

USHER RESPONSIBILITIES

St. Thaddeus Episcopal Church, Aiken, SC

PRIOR TO THE SERVICE

All Ushers should arrive at least 20 minutes prior to the service. Open doors as appropriate for the weather conditions. Bulletins should also be found on the service table or in the sacristy. Large print bulletins are also available for each service.

AS THE CONGREGATION ARRIVES

Hand out Worship bulletins and pleasantly greet worshipers as they arrive. Be ready to assist any who need help with the steps, getting up or down the ramp or other needs. Hearing devices are located near the service table.

AS THE SERVICE BEGINS

Ring the “Call to Worship” bell, numerous times, 5 minutes before the Service.

As the actual service begins, at least one Usher should remain in the Narthex to assist latecomers (about 5 minutes). Count and then record the attendance on the small tablet provided at the Ushers’ Table (right of the entrance).

AT THE READING OF THE GOSPEL

As the Acolyte gets the Missal and starts toward the Congregation, proceed up the right outside isle and give the list of people identified for the Prayer of the People to the Lay Reader.

AT THE OFFERTORY

At the Offertory, take the Bread, Wine and the count sheet from the Ushers Table and proceed to the Chancel. After receiving the Offertory Basins from the Acolyte, give the Acolyte the Wine and the Bread, remain in place until the Bread and Wine have been presented to the Priest. Your signal to move should be the Acolyte leaving the Altar.

If only two Ushers are serving, collect the offerings from the center aisle and then collect from the two outside aisles. If four Ushers are serving, two Ushers proceed down the center aisle and the other two Ushers down each outside aisle. After receiving the offerings from the congregations in the Nave, one Usher needs to go to the Balcony.

When the Celebrant motions for the congregation to stand, proceed to the Altar and present the basins. Remain in place until after the Presentation. As the Celebrant begins the liturgy, leave using both the right and left doors so as to not cross in front of the Cross. Weather permitting, exit through the Vestry to the outside and return to the back.

COMMUNION

Two Ushers proceed to the front pews, one assisting on the Epistle side and one on the Gospel side. If more than two Ushers are available, the third one should assist at the door/steps coming from the Sacristy as Communicants return to their pews. The fourth Usher should be ready to assist at the Chancel steps.

Two important points here - 1: Ushers handling the aisle must be aware that adequate Communicants are in line, but not more than from the Chancel step to the Altar; and 2: Be available for assistance at the Sacristy door steps if needed. Be careful! Grabbing the arm that is using the cane is no help at all. Most prefer to return to their pews without distraction.

AFTER THE SERVICE

Ushers should be available to answer Visitor's questions, help locate items, etc. Two unrelated Ushers are to count and record the offering using the appropriate forms found in the Ushers' drawer in the Chancel and place these, along with the count slip, in a large white envelope. Ushers SHOULD NOT open envelopes. One Usher is responsible for taking the envelop to the church office and inserting it through the slot in the treasurer's door.

Prior to leaving, Ushers should police the area by picking up service sheets/bulletins, straightening Prayer Books, Hymnals, Bibles, etc. Yes, **we do recycle**. Please return all unused bulletins, etc. to the white basket in the sacristy area to be returned to the office on Monday morning. Make sure visitor cards are in proper placed. If no service follows, secure the front doors, and turn off the lights. If the Altar Guild is still present, and they generally are, assistance should be offered. This is especially needed for services that conclude after dark. **These ladies should never be left alone.**

FINAL THOUGHTS

Be as unobtrusive as possible. Distractions such as unnecessarily movement about the sanctuary, audible voices, etc., are to be avoided. Proper execution of Usher duties has a tremendous impact on the beauty of our worship services.

Finally, **if you are unable to serve when assigned, you are responsible for finding your own substitute.**