

USHER GUIDELINES FOR PRINCE OF PEACE PARISH
USHER MASS COORDINATOR GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW:

The core functions of all ushers are: Greet and seat, take up the collection, facilitate the communion procession, distribute bulletins, and care for our fellow parishioners at mass.

The functions of the Usher Mass Coordinator include:

- *Arrive early to prepare for mass needs*
- *Facilitate assignments and presider needs*
- *Coordinate usher activities*
- *Remain a short time after mass to assure doors closed, lights off, etc.*
- *Mentor new ushers*

SCHEDULING:

An online ministry scheduling program is used to schedule the Usher, *Usher Mass Coordinator*, Altar Server, Lector, and Eucharistic Minister ministries for Prince of Peace Parish. Schedules are generally prepared approximately every two months by a member of our parish office. Parishioners serving in these ministries will be provided with a user name and password to log onto the ministry scheduling program to indicate date and Mass time preferences, to view schedules for all ministries, and to request substitutes. Prior to the end of the scheduling period a new ministry schedule is created, a notice will be distributed by E-mail to members of all ministries with a link to the ministry scheduling program. Copies of the ministry schedule will also be available in the ministry sign-in room. Note, you will receive an e-mail requesting times you may not be available prior to scheduling and another just before your date of service.

If you have questions about the usher ministry for our parish, please contact the usher ministry coordinator Jerry Hilscher by phone/text at 913-481-5808 or e-mail: jerry@hilscher.org.

To change your scheduled Mass time, or to temporarily suspend your usher service, please do so through the scheduling program or e-mail the scheduler: litmin@popolathe.org. If you would like to be removed from the usher rotation please e-mail the scheduler at litmin@popolathe.org. You cannot inactivate your usher service through the scheduling program by removing all Mass preference times; you need to email the scheduler to be inactivated. Supplementary instructions and requests for ushers during holidays and other special events will be solicited by e-mail originating from the ministry scheduling program or through e-mail from the usher coordinator.

We need every scheduled usher at their assigned Mass. If you cannot serve your scheduled Mass time, please request a substitute through the ministry scheduling program and follow up to ensure someone has volunteered for you. If no one offers to substitute for you through the ministry scheduling program, please attempt to find someone who can. Remember that the ministry scheduling program only contacts other ushers who are scheduled during your scheduled Mass time. Requests for substitutes are not sent by the ministry scheduling program to ushers who serve at other Mass times. Therefore, if you can serve as a substitute for Mass times other than the one you normally attend, that will be greatly appreciated.

BEFORE MASS:

As an official representative of the parish community and a liturgical minister, it is important for all of us to express the significance we place on the celebration of the Mass. Ushers please arrive at least

10-15 minutes before your scheduled service to allow time for preparation and a moment of silent prayer and reflection. *Usher Coordinators please arrive 15-20 minutes prior to service.*

Sign-in for your Mass on the ministers log sheet that is located on the counter in the Minister's Room. Wear your personalized, red, "usher" badge, or 'general' "usher" badge to allow parishioners to recognize you if they need help. (If you are wearing a Knights of Columbus name tag wear an "usher" badge too). Business casual attire is generally appropriate, although more formal attire is acceptable, especially for Christmas and Easter Masses.

The altar servers will normally light the Mass candles, however the coordinator or designate, may provide assistance to them or light the candles for them. The candle lighters and extra wicks are available in the vestibule inside the exit doors to the west of the altar.

The sacristy doors are kept locked, the coordinator on his arrival should unlock the doors.

The sound controls for the speakers in the gathering area of the church are in the sacristy. If you cannot hear the Mass in the gathering area the coordinator, or one of the other ushers should increase the volume up for those speakers.

Lights should be turned on at least 15 minutes prior to the first Mass of the day, and turned off after the last Mass of the day. The priest may do this, but if the coordinator arrives before the priest the coordinator should do so.

The coordinator or designate should check to make sure no chairs have 'migrated' to locations that are inappropriate or may interfere with normal movement or the communion procession.

Gifts (water and wine cruets and hosts in a ciborium, sometimes gluten free hosts in a small pix) should be on the small table in the back, if a Eucharistic Minister has not prepared this by 10 minutes before Mass time, the coordinator or designate should notify one of the Eucharistic Ministers (they will be gathered for prayer prior to Mass).

The mass coordinator should gather the ushers and each select an area to serve. Generally the Mass Coordinator is one of the center aisle ushers, especially if the coordinator is working with a new usher, who should also serve the center aisle.

Note that if the coordinator has not arrived 15 minutes prior to the service the usher(s) present should start on the above duties.

The outer and inner exterior doors should not be propped open. The interior doors into the main church area should be closed before and during the Mass allowing those in prayer a quiet, non-distracting time. If possible open a door for incoming worshipers and offer a pleasant smile before you are needed to help seat the people. Center aisle ushers should hold the two east side interior center doors open when the presiding priest, deacon, lector and altar servers are ready to proceed into the church to begin Mass. These ushers should then station themselves near the end of the back

pews, on each side, to assure no one is 'wandering' around the main aisle as the procession is moving toward the altar.

GREETING PEOPLE:

Please greet people as they arrive to attend mass. Watch for people who may need special assistance, such as those in wheel chairs, on crutches or who are infirm, and offer your help. Always ask if they would like to have an Eucharistic Minister bring them communion.

If possible, suggest that people in wheel chairs use the east area of the church by the choir where there is more aisle room (remove chairs on the end of aisles, if present) or in the pew cut-outs near the back of the church. This will be more convenient for them. The designated 'handicapped' seating is the pew, on the wall, at the choir side.

Cultivate a sense of humor in the face of difficulty and try not to show irritation. Have a non-judgmental attitude and accentuate the positive. Remember the old adage, "You catch more flies with honey than vinegar".

Prior to the beginning of Mass, the coordinator or designate need to solicit a family or others to carry the gifts. Ask people who are dressed appropriately. Try not to pick the same family or group frequently, look for new faces. Instruct the gift bearers to gather the gifts during the General Intercessions and then wait for the altar server (cross bearer) to escort them up the church aisle, then return directly to their seats. The two ushers distributing baskets down the center aisle of the church should watch for the gift bearers to make sure they are in position to walk down the aisle with the gifts at the appropriate time, have questions or need reassurance. If no one comes forward (some folks get stage fright) the center aisle ushers should convey the gifts to the presiding priest.

SEATING PEOPLE:

Begin seating people once the church is starting to fill, or at the coordinators discretion. Try to seat people in the pews near the front of the church and down the main aisle - later arrivals can then be seated on the sides and in the back of the church, thereby creating less distraction. *The coordinator should be aware of when to start seating people.*

DO NOT SEAT ANYONE ONCE PEOPLE ARE SEATED FOR THE FIRST READING. If people are standing along the back and sides of the church **before** the First Reading, you may assist them with finding seating. Do not walk up the church aisles to assist them with finding seats once the first reading has started, as it is disruptive to the presiding priest and the others in the congregation.

If there are a lot of people standing and seats are available the priest may invite those already seated to move toward the center of the church and delay the first reading until those seats are filled, **be prepared to assist.**

The ushers should be seated in the reserved chairs in the back of the church during the readings and homily.

Be sure that everything you do contributes to the reverence that should prevail during times of prayer, liturgy of the word, and the consecration. Avoid talking or unnecessary movement that may distract members of the congregation.

COLLECTION:

As the congregation is sitting down after the Universal Prayers (petitions), the ushers, with 3 baskets each, should walk to the front of the church in their respective aisles. Ushers should key on the center aisle ushers and attempt to arrive at the front of each aisle at approximately the same time. Then bow, in unison, towards the altar before beginning the collection. A normal distribution of collection baskets is as follows:

1. Three baskets for each side of the main aisle – distributed to the 1st, 9th, and 15th rows.
2. Three baskets for the left (east - choir side) section – distributed to the 1st, 9th, and 13th rows.
3. Three baskets for the two right (west) sections – distributed to the 1st and 11th rows on the left hand side and to the 1st row on the right hand side.

The ushers who have distributed baskets can collect them after the baskets have been passed back and forth across the pews. Watch basket flow and location for possible problems. Whichever usher(s) retrieves their baskets first should attend to the cry room and the gathering space. The collection shall then be immediately placed within the tamper resistant bag labeled for that Mass date and time, at the collection table in the back. After the contents of the entire collection have been deposited within the bag, it shall be sealed and conveyed to the black safe in the sacristy by two unrelated ushers. Should the collection be too large there are smaller 'overflow' envelopes at the collection table. Each usher conveying the collection to the safe shall print their names adjacent to the listed Mass time on the collection receipt form located on top of the safe, which will list the identification number of the bag being deposited. Please ensure the bag falls completely into the safe. If for some reason the bag gets stuck, please contact the presiding Priest after mass. Please make every effort to avoid tearing or snagging the bag. Any loose envelopes or cash that are given to you after the bag has been deposited in the safe can be deposited loose in the safe. After depositing the collection the door from the Sacristy to the church should be locked and lights turned off.

COMMUNION PROCESSION:

After the priest distributes Holy Communion to the Extraordinary Ministers, and before distributing the ciboriums and chalices, the ushers, again keying on the center aisle ushers, should proceed down the aisles, similar to the collection, and bow. Try to ensure that traffic flow during communion is constant. As you proceed watch for impediments and tripping hazards. The usher on the choir side should ensure the choir receives communion first. The ushers should make certain that all have been invited to join in communion before receiving communion themselves. If someone has indicated they would like a Eucharistic Minister to bring communion to them inform the Eucharistic Minister, before receiving communion yourself inform the EM and lead the minister to them after receiving communion yourself. Note that the cup bearer is not required to bring the precious blood due to a greater possibility of spillage.

DISMISSAL:

After receiving communion and a time of prayer and reflection proceed to the ministry room to obtain bulletins, be certain to take an adequate supply. After the final blessing the ushers can prop open the center interior doors. The usher who has been serving on the east (choir) side of the church should distribute bulletins at the eastern side door and the others spaced out in the gathering area. After the bulletins have been distributed, they should be returned to the ministry room and not placed in the

racks in the vestibule. *The coordinator or designate should make sure the center doors are closed before leaving.*

Lastly, you may return your personal usher badge to the holding boxes in the Ministry Room, or keep them with you. *The coordinator or designate should turn off the lights after the 5pm and 11am masses. Note that there may be baptisms after the 11am mass, check with the presider.*

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Church light switches are in the sacristy.

The priest or maintenance staff takes care of the HVAC controls; contact either if there is a problem.

The fire alarm control box is in the school lobby. The on duty maintenance person will respond if an alarm is sounded, one usher should go to the control box to determine if there is an actual fire.

If there is a fire, take appropriate action. Immediately inform the presiding priest of the situation and help in an orderly evacuation of the parish facilities. The ushers should assist the fire department with necessary directions if there is an actual fire.

In the event of a tornado warning, the congregation will be asked to evacuate the church and move downstairs to the church hall.

In the event you need a 'clean up', during or after mass; or additional carpets put out during inclement weather; or any other physical plant need call the Maintenance person, **(913) 230-7084**. This number is in the ministry room and by the phone in the sacristy.

A phone is available in the sacristy. **Call 911 in any emergency. For medical emergencies, always ask the priest or lector to request medical help from the congregation. A defibrillator is on the wall in the gathering area (by the light switches).**

Should anyone comment that they "had" to park in a no parking zone (yellow painted curbs), please remind them, in a friendly way that it is an extreme safety hazard and the Olathe Police can ticket them.

There is a lost and found box in the closet, in the Ministry Room, for small articles. If a valuable item, such as a wallet, purse, check book, etc. Is found, have the presiding priest make an announcement, if there is no response and if there is an identifying phone number call it and let the individual know that the item will be given to the presiding priest for safe keeping (and generally kept in the office).

Low Gluten hosts are available in the sacristy, **members of the parish should know the procedure to be followed**. Visitors should be accompanied to the sacristy where the individual will place one low gluten host in a pix, then accompanied to the gift table in the back of the church. If there is already a pix at the table or in the ciborium the individual will then add his host to the existing pix. The individual will then have to go to the presider for communion and inform him they need a low gluten host. Always be aware of individuals who may put in more than one low gluten host, the priest cannot consume them! If a priest touches a low gluten host after touching a regular host, the host is no longer low gluten.