



ST AGNES
LONGSIGHT



Sidespeople: a ministry of welcome

Information for Sidespeople

A Sidesperson is...

A lay person who assists the churchwardens in their work - notably by welcoming people at the church door and by taking the collection during the service.

Key points...

1. As a welcomer you are probably the first person a worshipper sees when they enter. Remember that you are representing the welcome of the whole Church - not just to visitors, but to your friends and regular parishioners
2. Make sure the books are set out correctly - check with the choir or organist that you have the right hymn books. Large print service books are always available in the same box as the other booklets for those who need them. Make sure they are on display in case anybody wants to ask for a copy.
3. Be aware of those struggling to get through the doors - either because they are carrying lots of things or because they have pushchairs, children etc. The doors make a loud noise if left to bang shut! Please hold doors for people - especially after the service has begun. In summer it is often best to leave the doors open on the catch
4. Help people to find a seat if necessary - especially if they are arriving late. Guide people to the front or to empty seats.

5. As Sidespeople you are often the first point of call for people needing things. This may range from pointing people to the toilets, helping children find Junior Church, showing younger children toy bags or books etc, or more serious Health & safety matters.
6. Please remember there is
 - a torch inside the book cupboard
 - a first aid box in the kitchen and in the vestry
7. Be aware of the location of the fire extinguishers and read the instructions on which extinguisher to use on which sort of fire
8. At large gatherings (100 plus people) it is necessary to unlock the other entrances. The key to both the kitchen door and the St Agnes Road entrance are in the vestry. These should be opened as emergency exits.
9. Counting. This is a vital task as it has an affect on our statistics and ultimately on the Parish Share! please count as accurately as possible - two figures are needed: under 16's and over 16's. If you can, try to take another count later in the service when everyone is seated. After Communion during the notices is a good time - when Junior Church and others are gathered together

10. Communion. It is the sideperson's duty to guide the congregation to communion. This requires sensitivity so as not to rush anyone but without causing a delay in the queue. At the same time please be aware for the need of as few words as possible in directing people.
11. Newcomers. Although it may seem obvious, please remember to make new comers especially welcome by inviting them to stay for tea or coffee after the service, or giving them a free copy of the parish magazine etc. It may be appropriate to introduce them to another congregation member or to the parish priest. Always try to start a conversation and take an interest in them. But remember that many people feel overwhelmed when they come to a church for the first time. Try not to swamp people with your welcome - always make space for them to feel at ease.
12. Be generous in your welcome - remember you are welcoming people into the house of God.
13. Be confident in your welcome - you have an important Ministry of Welcome, entrusted to you by the whole parish.
14. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13. 2)