

# Usher Signals

Ushers perform a central ministry in churches of all denominations.

They welcome, seat and assist congregants, helping to create an environment conducive to worship. Often following in the footsteps of their parents, ushers are guided by Psalm 84:10:

*I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,  
than to dwell in the tents of wickedness*

Many ushers communicate during services using a sequence of hand signals called the “National Silent Uniform System.” Devised by George T. Grier in the 1940s, these signals have gradually evolved. And they are still taught to hundreds of volunteers each year by the National United Church Ushers Association of America, which, this week, holds its 95th convention. Below are the (simplified) central elements of some of the N.U.C.U.A.A. hand signals.

## SERVICE POSITION

*This “mark of distinction” is adopted by ushers upon entering the sanctuary. It is the default ushering position from which other signals start.*





### GREETING SIGNAL

*Visitors are welcomed with a warm smile and an open hand.*



### ATTENTION SIGNAL

*This alerts other ushers that a signal is about to be communicated.*



### PRAYER POSITION



### USHERS TO TAKE THEIR STATIONS





### AISLE USHER SIGNS

*Aisle ushers sign requests to the usher in charge:*



*Relief*



*Programs*



*Envelopes*



*Fans*

### DOORKEEPER SIGNS

*Bending an arm through the partially closed door, the doorkeeper signals why those outside must wait before entering the sanctuary:*

*Prayer*



*Scripture*



*Other*



### AVAILABLE SEATS

*The usher in charge asks all the aisle ushers*

*to signal how many free seats they have:*



*The aisle ushers respond with the number:*



### **DISTRESS SIGNAL**

*Used to signal a problem.*



## COMMENCE THE OFFERING

*The usher in charge signals the offering with  
a nod and a slight spreading of the hands.*



With thanks to Filmore F. Gregory, Immediate Past National President, N.U.C.U.A.A., and Lillie A. Grant, New York State Chairman, George T. Grier School of Ushering.

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