



Usher Guidelines Manual

St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church
Lilburn, Georgia

March 2026



USHERS
Ministry of Hospitality

March 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The St. Stephen the Martyr Parish Community is grateful for your generosity and commitment to serving as an Usher.

Ushers are required to be registered parishioners at St. Stephen the Martyr. Also, they must undergo a background screening through the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

In general, Ushers provide services to the Congregation before, during and after Mass, and to create a welcoming atmosphere in the church, while not distracting from the liturgy.

What you do is not simply a job, but a gift of service. You have the opportunity to enhance your own and other's experience of the Liturgy through your gracious contributions each week.

In reality, you are more than an usher, you are a minister of hospitality - as you will contribute to the feeling of hospitality for all who attend Mass at St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church, whether they are long-standing parish members, those on business trips, or visitors/tourists visiting our Lilburn community.

Thank you again for your service and your conscious decision to share your gifts, your time and talent, with our parish.

Rev. Brian Lorei
Pastor
St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church
Lilburn, Georgia

USHERS GUIDELINES

Before Mass

Please arrive at Church 15-20 minutes before the Mass, put on an Usher Badge and check in with your Team Usher Leader and the other Ushers.

Place Offertory baskets and signs (**Green – 1st collection**, **Red – 2nd collection**) in the Fellowship Hall (and sometimes Nursery Room).

As a gesture of hospitality before Mass, Ushers may open the doors of the sanctuary for the parishioners and quietly welcome them to the Church. To avoid the noise in the Narthex spilling into the sanctuary, please don't hold the doors open. Allow Parishioners to seat themselves. Please note the handicap seating available in the front and back of the church. Please do your best to reserve them for those in need.

After Mass has Begun

For those arriving late, before the readings have begun, the Ushers **may seat people** by walking down the left or right aisles of the Church, where there is usually more room, especially towards the front.

Please do not seat during either of the 1st and 2nd readings. Please wait till the Gospel, when everyone is standing, to seat late arriving people - so it will be less of a distraction. Also, do not seat during the Eucharistic Prayer and Consecration.

Counting the Attendees at Mass

Sometime during the Mass when everyone is seated, the Ushers take a count of all the people sitting in the Church, Narthex, Fellowship Hall, and Nursery and record it on the Mass Attendance sheet in the Vestry.

Please Do NOT forget to count the people sitting in the Music Choir, The Priests, Deacons, Altar servers, people in the Narthex and the Ushers.

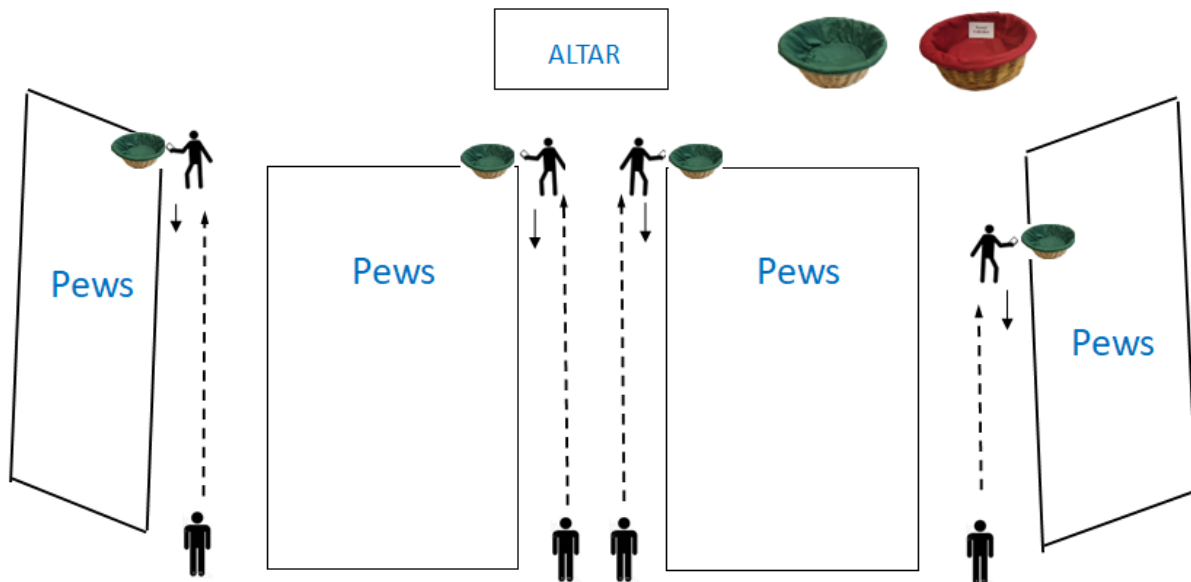
Until further notice, there is no Offertory Gift Procession.

Temporary Offertory Collection Procedure [Used During Covid Times]

The Offertory contributions are deposited by Parishioners in baskets either at right/left side of the Altar Sanctuary, the back of the Church, and the Fellowship Hall. After the parishioners have given their offerings, Ushers take the green and red baskets with the offerings to the Vestry to be deposited into the safe, in the usual manner.

Offertory Collection Procedure [Normal]

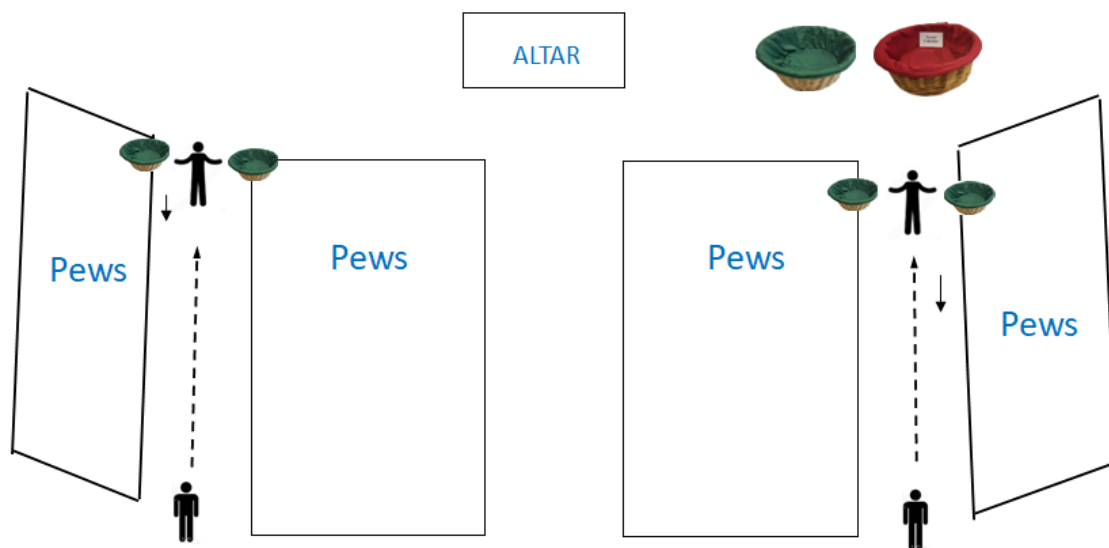
Usher Collection - Passing the Baskets with 4 Ushers



Distribution of Green and Red Baskets

- Ushers begin the process immediately after the Prayers of the Faithful. (Do not wait, please begin right away) 4 Ushers come forward with basket(s). First, they pass the **Green Basket**...
- If there is a 2nd Collection, please wait about 20 seconds before passing the **Red Basket**. (Please check bulletin each week to determine if there is a 2nd Collection,)
- The Ushers then go back to the last row to pick up the baskets with offerings.
- Deposit of Collection: All the Ushers then bring them into the Vestry and make sure all the baskets are emptied properly into the appropriate labeled security bags (1st collection; 2nd collection). Then the Ushers will sign (legibly PRINT name) and date the sheet confirming that the collections have been properly collected, bagged and deposited into the safe. (The bags are to be sealed at the end, **not folded in half and then sealed** because this hinders with the banker's ability to open the bag at the opposite end.)
- The empty bags are located in the cupboard to the left of the sink (in the Vestry).

Collection - Passing the Baskets with only 2 Ushers



Distribution of Green and Red Baskets with only 2 Ushers

- Ushers begin the process immediately after the Prayers of the Faithful. (Do not wait, please begin right away) 2 Ushers come forward with basket(s). First, they pass the **Green Basket**...
- If there is a 2nd Collection, please wait about 20 seconds before passing the **Red Basket**.
- The Ushers then go back to the last row to pick up the baskets with offerings.

Communion to the Physically Disabled

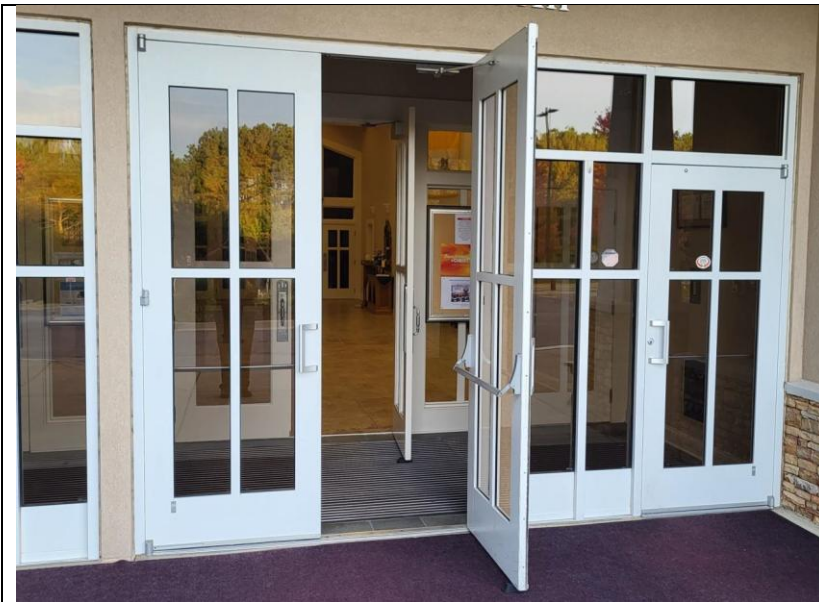
During Communion, each Usher should determine (and advise Usher Team Leader) if there is anyone in his/her section that cannot go up and wants Communion brought back to them (e.g. a person in a wheelchair). This information shall be communicated to the Communion Ministers.

***The Usher should select the Communion line that finishes first.**

After the last communicant, simply request the communion minister (Priest, Deacons or EM) to go back where the people are sitting.

At the Conclusion of Mass

- Hand out Church Bulletins as people leave. At least two ushers are needed to hand out the bulletins.
- Return Usher Badges to drawer.
- If any parishioner voices a comment /concerns to an Usher, please communicate it to Father after Mass (i.e. if someone says the sound system is not working correctly, a broken kneeler, etc.).
- Straighten up the interior of the Church for the next Mass.
(Pick up around the pews, straighten up the hymnal books, etc.)
- Return all lost and found items to “Lost and Found” in the Ushers Closet.
- **After Sunday 11:00AM Mass Only: (If Applicable)** Retrieve Offertory plastic signs and place them in the Vestry next to the offertory baskets.



During pleasant weather, at the end of Mass, Please prop open the entrance doors: one inside door, and one outside door.

Appropriate Attire / Dress

As a representative of the House of Our Lord; it is a sign of respect to dress appropriately for the Ministry of Ushering.

For men, a coat and tie are encouraged. However, dress clothes such as slacks, and a button down shirt may also be worn (Business casual).

For women, a modest dress, slacks or knee length skirts are appropriate. Jeans and tennis shoes are never appropriate. No halter tops or spaghetti strap tops should be worn, shoulders should be covered.

Under no circumstances shall any usher come to serve in gym shorts, sweatpants, cutoffs, jeans or tee-shirts. Ministers who are not scheduled to serve are asked to please dress appropriately in case they are needed to serve.

Safety / Emergency Procedures

Should an emergency arise in the building, please act with common sense to minimize injury to persons, and damage to property, in that order.

Please note the locations of the following:

- Fire Extinguishers (Narthex, Hallway, Kitchen, Altar Server Vesting Room)
- Fire Alarms (Narthex, Kitchen, Church doors)
- AED Defibrillator located in the Parish Library (White box attached to wall - red defibrillator is visible through glass window). For operation, just turn the machine on. From there, the machine will automatically speak instructions on how to proceed.
- First Aid Kit (Far left bottom cabinet of the Information Center, and in the Library [Includes Narcan])

Illness. If someone is in need of personal assistance (e.g. fainting in church), seek a medical professional from the congregation for help/advice with any medical situation. If appropriate assist the person to an out of the way area such as the library. If the situation is serious, call 911.

Threats. If someone behaves in a threatening way, please inform the Pastor. Also, it may be necessary to Call 911 and tell them, *“We have a combative person making threats at St. Stephen the Martyr, 5373 Wydella Rd, Lilburn, GA.”*

Do not try to reason with the person. Do not prevent the person from leaving. If the person leaves, get a description and make of the car. If possible, get the license plate. When in doubt, common sense prevails.

Emergency contact numbers:

If it is an **EMERGENCY**, for the Police, the Fire Department or for emergency medical help, CALL 911. Be ready to advise 911 of the nature of the emergency, and our address at St. Stephen's, which is 5373 Wydella Road, Lilburn, Ga. 30047.

If it is **NOT AN EMERGENCY**, but we still need an Officer, call the Gwinnett County Sheriff's 770.822.3120

Solicitation - There is no solicitation allowed on church property without the permission of the Pastor. Please ask those involved to leave.

If there is a person requesting help, please ask them to fill out a "Financial Assistance Request Form" located in the Narthex Information Center. A member of our Outreach committee will reach out to them soon. Also, feel free to provide them with the St. Vincent dePaul assistance phone number, or the Lilburn Co-op information flyer for financial assistance, clothing, food pantry, etc.

Scheduling and Replacements

Saturday Vigil / Sunday Masses should have three (3) Ushers whenever possible. If an Usher cannot make a Sunday, he should call one of the replacement Ushers on his Team, if any, and tell the Usher Team Leader. If no replacement usher is available, the Usher Team Leader will ask another Usher (from any Team) who is present at the Mass, to fill in.

Holidays such as Christmas and Easter require extra Ushers at each Mass. Thank you in advance for helping with these busy masses.

For Scheduling, please contact Keith Schwaner at Keith.Schwaner@gmail.com

***Thank you for your service in the Usher Ministry.
If a situation arises which is not clearly covered by these guidelines,
"Common Sense" prevails.***

A History of Ushers in the Catholic Church

The ministry of greeters is the oldest lay ministry in the Catholic Church. In the Old Testament greeters were called "gatekeepers." Their ministry was so important that they were given living quarters in the temple.

According to I Chronicles 9, their duties included opening the temple every morning, providing care and protection for all the precious vessels, preparing certain food items used in ritual sacrifices, and guarding the temple. By the time of Christ, these gatekeepers had become known as the "Temple Guard." They were ordered to arrest Jesus, but according to John 7, they instead became interested in Jesus' message.

By the third century A.D., a clerical order known as "porters" (overseers of the doors) was implemented. During those times, it was the duty of the porters to guard the door of the church against any intruders who might disturb the service. Part of their commissioning to the minor order was literally to be handed the keys to the church they were to serve. The porters' duties came to include opening and closing the church, welcoming all Christians to the mass, and keeping out any threats during times of persecution. In 1972 Pope Paul VI abolished the order of porter and this important task was given over to the laity.

While today's greeters have the same role, their primary duties and responsibilities include greeting and welcoming parishioners as they enter the church, helping them to find seats, assisting during health issues, taking up the collection, distributing handouts, and wishing everyone a good day at the conclusion of the Eucharistic Celebration.

