

# USHER PROCEDURES

## Berwyn United Methodist Church

Ushers are an important part of the hospitality ministries of our church. They are the face of our church who provide a warm welcome that is a visitor's first impression. The usher's cheerful service helps set the tone for our worship. A well-functioning usher team will insure that the service proceeds smoothly, that all worshippers are welcome and comfortable, and that any special needs or emergencies are handled efficiently. These procedures will assist you to be a capable member of this team.

### **TEAM COMPOSITION**

A Sunday morning usher team consists of a Team Captain and two team members. A Team Captain has additional responsibilities described below.

If you are unable to serve on your assigned date, arrange for a substitute. You can swap another week with someone using the usher schedule. The usher schedule can be found on the church website under Resources/Volunteer Schedules (<http://www.berwynumc.org/resources/schedules.shtml>). Notify the Usher chairperson and your team captain, letting them know if you have selected a substitute.

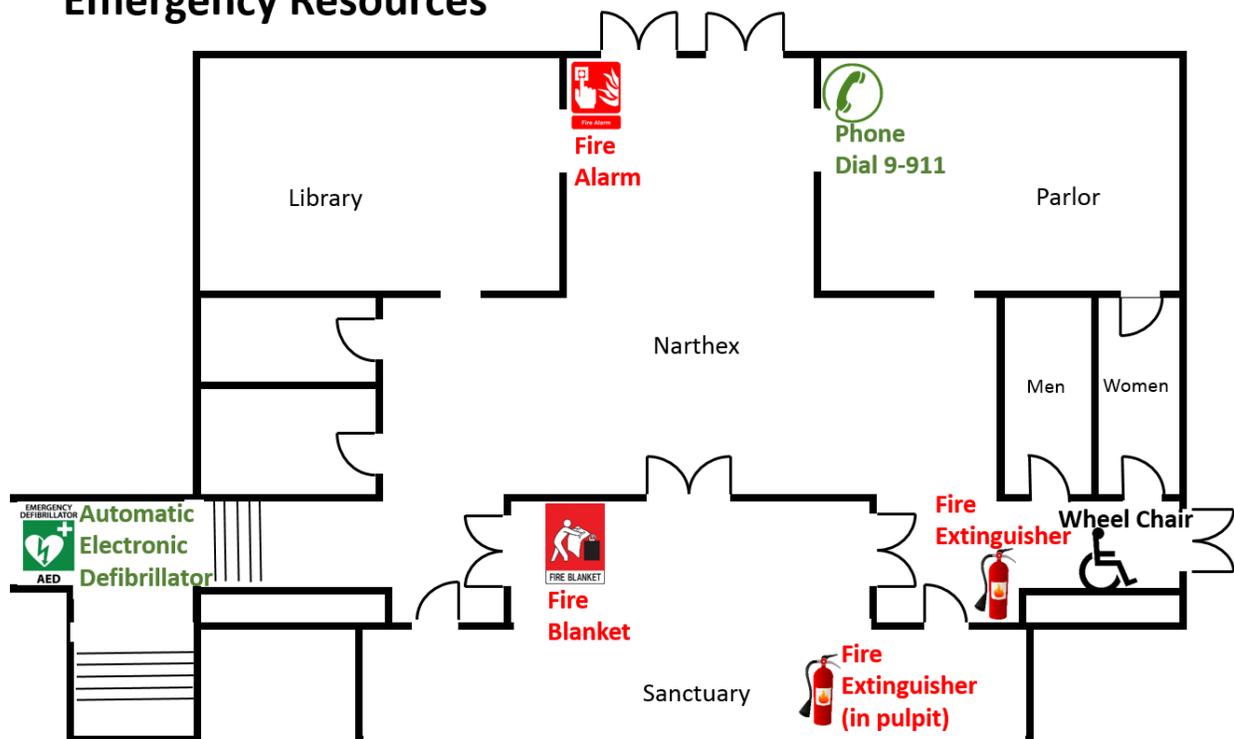
### **EMERGENCIES:**

Know the exact location of and how to use:

- FIRE EXTINGUISHERS: In the pulpit; on the wall outside the left Sanctuary door (rest room side); on the wall at the bottom of the stairs leading to the education wing.
- FIRE ALARM: On the wall to left of main outside doors.
- FIRE SUPPRESSION BLANKETS: On shelf in the Usher Cabinet.
- AUTOMATIC ELECTRONIC DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) Unit: On the wall at the bottom of the stairs leading to the education wing. (Instructions are with the unit.)
- FIRST AID KIT: In the right-hand drawer of the Usher's table
- WHEEL CHAIR: Under the coat rack opposite the rest rooms.
- EMERGENCY TELEPHONE: On the wall in the Parlor to the left of the main door.
- ALL EMERGENCY EXITS: Left front (organ side) of the Sanctuary (right front door [choir side] is not an exit); main Sanctuary doors; main outside entrance to the narthex; side outside entrance in front of rest rooms.

If it is necessary to evacuate the Sanctuary the ushers will, under the direction of the Pastor and Usher Captain, assist the members of the congregation to the nearest exit. If there is a simple loss of power, the emergency lights will illuminate automatically and the Pastor will decide whether or not to evacuate the Sanctuary. In the event of a more serious emergency, it will be necessary to exhibit extraordinary authority, firmness and confidence so that panic is avoided and the premises are evacuated quickly and efficiently. Give special attention and assistance to the needs of handicapped persons.

## Emergency Resources



- In the event of fire, a medical emergency, or a need to evacuate, an usher must report the emergency to 911 as soon as possible. It is best to use the church extension in the parlor instead of a cell phone if possible when calling 911, as using a land line will immediately identify the origin location of the call. It is necessary to dial a 9 before using a church telephone extension, so if using the phone in the parlor, dial 9-911.

If we evacuate the Sanctuary, the rest of the church building should also be evacuated. The Usher Captain should assign one person (Sweeper) to sweep the building and report back. The person performing the sweep should be someone who knows the building layout and exits. The key areas to examine and clear of people are:

- ✓ The nursery
- ✓ The office rooms
- ✓ The music room and music director's office
- ✓ The kitchen and kitchen storage room
- ✓ The Story Hour classroom (evacuate using the lower exit)
- ✓ The downstairs classrooms
- ✓ The youth room and the back stair up to the exit behind the pulpit
- ✓ All rest rooms (including handicapped restroom)

The Sweeper should report back any areas not covered or inaccessible to the Usher Captain who should report the same to emergency personnel. Other rooms (Schieck Hall, Library, Parlor) can be checked from the outside.

## **BEGINNING THE SERVICE:**

Arrive at least 20 minutes prior to the service. If the assigned team captain is not present, an experienced member of the team should assume the duties of the team captain.

The ushers are among the first persons a visitor or member of the congregation will meet on Sunday morning. The ushers should insure that each person is greeted warmly. As an usher, try to look for and identify visitors, make sure they receive a warm welcome, and are made to feel comfortable and at home.

The Team Captain is responsible to insure:

- That a sufficient number of ushers or substitutes are present
- That collection plates are empty and properly located on the South Credence Table (behind the Altar by the stained-glass windows) at the front of the Chancel
- That lights are on, doors to Sanctuary are open, heating or air conditioning is operating properly
- That pews are orderly
- That usher's basket is present and contains sufficient adult and children's bulletins, a candle lighter and usher's report form
- That any special handouts or other instructions on the usher's report are observed
- If it is Communion Sunday (the first Sunday of the month is Communion Sunday), that the communion elements are located on the shelf of the usher stand in the back of the church. If they are not, check with the Pastor to see if another procedure is being used for communion that Sunday.
- If there is no acolyte, light the candles on the Altar as the prelude music starts.

Greet each person warmly and present each with a bulletin and additional handouts if appropriate. Call attention to any pick-up items on the bulletin stand. Direct children to the children's activity bags if the child is not aware of them. Children's bulletins are available in the children's activity bags.

Be prepared to direct anyone to the restrooms and child changing stations. There is a changing station in each restroom.

Watch for and try to identify visitors, making them feel comfortable and welcome. Assist them in finding a seat if necessary.

Anyone in a wheel chair may be directed to one of the wheelchair equipped rows on the outside aisles. A family handicapped restroom is located between Schieck Hall and the Choir Room. To access the family handicapped restroom from the sanctuary using a wheelchair, it is necessary to use the sidewalk outside to bypass the stairs inside.

Assist worshippers in locating and using hearing assistance devices (in center drawer of usher's stand) if requested. Make sure any unit handed out has fully-charged batteries.

If it appears the supply of bulletins may run out, send someone to the office workroom to make additional copies. Give a bulletin to each person needing one.

At the start of the organ prelude the sanctuary doors should be closed. Watch for and assist late-arriving worshippers, helping them with the doors and encouraging them to enter the sanctuary and move quietly to their seats. Visitors often arrive late; watch especially for anyone who seems uncertain about where to go and move out into the narthex to help if necessary.

Assist the acolytes by lighting their wand just before they proceed down the aisle. Watch the acolyte and if they need assistance or the wand goes out, light a second wand and assist. If there is no acolyte, one of the ushers should walk up and light the candles.

## **DURING THE SERVICE:**

### **Collecting Prayer Cards:**

During the singing of the hymn as indicated in the bulletin, ushers collect prayer requests from the center aisle. Take and display a blank card and take a supply of “You were remembered in prayer” post cards. For each prayer request card collected, give the worshipper a postcard. One usher will deliver the prayer cards to the Pastor.

The “You were remembered in prayer” post-cards are in the left-hand drawer in the ushers' cabinet at the back of the sanctuary.

### **Collecting the Offering:**

The ushers wait behind the rear pew at the center aisle in advance of the collection time. They start walking down the aisle as the Pastor descends to the altar rail with the offering plates.

Two ushers collect offerings along the center aisle. The third usher should collect offering from anyone sitting along the outer aisles out of reach from the plate passed from the center aisle.

Upon completion of the collection the ushers again form up at the center aisle behind the rear pew, stepping off together when the Doxology (the “Praise God from all whom all blessings flow” song) begins.

If it is Communion Sunday, one usher will bring the offering plates, and the remaining two will bring the communion elements (plate with loaf of bread and chalice with wine) forward. At the altar rail, the first will step to one side, allowing the two with the communion elements to stand together in the center.

After the Pastor has received the collection plates, the ushers remain standing at the altar rail until the Prayer of Thanksgiving has been said.

## Other Duties during the Service:

If power point or other visuals are being shown on the screen during the service, dim the lights during the video presentation, following instructions in the switch box.

Remain available and alert at the rear of the Sanctuary during the service, continue to watch for late arriving persons, and be available to assist anyone leaving the sanctuary during the service because of illness or for other reason.

Monitor the heat. If the sanctuary becomes too cold or too warm during the service, quietly adjust the thermostat located in the rear of the sanctuary, near the light switch box.

The Usher Captain makes an attendance count of all persons in the Sanctuary, a separate count of children and attendants in the nursery and completes the Usher Report in the basket on the usher's cabinet.

Part of the attendance count includes the nursery. One of the ushers needs to check the nursery to see if any children need to be counted. In addition, the Berwyn Safe Sanctuary Policy requirement is met by having an usher check on the nursery at a random time during the service. This can be satisfied by simply looking in through the window in the door and confirming that all is well.

## **AFTER THE SERVICE:**

Open all Sanctuary doors including the separate doors to the side aisles during the final hymn.

Pick-up the offering from the altar, put it in a business envelope (from the usher's basket), label it as the Sunday Offering and the date. Put the offering through the slot in the Safe.

Extinguish the candles on the Altar.

Check each pew, remove litter, return hymnals to the racks and collect the Ritual of Friendship (Attendance) sheets after worshippers leave the pews. Place the filled-in sheets, Usher Report and extra bulletins in the usher basket and return the basket to the office workroom.

## **COMMUNION SERVICES:**

### By Intinction:

This is the usual procedure for administering the elements. No special duties are required of the ushers, but they should be prepared to assist in serving the elements if needed. They should remain at the rear of the Sanctuary and be prepared to assist anyone who appears confused or needs assistance because of a handicapping or other

condition. Be alert to those who are unable to approach the altar, and signal to the pastor any who require the administration of the elements at their seats. The ushers should be among the last to receive communion.

### At the Altar Rail:

When the Pastor is ready to administer the sacraments to the congregation, the Usher Captain and two ushers will move up the center aisle to the first row of pews. The two ushers will invite worshippers from pews on each side of the center aisle to move to the Altar Rail so that no more than 13 persons are on each side of the rail. The maximum number of persons should be asked to come forward without breaking up family units. The Usher Captain will remain at the front of the center aisle to guide the worshippers to the Altar Rail. If more participants come forward than there is room at the altar rail, the Usher Captain may direct some to sit in the front pew until the next group.

When the participants have arrived at the Altar Rail and are invited to kneel, the Usher Captain takes a seat in a front pew and the other ushers take seats in pews at the row last emptied.

When the participants have received the elements and are directed to rise, the Usher Captain will direct the worshippers to return to their seats by way of the side aisles while the other ushers signal the next group of participants to move to the altar rail.

The Ushers will join the last group to receive communion.

### In the Pews:

This service will require four ushers. The ushers will form in pairs at the rear of the Sanctuary and when indicated by the Pastor, will walk down the center aisle and up to the top step of the Chancel. The first two ushers will stay in the middle of the step and the other two will step to their left and right.

The Pastor will hand a tray of bread to each usher, starting with the two in the center. When all ushers have received a tray, the two in the center will turn toward each other and proceed down the steps and to the first pew on the side aisles. The second pair will turn toward each other, move to the center of the step, and proceed to the first pew of the center aisles.

When all ushers are in position, they will pass the trays of bread to the worshippers in the pews. After the bread has been served to all worshippers, the ushers will meet at the back of the sanctuary and offer the element of bread to one another.

When directed by the Pastor, the ushers will bring the trays back to the Altar in formation as above, will receive the trays of juice, and will repeat the serving procedure. If all cups in a tray are given out and there are still worshippers to be served, the Pastor may bring an additional tray to the usher, or the usher may return to the chancel for another tray.