

Georgetown Presbyterian Church

USHERING INSTRUCTIONS – (Updated 2008; Reviewed January 2009)

EMERGENCIES - 911

Police: Non-Emergency: (202) 727-4326 **Fire:** Non-Emergency: (202) 673-3125

GPC Doctors or Nurses: **Georgetown Hospital Emergency Room**
Jane Lewis, John Marshall, Joe Romness, and (202) 784-2119
In choir - Roger Harris and Carl Schneider (pediatrics)

Georgetown Ministry Center: (202) 338-8301 **Emergency Hypothermia Hotline**
1041 Wisconsin Avenue (below M Street) (202) 339-7093

A telephone is in kitchen behind the Georgetown Room, to the left as you enter the kitchen.

First Aid Kit is located in coatroom between Narthex and Balch Hall.

General Information

Usher Captains are responsible for:

- (1) communicating with their Ushering Teams;
- (2) checking the lighting and sound systems before each service;
- (3) handling crying infants, health emergencies, intruders, etc.;
- (4) opening the outside door to P Street at the end of the service;
- (5) depositing the offering in the safe after the service;
- (6) keeping disruptive noises to a minimum.

There are six (6) **Ushering Teams**. Each serves one or two months (or several Sundays) per year. See the list of Usher Teams at the end of the memo.

The individual **Ushers** in the Usher Teams generally perform the tasks outlined in this Long-Form Ushering Instructions memo and other tasks as assigned. When an **Usher** receives the reminder from the Usher Captain, the Usher is to confirm receipt, even if unable to serve all of the Sundays.

Copies of both the Short-Form and Long-Form Ushering Instructions are kept at the table at the rear of the Sanctuary, where the other Ushering materials are kept.

Ushering Instruction Timeline

Mid-December Each Year Usher Captains advise the Coordinator which months they can serve and any changes to their ushering team. Ushers are requested to advise their Captain if they cannot continue to serve in the coming year.

By 20th of Month Before Usher Captains remind their team members prior to their month (or Sundays) of service, noting any special aspects in the upcoming services.

Sunday Morning Services (one hour earlier in summer)

10:30—Usher Captain

Lighting - Usher Captain turns on all Sanctuary lights at the wall plates located on the right rear wall of the Sanctuary. All Sanctuary lights should be on at the start of the service. If there are problems, notify the custodian.

Sound - Usher Captain checks that the headsets for the hearing impaired work. The sound board is operated under the direction of Bob Davis.

Badges, Plates, Bulletins - The basket with Usher badges, the attendance book, the bulletins and the offering plates should be on the small table in the rear of the Sanctuary.

10:40 or earlier

Ushers and Greeters Arrive. (Anna Schuhart coordinates the Greeters.) All six Ushers put on Usher badges and stand inside the three Sanctuary doors handing out bulletins as worshippers arrive. They should pleasantly greet members and visitors and offer to seat worshippers, especially visitors.

Seating Worshippers

Although many long-time worshippers like to sit in favorite locations, when appropriate, the Usher should escort the worshipper to a seat, attempting to fill in pews. The side pews can seat 3 people, and the center pews seat 7 or at most 8 people.

As the Sanctuary fills, ushers should occasionally “sweep” up and down the aisles in order to locate available seats. Seating visitors near active GPC members will enhance the probability that they feel welcome.

Other Responsibilities

Ushers close the doors when minister steps to dais. However, one door can be left partially open to seat latecomers. (Greeters take their seats, when the Bible is carried in or as Prelude ends.) One usher should remain in Narthex. (Ushers should keep conversation to a minimum before and during the service because sound reverberates in the back and disturbs worshippers.)

During Service

Seating Latecomers - Once the Service starts, Ushers should keep late worshippers in the rear of the Sanctuary until an appropriate break in the service, usually when the congregation is standing. Seating worshippers down the side aisles rather than the center aisle is the least disturbing to the Ministers and other worshippers. Worshippers should not enter the Sanctuary during prayers or the reading of the Scriptures.

Worshippers Making Disruptive Noises - Ushers should ask parents with crying infants and worshippers coughing or making other disturbing noises to leave the sanctuary. Since the noise of anyone in the Narthex carries into the Sanctuary, the Usher should direct them to the Bride's/Cry Room, which now has video and sound so that the service can be followed from there without disturbing other members of the Congregation. The Georgetown Room also could be used by worshippers with active children.

During Time with Children

The Usher Captain records name of the preaching Minister, the attendance, and the weather conditions in the attendance book. Most of the Attendance is counted from the choir loft, before the

children leave. The last couple rows are done from the back of Sanctuary. DO NOT LEAN OVER THE BALCONY. The count includes everyone (except babies): Ministers, ushers, choir, organist, worshippers, children, etc. While in the choir loft, pick up the offering, leaving the plate on the choir table.

Taking up the Offering

During the last verse of the post-Sermon hymn and before the Prayer for Ourselves and Others begins, the Usher Captain quietly distributes the offering plates to the Ushers. As the Offertory begins, the Ushers walk down the three aisles to the front of the Church, and begin collecting the offering.

The ushers collecting from the two center rows of pews alternate rows, but if rows are not filled, each usher would only collect from nearest person(s) and then hand plate to the next row.

After offering is collected, all Ushers gather at the center aisle in the rear of the Church. When possible, use the following gender sequence:

1 Female 2 Male
3 Male 4 Female
5 Female 6 Male

When the Doxology begins, the Ushers walk to the front of the Sanctuary and fan out facing the Minister. The Minister takes the plates, puts them on the table, and offers the Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer. The Ushers then turn and return to the rear of the Sanctuary.

On communion Sundays, the Ushers follow the elders down the center aisle and after giving plates to the minister they go back down the center aisle.

The Ushers may now remove their Usher badges and put them in the small basket. At least one usher should remain at each of the 3 rear doors to assist any worshipper needing to leave and to keep the doors from banging.

After Benediction

Usher opens center Sanctuary doors so ministers may exit to Narthex. Outside doors to P Street should not be opened until the service ends, to avoid cold/heat problems from out-of-doors.

After Choir Response

Ushers open Sanctuary side doors and outside doors to P Street.

After Service

As the Postlude begins and the Congregation begins to leave the Sanctuary, the Usher Captain and a second Usher pick up the offering plates from the table, take them and the basket and attendance book downstairs to the supply room on the right, and deposit the offering in the drop safe there. (Deposit a small amount at a time to avoid jamming the cylinder.) Leave the small basket with the Usher badges, the attendance book, and the offering plates on top of the drop safe. Close the door so that it locks.

Medical Emergencies

Locate a GPC doctor or nurse who is listed on the first page. A first aid kit is located on the shelf of the coatroom located towards the Georgetown Room.

Handling Worshippers with Disabilities

Hearing Disabilities. Battery operated headsets and a battery charger are located on the table located on the right side of the Sanctuary. When a hearing-impaired worshipper arrives, an Usher places a battery (from the charger) in the headset and tests it before handing it to the user. After the service, the headsets are left in the basket with the battery turned on. The custodian recharges those that have been used and are rundown.

Visual Disabilities. For worshippers with visual impairments, there are 12 large print Revised Standard Version Bibles (will be) and 15 large print hymnals located on the table at the rear of the Sanctuary.

Wheelchair Accessibility. For worshippers in wheelchairs, there are two pew locations: one toward the front of the right center pews and one “removable” section in the back (on the right end of the last of the left center pews). Remove it by unclasp the three clamps. Additional wheelchairs would be set against the rear wall of the Sanctuary.

If additional seating is needed, worshippers may use the “Reserved for Ushers” chairs in the back of the Sanctuary, the “Elders’ Pews” at the front of the Sanctuary, or chairs from the Georgetown Room set behind the last row of pews, in front of the pews, and in the space near the baptismal font. At the end of the service, Ushers should return any such chairs to the Georgetown Room.

Handling Visitors in Need

Persons Who Wish Pastoral Care. Refer to one of ministers – or - ask them if the matter can wait until during the week. Such people may make appointments by calling the Church at (202) 338-1644.

Persons Who Need Food, Cash, Clothing, or Shelter. Ushers should let those in need of food know that, in addition to the free Lunch Bunch coupon, those preparing Lunch Bunch can provide them with a bag of food to eat later. Those in need of cash, clothing, or shelter should be directed to the Georgetown Ministry Center at Grace Episcopal Church on Wisconsin Avenue below M Street (it opens at 10:00 am on Monday).

Ushers should present such people with one of the cards on the ushers’ table, prepared with information about shelters. Also on the cards are some addresses for shelters that do not require referrals, and for food providers, which are open on either Sunday or Monday. If the weather is really cold, Ushers should call the Hypothermia Hotline (202) 339-7093, find the nearest available shelter, and arrange to have the person transported to the shelter.

Handling Disruptive Persons

The Church is in an urban area, and disruptive persons may appear. A single Usher should not try to deal with any actively hostile or disturbed person. If an Usher thinks someone might become disruptive, 2 or 3 willing people might sit with that person.

If necessary, call 911 or the Police non-emergency number (202) 727-4326. The nearest telephone is in the kitchen behind the Georgetown Room located to the left of the doorway.

Procedures for Special Services

Special services may have a different staffing level than a regular Sunday service, but that month’s ushering team may be needed. Some services have special Ushering traditions.

Communion—When the Elders serve Communion, they line up and, as the Doxology is played, walk ahead of the Ushers, moving to the Elder pews. After taking the Offering plates, the Minister will

indicate when the Ushers are to turn around and return to the rear of the Sanctuary. Open doors for two Elders going to choir loft.

Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday—The Usher Captain for that month will arrange Ushers.

Easter (2 Services, 9:00 am and 11:00 am)—The Usher Captain for the month will notify Ushers about early arrival requirements. Easter Ushers generally join the Choir for the Choir's traditional Easter Brunch between services.

Because of high attendance at the Easter 11:00 am service, as many additional chairs as possible should be placed behind the last row of pews, in front of the first row of pews, and in other vacant areas in the front of the Sanctuary, prior to the start of the service.

Christmas Eve (2 Services, 5:00 pm and 11:00 pm)—Returning GPC college and senior high students traditionally serve as Ushers for the 5:00 pm service. The Usher Coordinator and Usher Captain for the month will make Ushering arrangements with these returning students - and with members of the Usher Team for the 11:00 pm service.

Funerals—Volunteer Ushers usually hand out bulletins at funerals. The Minister will advise the Usher Coordinator who might assist.