

St Peter's RC Church Edinburgh

Welcoming and Passkeeping

Volunteering role

The Welcome Team, comprising two passkeepers and two “welcomers”, undertake their duties at Sunday Masses and other major services. The head passkeeper is responsible for overseeing the work of the Welcome Team and reports to the Parish Priest. Other passkeepers assist during services as necessary, for example in taking up the Offertory collection.

The Welcome Team should arrive a half hour before Mass starts to make preparations and remain afterwards for 10-15 minutes to clear up.

Before Mass, the “welcomers” are required to:

- offer a friendly greeting to those arriving for the service
- give appropriate advice to visitors to the parish
- distribute hymn books, Mass books and music sheets
- distribute copies of the weekly parish newsletter
- offer a Parish Directory and Welcome leaflet to newcomers to the parish

Before Mass, the passkeepers are required to:

- prepare hymn books, Mass books and any additional music sheets for distribution
- reserve seats at the front of church on appropriate occasions, such as baptisms, family masses etc
- prepare for distribution of Holy Communion in the middle of church by: removing kneelers from one row of pews on each side of church; and placing reserved signs at each end of the vacated pews
- put out additional seating when required
- give appropriate advice to visitors to the parish
- offer a Parish Directory and Welcome leaflet to newcomers to the parish
- ensure that two more passkeepers are available to take the Offertory collection
- ensure that a chalice and wine decanter are in place for the Offertory Procession
- identify 3-4 parishioners for the Offertory Procession
- ensure a clear passage for the priest and altar servers in procession to the altar.

During Mass, the passkeepers should undertake the following, as necessary:

- ensure a clear passage to Parish Room for children and leaders for Children's Liturgy
- show those arriving late to spaces in the pews
- alert Children's Liturgy leaders to return to Church for the Offertory Procession
- take up the Offertory collection, bringing baskets to the back of Church
- arrange Offertory Procession: bearers of collection, chalice, ciborium and children
- ensure a clear passage for Eucharistic Ministers taking Holy Communion to the middle of church for distribution
- take second or retiral collections as arranged.

At the end of Mass, the passkeepers are responsible for carrying out the following:

- opening the double doors from Church to the vestibule, and to the courtyard
- ensuring a clear passage for the priest and altar servers in procession from the altar
- collecting hymn books, Mass books and additional music sheets from those leaving Church
- collecting books, music sheets, newsletters, personal property etc left in pews
- return hymn books and music sheets to storage under the arches at back of Church
- leave found personal property in a prominent place
- bag proceeds of Offertory and other collections in the Sacristy
- restoring the kneelers removed before mass

Additional matters which may need attention

Four children selected by the Children's Liturgy Group form the Offertory Procession on the first Sunday of the month.

Passkeepers should watch for elderly or disabled people unable to reach the altar for Communion, and should offer to have Holy Communion to be brought their place.

In case of illness, passkeepers should be prepared to summon medical staff from among the congregation- details of nominated first-aiders are posted at the back of church - and to summon the emergency services, if necessary. Cold drinks from the parish room kitchen can be offered to those who are unwell, and seats in the parish room and the courtyard.

Parents embarrassed by their noisy small children should be reassured that they are most welcome in St Peter's. If it seems appropriate, they should be offered places in the side chapel at the front left of church or seats at the rear of church behind the pews. Parents who need to feed or change small children can do so in privacy in the larger toilet cubicle which has a suitable table.

The Welcome Team are required to participate in an annual simulated emergency evacuation of the church premises. Detailed instructions have been issued for this purpose.

Other services

Arrangements for weekday Masses are made on the day by those who regularly attend these services. In addition, special arrangements are made in advance by the parish priest and the head passkeeper for other services, such as funerals, Midnight Mass and the Easter Triduum. The duties set out above for Sunday Mass generally apply to other services.

Contact:

John Wastle 447 3442 wastles@btinternet.com

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