

## **THE MINISTRY OF USHERS AND GREETERS**

Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church

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

“Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you.” – Romans 15:7

### **Background**

In new situations, we begin forming impressions very quickly. Think about when you go to a new restaurant. Have you ever walked into a restaurant and there was nobody up front to greet you? When you feel ignored in the first 30 seconds, it can make the whole experience feel awkward. If the first few moments of a new experience are negative, we often begin to look more critically at everything else that happens. But, if those first few seconds are positive, we are likely to continue to feel positive about the rest of the experience.

I think I have heard more new members say that they joined the church – not because they liked the pastor or the programs of the church – but because they said, “The first time that we visited, it was the people who were so kind and welcoming toward us.”

Although people seem to be well connected through facebook and the internet, there is a growing feeling of isolation among many people. We may work in cubicles at the office or at home. And, the average American has fewer close friends than we did decades ago. People have an almost desperate need for community, and the church as the body of Christ can offer a level of belonging that is not found anywhere else.

Greeters and Ushers are ministers of hospitality. They are usually the first official representatives of the congregation that people meet upon arrival at church. They should pray that the people who visit our congregation will feel like Jesus has been with them, and that they, as ushers and greeters, have played a role in that process.

At Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church, we will have at least 2 greeters and at least 2 ushers on a given Sunday. Volunteering to serve as an usher or greeter is open to everyone throughout the church including families with children.

Greeters will be stationed at the front entry doors of the church to joyfully welcome people right when they walk in from the parking lot.

Ushers will be stationed in the narthex to give a friendly smile as they pass out bulletins and assist people with any special needs.

### **Some tips to remember**

Be sure to wear your name tag and encourage others to do the same.

Make positive eye contact with people and SMILE.

Give a friendly greeting like, "Good morning. It is nice to have you here today."

Greet children at their level by bending down. This makes eye contact possible and helps you appear less intimidating.

Focus your efforts on communicating a genuine welcome to everyone who comes – long time members, newer members, and visitors. But, true hospitality does mean putting visitors first when you have to make a choice in your use of time. Visitors need a little more attention than regulars.

Be alert for opportunities to introduce visitors to other members of the church.

If you are unsure if somebody is a new visitor or a long time member who you just don't know, consider a simple introduction like: "Hi, I'm not sure we've met. My name is \_\_\_\_\_."

Be careful not to give the impression that a visitor has to pass some kind of litmus test to be accepted. Don't appear disappointed if an initial conversation doesn't reveal something you have in common. Rejoice that the person is present in our church!

While you want your personal appearance to be neat and attractive, there is nothing wrong with diversity in dress by those who are ushers and greeters. A mixture of our ushers and greeters wearing both casual and traditional "Sunday dress" communicates to visitors that we welcome every single person whether they are wearing a suit or not.

Make an active effort to remember the names of visitors when they arrive, and be sure to greet them by name at the end of the service or when they come back the next Sunday.

In case you meet a family with young children, be able to share some basic information about our nursery and children's chapel.

## **DUTIES OF GREETERS**

Greeters will be stationed at the front entry doors of the church to joyfully welcome people right when they walk in from the parking lot.

Arrive 20 minutes before the service. Check if there are nametags available and that the welcome table is clean and organized. Notice if there are any special events coming up that may be important to share with visitors.

Smile and let people know that you are glad that they are here.

Help visitors prepare a name tag (optional) or direct them to a welcome center for that purpose.

Be available to help the ushers with the offering, if requested.

After worship invite people to the Fellowship Hall for refreshments and if they are interested, walk with them or direct them to where it is.

## **DUTIES OF USHERS**

Ushers will be stationed in the narthex to give a friendly smile as they pass out bulletins and assist people with any special needs.

### **Before the service**

Arrive 20 minutes before the service. Read through the bulletin. Check with the pastor for any special instructions.

Select two additional people to assist with the offering. You may ask the greeters, but also try to include the youth in this process or others who are minimally involved.

Stand at the outside Narthex door to hand out bulletins, and greet attendees.

Be professional and courteous at all times. Be especially friendly to those you do not recognize. Greet people using their names as often as possible. Pay special attention to children and youth; say "I'm glad you're here!"

If people need a little extra assistance, one of the ushers should escort them to their seats. If they need hearing assistance, get a Williams receiver from the table in the Narthex for them.

Connect with the acolyte and make sure that the acolyte is prepared. Read over the duties of the acolyte.

### **At the start of the service**

If someone from the congregation would like to speak during the announcements or prayer requests, please offer them a microphone. These mics are available from one of the sound techs.

Assist the acolyte: The acolyte assigned for the Sunday will report to the back of the sanctuary. At the end of the Opening Prayer, light the acolyte's staff. (There is a lighter in the drawer of the table in the entryway). When the Musical Interlude begins, send the acolyte down for Bearing the Light of Christ.

Close one of the outer Narthex doors to the patio area. Please watch for latecomers. One usher should remain in the narthex to greet latecomers until 10:15. They may be seated between activities, not during time of prayer. Help them find a place to sit. Try to direct them up the side aisle.

Attendance: During the first hymn, take attendance and record the count in the notebook in the table in the Narthex. Be sure to include the choir, the pastor, the organist and the nursery. The count should be the total amount of people on our campus at the time of worship.

Offering: Requires four people. The plates are located above the coat rack in the Narthex. Enter the Sanctuary down the center aisle when requested by the Liturgist. Once you arrive at the front of the Sanctuary, the first two people will turn to go up the outside aisle. When finished, consolidate the offering trays into one and go to the front communion table and then exit through the side door. Give the tray to designated counter who will take the tray and take care of the offering.

### **At the end of the service**

Assist the acolyte in carrying the light of Christ out into the community: When the congregation begins the second to last verse of the last hymn, the acolyte should walk down the center aisle with the staff unlit. At the table, the acolyte should light his or her candleholder and then snuff out the candle on the table. Then, he or she should wait up front with the lit candleholder until the pastor gives the benediction. Once the pastor finishes the benediction and the last verse of the hymn begins, the pastor and the acolyte will walk down the center aisle together until they get to the back of the church. Once they are in the back of the church, the acolyte may extinguish the flame.

Open the doors, and greet the people on their way out, thanking them for coming. Direct them to the coffee hour. Clean up the pews, pick up papers, and replace hymnals, bibles, pencils and the pew envelopes. Collect unused bulletins and return to the office.

Remember, your main job is to warmly welcome people to the church so that they may encounter the love of God in Jesus Christ.

## **Secondary responsibilities**

In case of MEDICAL EMERGENCY, people with medical training are Julie Smith, Kandace Goins, Tom Shaw, Mary Lou Converse and Sonja Flener. AED's are located in the Office hallway above the mail boxes and also in the CE Wing above the first floor drinking fountain. Additionally, blood pressure cuffs are located at the sound table and in the fellowship kitchen above the first aid kit. A wheel chair is located in the library. If you are rendering assistance, try to keep it discrete and move the patient out of the Sanctuary if possible. Telephones are located in the Office, Fellowship Hall, CE Office, Pastors Office and the Bookkeepers Office. The sound crew also has cell phones for emergency use. EMS phone number is 911; the church address is 2420 NE Fairview Ave.

Fire extinguishers are located in the Library, Upper Room, and CE building hallway and behind the Chancel.

As a rule, do not take messages to the pulpit during the service. Take appropriate action yourself, contact the sound crew or wait until the end of the service. If anyone becomes disruptive during the service, gently invite them to sit in the Library.

Remind parents that we have a wonderful nursery where they may change diapers. They are free to get up with their children during the service if they need to. Also, they may pick up a Williams receiver in the Narthex so that they can go anywhere in the building and hear the service.

If you have any questions on a Sunday morning, contact the pastor, worship team, or the sound crew. If you are unable to fulfill your duties as an usher, first try to arrange for someone else to take your place and let the office and chair of worship know about the substitution. If you cannot find a substitute, please communicate this to the office or chair of worship and we will take care of it.