

Usher's Handbook



**St. Stephen's Ev. Lutheran Church
300 West Street
Beaver Dam, Wisconsin**

The Usher and His Church

While the pastors and the organist lead the congregation in worship, the ushers also have a most important job. Ushers have the job of seeing to it that the worship takes place in a fitting and orderly way. It is the duty of the ushers to see that all the physical aspects of the building are comfortable and that all the physical duties that must be taken care of before, during and after the service are carried out properly.

The people who come to our services are coming to God's house for worship and meditation. It is the duty of the ushers to see that they are able to do just that without many distractions. Thus, it is most important that the church usher performs his duties quietly, with a set routine, so he will not be a distraction.

In many ways, the ushers set the attitude and atmosphere for all who pass through the doors of our church. If the ushers are rushing around, confused about their duties; if they gather in groups and visit or neglect their duties, then these attitudes will quickly spread.

The ushers' attitude and personality will be most important when visitors come to worship with us. In many cases, the usher is the first person they come in contact with. Don't hesitate to say "Good Morning" and to offer a friendly smile and handshake. The outward appearance of the church building and the appearance and attitude of the ushers will be essential in forming their first impression of our church. Remember, the impression we make as Christians is a factor in how people form their first impression of Jesus Christ.

In Psalm 122 King David says, *"I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'"* It is a joy to serve the Lord in his kingdom. The Lord has given us all certain talents and

he expects us to use them for his glory. As an usher you are serving in the Lord's kingdom in a special way. You are making it possible for God's people to worship so that all glory might be given to God.

May the Lord Jesus richly bless you in this special work of the church. May the Lord Jesus, through your service, bring many blessings to all who come to worship at St. Stephen's.

“Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”
(1 Corinthians 15:58)

Ushering Duties at Each Service

1. Check schedule to see when you are supposed to usher. Check the monthly church calendar or weekly calendar in the bulletin
2. Ushers should arrive **30 minutes** before each service.
3. Pick up lapel pin and check in with captain.
4. Hand out church bulletin, greeting each member with a cheerful “Good morning!” and handshake.
5. If church is nearly full, the captain may ask you to go down to the front and help seat people. Please move around and find seating room for the people that come to you. Either motion to them or put out your hand on the bench in front of where you would like them to be seated. Say “Please” if people have to move over to make room.
6. Church bells signal the beginning of the service.
7. All people are to be seated as soon as possible.
8. No one is to be shown their seat when the pastor is speaking or when the congregation is standing.

9. By the end of the first hymn all ushers are to be seated on the chairs in the back.
10. After the Sermon, pick up offering baskets in the narthex.
11. When “Create in me” the Creed or the hymn after the sermon is finished, proceed to the front of the church together, carrying the offering basket in the right hand. Turn at the front bench.
12. Collect the offering.
13. Two ushers will bring the offering to the front, all the way to the communion rail. Step aside for the prayers. The ushers return to the back after the prayers.
14. After the closing hymn is sung, all ushers will line up in the aisles and walk to the front of the church together. They will stand facing the altar until the pastors walk past the ushers to the rear of the church. The ushers should dismiss the congregation row by row and count the people that you usher out.
15. Give your captain or co-captain the count.
16. Check the church proper: pick up paper, place hymnals back in the racks, etc. immediately after you hand in your count. After the last service shut the windows.
17. All ushers should wear their “Sunday best.” Suits or shirts and ties are preferred. Out of respect for the house of God, we should come to his house dressed neatly and well groomed.
18. Be sensitive to and assist those who have disabilities and need special help such as the hard of hearing, people in wheelchairs, the elderly, parents struggling with children. We have hymnals in large print for the visually impaired (in rack by the ramp door), and personal sound systems for the hearing impaired (in cabinet in the mothers’ room). The pastors often have printed copies of the sermon in the sacristy for those who can’t hear but wish to read along.

Ushering Duties for Captains

1. Check schedule to see when you are supposed to usher.
Check the monthly church calendar or weekly calendar in the bulletin
2. Ushers should arrive **30 minutes** before each service.
3. Pick up lapel pin and make sure all your ushers have a lapel pin also.
4. Assign each usher to his station.
5. Open windows as necessary. Narthex doors should be opened inward before service and opened outward after the bells are rung.
6. Check the church proper to see that everything is in order for the service.
7. Contact the pastor to see if there are any special instructions.
8. Church bells signal the beginning of the service.
9. Ordinarily, the ramp door should be closed during the first hymn. (This helps minimize distractions, since it has happened that someone wanders in or lingers on the ramp while a service is in progress.) The ramp door may be left open for a breeze during the Summer.
10. All people are to be seated as soon as possible.
11. No one is to be shown their seat when the pastor is speaking or when the congregation is standing.
12. By the end of the first hymn all ushers are to be seated on the chairs in the back.
13. Captains should be seated in the narthex or on the chairs in the back—but keep an eye on the narthex for latecomers.
14. Make sure offering baskets are in the narthex.
15. See that the offering is collected properly.
16. Remind the ushers to count the people accurately.

17. Captains should stand in the narthex and count the people who leave early (especially for Communion services and when *WELS Connection* video is shown).
18. Get the attendance count from your ushers:
 - a. Record on register in the basement
 - b. Return the offering baskets to the mothers' room cabinet
 - c. Return lapel pins to the mothers' room cabinet.
19. If it is the last service, close all the windows and assist the councilman in locking all the doors.
20. All ushers should wear their "Sunday best." Suits or shirts and ties are preferred. Out of respect for the house of God, we should come to his house dressed neatly and well groomed.

NOTE: On communion Sundays, the captains are to help the councilman on duty by sending communicants up to the altar.

General Information

1. Phone locations: in the kitchen in the church basement, in the mothers' room and in the sacristy.
2. If someone is ill and vomits, there is vomit absorbent (sawdust) in the cupboard in the mothers' room.
3. Under no circumstances should transportation be provided by the ushers for a person who is ill.
4. Emergencies: In the mothers' room there are three laminated cards with special procedures to be followed when there are **medical emergencies, fires or tornados**. Please familiarize yourselves with all three sets of cards.

Going the Extra Mile for Visitors

1. Visitors have four basic needs: the need to *feel welcome*, the need to *feel comfortable*, the need to *feel listened to*, and the need to *feel important*. Ask the Lord to help you be his instrument to meet those needs.
2. Read the bulletin yourself so that you can inform visitors about what is going on that Sunday and that week at our church.
3. Participate in the worship service yourself! You can worship Jesus and still be attentive to worshipers needs.
4. Involve the pastors as much as you can in making worshipers feel welcome, comfortable, listened to and important.

“And you are to love those who are aliens.”
(Deuteronomy 10:19)

What to do?

What to do in case of...

...a noisy child.

Let them be for a minute or two. It may take some time for the parents to respond or to calm the child down themselves. After you give them that time and if things aren't improving, go up to the parents, gently, kindly, and ask, "Can I help you?" "Is there anything you need?" Bring a "busy bag" with you and offer it if you don't think anything else can be done. Don't say, "Your child is noisy" because they already know that.

...someone passing out.

Ask friends or relatives who are sitting nearby if the person is okay. Ask if you can help. If the person can't wake up or come to on their own after attempts to wake, inform the church councilman or usher captain on duty and call 911. Other people who have cell phones may have called already, so don't be ashamed or afraid to call. It's better to call emergency services sooner and find that they aren't needed later than to not call and wish you had later.

...someone with an electronic device.

If the device is silent, let them be. The sight of someone (child or adult) texting or playing a game may be distracting—but it's only distracting for those who see it. If the device makes noises, beeping or ringing, a look (with a slight smile) and an index finger to the lips may be all that's needed.

...someone wanders in late.

Pick up a bulletin, offer it to them, and ask, "Can I help you?" They may be here for the worship service. They may be here for some other reason, so ask.