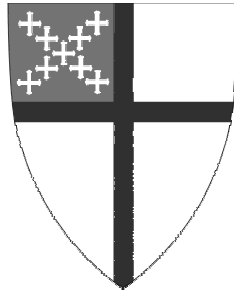


**MINISTRY GUIDE FOR ST. AIDAN'S USHERS**  
**REVISED August 1, 2008**



**St. Aidan's Episcopal Church**  
**13560 Cogburn Road, Alpharetta, GA 30004**  
**770-521-0207 [www.staidans.org](http://www.staidans.org)**

**Preamble:** Yours is a ministry of hospitality, particularly for newcomers, but also for members in need. Always be alert for ways you can help, be mindful to promote a sense of reverence and to limit disruptions, and be ready to assist with health emergencies, if they arise (see Paragraph 5). Thank you for the work you do and the commitment that you have made.

**1. ARRIVAL:** Ushers should arrive at the Church no later than twenty (20) minutes prior to the start of the service for which they are responsible. The Head Usher is responsible for the development, publication and distribution of the Usher Schedule (see Paragraph 4.a.).

**2. ATTIRE:**

- a. When Sunday School **is in session**, ushers should wear a suit or sport coat (preferably dark blue, brown or black) with tie, or appropriate female attire, and Usher Name Tag (normally positioned on the right lapel).
- b. When Sunday School **is not in session (summer)**, ushers should wear business casual (i.e. slacks and sport shirt with collar), or appropriate female attire, and Usher Name Tag (normally positioned on the right of the shirt) – no shorts or sneakers, please.

**3. DUTIES:**

- a. Upon arrival, ushers should check in with the appropriate Team Leader to ensure all members are present – if someone is absent then each usher should assist the Team Leader in identifying a replacement. It is each usher's individual responsibility to comply with the published Usher Schedule or to find a qualified replacement, if necessary.

(1) There will normally be only two (2) ushers at the early service so they must make the appropriate adjustments to ensure that all of the following procedures are accomplished properly.

- (2) There will normally be four (4) ushers at the later service unless additional ones are required because of special occasions or ceremonies.
- b. Ushers should ensure that bulletins and children's activity sheets are present and prepared for distribution.
- c. Ushers should rearrange chairs in the Sanctuary, as necessary, upon the completion of Sunday School, or prior to any service. The designated Team Leader should:
- (1) Check the lighting levels to ensure that they are as desired by the Presiding Priest in charge of the service (i.e. all the circular knobs are turned all the way to the right and the lights are on over the choir and the altar). The light switches are located in the rear of the Sanctuary to the left of the doors upon entering and are labeled as appropriate.
  - (2) Check that the two thermostat controls mounted on the left and right front walls in the Sanctuary are as desired for the weather conditions. Normally, the thermostats should be set on "Cool" at 71 degrees in the summer.
  - (3) Check that the remaining thermostat in the Narthex Area is set as desired: this control is located on the right wall just before you enter the door leading from the Narthex into the Office Area.
  - (4) Check that the Narthex Speaker Control, which is located on the right wall as you exit the Church, is adjusted as appropriate. Ushers should be aware that the volume control should be adjusted differently depending on whether the microphone is mounted on the Presiding Priest's clothes or whether the fixed microphones mounted on the podiums are being used. **If the speakers are not on, go to the Sacristy and ensure the system is on.**
  - (5) Check that the right door as you exit the Narthex is unlocked. The Left door is unlocked with a key while the right door must be unlocked with an Allen Wrench that is located on top of the fire alarm box to the left of the doors as you exit. Take the Allen Wrench and insert it in the hole beneath the left side of panic bar/door handle and turn as appropriate to "wind" the handle either up or down to withdraw the drop bar from the hole in the threshold and allow the door to move freely.
- d. **Two ushers** should station themselves at the outer edge of the double doors leading into the Sanctuary to relieve congestion and greet the parishioners as they enter, handing out the appropriate materials to adults and children alike. These ushers should try to move people in as smoothly as possible so the service can begin on time.
- e. Ushers should attempt to keep the noise level the Narthex Area at a minimum because the noise travels into the Nave/Sanctuary more than you realize. **At the late service, two ushers should be inside the Nave, at the back, one on each side, to assist people in seating and with other needs.** As yours is a ministry of hospitality, ushers should assist

any parishioner in need, such as the handicapped or the elderly, **and parents needing help with children**, and attempt to seat them on the aisle to facilitate Communion.

- f. Ushers should also kindly remind parishioners that food and/or drinks are not **permitted** in the Sanctuary. Have them leave them on a table or put them in the trash.
- g. During inclement weather, the ushers should enlist the support of available parishioners and provide them with the St. Aidan's umbrellas so that they may assist other parishioners in proceeding from the parking lot into the Church. These golf size, maroon and white umbrellas, with the St. Aidan's logo, are located in the closet storage area on the right as you approach the Men's Room. Additionally, the ushers should attempt to organize, as much as practicable, the umbrellas being carried by parishioners and being left outside the Church. This is necessary to reduce confusion, and, hopefully, preclude individuals from taking the wrong umbrellas at the conclusion of the service.
- h. The ushers should assist all appropriate **ministers** in ensuring that the Procession is organized properly and those late arriving parishioners are directed properly. Once the Presiding Priest and all have processed, ushers should **stand in the center aisle at the font and direct people along the side aisles. Once the opening hymn is over, close the doors to the Narthex and monitor coming and going. Note: people should be asked politely to wait to enter while any of the four lessons are being read. You can even use "body language" by standing in front of the closed doors.** When attendance is particularly heavy, the ushers should assist the late arriving parishioners in finding seating as appropriate.
- i. During the service, at least one usher should remain at the rear doors to open and close them as necessary to reduce distractions. The remaining usher(s) may **divide up and** be seated in **the Narthex and in the Nave—in** the vicinity of the rear doors as appropriate.
- j. Ushers should keep all conversations among themselves to a minimum, and, if a conversation is necessary, it should be conducted in the Narthex Area or outside.
- k. **During the Psalm and/or second reading** (but **not** during the Sermon), ushers should count the congregation as follows: one usher should proceed to **Burtenshaw Hall and count either 1) at 8 AM, the breakfast team, or 2) at 10:30 all those in Children's Chapel**, and then go to the **Nursery** to count the children and adult **parishioners** present; in the Nave, two ushers (one on each outside aisle) should count the parishioners present. Look closely for small children. **The choir and altar party should also be counted.** These totals should then be annotated on the Attendance Sheet, which is located in the right most drawer of the right table as one would leave the church. The total count of all adults and children taken from the completed Attendance Sheet should then be **placed on top of the offering plates as they are brought forward**—and folded so the priest can easily see the total count (which is used to bless the right amount of wafers/wine).
- l. When Children's Chapel is being conducted, as soon as the Sermon is completed, one of the ushers should proceed to Children's Chapel in Burtenshaw Hall and notify the Chapel

Leaders that they need to start bringing the children back into the Narthex Area so that they can return to their parents at the Peace. **At the Peace, and not before**, the ushers should open the rear doors of the Nave/Sanctuary and assist the Chapel Leaders in directing the children where they need to go.

**m. Offertory Procedures:**

(1) When the Presiding Priest announces the offering, two ushers should proceed, side-by-side, down the center aisle while the other two ushers, if present, should proceed one each down the outside aisles.

(2) The ushers in the center aisle should receive the offertory plates from the acolyte with the usher on the left receiving first, followed by the usher on the right. Once both ushers have received their plates, they should turn outward toward their respective sides of the Church. The ushers then pass the plates 1) to those in the “side,” angled seating and 2) to those seated in the main sections, with the ushers in the outside aisles, if present, returning the plates down the next row toward the center aisle. As the ushers in the center aisle proceed from front to rear, they must ensure that they identify anyone who may wish to receive Communion at their seats so that this information can be conveyed to the Presiding Priest.

(3) The choir-side is now shorter in seating than the window-side, so if the ushers on choir-side finish first, they can collect on the window-side, starting at the back and moving forward to the next usher group.

(4) When the collection is completed, the ushers should wait at the rear of the Sanctuary to coordinate the presentation of the oblations (elements) and the offering:

(a) At the early service, one usher should carry both collection plates and the other usher should carry the oblations. As the offertory hymn begins, the ushers should make eye-contact with the Priest or Verger and then proceed down the center aisle, side-by-side, with the usher carrying the oblations on the left and the usher carrying the collection plates on the right, to just in front of the altar. The ushers should be very careful while proceeding down the aisle and be aware of the possibility of someone from the congregation rising unexpectedly and hitting ones arm. Upon arrival at the altar, the usher carrying the oblations should present them to the acolyte, verger or priest, and the usher carrying the collection plates should present them to the other acolyte. Once both presentations have been made, the ushers should bow in unison, turn inward or toward each other, and immediately proceed up the center aisle to the rear of the Nave.

(b) At the later service, children from Children’s Chapel are normally selected by the Children’s Chapel leaders to (1) carry the Wooden Cross and (2) carry the children’s collection plate. Other individuals and/or children can be selected at random to carry the oblations, and the regular collection plates. The Collection Procession is as follows: the child with the wooden cross, followed by the two

individuals carrying the oblations, followed by the child with the Children's Chapel Collection plate, followed by the two individuals with the regular collection plates. As the offertory hymn begins, the ushers should make eye-contact with the Priest or Verger and then proceed as described down the center aisle to just in front of the altar. The parishioners/ushers should be very careful while proceeding down the aisle and be aware of the possibility of someone from the congregation rising unexpectedly and hitting ones arm causing inadvertent spillage. The oblation bearers should hand the oblations to the Verger and then step aside. The individuals carrying the collection plates then move forward, with the child presenting the plate first to an acolyte followed by the individual on the left and then the individual on the right. As soon as this is completed, all individuals should bow in unison, turn inward or toward each other, and proceed, side by side, up the center aisle to the rear of the Sanctuary, with the cross bearer first, followed by the remaining four ushers/parishioners/children.

(5) During very high-density services, such as Christmas and Easter, it may be necessary to collect the offering at the front and the rear of the Sanctuary simultaneously. If this becomes necessary, it will be the responsibility of the Team Leader to identify additional ushers to assist with the collection of the offering and to coordinate this action.

**n. Communion Procedures:**

(1) Once the **Celebrant says, "The Gifts of God for the People of God,"** all two/four ushers should proceed down the center aisle, two by two.

(a) At 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., the two ushers immediately invite people to stand and fill the altar rail for Communion, side areas first, then main seating areas. Ushers should be aware of the necessity of filling the entire rail, limiting congestion as much as possible while maintaining a steady flow.

(b) At 10:30 a.m., two ushers should stand at the bend of the altar rail, offering eye contact and inviting hand gestures for people to come to the side and fill the rail to the end near the back wall.

(2) At 10:30 a.m., two ushers should proceed up the center aisle, row by row, releasing the parishioners, as necessary, to ensure a **standing line of at least 8-10 people on each side**. These ushers should release the parishioners while facing forward as much as practicable. As these ushers release the last few rows, they should be prepared to direct the last few parishioners to receive Communion to either the left or the right Communion lines to ensure a steady and uniform flow on both sides.

(3) Once the people have gone for Communion, the two/four ushers should step forward immediately at the altar rail opening to receive Communion. At this time, the appropriate usher should identify to the Presiding Priest, the location of any parishioner who desires to receive Communion in his/her seat. If there is wine remaining in the chalice, ushers may consume as much as they are comfortable with doing. Once all four ushers have

been served, they should bow in unison and then turn inward – the center two ushers should then proceed, side by side, up the center aisle, with the outside two ushers proceeding immediately behind them, also side by side.

(4) The ushers should then return to the rear of the Sanctuary and wait for the service to conclude.

- o. As the Recessional Hymn begins, the ushers should open the rear doors of the Sanctuary and assist parishioners as necessary in exiting.
- p. At the conclusion of the service, and once all parishioners have exited the Sanctuary, the entire usher team should clean up the Nave, Chancel, and Sanctuary, picking up bulletins, paper, crayons, etc. and returning all hymnals and Books of Common Prayer to their under the seat location (hymnals on the left and Books of Common Prayer on the right.) The ushers should return the Nave/Sanctuary to a condition where another service could be conducted without further effort. The Team Leader should ensure that all the lights are off (**in the bathrooms, too**) and that the HVAC controls are back to “**Run Program.**” Once the Sanctuary is in proper order, and all materials have either been discarded in the proper containers or returned to their proper places, the ushers are released.
- q. Periodically, the four ushers from the later service will be asked to realign the chairs and rows as time permits.

#### 4. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:

- a. **Scheduling and Notification:** It is the responsibility of the Head Usher to develop, publish and distribute an Usher Schedule to ensure that each service has an adequate number of ushers. Each week, the Head Usher will contact the two ushers who are serving the early service and the Team Leader of the Team that is serving the later service to remind them of their responsibilities. The Team Leader is then responsible for contacting the remaining members of his/her Team.
- b. **Lost and Found:** There is a Church Lost and Found located on the shelves on the left hand side of the small area just prior to entering the Men’s Room. All such items should be placed in this area and inquiring parishioners should be directed to it as appropriate.

#### 5. SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

- a. **First Aid:** There is a First Aid Kit for minor injuries/requirements in the small bathroom just outside the church office
- b. **Fire:** In case the fire alarm is activated and/or a fire is detected, the safety of all personnel is paramount. Ushers should immediately call 911 on the telephone in the kitchen area and provide the appropriate information and evacuate all personnel without

hesitation. Ushers should then await the arrival of the Fire Department and should not permit personnel to reenter the premises until advised to do so by the proper authorities.

- c. **Bomb Threat:** In the event of a bomb threat, again the safety of all personnel is paramount. Ushers should immediately call 911, apprise them of the threat, and then evacuate all people. Ushers should then await the arrival of the proper authorities and should not permit personnel to reenter the premises until advised to do so by the proper authorities.
- d. **Illness:** In the event a person suffers an ailment that appears to be of a serious nature, ushers should immediately call 911, **see if there is “a doctor or nurse in the house,”** and apprise them of the occurrence. They should then make the person as comfortable as possible, but they should not attempt to move them until advised to do so by the proper authorities. Ushers should then await the arrival of trained medical personnel and assist as appropriate.

**6. FINAL NOTE:** These Procedures are a “work in progress” and “there is no pride of authorship”. If you have suggestions or recommendations for additions and/or deletions, please contact me and they will be incorporated. Once again, thank you for being a part of this very important St. Aidan’s ministry.

Your Very Humble Head Usher,

Dave Hofstetter  
770-664-5494 (Home)  
770-390-3104 (Work)  
770-910-2897 (Cellular)  
(dghofstetter@aol.com)

## Summary Check List

- Wear nice clothes (business casual or sport coat)
- Arrive 20 minutes prior to service
- Keep conversations in the Narthex short and quiet so that you can welcome all who enter. Remember: voices carry.
- Check lights and A/C setting
- Recruit replacements “the day of” as needed
- Locate all bulletins for distribution
- Help with umbrellas during the rain!
- 10:30 a.m. : two in the Narthex; two inside
- Ask people with drinks and food to leave them in the Narthex
- Ask people to wait to be seated during a reading or psalm (music time is better for seating)
- Count: Only adult ushers count; Please count carefully; place count in offering plate.
- Get children from Children’s Chapel as the Prayers of the People begin. Children wait in the Narthex and come in after “the Peace of the Lord be always with you.”
- Offertory: if one side finishes the collection before the other, those ushers help on the uncollected side too.
- People may go to the rail for Communion after the priest says, “The gifts of God for the People of God.”
- After the 10:30 service, set the AC units on “Run Program” (not Hold)
- Clean up (altar area too) and count unused bulletins