



GUIDELINES for GREETERS & USHERS

GRACE COMMUNITY EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

Lake Katrine, NY

Revised: May 19, 2014

Romans 15:7 says: "*Warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you.*" God does not require that we have great talent but that we use the talent that He gave us.

The purpose of this document is to present an understanding of the responsibilities of greeters, ushers, and the greeter / usher coordinator.

- I. **GENERAL ITEMS for BOTH USHERS and GREETERS** (Men or women may serve in either role):
 - A. **Be punctual:** Perhaps the most important responsibility of these positions is to be ready to serve **at least 20 minutes** prior to the start of the service. This is *especially true* for greeters as people need to be welcomed to our church. You represent the church. Probably you will be the first person that a visitor meets. Think of yourself as a public relations representative. For some of us, this means '*going out of our comfort zone.*'
 - B. **Dress neatly.** Ladies, a nice dress, skirt/blouse, or dress slacks are always appropriate; Men, a nice shirt, long pants and shoes are best.
 - C. **Wear your name tag.** (Name tags are physically located behind the left hallway closet door.)
 - D. **Make eye contact.** Stay alert! Smile, look pleasant.
 - E. **Greet strangers as warmly as friends.** A firm hand shake (if you are comfortable with it) is always good. A simple greeting of "Hi, I'm Jim. It's nice to have you here today." If possible, greet each person by name. Try to learn names so that you can greet them by name in the future. Note that some people do not like to be touched (e.g., hand shake.) Be sensitive to this; If an individual shows reluctance to 'touch,' don't force the issue.
 - F. **No bottlenecks:** Don't stop to talk to friends. Don't cause 'bottlenecks' of standing people. "*Say HELLO, and let them go.*"
 - G. **Personal hygiene:** Bad breath is offensive; Consider using breath mints. Also, if you have a severe cold, it's probably best to call (before Sunday morning) for a replacement.
- II. **GREETERS:**
 - A. Stand back from the front entrance about 15', (about where the carpet currently ends) greeting people with a warm 'Hello.' Offer a handshake as appropriate.
 - B. Offer to guide people as needed (e.g., new comers) to nurseries, bathrooms etc.

- C. Stay at this 'post' until after the praise chorus' end. (Approximately 10 minutes after the start of the service.)
- D. One of the biggest problems in greeting is **causing a bottleneck** or failing to greet people while having a conversation with a friend. Please do your best to avoid this situation.

III. **USHERS GENERAL:** Stay alert. You are a watchman.

- A. **SERVE:** Currently two people serve as ushers at the service. Ushers should position themselves outside the center sanctuary doors with bulletins in hand. It is suggested that you hold the bulletins in your hand in a reversed position (person receiving it does not have to turn it around). Try to give one bulletin per family (unless asked for additional). **Always** have a few bulletins in your hand available for distribution.
- B. **SEATING:** Be alert for the need to guide people to seats as appropriate. This may be the most 'trying time' of being an usher. In general, especially prior to the start of the service, people will locate seats by themselves. As the sanctuary begins to fill, be alert to the need of providing seat locating assistance. See seating note at item (E) below.
- C. **SANCTUARY DOORS:** The sanctuary doors may remain open with people entering until the main greeting / call to worship and prayer (after the opening praise choruses.) As the individual doing the Call to Worship goes onto the platform, close the doors and keep them closed not allowing anyone to enter until after the call to worship is completed. Ushers should remain on the vestibule side of the sanctuary doors during this time to prevent people from inadvertently entering. After the prayer is completed, leave the doors closed, but allow people to enter as appropriate.
- D. **OFFERING TAKERS:** Prior to the service, select individuals to assist with the offering. See item below on taking offering.
- E. **SEATING PEOPLE:** Experience will tell you when to assist people in locating a seat. **ANTICIPATE!** As the sanctuary becomes full, know where there are empty seats.
 - 1. The pastors have asked that seating of latecomers is to be avoided during 'quiet times'! This includes featured music and Witness Stand.
 - 2. Watch ahead for people arriving and if needed, plan where you are going to seat them.
 - 3. When taking people to their seats, stay in contact with them. Make sure they are with you . . . (More than one usher has arrived at the front 'by himself')
 - 4. Some clues that seating assistance is needed:
 - a. When the sanctuary is nearly full.
 - b. If the people give you a 'questioning look' implying, they don't know where to sit.
 - c. If people are new to the church.
 - 5. In any circumstance, don't hesitate to ask if they would like assistance in locating a seat. Try to anticipate seat availability by keeping track of vacant seats. If you are

caught unprepared to seat a large number of people, ask them to wait a moment until you are sure that you have space for them. Often people compound the seating problem by saying "I don't want to sit in the front" or "I want to sit with my family." Try your best to accommodate them.

6. People that are already seated often add to your difficulties by sitting at the end of the row therefore leaving a vacant space in the center (of the row). In this situation it is best to quietly say to the already seated person, "I have (number) people to seat in this row." This comment allows the already seated person the option to slide over or let the newcomers 'climb over' them (to the middle seats).
7. After seating people, (on your return trip to the rear) look for other empty seats.

IV. **OFFERING:**

- A. Six individuals total are needed to take the offering. Either men or women may help. Those helping [with the offering] should be asked to serve prior to the service. One of the scheduled ushers can be part of the offering team.
- B. Four people are used downstairs, (two in the center and one in each side aisle); Two people are used in the balcony. 'Offering takers' need to be at the rear of the church and ready prior to 'offering time'. Typically this is during the 'Hosanna Kids' greeting. As soon as the prayer for the Hosanna Kids, offering takers should start down the aisle, not waiting for the invitation.
- C. When taking the offering, try not to look at the offering plate once it has left your hand. (What is placed in the offering plate is personal between the individual and God.) Look to the rear of the church while waiting for the plate to come across the aisle. Out of the corner of your eye, keep track of plate(s).
- D. During the taking of the offering, one of the scheduled ushers should stay at the rear to cover any 'situations.'
- E. Once the offering is completed, the scheduled ushers should take the plates to the office for separating items and placing the offering in the safe.

V. **USHERS - DURING THE SERVICE:**

- A. **AFTER THE OFFERING** is taken and sorted, a head count should to be taken. We count all individuals; sanctuary, balcony, Hosanna Kids, nurseries, and mother's room. Place the counts in the attendance notebook (which is currently stored in the cabinet outside of the pastors office.)
- B. **HEATING / COOLING:** Be sensitive to the temperature of the sanctuary. The sanctuary thermostat is located outside of the right rear sanctuary door. Adjust the thermostat when necessary.
- C. **DURING SERMON:** It has been suggested that one of the ushers remain in the vestibule area during the sermon time 'just in case.'
- D. **A DIFFICULT TOPIC:** The pastors have asked: "That we observe / deal with distur-

bances during worship and take appropriate action. You may suggest that mothers with young children take them to the mothers room or nursery. Ask noisy children to quiet down. Discretion must be used.”

- E. **GOD SIGHTINGS:** Periodically ‘God Sightings’ are scheduled. This requires microphones to be brought to individuals in the sanctuary wanting to share. Ushers need to have the mics ready and to arrange for individuals to ‘run around with the mics to people wanting to share. Usually some of the offering takers can do this especially in the balcony. Three mics are needed downstairs and one in the balcony. As of this writing, there are two or three mics in the usher cabinet. There is one upstairs on the half wall adjacent to the A/V area. Check before the service and if needed, ask the music team to bring as many as needed back after the praise choruses.

VI. **USHERS - END of SERVICE:**

- A. After the benediction one usher should be positioned outside of the sanctuary doors. Occasionally congregants may give you offering (which they didn’t have ready when the offering was taken), may ask for a Bible, or have some other request.
- B. After most of the people have left the sanctuary, pick up any bulletins, papers, scraps, etc. that are left in the seats, pews and floor. On communion Sunday, communion glasses need to be picked up and discarded. Be sure to remember the balcony.
- C. If the chairs are not being picked up, as much as possible, reset the Bibles and hymnals as appropriate; in pew area in the racks, otherwise in the rack at the sanctuary entrance.

VII. **GREETER / USHER COORDINATOR DUTIES:**

- A. On the Friday (before Sunday) send out a reminder e-mail of who is on duty this Sunday. If possible, include the lock up deacon who will be putting away the offering. As appropriate, include some reminders e.g., “Ushers: This Sunday we need to be prepared for God Sightings.”
- B. On Sunday morning assure that bulletins are available and distributed as follows: 12 each to the little tables by the stairs, five each to the plastic wall holders at the top of the stairs, and two or three to the plastic wall holder at the balcony back entrance. You may do this yourself or ask one of the on-duty ushers to do it.
- C. On Sunday before the service either you or one of the on-duty ushers walk around the sanctuary picking up candy wrappers etc. that are laying around. The balcony can be checked when the upstairs bulletins are taken up.
- D. Arrange to have tissues (two boxes) in the vestibule area. It seems like someone always wants one on Sunday morning. (The boxes seem to disappear to during the week.)
- E. When ‘God Sightings’ is scheduled, remind the ushers to have the mics ready. It’s a good idea to remind the A/V team that there is 'God Sightings' on the day of the event.
- F. As often as needed, arrange to have the pew / chair racks refilled with offering envelopes, kids stuff, and pencils.

- G. Check the wireless headphones for proper operation. Occasionally they need new batteries. Two AAA batteries are needed for each one. Usually batteries are available in the cabinet under the headphones however you may have to purchase some.
- H. Have two or three (black old style) Bibles ready for giving to those individuals asking for Bibles to keep. Keep them available on the stand where the bulletins and wireless headphones are kept.
- I. Periodically as needed, develop the schedule of greeters and ushers for the next schedule period (typically three months) taking into consideration special services (e.g., Christmas Eve, Easter, etc.)
- J. The coordinator may be called upon to provide ushers for special events (e.g., weddings, funerals, special programs.) Be alert to this need.

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