

USHERS MINISTRY
St. Mary Help of Christians
Aiken, SC

Portions of this document were extracted from
“The Ministry of Ushers” by Gregory F. Smith

TRAINING FOR NEW AND VETERAN USHERS

PREFACE:

The Usher Ministry is established in the church in order to serve the people of the parish and create and maintain a climate of hospitality within our Eucharistic assemblies. While many may see the main focus of the ushers as to show the faithful to their seats, take up the collection and pass out bulletins after mass, we as ushers must understand that our responsibility is much greater than that. We greet the faithful when they arrive and give them a sense of warmth and hospitality. The Usher is the first person to meet our members on arrival and very often establishes the attitude of those attending Mass. A smile, a handshake and a warm greeting can transform the attitude of someone who had a rough morning getting to Mass. While our duties do ensure that the Mass runs smoothly, we must at all times try to maintain an atmosphere that provides an open invitation to worship.

Thank you for accepting Christ’s call to serve in this ministry. You have established yourself as someone who wants to make a difference and assist the parish in creating an environment to bind members together into holy fellowship. The warm friendliness and open hospitality of ushers provides an essential ingredient that prepares the congregation for the re-creative work of the Holy Spirit, who labors mightily in the celebration to make all who share in it “one Body, one Spirit in Christ”.

Details concerning the Church and St. Angela’s Hall:

LOGISTICS:	CHURCH	ST. ANGELA HALL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulletins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always in receptacles attached to the rear pews. • Bring extra bulletins to St Angela’s Hall after 12:15 PM Mass. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return extra bulletins to the Church after 6:00 PM Mass.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wine & Hosts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared by the Priest, Deacon or Mass Coordinators. Ushers bring them from the sacristy to the rear of the Church before Mass begins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass Coordinators will prepare the wine and hosts and place on the table against the bleachers. Ushers need to ask Coordinator how many hosts are available for communion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest Rooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Smith Hall; and in emergency the one in the Sacristy (enter through the rear center door and turn left) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behind the altar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid Kit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located in the Confessional nearest the swinging doors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located in the Athletic Office.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Clare’s Chapel (left side of the shelf, where the register is) • Smith Hall (kitchen countertop) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletic Office (phone is usually unplugged during Mass)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Count 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ushers need to count people and ensure sufficient hosts are available. Hosts are stored in cabinet in the Office.

BEFORE MASS:

It is the role of the ushers to welcome people into the Church and to answer questions when asked.

- Arrive 15 minutes prior to the beginning of Mass. This allows us time to ask the priest if there are any special circumstances for this Mass (i.e., reserving seats, second collections, and changes in the celebration of the Mass). It also allows us time to bring the hosts and wine to the rear of the Church to the gift table. We then serve to greet members and visitors as they arrive for church. This is our Hospitality Ministry.
- Check to ensure that all of the Bulletins are in the receptacles attached to the rear pews (Church) and on the tables at the two doorways (St Angela's)
- Before 5:00 PM Saturday Mass and 7:30 AM Sunday Mass the Ushers should open the doors to the Smith Hall for use of the rest room facilities. Keys are located in the Sacristy and in St. Clare's Chapel.
- Before all masses, meet with the celebrant to discuss any activities or special services that may be taking place during the Mass.

GREETING THE COMMUNITY:**SEATING:****Church:**

- The first two seats next to the center aisle on the Mary side of the church are reserved for Lectors.
- Usually, we will try to reserve the front pew on the Joseph side for the elderly and handicapped and injured.
- As people begin to arrive, greet them with a smile and maybe a handshake. As the Church begins to fill up, the Ushers themselves begin to seat people. Remember that you are a recognized Usher, whether you know it or not; and people are looking to you to assist them with seating; so don't be shy. Walk the aisles, look for spaces, and ask people to move in so that others may sit. If need be, go to the front of the Church and ask people to push in towards the center aisle so that we can sit more people from the side aisles. We have never encountered anything but a cordial attitude when serving to seat people. Do it with a smile and with Christ in your heart. What could go wrong?

St. Angela Hall:

- The first two seats on the left side of the center aisle are reserved for Lectors.
- Usually, we will try to reserve the front pew on the right side of the center aisle for the elderly and handicapped and injured.
- St Angela's seldom gets full except on the holidays. However, some people may need assistance in finding a seat rather than sitting on the bleachers. The same rules of practice and of etiquette applies in St. Angela Hall as apply in the Church, as above.

THE COMMON GOOD:

- Good order in the Eucharistic Assembly is based upon respect both for the individual member and for all the other members of the assembly.
- The rule of reason tempered with charity calls for the individual to so conduct himself and the members of his family that the larger community may not be unduly disturbed in its worship.

- It also calls for the community as a whole to make some reasonable allowance for the individual and for his comfort at worship.
- Balancing the interests of the individual with those of the whole community is sometimes difficult to achieve. It is part of the Ushers' responsibility to act and to speak both with reason and with love, always to keep the peace of the assembly. Sometimes this will require the Ushers to intervene in a disturbance – even to the point of ushering the individual out of the assembly – out to the vestibule – over to Smith Hall – and even, in extreme cases, outside and away from the Church property.

BRINGING UP THE GIFTS:

Prior to the beginning of Mass, the Usher should ask a family if they would bring up the gifts. If no family is selected, then the Ushers will present the gifts. At the 6:00 PM Lifeteen Mass, the teens may present the gifts.

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING THE COLLECTION:

It is the policy of the Diocese that two individuals will handle all collection monies at all times. To do this, the parish is providing a moneybag labeled for each Mass and with each bag is a card slot with a card identifying the two individuals who processed the collection for that Mass. This label also has their phone number next to their name.

The bags are locked by key and the key location will be identified during your training session. For this procedure to work, each individual Usher will have to have a key to the Sacristy. This key must be obtained by the individual Usher, by personally signing out the key at the parish office between the hours of 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM on M-F. This will get you into the middle door of the Sacristy so that you may process the collection money.

Church:

- The altar server will place the collection in the rear of the altar. After Mass, the two Ushers who are to handle the money will proceed to the Sacristy and retrieve the basket with the collection and the appropriate moneybag labeled for that Mass. Second collections will be placed in a separate canvas bag and placed in the locked bag also. The regular collection will remain loose in the bag. Once all monies are in the bag, the bag is locked. The remainder of the procedure will be covered in the training session.

St. Angela Hall:

- The collection will be on the altar and will be retrieved by the Ushers at the conclusion of the Mass. If there is a second collection, the money from that collection will be placed in a separate canvas bag and placed in the larger moneybag along with the regular collection. The regular collection should be placed in the bag loose. The Ushers should also collect laundry to be taken to the Sacristy for cleaning. The laundry should be placed in a bag labeled for that Mass. Once the laundry is in the bag, two Ushers should take the moneybag and the laundry to the Sacristy and enter through the rear center door. The laundry should be placed in the chair sitting in the Sacristy. The remainder of the procedure will be covered in the training session.
- At the Lifeteen Mass, the Teenagers will perform the Usher duties. However, an adult Usher must be present to secure the money.

AFTER MASS:

An important part of the hospitality that is to be offered in our Church is for the Ushers to prepare our worship space for the arrival of our next worshipers. Thus, the pews and the chairs should be put back into good order. Hymnals and Catechisms should be straightened up and stray bulletins, other papers, and lost and found items should be removed. Doors and lights should be left in the positions proper for the times intervening between the Masses.