

# St Matthew's – Sidesperson guidance notes

## 1. On arrival

Arrive in time to check the Order of Service (for anything unusual) and the Rota. Put on badge!

Make sure fire exits are left clear. Unbolt both the doors in each of the three sets of doors to the Link – forecourt to Link, Parish Centre to Link, Church to Link. Make sure the routes to the emergency doors are clear – through the clergy vestry and through the flower/coffee vestry.

## 2. Emergencies

Make yourself aware of fire exits and location of extinguishers. If there is a fire – evacuate the area and ensure the fire brigade is called. The postcode is OX1 4LW and on a card by the door.

Make yourself aware of any first aiders or medics in the congregation. If someone is taken ill, ask a first aider to assist. There is a wheelchair in the Church Kitchen – it is usually better to help an unwell person to the office or even the Link. If the problem is potentially serious do not hesitate to call an ambulance. The ambulance controller will ask for a postcode and will stay on the 'phone to provide guidance.

## 3. Welcome

Be prepared to help hand out service sheets etc. if necessary. Also to welcome and direct people if welcomers are busy. Welcome arrivals after the welcomers sit down. Direct and assist people to vacant chairs/ pews.

Keep an eye open for non-regulars and welcome them. There are new "Welcome" postcards on the side by the entrance.

Keep an eye out for and assist with things such as parents with small children who may prefer the sofa or crèche; anyone who is causing a disturbance.

## 4. Crowd control

Make sure the entrance doors (to the street) have been shut before the children leave for their groups. Fix open both the doors to each of the Parish Centre and the Church for the rush of children to their groups. Close the doors afterwards.

## 5. Heat

Keep the main doors open in summer. In the winter, keep all the doors – main Church doors, flower/coffee vestry, Parish Centre - closed as much as possible as otherwise the heat will rapidly disappear! There are local electric heating controls for the Link and the door area inside the Church. If the heating switches off' early, open the cupboard door next to the Church kitchen and switch on the four timers for the number of minutes needed.

## 6. Security

Glance regularly towards the Parish Centre to ensure security of the premises. We have a policy not to give money to people who beg – stating this policy firmly puts a limit on the conversation. But a cup of coffee can be offered, and sometimes there are other specific needs that can be met.

During the service, be aware of anyone coming into church.

## **7. Numbers**

Whenever it is easiest for you to discreetly:

- Count the number of children who go to the groups or remain in Church (for this purpose, adults are 16 and above).
- Count the number of adults in the congregation and in the Parish Centre with the children.
- Note the number of adult communicants.
- Note the number of child communicants.
- Do your sums and note in the red book.

## **8. Offertory**

If the congregation is particularly large or the offertory hymn is short, enlist help for the far side (near sound desk). Be ready to pass the offertory bags or plates as soon as the relevant hymn begins. Take the offertory forward where it will be left on the altar for the person counting money to collect.

## **9. Communion**

If the congregation is particularly large enlist help for the far side before the service starts. When the Eucharistic Prayers begin let *all* the children's group leaders know where the service has got to. They need time to finish what the group is doing or to prepare for parents to collect their children.

Everyone seems to have their own order for directing people up for communion. Generally, it seems helpful to work from the back forwards and to make yourself 'visible' so that people realise what you are doing: trying to keep an orderly flow of communicants moving forward. Sometimes it is necessary to hold back a group of youngsters, e.g. when several older people are about to go forward, or to direct them to the far side if things get crowded or lop-sided.

Keep an eye out for elderly or disabled people, check if they would like to receive communion where they are sitting. Take communion last and make sure the celebrant is aware of such members.

## **10. After the service**

Ensure the creche, children's and youth groups know the service has ended by going and making eye contact with the person leading the group, not one of the children or young people. When it's Communion, ensure the groups are down in good time for the distribution.

Have a quick tidy up after the service, especially discarded service sheets and re-positioning chairs.

Keep an eye out for whether the collection counter has arrived – if not, ask another person on the counting rota to count the collection with you and secure the collection in the safe in the office safe.

Check that someone is on lock up duty before departing.

# **Thank you!**