

LA CAÑADA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

USHER MINISTRY MANUAL

A “living” document, which evolves

Revised September 2009

Ushers are a ministry of worship. It is critically important to the life of the church that worshippers, especially first time visitors, are warmly welcomed. In this way, we are a bridge between the functions of outreach and spiritual formation.

The current mission statement for our ministry reads:

Being a church usher is a sacred responsibility. It is a great privilege because it is a service rendered to God, and an act, which plays a part in conducting the worship service. It requires the same quality of dedication demanded of those who teach in the church school or sing in the choir. Very often the usher is the first person the worshipper meets when entering the church. First impressions are important. The attitude conveyed with words, facial expressions, and general deportment, as well as the appearance of the usher, will influence the worshipper. Ushers are ministers of hospitality.

Please convey a warm welcome to regular attendees, guests and visitors who may be searching for a church ministry.

GOALS:

As hosts of the worship service, to lead worshippers into God's house. To help each person according to his/her need, to participate fully in the worship service.

To create and maintain a reverent, yet joyful atmosphere for worship.

To be alert and attentive at all times during the service, and to handle problems and emergencies that arise, with the safety of all in mind, in the least disruptive manner possible.

To make sure that every visitor feels welcome, comfortable, listened to and important.

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." Hebrews 13:2 NRSV

To conduct ourselves in a worshipful manner to project a positive attitude to all.

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16 NRSV

To be trained in emergency procedures and be familiar with emergency equipment.

To prepare the sanctuary for the next service.

"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved."
1 Corinthians 10:31 NRSV

USHER CAPTAIN DUTIES

General Duties

1. Usher Captains are the Head Coaches of their teams. They are responsible for recruiting, training and making assignments. They are responsible in maintaining a team that is consistent with the Usher's Mission Statement. Most importantly they make sure their team is equipped and prepared to handle all that occurs during a service.
2. Contact your team during the assigned week and confirm at least four ushers are available to serve. The preferred method of communication is email. For Holiday Services, a minimum of six ushers, including the Usher Captain, is highly encouraged.
3. The following are considered to be holiday or special services:
 - a. Ash Wednesday in February
 - b. Maundy Thursday in March
 - c. Palm Sunday in April
 - d. Easter in April
 - e. Christmas Eve on December 24th
 - f. New Year's Eve
4. **During anticipated heavily attended holiday or special services, a second usher teams will be scheduled to serve in the Family Life Center to handle over-flow attendance. Such needs will be anticipated for the 2009 season and scheduled accordingly.**
5. Communicate with the Head Usher during the week of your assignment as to your crew's availability.
6. Communicate with the Head Usher concerning issues with your team; report problems that occurred during service; give feedback and suggestions to improve our usher ministry. In June, provide Head Usher with names of those ushers who have been inactive for more than six months.
7. Recruit ushers for your team. A minimum of six ushers (including the Captain) to be on your roster year around is ideal.
8. Train and coach each usher on your team. Rotate ushers through all of their assignments, including Captain's duties. Every usher on the team should be able to fulfill all duties and responsibilities including taking over as Captain.

9. If staffing permits, Captains should not perform standard usher duties. Captains should be available at all times to troubleshoot and handle situations that arise. Captains should be alert to what is going on in all areas. They should be free to roam, leave the sanctuary without leaving usher posts uncovered.
10. First service Captains may have to pick up bulletins in church office if not already delivered to the Tower Room. Large print bulletins may need to be placed on side counter in narthex.
11. **All usher teams will be rotated through an “on-call” basis to assist in such special events as memorials, concerts and other events requiring the usher ministry assistance. A schedule will be posted for this rotation in the tower room. It may be anticipated that short notice may be provided for such usher team assistance. It is the responsibility of the “on-call” usher team to swap with another team, should they be unable to perform their duties.**

Pre-Worship Service Duties

12. Arrive at church at least 15 minute prior to the scheduled beginning of the service. Arrive 30 minutes early for holiday or special service.
13. Verify that bulletins are available for your service. Please be aware that bulletins for 1st and 2nd services are different and apart from 3rd service.
14. If you are assigned to the third service, make sure all previous bulletins are purged from the Sanctuary and narthex and discarded.
15. Always rope off the last 5 to 10 pews depending upon the service -- 10 pews for the first and third services and 5 pews for the second service. **Remove ropes for latecomers approximately 15 minutes into the service at a convenient moment during the service, so as to not disturb the proceedings.**
16. **For the 11:00am service, on the first Sunday of each month, that scheduled usher team will rope off the first 6 rows of the Foothill Blvd. side of the sanctuary to provide seating for late arriving high school youth. “Reserved” signs are available in the Tower Room. The 11am usher service team will need to obtain ropes from the main sanctuary and return same at the conclusion of the service, along with “reserved” signs.**
17. Please check the Bulletin and Microphone Sheet posted in the Tower Room or with the sound technician regarding any special needs or activities. Remove any "Reserved" signage if it is not pertinent to your service and not required for later services. Relay any special instructions or concerns to usher captains of later services.
18. Supply ushers with bulletins so they don't have to leave their assigned posts.

19. Make sure the side aisle ushers count the congregation excluding the choir and record the count on the count sheets. Conduct count after Time for Young Christians.
20. Ensure at least one usher is on duty in the narthex at all times.
21. Make sure that all ushers are wearing their nametags. **Usher team name tags will be found in the container in the Tower Room. It is the responsibility of each usher to replace their removable name tag in the team captain name file in that container after use, so that it is available for their next service.**
22. If there is a baptism scheduled, you may want to make contact with the family in the event you are needed.

Worship Service Duties

23. Ensure your ushers are actively monitoring the side aisles for available seating. Be aware of the empty seats located in your aisle. This is especially critical during second service and all heavily attended worship services.
24. A heavily attended service may require you to:
 - a. Notify the Pastor to ask the congregation to move toward the center aisle to make more room.
 - b. Notify the receptionist in the church office to contact the on-call Custodian for additional seating. If worshippers are seated in the Narthex, open the center doors so they can view the chancel area.
25. Obstruction Free Aisles.
 - a. All sanctuary aisles must remain obstruction free at all times.
 - b. The City Fire Marshall prohibits any strollers, wheelchairs, walkers or other seating devices to be in the aisles. Therefore, all such equipment must be collapsed and taken to the narthex.
 - c. Worshippers in wheelchairs must be directed to the right side aisle and not obstruct the walkway. To accommodate wheelchair bound worshippers, please remove one of the portable chairs that have been placed against the wall and seat the worshipper in that space. The key is that the walkway must be obstruction free.
 - d. Standing in the walkway of the aisle for any extended period is prohibited.
26. Those entering sanctuary once worship has started require the most attention. If possible, personally assist them to their seats.

27. For collection:
 - a. Set out plates before the Offertory. You may use four plates when attended service is light; otherwise, use the standard six plates.
 - b. Ensure collection is taken using the system prescribed by your captain. The one-three-split technique is encouraged for six plates. (See Figure 1, page 10)
 - c. The ushers begin to walk up the aisle when the pastor announces tithes and offerings. Begin collection even if other activities are occurring. Take your lead from the Pastor's announcement.

Post Worship Service Duties

28. Gather collection monies and place in one of two collection bags. **Ushers should utilize the “tamper-proof collection bags. The movement of the collection and placement into the tamper proof bag should be viewed by at least one other crew member.** At no time should any usher be alone or in sole possession of unsecured funds. **Two ushers** should immediately transport the locked collection bag and key to the safe in the church office. Drop the bag in the opening at the top of the safe. If the Receptionist has coffee money, it can be placed in the collection bag beforehand. **These instructions will prevent any imposition of impropriety towards the usher ministry and our service to the church.**
29. Return all offering plates to Tower Room.
30. Make sure the usher team collects bulletins and friendship sheets after the service.
 - a. **Captain gives the Friendship Pad sheets to the Receptionist in the church office after each service.**
 - b. After the 1st service, the used bulletins are to be placed on the benches in the Narthex for use in the 2nd service.
 - c. After the 2nd service, used bulletins must be purged completely from the sanctuary and narthex. Please discard these bulletins in the box located in the Tower Room.
 - d. After the last service, discard all bulletins in the boxes located in the Tower Room.
31. Thank your team for their service.

USHER DUTIES

General Duties

1. Reply to your Usher Captain's request during the assigned week as to your availability. The preferred method of communication is email.
2. On behalf of the church, create a warm and friendly impression with all worshippers. Dress as you would normally dress to attend service. Formal business attire is not required. **Visitors, guests and those persons searching for a church ministry may be influenced by your greeting and helpfulness.**
3. Wear your usher nametag. **Replace your nametag after use in the container sorted by Team Captain names.**
4. The primary focus should always be Welcoming and Greeting the worshipper; the distribution of the bulletin is secondary.
5. Ushers should act worshipfully at all times.
6. Refrain from talking to each other in the Narthex while the service is in progress. The ushers should go to the patio area for prolonged conversations.
7. Usher should be aware of and follow all safety and emergency requirements listed on the attached Safety & Emergency Information for Ushers sheet. The Safety & Emergency Information sheet is posted in the Tower Room.
8. Ushers should be alert to the location of the closest Deacon Welcomer (curbside; Foothill Blvd) who can help visitors find classes and answer questions. To assist ushers after the Deacon Welcomers are off duty, please direct worshippers to the Welcome Center or church office. **Deacon Greeters are no longer located in the narthex of the church. Ushers shall warmly greet service attendees.**
9. Ushers should be aware that large print Sunday bulletins and previously delivered sermons are located on the side counter in the Narthex.
10. Ushers should be aware that previously delivered sermons on audio tape are available in the church office. There is a \$3.00 charge for each tape.
11. No food, coffee or drinks are permitted in the sanctuary. Use discretion if someone is insistent on bringing in bottled water.
12. Know the location of the following emergency equipment and hearing aid devices.
 - a. Fire Extinguisher: **Tower Room**
 - b. First Aid Kit: Tower Room.

- c. Oxygen: **Tower Room**
- d. Bullhorn: Pulpit.
- e. Wheelchair: **Tower Room**
- f. Hearing Aid Devices: Church Office.

Pre-Worship Service Duties

- 13. Arrive at church at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled beginning of service. Arrive 30 minutes early for a major church holiday or event.
- 14. Check with Captain for any special needs for the service, reserved pews, baptisms, *etc.* **Also review the service bulletin for any special events or needs, which may exist.**
- 15. Positioning (See Figure 2, page 10)
 - a. One usher should be positioned within ten feet inside the Sanctuary on each side aisle.
 - b. One or two ushers should be positioned ten feet inside the Sanctuary in the center aisle doors.
 - c. **Ushers may also consider greeting service worshippers at the doors of the narthex. Deacon greeters are no longer positioned in the narthex.**
- 16. Greet and seat worshippers and pass out bulletins at the location assigned by your Captain.
 - a. Encourage seating up front whenever possible.
 - b. Be alert to visitors and help them especially to find a seat. If visitors have questions, direct them to the Deacon Welcomer located on the patio closest to Foothill Blvd or assist in whatever capacity you can.
 - c. Try not to leave your assigned station. Ask your Captain to help worshippers with needs outside the sanctuary.
 - d. One usher should be on duty in the narthex at all times.
 - e. Ushers may keep the center aisle door open for seating during announcements. To minimize patio conversations and traffic noise, the front and South side Narthex doors should be closed
 - f. Ushers may continue to seat worshippers down the center aisle during announcement time. Latecomers must be directed to the side aisles.

Worship Service Duties

17. Opening and Closing the Sanctuary doors.
 - a. Close the center aisle doors after announcements are concluded.
 - b. Close the side aisle doors prior to Prayer of Confession.
 - c. Open center aisle door at the conclusion of the Charge and Benediction.
 - d. Open all doors before communion is served.
18. No seating is permitted during:
 - a. Time of Confession
 - b. Meditation
 - c. Prayer
19. Communion Schedule:
 - a. 1st and 2nd services: Routinely the first Sunday of every month.
 - b. 3rd service: Every Sunday.
20. Communion Positioning and Duties (See Figure 3, page 11)
 - a. A minimum of three ushers is required. However, if communion is being served simultaneously in the narthex (e.g., world communion), a minimum of four ushers is required.
 - b. One usher is positioned at the head of the center aisle: Directs worshippers to the first available station on his/her left and right.
 - c. Two ushers are positioned on each side of the center aisle: Directs worshippers to stand and form two lines down the center aisle.
 - d. If communion is also being served in the narthex, two additional ushers are positioned at the last pew. Direct worshippers to stand and form two lines facing the narthex.
 - e. Encourage worshippers to stand early so there is a steady flow waiting in each line.
 - f. Keep each line filled or queued with at least 15 worshippers at a time.

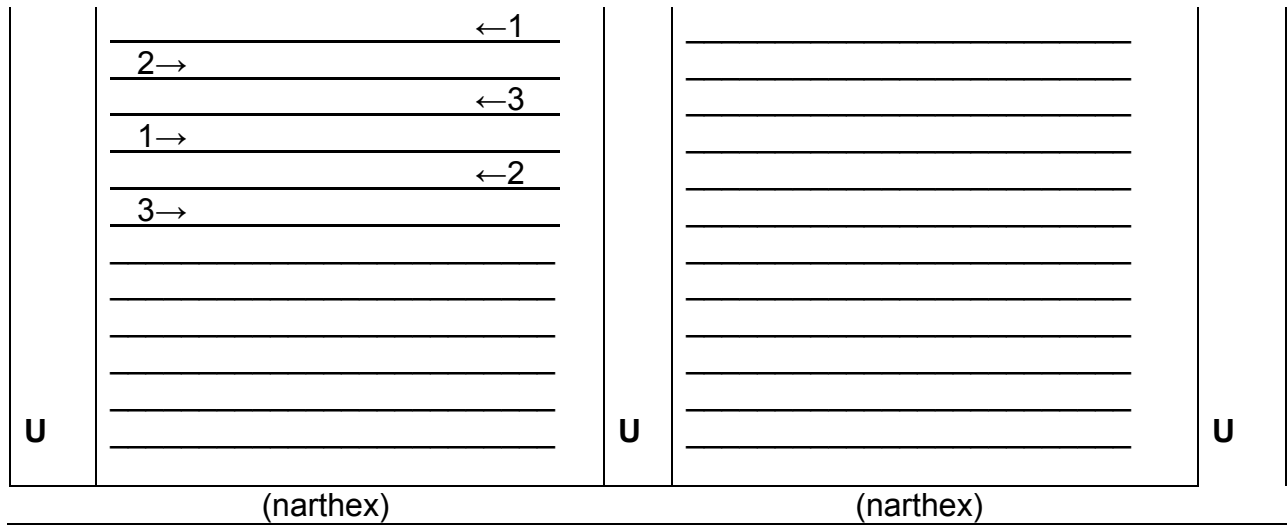
- g. As the procession ends, direct worshippers to break their given line and fill the shorter of the two lines. This means worshippers may be served at a station on the opposite side of their chosen seat.
 - h. Staff permitting, post an usher at the head of each side aisle to further assist anyone back to their seat.
21. Take collection as assigned by your Captain. Begin to walk up the aisle when the Pastor announces tithes and offerings. Take your lead from the Pastor's announcement.

Post Worship Service Duties

22. Make the Sanctuary ready for the next service.
- a. One usher is encouraged to walk up each side aisle during the Pastor's Charge and Benediction to expedite the clean up process.
 - b. Pick up all used bulletins and inserts. Tissues and other trash may be left for the custodian. **Remove such debris as may be possible for the next service.**
 - c. Friendship Pad sheets should be torn off, dated, and taken to the church office after each service. If the red pad is empty, please replace the pad of forms with a new one. If the pen is missing, please replace. Extra pads and pens are located in the Tower Room.
 - d. Return hymnals and Bibles to original rack position.
23. Take any lost articles to the Church Office.
24. Thank your team for their service.

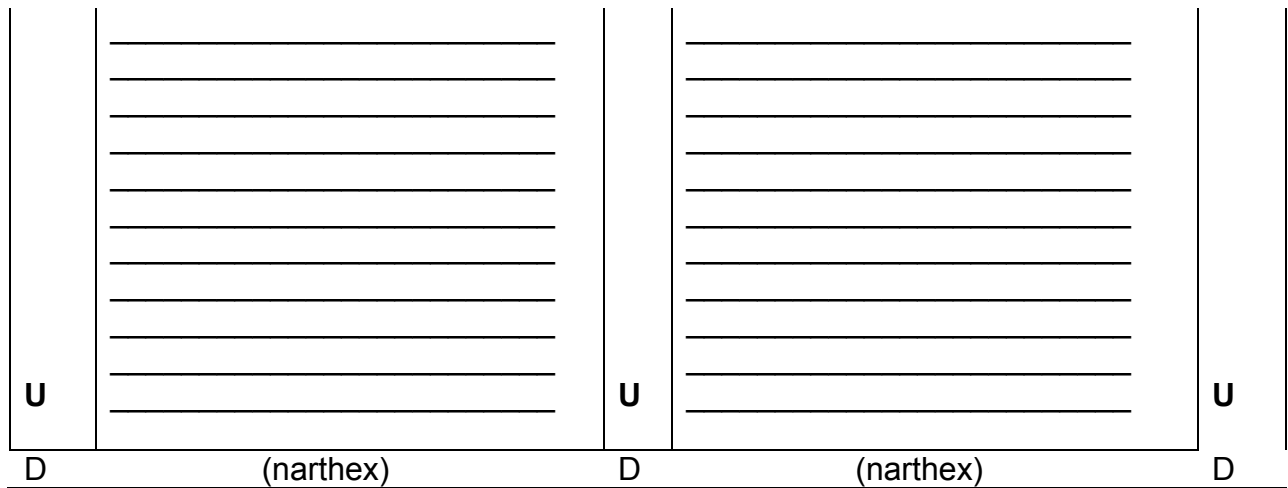
**THREE-ONE SPLIT TECHNIQUE
(Requires 6 plates)**

Figure 1



**USHER POSITIONING
FOR DISTRIBUTING BULLETIN**

Figure 2



U=Usher
D=Deacon Greeter

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION FOR USHERS

1. Emergency Procedures in case of illness or accident:
 - Notify a pastor to ask for a doctor in the sanctuary to assist the person in need
 - Call 911 if instructed by the doctor; obtain brief information of the emergency before calling 911—the person answering the 911 call will ask the nature of the emergency. **It is HIGHLY suggested that emergency calls be placed by a land line for immediate dispatch address identification. A cell phone call may be mis-routed.** Be sure someone stays with the person in need until disposition of the medical situation is determined.
 - If the doctor requests any first aid equipment, bring it to him/her. See 14a under Usher Duties for the location of first aid and emergency equipment.
 - If necessary for use, there is a stretcher in the Tower Room. However, do not move an injured or ill person without instructions from a doctor. The injured/ill person can lie down on a pew or on the couch in the Bride's Room (west of multi-purpose room—enter through multi-purpose room) or on the couch in the Demarest Hall lunchroom (near Lay Counseling rooms in the office building)
2. Fire, Earthquake, or other Emergency Evacuation Procedures
 - Usher Captain stays to direct others to help as necessary.
 - Call 911 if directed to do so by a pastor or if the emergency is one of an obviously serious nature.
 - Ask pastor to use the bullhorn to give instructions for an evacuation.
 - In an obviously serious emergency, open all exit doors and direct people to evacuate the sanctuary in an orderly and calm manner. Instruct people to move to an area farthest from the area of emergency.
 - Use the fire extinguisher when necessary.
 - Fire extinguishers are located in the Tower Room and outside the Groom's Room on the south side of the chancel. See directions on the extinguisher.
 - Direct flow towards bottom of fire upwards.
 - Call for custodian to shut off power, gas, or water. He will determine if any of these actions is necessary.

3. Sanitation

- Know the location of available restroom facilities. An Equipment Facilities Location Map is posted in the Tower Room.

4. Special Requirements for Handicapped

- Restrooms for the handicapped are located in Demarest Hall
- Wheelchairs are stored in the Tower Room.
- There is a ramp access from the parking lot off of Foothill Blvd.
- Hearing Aids are available in the front office. If for some reason, the hearing aids are not available, the custodian will get them.