

## **USHER INFORMATION FOR 11:00 A.M. CLASSIC SERVICE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Ushers play an important role in our life at Grace & Holy Trinity Church. Often, you are the first contact a guest or a newcomer has with the Church. This contact can leave a lasting impression of the Church and its members. The ushers also help maintain the dignity of the service and often establish a meaningful source of communication with parishioners when delivering flowers after the service. In carrying out these functions, those accepting the responsibility of an usher can provide meaningful contribution to our parish life. Thank you for the gift of your time in this important ministry.

This manual represents an effort to cover some of the more important usher duties for the 11:00 a.m. Classic Service.

### **PRIOR TO THE SERVICE**

1. Ushers should arrive at least fifteen minutes before the service begins. Four ushers serve at the 11:00 a.m. service. Families are encouraged to serve together. Please wear a nametag and a smile.
2. Counters (clickers) are used to count attendance; choir, clergy and children should be included in the count. Counters and bulletins are kept on the credenza at the back of the church by the doors.

Special bulletins are also available for children – please give one to children or their parents. Children’s books and crayons are located in the “Children’s Chest” at the back of the pews on the pulpit side.

3. Two ushers should stand at each entrance to the Nave to distribute bulletins and handle the counters. This is a splendid opportunity to project the image of Grace & Holy Trinity by greeting everyone with a warm and friendly smile.
4. If possible, ushers should try to identify any guests and make them feel welcome. Greeters are also present at the doors to welcome people and ask them to sign the guest books. Please do not say, “Are you new here?” This can lead to a number of awkward situations and replies such as, “No, I’ve been here since Richmond burned, who are you?” Say rather, “I don’t know if we’ve met, my name is....”
5. The Chapel is used as a second location for the administration of Holy Communion at the 11:00 a.m. service. If the bulletin lists three chalice bearers the Chapel will probably be open. The usher captain should confirm with the clergy prior to the service whether the Chapel will be used. In addition, the usher captain should consult with the clergy prior to any special service to discuss any particular logistics.

6. When the service is ready to begin, the sexton or a member of the clergy will press the buzzer just inside the parish hall doors to alert the organist to play the processional hymn.
7. Ushers should be aware and assist those who may need to find available seating. Special seating for wheelchairs is located in the area beside the baptismal font. If someone with a walker is seated off the center aisle please ask them if you can take the walker to the back of the church during the service and say that you will return it to them immediately when the service is over. This keeps the aisle clear for the choir.

### **DURING THE SERVICE**

1. Doors to the Nave should be closed at the end of the processional hymn. Request latecomers wait to use the center aisle until clergy have reached the altar steps.
2. Attendance is determined from the counters: choir, clergy and children should be included in the count. Write the count on a piece of paper and give it to the acolyte when you receive the offering plates.
3. One usher should remain at each door well into the service to assist with seating. While it has not been the custom to restrict the seating of latecomers to certain parts of the service, such seating should be handled discreetly in order to avoid disruption of the service, using the side aisles whenever possible. Please try not to seat people during the reading of the lessons.
4. Should someone become sick during the service there are typically doctors present who can be called upon to assist. The sexton will also know where to locate a wheelchair and first aid kit if necessary.

### **PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING THE OFFERING**

1. Come forward in two lines and receive the plates from the acolyte at the chancel steps. First two straight ahead and the second two outside the first. Give your note with the count to the acolyte when you receive the offering plates.
2. Then the ushers may move through the congregation passing the plates to both center sections and to those seated on the side aisles. The usher captain should check to see if collection is needed from people seated in the balcony.
3. After the offerings have been collected, the ushers should gather at the back of the church and come forward after the choir anthem and during the singing of the hymn (typically the "Doxology").
4. Come to the altar rail in two lines and fan out in single file with the first two ushers delivering their plates and fanning to the left and right followed by the two behind them doing the same until all plates have been delivered. The acolyte(s) will receive the plates and hand them to the celebrant. The plates are then handed back to the ushers who

should take them immediately to the sacristy, by exiting to the door on the right, by the organ console.

5. In the Sacristy, please put all of the offerings in plastic bags along with a note designating the service and put them in the drop safe. If there are any guest forms please pull these out and give them to a member of the clergy following the service.

### **COMMUNION**

On Communion Sundays, when the Chapel will be used for administering Holy Communion, please do not open the back doors to the chapel or undertake any other movement during the prayer of consecration. This can be a distraction during this solemn point in the service. Wait until after the words of invitation are offered (“The gifts of God for the people of God”) to open the chapel. Ushers should check to make sure that the altar candles are lit in the Chapel and the doors (including the center doors) are opened to the Chapel during Holy Communion. (Chapel windows are not to be opened) A lighter for the Chapel altar candles is available just above the right side of the altar.

### **FOLLOWING THE SERVICE**

1. On Morning Prayer Sundays try to clear the space in the back of the church for the choir to use after the recessional to sing a short anthem. Stand by the doors and not in front of the pews under the chapel windows.
2. Nave doors to the outside and to the parish hall should be opened at the end of the service.
3. Ushers should offer assistance to anyone who may need help leaving the Church, in particular those who may be in a wheelchair. Please invite people, especially newcomers, to come to the coffee hour following the service.
4. The usher captain should ensure that counters and extra bulletins are left at the back of the church.
5. Ushers are asked to deliver flowers, which may be picked up from members of the Altar Guild just outside of the Sacristy. The usher captain will distribute to the other ushers the note cards that will accompany the flower deliveries (up to 4 deliveries per Sunday). The cards and directions are kept in the Sacristy, next to the sink on the right side of the room. This distribution is best done prior to the beginning of the service and not at the time of the offertory.
6. Members of our congregation, especially those confined to their homes or hospital, often comment on how meaningful it is to receive a visit from ushers delivering flowers. This function should be viewed as an extension of the service with a special effort being made

to visit briefly with those receiving flowers, when appropriate. Any note attached to the envelope indicating the reason for the visit should be removed.

7. Before departing, the usher captain should check with the clergy to determine if they can be of further assistance.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Occasionally an individual or family will arrive at the Church expressing a need for money, food or lodging. Please invite them to participate in worship. If they need immediate assistance, they should be directed to the homeless point of entry, Commonwealth Catholic Charities, 511 West Grace Street. On Sunday afternoon, there is a public feeding site at Abner Clay Park (Brook Road and Clay St).
2. The VCU police are the best people to contact in the event of an emergency. The LiveSafe mobile phone app is the fastest way to reach them. It is also a way VCU police can contact us in an emergency in our neighborhood. For more information, visit <https://police.vcu.edu/stay-safe/livesafe/>. 911 for you without the app.
3. Occasionally loiterers will approach parishioners outside or even inside the Church requesting money. Panhandling is not allowed at GHTC and is grounds for removal. Ushers should keep an eye on such individuals to ensure that they do not interrupt the service or cause problems for communicants. Should this become the case, ushers should handle the matter discreetly by asking the individuals to leave. In extreme cases, the police should be called.
4. If the temperature in the Church appears to be uncomfortable or the sound system is faulty please notify the sexton.
5. Items left in the Church after the service should be turned in to the lost and found cabinet, located in the entryway between the church and the parish hall.
6. The usher captain should remind his team members approximately two weeks before the month in which they are scheduled to serve. By Wednesday morning of each week, the usher captain should email to the church office the names of the ushers serving on Sunday of that week. The church office will then email those ushers by no later than Friday to remind them that they are scheduled to serve on Sunday and will include a preliminary list of the expected flower deliveries.
7. Please let your usher captain know if you are not able to serve as scheduled.

Thank you again for your service in this important ministry

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