

**First Methodist Church Washington  
(FMCW)  
Usher Duties and Responsibilities**

**Introduction:** The definition of an usher means *door keeper* but FMCW greatly depends on diversity and magnitude of the many services ushers provide. Each usher has the opportunity to impact the lives of new and existing people in the church and should be viewed as an extension of the pastor's hand. FMCW pastors believe that an usher's performance can make or break the outcome of the service as well as bring a true reflection of how friendly and loving their church really is.

Ushers set the spiritual climate of the service by presenting a joyful attitude, making others feel welcome and comfortable, providing information regarding the church and each department, and make sure that everything is flowing in proper order so that everyone is free to worship without interruption.

The usher' responsibility is to help inside of the worship area with seating, offerings, assist the pastor with communion, discipline or noise interventions, as well as safety.

**Appointment:** FMCW ushers are volunteers. Usually there are four to six regular ushers at each service. A Head Usher is agreed to and serves as the liaison to the Pastor. The head usher coordinates usher activities.

**Usher Responsibilities:** These responsibilities are specifically for Sunday services. For funerals and other special services the responsibilities should be adapted to the service needs.

***Before the Service:***

1. Arrive at the church 30 minutes prior to the start of the service.
2. In Sanctuary for Traditional service:
  - a. put hymn numbers on both hymn boards.
  - b. Turn on Rose and interior window lights.
  - c. Verify the Alter Guild has set up the church:
    - i. Check cleanliness of the church. Please pick up trash or other materials on floor or seating.
    - ii. Place attendance pads at beginning of each row.
    - iii. make sure pews have adequate hymnals, Bibles, pencils, prayer requests, and offering envelopes.

- d. Locate and make sure money bags, keys and candle sniffer are ready.
  - e. Get bulletins and make sure ushers ready to handout to arriving guests.
  - f. Fifteen minutes prior to service, light alter candles as needed. Assist Acolytes/Crucifer as needed.
3. In Wesley Hall:
- a. place prayer card collection baskets on speakers in front.
  - b. Verify the Alter Guild has set up the room:
    - i. Check cleanliness of the room. Please pick up trash or other materials on floor or seating.
    - ii. Place attendance pads at beginning of each row.
    - iii. make sure pews have adequate pencils, prayer requests, and offering envelopes.
  - c. Locate and be prepared to hand out bulletins.
  - d. Verify hand microphone available for congregation prayer and praises.
4. Head usher check with Pastor for any special needs.

***During the Service:***

1. Welcome arriving congregation with a warm, friendly smile. Pass out bulletins as worshipers arrive.
2. As needed, assist worshipers to find seating.
3. Provide directions to the restrooms, children's church, nursery, etc. when requested.
4. Be aware of the temperature in the worship space; adjust thermostat as needed.
5. As appropriate for the service collect offerings or direct congregation forward for communion service.
6. Be alert for issues that may need your attention. The ushers should take perimeter positions generally in the vicinity of an exit to assist late comers, monitor for unusual situations, and provide quick response in the event of an emergency.
7. Count attendance and mark on the attendance log. Count shall include all service participants as well as those in the nursery.
8. At Sanctuary, after benediction ring bell three times.

***After the Service:***

1. Assist worshippers to leave the building in an orderly manner.
2. In Sanctuary:
  - a. Place offering money, including early service's, in bank bag and lock in safe.
  - b. Return safe and door keys to cabinet in church office.
3. In Wesley Hall:
  - a. Place offering monies in bank bag and deliver to head usher at Sanctuary.
4. After the service has ended, have a designated usher go through the church building to make sure doors and windows are closed and no one else is in the building.

5. Turn out lights, extinguish candles, and adjust temperature levels.
6. FMCW custodian will come in after the final service and lock up all the church buildings and ascertain the security and fire monitoring systems are armed.

### **SAFETY and Emergency Procedures**

In the event of an emergency or disturbance, the safety of the church members is every usher's first responsibility. Most emergencies are for medical attention or some kind of disturbance with an individual.

#### For a medical emergency:

1. Clear the area to allow assistance.
2. Always assign one person to call 911.
3. Check for breathing and heartbeat.
4. Station one person to help emergency personnel to the person who needs help. Have another usher make sure the isles are clear for emergency personnel.
5. Keep either an usher or experienced medical person from the church, next to the afflicted person at all times.
6. Monitor and make sure the area is not crowded by on-lookers. Evacuate the building if needed.

#### For a disturbance:

1. Determine whether a person needs to be taken out of the sanctuary.
2. Determine how you wish to do this. Most of the times, it can be handled through a gentle but yet firm statement to come with the usher. If the disturbance is overbearing and causing further trouble, it may take a couple of ushers, one on each side, to gently encourage the person to another place. If they still refuse to be removed, then contact a senior elder or senior pastor for further assistance. It may be necessary to call the police.
3. Determine a safe place to deal with this person and firmly state this type of behavior is not wanted or accepted in our services. Please distinguish between the person and the behavior. Most churches welcome everyone but not the disruptive behaviors.

#### For situations requiring evacuation:

1. Ushers should maintain order to the best of their ability in the event of any kind of evacuation. The ushers should start with the last pew or row in the sanctuary and direct people out to the closest exit leading to the outside.
2. Ushers will help others in the building at the same time, such as children church, youth department, checking the bathrooms and nurseries, etc. to ensure an evacuation is conducted in a safe and timely manner. It is good for all ushers to check remaining rooms to make sure everyone has evacuated.
3. The evacuation groups shall congregate away from the church building.