

# Usher Handbook – First Presbyterian Church of Littleton

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## A Word from Pastor Cody

I once heard that the sermon begins in the parking lot (Andy Stanley). When you couple this quote with the observation from cognitive psychology that people remember what happens first and last more than anything in the middle, **our guests’ experiences are largely determined by how they’re welcomed and how they are sent off. You become the personal face to this house of worship.**

More than anything, I invite you to imagine that each person walking through the door is a guest in your home. Be on the lookout for someone who isn’t familiar with the house and help them feel welcomed and find their way around.

Thank you for using your gifts to serve the body of Christ!

### Biblical Importance

Hospitality was a big deal in Biblical times, especially in the Jewish culture. Here are some Scriptures that highlight the role hospitality plays in living out our faith.

**1 Peter 4:8-10** – <sup>8</sup> Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Be hospitable to one another without complaining. <sup>10</sup> Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. (NRSV)

**Hebrews 13:1-2** – Let mutual love continue. <sup>2</sup> Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. (NRSV)

**Romans 12:9-13** – <sup>9</sup> Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; <sup>10</sup> love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup> Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

**Leviticus 19:32-34** – <sup>32</sup> “Stand up in the presence of the elderly, and show respect for the aged. Fear your God. I am the Lord. <sup>33</sup> “Do not take advantage of foreigners who live among you in your land. <sup>34</sup> Treat them like native-born Israelites, and love them as you love yourself. Remember that you were once foreigners living in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God. (NLT)

**I [Pastor Cody] would summarize these as: choose to show love, show hospitality without complaining, use your unique gifts to serve others, be on special lookout for guests and strangers, and show respect toward all.**

### Identity of an Usher

Churches use three main words to capture what it means to be the first person to interact with people coming to worship: usher, greeter, and host. All of these words capture an aspect of your role in being the personal face to this house of worship.

- An **usher** helps people find their seats and helps keep everything running smoothly.
- A **greeter** provides a friendly face and any key information (like the location of restrooms).
- A **host** sets the tone (casual, respectful, etc) and helps people feel comfortable by meeting their physical needs.

A good rule of thumb is that **anyone who passes within six feet of you should receive a verbal greeting, eye contact, and an offer of help if needed.**

### Connecting With Guests

Imagine that someone comes over to your home for the first time. How would you greet them? What would you offer them as they came through the door? When a guest comes over, they usually need to know...

1. That the host is pleased to see them
2. Where to sit
3. Where the restroom is (if asked)
4. What to do with their kids (if they have them)

As the host for the house of the Lord, try to meet those four needs in a friendly way.

*(1) The host is pleased to see them*

- a. "Hi, I'm <NAME>. Good to see you. I don't think we've met before."

*(2) Where to sit*

- a. "Can I help you find a seat or anything else?"

*(3) Where the restroom is (if asked)*

- a. "Let me show you where the restrooms are."

*(4) What to do with their kids (if they have them)*

- a. "We have activity bags for the kids right here, and I can show you the childcare room and Sunday school rooms if that would be helpful."

At my [Pastor Cody's] old house, we had a bizarre light switch in the bathroom. The normal, easy-to-find switch turned on the fan, but you had to reach far into the room and find a tiny switch on the outlet on the wall to turn on the light. The first few times someone came over to our house, I tried to just verbally explain how to turn on the light when they asked me how to find the restroom. After several failed attempts, I finally gave up and just walked people to the restroom and turned on the light for them.

Imagine trying to tell a guest how to get from the Sanctuary to the childcare room if this is their first time. "Go across Chandler Hall to the stairs. Go downstairs and you'll see the Godly Play room on your left. Keep going straight and the Childcare Room will be on your right." The guest will probably nod and say, "OK," but in their head they're wondering, "What's Chandler Hall? What's Godly Play? I'm just going to keep my kids with me."

**As often as possible, walk someone to the destination rather than explaining how to get there.**

## Usher Checklist

### **Before the Service**

- Arrive 30 minutes before the service starts. Check in with the Head Usher.
- At your assigned station, be Usher (smooth sailing), Greeter (friendly face), and Host (set the tone) to everyone who passes within six feet of you, *especially guests*.
- If you are stationed at a worship entrance, hand out bulletins, large-print hymnals, hearing assistance devices, and children's activity bags as needed.
- If the sanctuary is almost full, invite people to make room for others. "Excuse me, would you mind moving toward the center? It's always good to see so many people worshipping God."

### **During the Service**

- If you are stationed at a worship entrance, wait 10 minutes after the start of the service to close the doors.
- Collect the offering.
  - Usher team decides who will be in center/side aisles.
  - Pass the collection plates starting with the front row. Please do not watch as people give.
  - If Communion follows offering, give the offering plates to the Head Usher
  - If the Doxology follows offering (no Communion), two ushers take the offering plates forward during the Doxology, receive the choir offering plate from the pastor (if needed), wait for the end of the Doxology, walk back to Chandler Hall, and give the offering plates to the Head Usher.

### **After the Service**

- Tidy up after the worship service.
  - Check choir area, main floor, and balcony.
  - Collect discarded papers from the pews, replace Bibles and hymnals in their holders.
- After final worship service, collect signed Friendship Pad pages and place them in the mailbox of the Church Administrator (Elinor). The pads may have been left at either end of the pew.

**NOTE: SEE Appendix B for 4"x6" Checklist Cards**

Head Usher Checklist**Before the Service**

- Confirm who will be on your Usher Team and send names to the Church Administrator (Elinor) by noon on Wednesday prior to the service for inclusion in the bulletin.
  - We typically need 4+ ushers for the early service and 5+ ushers for the late service
  - For big days (Christmas, Easter, Palm Sunday, etc), we typically need 7+ ushers
  - Many hands make light work! Feel free to recruit extra help, and anyone who is in 7<sup>th</sup> grade or beyond can be an usher.
- Familiarize yourself with locations of fire extinguishers, exit locations, and evacuation plans. In an emergency, conduct an orderly evacuation of the Church.
- Arrive 35 minutes before the service starts. Check in with Preaching Pastor.
- Encourage the Usher Team to be Usher (smooth sailing), Greeter (friendly face), and Host (set the tone) to everyone who passes within six feet of them, *especially guests*.
- Ensure enough bulletins (regular and large print) are present for each sanctuary entrance.
- Assign an usher to each station.
  - Side sanctuary door
  - Front sanctuary door and Chandler Hall (x2)
  - Parking lot entrance
  - Bell ringer
- Decide with Usher Team who will take center/side aisles during the offering.
- Coordinate with the Trustee to determine who will count attendance.
  - Count all worshipers, including choir, musicians, pastors, and children.
  - Start counting during the Word with the Children or Special Music.
- Ensure offering plates are in the choir area and the balcony.
- Coordinate with the Trustee to determine who will collect the offering from the balcony.
- The Trustee typically rings the bell 10 minutes before the service.

**During the Service**

- During the service, remain in Chandler Hall for latecomers or emergencies or major disruptions.
- Secure the offering with the Trustee
  - Head Usher or Trustee places entire offering in bank bag. Bag is locked. Key is removed and the bag is locked in the safe by the Trustee. Keys from bank bag and safe are secured. Head Usher witnesses this entire process.

**After the Service**

- Ensure the sanctuary is tidied up after each worship service.
- After final worship service, ensure Friendship Pad pages are collected.
- After final worship service, return offering plates to the stand outside Chandler Hall.
- Thank the Usher Team for their service and remind them of the impact they made today.

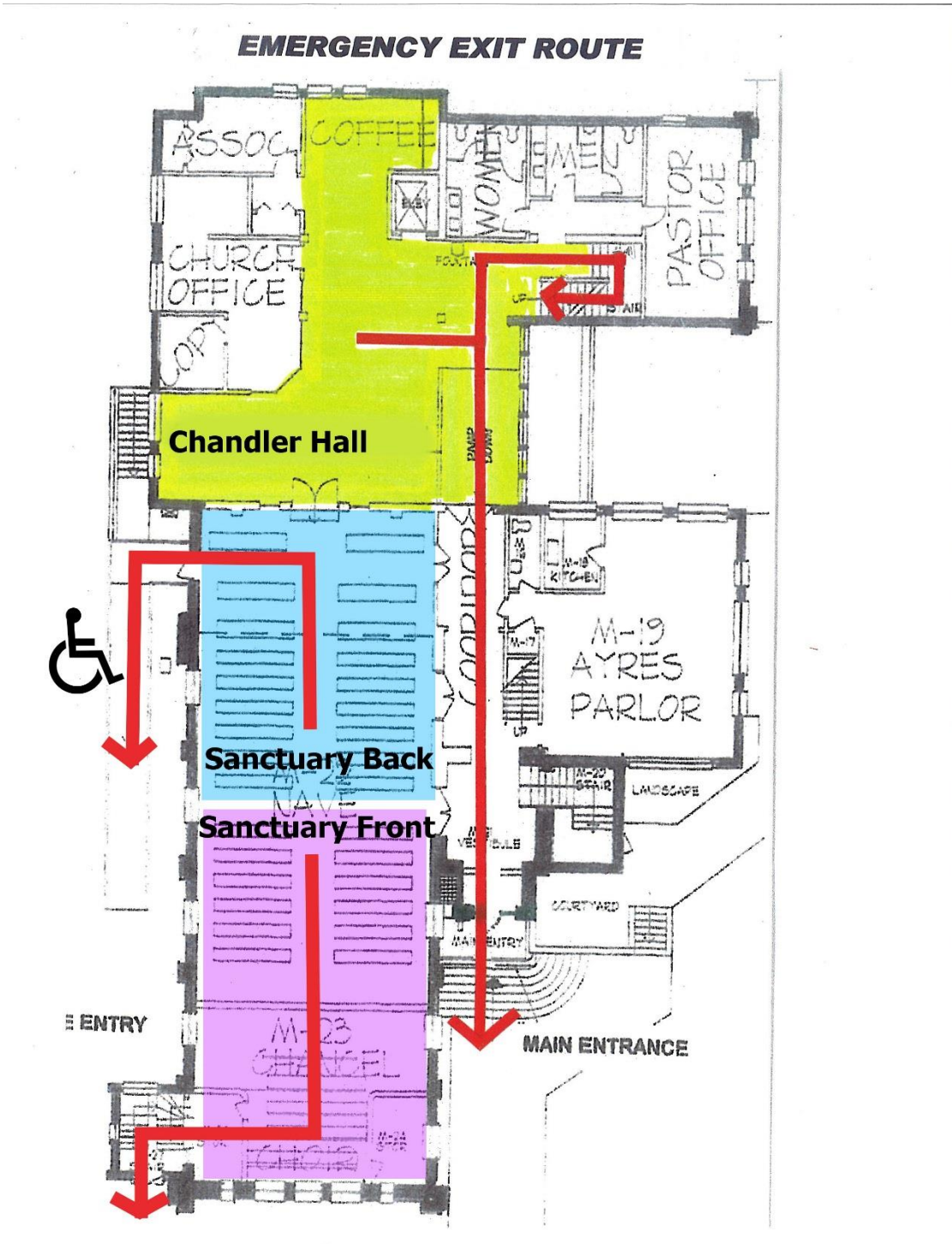
**NOTE: SEE Appendix B for 4"x6" Checklist Cards**

Funeral Checklist

TODO

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an accident/incident, please complete a report using the form located in the pockets of the Trustee Binder on the counter in the office. Place the completed form in the mailbox of the Church Administrator (Elinor). If immediate attention is required, contact the Trustee or Pastor.



Scorecard

This scorecard is a way for Head Ushers to quantify areas that are “well done, good and faithful servant” and which areas could use some improvement. These aren’t collected or compared. Instead, these are an internal tool to help Usher Teams focus their energy on showing the love of Christ to all who walk through the door of First Pres Littleton.

1 = Not True, 2 = Somewhat True, 3 = Definitely True

**Usher Captain:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Our Team Assembled 30 Minutes Before Service	1	2	3
We Had Friendly Eye Contact	1	2	3
We Had Friendly Faces and Greetings	1	2	3
We Greeted Everyone Within 6 Feet of Us	1	2	3
We Respectfully Assisted With Seating	1	2	3
We Accurately Counted Attendance	1	2	3
We Opened and Closed Doors at Proper Times	1	2	3
We Left the Sanctuary Ready for the Next Service	1	2	3
We Collected the Offering in an Efficient and Secure Manner	1	2	3
We Noticed Visitors, Showing Them Around As Needed	1	2	3

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_



Head Usher Team Definition

The Head Usher Team is a subcommittee of the Worship Committee. The Worship Committee will work with the Head Usher Team to establish a clear plan for the worship services (ex: taking the offering, communion, greeter locations, etc).

The Head Usher Team is comprised of all the Head Ushers. The following roles are to be filled on an annual basis by a Head Usher or another member at large.

**Worship Committee Liaison** – this person attends the Worship Committee as needed on behalf of the Head Usher Team. When decisions affecting the ushers will be discussed at Worship Committee, this person represents the experience and perspective of the Head Usher Team at the meeting.

**Secretary** – this person maintains this Usher Handbook (ex: contact info, calendar, etc) and takes notes at any meetings of the Head Usher Team. This person also reminds the Head Usher Team to sign up ahead of time for coverage.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Current Officer</b>	<b>Previous Officer</b>
Worship Committee Liaison	Maggie Ashworth	
Secretary	Cody Sandahl	

Head Usher Calendar

A physical calendar is available for each worship service in Chandler Hall. Someone from the Head Usher Team typically serves as a recruiter for one month at a time (ex: October, Early Service). They are responsible for recruiting ushers for each week and assigning a Head Usher (if the recruiter is not going to serve as Head Usher personally).