 - b. One Usher holds the large flagon and ciborium.
 - c. The other 3-4 Ushers carry the plates, including two extras for the two Ushers carrying the oblations.
 - d. Ushers walk in pairs down the aisle, led by the oblation bearers (bread and wine).
- b. The Ushers begin down the aisle immediately when the Celebrant begins saying the Offertory Sentence. This sentence is often different from service to service, so the Ushers should be ready and prepared. Do not wait for the Celebrant to finish the sentence and return to his/her chair, but begin the moment the Celebrant begins saying the sentence. Ushers should walk briskly up the center aisle to the rail.
- c. Ushers on inside (closest to the gate) hold two plates each, and Ushers on outside hold one plate each.
- d. Oblation Bearers (ushers carrying flagon, ciborium, and cruets) move up chancel steps to front of Altar
 - a. Usher carrying flagon and ciborium places them, across the altar, onto the corporal in front of the Deacon. Then bow.
 - b. Usher carrying the two cruets hands them to the acolyte standing to the left side of the altar. Then bow.
 - c. Two Ushers should immediately turn around, move back to the rail entrance, receive their two offering plates, turn and face the altar, and then everyone should reverence together. This should all happen briskly, but unhurriedly.
- e. Passing of Alms Basins
 - a. One usher moves to each transept, two ushers move up center aisle, and two move up side aisles, passing the basins back-and-forth in orderly fashion
 - b. All alms basins gathered at rear of church and offerings consolidated into two plates
- f. Immediately at the conclusion of the Anthem (the moment the music stops)
 - a. Emcee moves to chancel gate with large alms basin and Celebrant and Deacon move to places at the Altar
 - b. Two Ushers, joined by a child carrying the offering from Children's Chapel, move briskly down aisle the moment Emcee stands in gate.
 - c. Ushers present alms basins to Emcee across the chancel gate, with child presenting basket last
 - d. Emcee carries basins and places them on far right side of Altar
 - e. Ushers reverence at the railing with a bow and return to seats via the side aisle

11:15 a.m. Eucharist

- a. When the Offertory Anthem begins
 - a. Ushers come forward with alms basins, line up at rail, reverence with a bow, and then proceed to pass the basins.
 - i. One usher moves to each transept, two ushers move up center aisle, and two move up side aisles, passing the basins back-and-forth in orderly fashion
 - ii. All alms basins gathered at rear of church and offerings consolidated into two plates
 - b. When the anthem ends and the hymn begins,
 - a. Two ushers carry oblations and two Ushers carry plates, plus a child carries the Children's Chapel offering (if there is one).
 - b. Two Oblation Bearers move up chancel steps to front of Altar
 - i. One Usher reaches across the altar to place the large Flagon and Ciborium directly on Corporal (white linen on the Altar) in front of Deacon
 - ii. Other Usher presents two small cruets of wine and water to Acolyte on left side of Altar (Usher holds cruets by the handles)
 - c. Two Ushers carrying alms basins present them to Crucifer just inside the gate, who then carries up and places on far right side of Altar (north side).

At Communion

Ushers come forward following the Lord's Prayer and Fraction Anthem, immediately after the Presider says, "The Gifts of God for the people of God." Do not wait for the choir to begin the anthem or the Acolyte to strike the bell three times before coming forward.

Two stand at front of center aisle to direct people to the rails. The goal is less to restrain people than to be helpful to them as they move to the rail. These ushers must pay careful attention to ushers directing transepts so that line may be efficiently fed to the side rails in 6-8 person clusters

Two stand by first pews and move back row by row inviting people to leave their row and join the lines moving forward. The line should be kept full.

It is important that people with mobility issues be given plenty of time to move to front, and not feel hurried.

One usher should be stationed at the corner of each transept, to motion to the usher in the center aisle that there is space at the side rails. This usher should motion to the aisle usher the number of people requested to fill the rail. It is important that the center aisle usher pay attention to the transept usher to ensure side rails are filled properly and efficiently

Special Notes for Communion

Fill the side rails before filling the front rail.

- a. The side rails are more difficult and time-consuming to fill, and therefore require more attention and persistence.
- b. It is alright to have several empty spaces at the front rail, while working to fill the side rail: it takes people less time to get to the front rail.

Be mindful of mobility-impaired (walkers and wheelchairs) parishioners, and direct them to the end of the front rail.

When someone cannot come forward for communion, please indicate to Emcee or Celebrant so that communion may be brought to them.