



# **The Ushering Ministry at Normandale Lutheran Church**

Usher Manual, updated August, 2016



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### **NLC Ushering – A Servant Ministry**

It has been a tradition since the beginning of the Christian Church to have members of the church family assist in many tasks that support the church and the worship service. The ushering program at Normandale Lutheran Church has built upon this rich tradition of lay members assisting in the worship service to provide a meaningful, safe, and spiritually invigorating service for visitors and members.

Ushering is a spiritual, communal, and social experience at NLC. The Normandale program emphasizes the fundamental principle that ushers are directly involved in service to our Lord and their church family during the time of their service. Ushering can be and is a rewarding activity in which new friends are made and relationships built while at the same time serving in an active manner.

Ushering is an outreach experience at NLC. One of the most important points to be stressed with ushers is that in many circumstances, the usher is the first person or representative that a member or visitor sees at a worship service. How we greet members and guests is extremely important. We strongly affect the worship participant's experience if we are not attuned to their needs and appear indifferent or if we are animated, enthusiastic, and welcoming. Remember, as we greet people, we are encountering people who may be in spiritual crisis, may be grieving, may be in depression, or may be considering joining NLC. The usher becomes a pivotal representative in determining each person's worship experience.

Ushering is a vital part of the ministry at Normandale Lutheran Church. Effective ushering enhances the worship experience for all in attendance, members and visitors alike. Normandale strives to extend a warm welcome to all and to assure visitors they are welcome and we want them to return. Many times it is the attention and courtesies extended by the usher that determine whether visitors will return and/or consider becoming a member. Ushering is an important part of our outreach to all parts of our community.



## **Recruitment**

Normandale actively recruits participants for the ushers program from all segments of the Normandale family. The usher program coordinator and team captains are the main members entrusted with usher recruitment. Phone calls, personal solicitations, and special recruitment presentations are all used. In addition, the Director of Connections asks new members to Normandale to join service ministries such as an usher team. A database of volunteers is maintained in the church office and reports are readily available to the usher coordinator and team captains. These lists may be requested through Dana Arnold in the church office. The usher coordinator works in an ongoing capacity to call and invite virtually all members of NLC to participate in the ushers program at one time or another. New usher team members are assigned to a team by the usher coordinator on an as-needed basis, or may be added by a team captain to their team. Notification of the assignment, along with a team roster and usher handbook, is mailed to the new usher. Team captains are urged to contact their new team members early on to welcome them and explain the schedule, as well as socialize with their entire team throughout the year.

The goal of recruitment is two-fold

- To identify, invite and maintain an ongoing, revolving base of usher families and individuals that the program can rely on.
- To regularly reach out beyond established members of the program to new families and individuals not currently involved in NLC.

Who can be an usher?

Not just anyone should be an usher. In the same way that not every person can sing in the choir, teach Sunday School or lead a confirmation small group, an usher should have the gift, passion and ability to be a responsible servant to the worship experience. An usher should have a heart for spiritual service, bringing God's joy, love and peace to the worshipping congregation.



## **Organization**

The ushering ministry is coordinated by the Usher Program Coordinator and the Director of Worship & Music. A standard usher team usually consists of 6 members. Four are required to service the main sanctuary and two for the transept. In cases of extremely low attendance a four-person team can service both areas. Teams are organized for the first (9:00 a.m.) Sunday service and the late (10:30 a.m.) Sunday service, plus special assignments during festivals or special services during the church calendar. In the summer, there may be one Sunday service and one weeknight service.

Special services include:

1. Ash Wednesday
2. Midweek Lenten services
3. Maundy Thursday
4. Good Friday
5. One additional service on Easter morning
6. Thanksgiving Eve
7. Midweek Advent services
8. Christmas Eve
9. Christmas Day
10. Epiphany
11. Ascension

Members of the ushering program participate in one of two ways

**Team Captain:** A captain, or co-captains, heads each worship service ushering team. Captains/co-captains manage ushering teams for the calendar year. With twelve teams, each team serves twice a year for a one-month period.



**NLC usher:** Ushers are members who desire a more limited involvement in the program. Ushers are trained and coordinated by their team captains.

**Substitution:** Scheduled ushers are expected to arrange for a substitute if they are unable to usher at their scheduled time and should call their team captain or the program coordinator if unable to secure a substitute no later than Thursday of the preceding week.

### **Sunday Morning Procedures**

**Captain's Duties:** The captain is expected to arrive by 8:15 AM for the 9:00 and 9:45 AM for the 10:30 Am service. It is very common at NLC for worship participants to arrive more than half an hour before services for prayer, meditation, and reflection. The captain should be in place to meet these early arrival's needs. Captains should complete the following Sunday Morning check list:

1. Captains-- arrive by 8:15 for the 9:00 and 9:45 for the 10:30 service for set-up and early arrivals.
2. Get Bulletins and children's bulletins from the church office. These are often on the floor behind the receptionist desk. Remember a full box can be heavy.
3. Bulletins are distributed to each back pew of the main entryways into the church and on the chairs adjacent to the transept entry. Children's bulletins are placed on tables at entrances.
4. Locate and count the offering plates (9 needed) for use.
5. Pick-up the morning attendance form from the shelf in the Usher's closet.
6. Check for any special instructions regarding the service on the clip board in the usher's closet.



7. Place reserved signs on pews according to worship schedule for the day.
8. Usher team assignments are made as team members arrive.
9. Coach new ushers on offering, communion, and late arrivals.
10. Close doors during opening confession and prayer. Late arrivals enter on entrance hymn.
11. Have team take count during the readings. Include all left side, right side, balcony, transept, service participants and usher team.
12. Press “OK” button (main entrance, left side, up six feet) after completed offering to signal organist to proceed.
13. Have at least one usher on duty inside church and in Narthex at all times to monitor the congregation, late arrivals, or other needs.
14. Turn Welcome pad pages in to office.
15. Have team inspect and perform a mild cleanup of the sanctuary after service

**Team member Arrival Time:** Scheduled ushers are expected to be there at least 25 minutes before the service. All ushers are expected to report to the ushers’ closet to check the clip board for special worship instructions and to put on their name tags.

**Attire:** All ushers are asked to remember that during the service they are representatives of our entire church family and are participating directly in a worship service for our Lord. Emphasis is placed on being neat, clean and aware of serving. Political or popular signages in the form of shirts, decals, buttons, pins or any other item that may distract for the worship service are not allowed. Suit coats, blazers, or sport jackets are suggested. Dresses pant suits, or skirt/ jacket combinations are suggested for women.



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Depending on conditions (summer heat or chilly winters) the dress code can be relaxed to allow dress shirts without coats or sweater combinations.

**Name Tags:** Each usher team member will have a special usher name tag, so members and visitors may know you by name. These name tags will be stored in the usher closet.

**Special Instructions:** For each service a document entitled “Worship Notes” is prepared for all those participating in the service. It contains all the special instructions for each service. A copy of this is emailed during the week to team captains and a copy is posed on the bulletin board in the ushers’ room. The board should be checked for this sheet before each service, especially for any last-minute changes.

**Hearing Aids:** There are several hearing devices for the hearing impaired. They are kept in charging rack in the AV room. When the device is returned, be sure it has been turned “off” and the earplug should be cleaned with alcohol and a cotton swab, which can be found in the first aid cabinet in the first aid room.

**Large Print Hymnal:** A large print hymnal is available for the vision impaired. It can be found in the ushers’ room. It is a loose-leaf book, which is compiled specifically for each service.

**Lighting:** Lighting is controlled primarily from the sound operation desk in the choir loft. However, at some special occasions, the usher captain may be called upon to dim or brighten the sanctuary area. There are controls on the walls in the rear of the sanctuary, one at each of the side aisles. Each button has two settings, one is “off,” the other button on the south wall is for “full” lighting, on the north wall the other setting is for “low” lighting.

**Bulletin Distribution:** Bulletins are handed to the worshippers as they enter the pew. Bulletins are handed face up from the top so the worshipper grasps the bulletin on the bottom. Each team member should



review the entire service schedule for the day to be oriented for ushering duties.

**Doors:** Sanctuary doors are open until the service begins. Following the procession, all sanctuary doors are closed and remain closed until the end of the service.

**Special Needs Seating:** Normandale has four shortened pew rows for wheelchair worshippers. There are two on each of the side aisles near the front of the sanctuary. The back row may also be used for wheelchairs. When communion is served the front pew on the pulpit side is reserved for people with disabilities. Communion servers will come from the chancel to serve these people in the pew.

**Positioning:** Two ushers are needed in the center aisle and one in each of the side aisles. Ushers position themselves about one-fourth to one-third from the front of the sanctuary. From this position ushers go to meet worshippers who wish to sit further back to assist in seating and to give them a bulletin. Ushers set an example for worshippers by refraining from conversation during the prelude, as this time is for prayer and meditation. Worshippers are greeted with a smile and a verbal “Hello” or “Good Morning/Good Evening” as they are handed a bulletin. Following the service ushers return to the sanctuary via the side entrance for clean up of the sanctuary.

**Service Procedures:** The usher team members are to remain in their positions seating attendees until the presiding Pastor begins the announcements. At that point ushers are to withdraw to the entrances of each aisle, still offering programs to last minute arrivals.

Once the initial confession service begins, doors are to be shut. Late arrivals are asked to remain in the narthex until an appropriate time for seating, or the entry hymn is begun. Late arrivals are not seated during the liturgy, prayer or while the congregation is standing. Pay attention throughout the service, watch what is going on in the Sanctuary, in case any help is needed,

**Maintaining decorum:** We are managing a worship service dedicated to our Lord. Part of the ushering team’s responsibility is to ensure that attendees be able to focus and participate in the service without



distractions or interruptions. All aspects of courtesy, communication, and manners during the service extend from this base concept. One of the most sensitive and diplomatic responsibilities held by the ushering team is to maintain a sense of decorum for the worship service regarding noise, interruptions, and inappropriate activities. Unfortunately, this may require gentle intervention in the actions of a member, guest, or visitor and so therefore should be administered with the greatest of care. Key points to remember:

- **Noisy children:** Great patience should be afforded towards any infant or toddler having outburst of anger or frustration. At Normandale, we want families to worship together, and most times parents take care of any issues. However, if the captain determines that the active child is detracting from the worship experience of other NLC members, the usher is to approach the parent and invite / direct the parent and child to leave the sanctuary for a quieter location. This also applies to older children in large groups (confirmation or otherwise).
- **Adult members:** Some members see the pre-service silence period in the sanctuary as a social time for visiting with friends and family. If it is determined by the usher that any such activity is harming the religious experience of those around them, the usher should ask them to move to the Narthex or return to a quiet form of respect, meditation, prayer, and participation.

**Seating management:** As the sanctuary fills, team members are expected to survey their assigned area and make mental notes of spaces for single, double, or family seating. These noted spaces should then be made available to latecomers as they arrive. Ushers are expected to help all latecomers find a suitable seat. Latecomers should never be left to fend for themselves in finding a location. Ushers should also ask if they could help direct people to a seat. We prefer to fully utilize pew seating before beginning to seat worshippers on chairs. Ushers should not hesitate to ask worshippers to move to the center of the pew or ask that those who desire a seat be allowed to step in front of them.

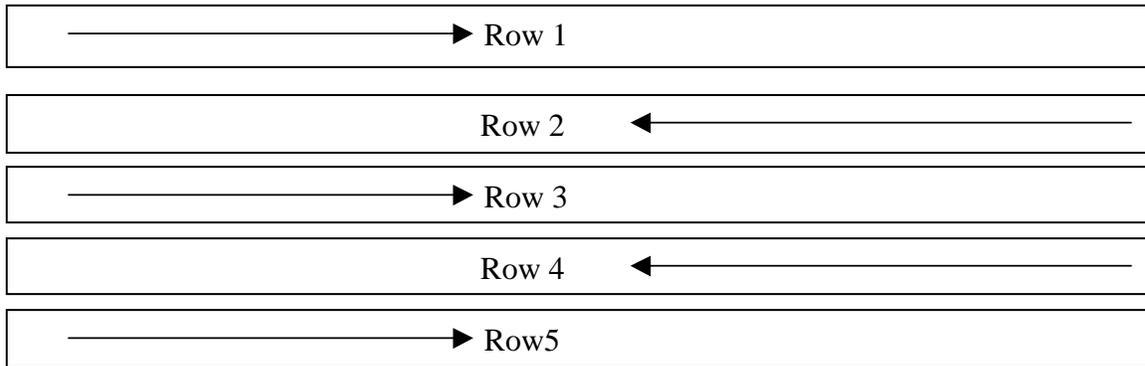


**Attendance/Counting:** In order to keep proper attendance records, ushers are asked to count the worshippers at each service. Counting is done from the side aisles during a hymn or choir anthem. Counting should not be done during the sermon, as this is distracting. Attendance should be recorded on the attendance forms, which can be found in the ushers' room, and turned in to the office receptionist. Up to four team members can be assigned to count: Nave left side / Nave Right Side / Transept / Balcony. Nave counters should also count all clergy and worship assistants in the sacristy area.

**Offering:** Six ushers are needed for the offering, two in the center aisle and one each of the side aisles of the main sanctuary, plus 2 in the transept. Offering plates can be found in the ushers' room. The captain should locate and secure them as one of their arrival activities. During the offering ushers always face the front of the church, stepping backward. In most cases the offering is brought forward to the altar. Two members of the team should prepare to come forward at the end of the offertory anthem. *Signal the organist that the offering is ready to be brought forward by pressing the signal light button located on the right hand frame of the center sanctuary door.* When the pastor approaches the altar, and offering music begins, the 2 team members should process with the offering to the front of the sanctuary, present the offering to the pastor, turnabout and return. Two designated ushers get the offering plates from the sacristy and bring them to the safe room in the office. At some services the offering is not brought forward; this will be noted on the special instruction sheet, which is emailed to the captain and posted in the ushers' room. An usher goes to the balcony with a plate for the choir at both services, before the congregational offering is taken. Wait for the plate to be passed and then take it downstairs.

**Plate passing:**

1<sup>st</sup> Usher: Rows 1 & 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> Usher: Row 2, then reverse order, 2<sup>nd</sup> usher:  
Rows 4 & 6, 1<sup>st</sup> Usher 1: Row 5



**Communion:** Two communion assistants will be stationed at the head of the aisle or “post” position to control the flow up to the communion rail. Special care should be given to not split families or couples. A simple head count of approx. 17 on either side allows for maximum participation at the communion rail. Two ushers direct the communicants forward using the center aisle by individual pew. For smooth, expedient communing, a full line of waiting communicants should be maintained. Two ushers manage transept communing. One stands “post” to the side for management of the “wall” kneelers or spaces. Approx. 15 communicants can be accommodated. Because of crowding and traffic patterns, the second transept usher takes a signal from the post usher to send another group of 15 forward from their seated pew position. A standing group should not be attempted in the transept area.

**Clean up:** Immediately following the service, pews and hymnal racks need to be straightened. Remember, many hands make light work. If all ushers jump in and help, it takes about 10 minutes. Remove loose paper and recycle, discard other waste, and turn in items left behind to the reception desk in the office for Lost and Found. Bulletins and announcements from the first service in good condition can be used at the second service. Group the pew rack materials in groups of two –a red Hymnal and a green Bible. Remove the sheets from the Welcome pads and turn them in to the office receptionist, or place in Janet Devine’s mailbox.

**Handouts (following service):** From time to time ushers will be asked to hand out items following the service. This may be a publication or information sheet regarding an upcoming event. Ushers position themselves in the narthex near the three doors to the sanctuary for this distribution.



**Security:** Expecting the unexpected is also a part of the usher team’s responsibility. All ushers, especially the captain, should be attuned to all members and visitors as they arrive. Mental notes should be made of anyone with packages, bags, backpacks, etc. and monitoring during the service is advised. Anyone appearing agitated, nervous, or distracted should be asked if they require assistance. In the event of any disruption of the service by an attendee (protester, anger, arguer, outspoken, or physical confrontation,) all team members should move to protect the congregation and staff and should make the disruptor aware of their presence. If evacuation is necessary, the ushering team is to take up positions at the doors ensuring that they are open and managing the flow of the evacuation. The captain should also determine if immediate evacuation of the sanctuary is prudent. 911 police assistance should immediately be sought. Ushers should not come into physical contact with anyone in these circumstances, yet be prepared to ask the person to accompany them from the sanctuary, out of the church, preferably to authorities.

**Emergency Procedures**

**Fire:** In the event of a fire, ushers are expected to quickly move to make sure that all doors to the sanctuary are wedged open. Orderly evacuation is an absolute must and the team is expected to monitor stairs and traffic areas to ensure that a panic situation does not ensue. If a fire alarm is activated, the captain should proceed to the alarm-monitoring box, located \_\_\_\_\_ determine if the alarm is false, or if genuine, return to manage the team in evacuation procedures.

**Usher’s Guide to First Response:**

- I. Emergency Action Steps....Stay Calm**
- Check**      Check the scene and the victim
- Call**        **Call 9-1-1**



### **Call First---time is critical**

- An unconscious adult or child 8 yrs or older
- An unconscious infant or child known to be at risk for heart problems

### **Call Fast---*Provide 1 minute of care, then call***

- An unconscious victim less than 8 yrs old
- Any victim of submersion or near drowning
- Any victim of cardiac arrest associated with trauma
- Any victim of drug overdose
- Care for the victim and family members

## **II. Good Samaritan Laws**

Developed to encourage people to help others in emergency situations. They require that the “Good Samaritan” use common sense and a reasonable level of skill. **If the victim is conscious remember to get consent. If victim is unconscious, consent is implied.**

## **III. Types of Medical Emergencies and care**

### **A. Cardiac (Heart) Emergencies**

#### **1. Signals**

- Chest pain or discomfort lasting more than 3-5 minutes or that goes away and comes back. Pain is not relieved by rest, changing position or medication. May spread to shoulder, arm, back, neck or jaw.
- Trouble breathing. Feels short of breath.
- Nausea
- Sweating or changes in skin appearance
- Dizzy or unconscious
- Ache, heartburn or indigestion

#### **2. Care**

- Have person stop activity and rest. Sitting position may help breathing. Keep warm and comfortable.
- **Call 9-1-1/Request help of medical professionals.**
- **Bring AED and First Response kit to victim.**
- Check for breathing. If not breathing, tilt head back, pinch nose and give 2 slow rescue breaths.
- Check for pulse. If no pulse, begin CPR.



B. Choking

1. Signals

- Clutching throat with hands
- Unable to speak, cough forcefully or breath
- High-pitched wheezing

2. Care

- **Send someone to call 9-1-1/Request help of medical professional**
- **Bring AED and First Response kit to victim**
- Place thumb side of fist against middle of abdomen just above the navel. Grasp fist with other hand
- Give quick, upward thrusts. Repeat until object is coughed up

C. Stroke—Caused by a lack of O2 to the brain when a blood vessel bursts or becomes narrowed by a clot.

1. Signals

- Weakness
- Loss of feeling or paralysis on one side of body
- Difficulty or loss of vision
- Difficulty or inability to walk, speak or understand

2. Care

- **Send someone to call 9-1-1/Request help of medical professional**
- **Bring AED and First Response kit to victim**
- If person is drooling or having difficulty swallowing, place person on side to keep airway clear

D. Seizures

- If person has a known seizure disorder it is not usually necessary to call 9-1-1/**Request help of medical professional**



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- **Bring AED and First Response kit to victim**
- **Call 9-1-1 if:**
  - Seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes or is repeated
  - The person does not regain consciousness
  - The person is pregnant, diabetic, injured or shows other life-threatening conditions

**First Responder First Aid Pack (orange bag)**

<b>How Many</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Used</b>	<b>Replaced</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Airways</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Trauma dressing</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Stethoscope</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Blood Pressure Cuff</b>		
<b>3</b>	<b>Surgipad dressings</b>		
<b>8</b>	<b>4 X 4s</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>CPR Microshield</b>		
<b>1 box</b>	<b>Ammonia Inhalants</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Dermicel tape</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Envirocide</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>SAM splint</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Ice pack</b>		



<b>1</b>	<b>Trauma shears</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Penlight</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Bite stick</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Glutoseal/ Burn cream/latex gloves</b>		

**Usher's Room Wall-mounted First Aid Kit**

<b>How many</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Exp date</b>	<b>Used</b>	<b>Replaced</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Mask and spacer</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>Albuterol</b>	<b>5/03</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>EpiPen .3 mg</b>	<b>6/03</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>EpiPen Jr .15 mg</b>	<b>6/03</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Nitroquick .4 mg</b>	<b>7/03</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Ibuprofen</b>	<b>10/03</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Benadryl</b>	<b>3/04</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Low dose Aspirin</b>	<b>9/04</b>		
	<b>Ammonia inhalants</b>			
	<b>Flex wrap</b>			
<b>5</b>	<b>4 X 4's</b>			
<b>5</b>	<b>3 X 3's</b>			
<b>5</b>	<b>2 X 2's</b>			
<b>15</b>	<b>Telfa pads (3 sizes)</b>			
	<b>Eye pads</b>			
<b>2</b>	<b>Ice packs</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>Large compress</b>			
	<b>Triangular dressing</b>			
	<b>Fingertip bandage</b>			
	<b>Knuckle bandage</b>			
	<b>Band-Aids (various sizes)</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>Roll of gauze</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>Adhesive tape</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>Elastic tape</b>			
	<b>Cotton swabs</b>			
	<b>Triple antibiotic ointment</b>			
	<b>Burn gel</b>			
	<b>Hydrocortisone cream 1%</b>			
	<b>Antibacterial towelettes</b>			
	<b>Antiseptic spray</b>			

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	<b>Antiseptic swabs</b>			
	<b>Alcohol wipes</b>			
	<b>Eye wash</b>			
<b>1 box</b>	<b>Latex-free gloves</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>Scissors</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>Thermometer</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>Tweezers</b>			
<b>2</b>	<b>Stethoscopes</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>Blood pressure cuff</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>Emesis basin</b>			