

Serving the Sunday Assembly as an Usher

Introduction

One of the most difficult things about being new to any faith community is figuring out the worship procedures and unspoken rules. One of the ushers' main roles is to help ease this burden and allow individuals to experience worship with less uncertainty. Your hospitality is a vital part of welcoming and integrating new worshippers into our service.

As an Usher on Sunday

1. Please arrive no later than ten minutes before the beginning of the service to check in with the other assigned usher and determine who will a) ring the bell and b) take an attendance count.
2. When you arrive, ensure the worship space and entry spaces are presentable (i.e., that there are no extra papers in the narthex [entryway/vestibule], the children's play space is tidy, the pews are free of papers, and seat cushions are returned to the bench in the narthex).
3. Put on a nametag with your name written in large letters and the word "usher" under your name.
4. Immediately after the prelude(s), one usher rings the church bell seven times. The cord for the bell is located at the top of the balcony staircase, which is accessible through the single swinging door in the narthex that is close to the exit door nearest the Hoyne and Le Moyne intersection.
5. During the service you may be seated near the back. Be mindful of newcomers and those who look confused, and be sure to direct them as appropriate (see below for some basic WPLC facts).
6. During the Hymn of the Day (after the sermon), one usher should count the total number of people in the sanctuary (this includes adults, infants, children, the organist, the pastor, worship leaders, etc.) and record the number on a piece of paper (an unused bulletin or offering envelope works well) as the "sanctuary" count. Sometimes it can be helpful to go into the balcony for a better view. After you've taken the sanctuary count, go down to the nursery/Sunday school room in the basement and count the total number of people in each area (this includes teachers and the nursery attendant), recording them on the sheet as two separate numbers ("nursery" and "Sunday school"). This means you will ultimately have three separate attendance numbers recorded (sanctuary, nursery, and Sunday school). If you pass anyone in the hall that you did not count, please add him/her to the sanctuary number. If you see someone in the nursery you counted upstairs, please exclude him/her from the sanctuary number. Our goal is to get a picture of the total number of people in the building at the moment of the Hymn of the Day. Once this information is recorded, place the piece of paper in one of the offering plates at the rear of the sanctuary.
7. While you are in the Sunday school room taking attendance, let the teacher know that the sermon is over and that the teacher and children may return to the sanctuary. As you come up from the basement, walk with the Sunday school students to provide additional safety.
8. After the announcements, we generally—though not always—take the offering. When we do take an offering, meet the other usher in the back. Each usher takes an offering plate, and when the offertory music begins, both ushers walk together down the aisle to the front. Pass the plate back and forth down the pews on your side of the sanctuary (while the other usher does the same on his/her side of the sanctuary) so that all have an opportunity to give. If someone doesn't look like he/she has something to offer, respectfully move along. An offering is appreciated but not required, and many of our regular attendees give electronically.

9. When you finish taking the offering, one usher should take both offering plates and stack them together. This person should be on the baptismal font side in the rear. The other usher gets the bread and wine and stands on the organ side. When the Offertory Hymn begins, both ushers walk up the aisle together. The pastor and assisting minister meet will meet you at the first step of the chancel. The bread and wine go to the pastor; the offering plate goes to the assisting minister. On the way back to the rear of the sanctuary, there is a small table in front of the first pew near the baptismal font. Both ushers should carefully move the table out into the middle of the aisle so that the long edge is parallel with the stain glass window wall. The Communion tray should be closest to the congregation and uncovered (the top may be placed in the first pew if there is no room on the table) and a small jar of grape juice should be on the table closest to the chancel. See the picture below for a visual of the setup of the communion cup table.



10. During the Lamb of God, before Communion, both ushers come forward and invite individuals into the aisle one pew at a time. Smile, nod, and/or use hand gestures that are welcoming and inviting. Once everyone has been invited to Communion, the ushers come forward and take Communion. If anyone has requested Communion in the pew, let the pastor know.
11. After Communion, return the Communion glass table to its original location in front of the first pew and cover the glasses again.
12. After the service, help clean up: pick up bulletins in the pews and narthex, throw away trash, close the front doors and turn off fans (in the summer), return seat cushions to the back bench, blow out icon candles, blow out chancel candles, and clean up the children's play space.

Basic WPLC Facts

- 1) **Bathrooms** – Men's and women's bathrooms are located in the basement, which should be accessed at the bottom of the southeast staircase (closest to Hoyne & Le Moyne). The men's is diagonally across Social Hall and down the hallway on the left. The women's is directly forward from the bottom of the stairs.

- 2) **Gender-neutral bathroom** – The gender-neutral bathroom is located in Pastor Jason’s office. Pastor’s Jason’s office is located on the west side of Fellowship Hall, through the door with the exit sign and inside the door to the right of the computer. During the service, the parish assistant can provide directions and/or entry to the pastor’s office if it is locked.
- 3) **Nursery** – The nursery is staffed for children up to age five and is located on the northern side of Social Hall in the basement.
- 4) **Sunday school** – Sunday school begins at 10 a.m. for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. The classroom is located in the basement on the northern side of Social Hall next to the nursery. On certain baptism Sundays, children will start in the sanctuary before heading down to class. The chalkboard at the nursery entrance should indicate where Sunday school children will start (upstairs or downstairs).
- 5) **Elevator** – There is none at this time. If a wheelchair-bound member or visitor arrives, please attempt to recruit one or more other people to help carry the person in. The parish assistant and pastor can also assist in recruiting helpers.
- 6) **Coat rack** – The coat rack is located at the bottom of the southeastern staircase (near Hoyne & Le Moyne). Items are unattended and so are left at people’s own risk.
- 7) **Extra name tags, pens, welcome cards, bungee cords, tea lights for icons, lighter** – These items can be found in the small drawer of the bulletin table in the narthex.
- 8) **Water** – A water cooler is located in Fellowship Hall next to the sanctuary. If needed, please replace the water jug with a full jug from the front vestibule of the church rental units, which are located at 2112 W. Le Moyne. The vestibule does not require a key.
- 9) **Changing tables** – Changing tables are available in the nursery and in both the men’s and women’s restrooms.
- 10) **Fellowship time** – Fellowship time takes place after all Sunday services in Fellowship Hall, on the northern side of the narthex next to the sanctuary.

If you have any questions before the service, please contact Pastor Jason (pastor@wickerparklutheran.org) and he’ll be happy to assist you further. Thank you for your service!

A Word of Thanks

Thank you for helping to lead our liturgy at WPLC. Liturgy literally means “the work of the people” or alternatively “the work for the people.” As we gather in worship, we work together to reflect on and experience God’s presence in the world, and we also know that it is God’s work in which we participate. Yet our worship is not the end of it—we go out into the world to engage in a holy liturgy each week as we work, learn, grow, rest, and dwell with others and our God. Thank you for serving and helping us participate in God’s holy liturgy!