



*Welcome
to the Catholic Parish
of the Wairarapa*



**'A community living and sharing the Good News of
Jesus Christ.'**

GUIDELINES MINISTERS OF WELCOME

History

The ministry of greeters and ushers in the Catholic Church has developed over time, originating from the early Christian practices of hospitality and community. In the early Church, gatherings were often informal and focused on fostering a sense of belonging and fellowship within the Christian community.

As the Church grew, the need for order and organisation during liturgical celebrations became apparent, leading to the establishment of more formal roles.

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) encouraged greater laity involvement in Church activities, contributing to the recognition of greeters and ushers as vital ministries that foster hospitality and inclusiveness within the parish community.

USHERS

The role of ushers can be traced back to the Middle Ages when they began to assist in managing the congregation, directing the flow of people and ensuring proper decorum during Mass. Ushers often helped in the collection of offerings and provided guidance to attendees, particularly in larger congregations. They were essential in maintaining a respectful and reverent environment throughout the liturgy.

GREETERS

The role of greeters is more modern, developing significantly in the post-19th century as churches began to place greater emphasis on welcoming visitors and fostering community engagement. Greeters are tasked with making newcomers feel welcome, providing information about the parish and enhancing parishioner fellowship.

Today, the ministries of greeters and ushers continue to be essential in many parishes, promoting a welcoming environment and ensuring the smooth conduct of liturgical celebrations. These roles reflect the Church's commitment to hospitality, community building, and the encouragement of active participation in the life of the Church.

Responsibilities of Ministers of Welcome

BEFORE MASS

- Come 30 minutes before the Mass.
- Collect the newsletters, which are usually kept in the sacristy, and place them at the table in the foyer.
- While waiting for parishioners to come, check the noticeboard for old and irrelevant notices. Take them down and replace them with new ones if there are any. The new ones usually come with the newsletters.
- Stand near the glass doors and greet people as they come in and hand the newsletter.
- If faces do not look familiar, they may be visitor or new parishioners. Courteously identify if they are new parishioners. If they are new parishioners, please see the instructions below for new parishioners.

NEW PARISHIONERS

After identifying new parishioners:

- Give them a pamphlet with a form (available in the foyer).
- Ask them to fill out the form (pens are available in the kitchen cupboard).
- Direct them to place the completed form in the suggestion box.
- Also write their names in the notebook in the kitchen cupboard.
- If you are able to, please also:
 - engage them in conversation;
 - introduce them to the people seated around them;
 - introduce them to the priest.

RETURNING ABSENT PARISHIONERS

Either long-term or short-term

- At each mass, view the congregation to note whether anyone is missing.
- Confirm their absence with parishioners seated in the same area.

- Try to establish whether anyone has known where they may be.
- Record anything you can find out in the notebook in the kitchen cupboard.
- Pass information onto Visitation and Phone Ministry coordinators to establish any way to reach out and contact them.
- Visitation/Phone Ministry Coordinator makes contact following the Visitation Ministers Guide.

WELCOME MINISTRY MINISTERS GUIDE

NEW PARISHIONERS

- Contact new parishioner by phone
- Introduce yourself.
- Welcome them to the parish.
- If possible, make a time to visit.
- Advise the coordinator of date contacted and day planned for visit.
- Collect a welcome pack and make sure all of the following contents are present:
 - a suitable gift;
 - the parish booklet;
 - the current newsletter;
 - an automatic payment form;
 - community ministries information.

WHEN VISITING

- Be aware of Covid restrictions.
- Arrive on time.
- Introduce yourself and welcome them to parish family.
- Deliver the welcome pack and explain its contents.
- Advise them that an envelope system for donations is no longer used and that automatic payments are encouraged.

- If they want to sign up for automatic payments, they will receive a call from a Finance Committee member to advise on filling out the automatic payment form, which can be tricky.
- Once filled out, the form can be placed in the Suggestions Box in the church foyer.
- Briefly go over the Community Information and explain how the Community Line works.
- Make friendly conversation but use the opportunity to establish:
 - previous parish involvement;
 - any obvious needs;
 - ask if they would like a visit from the priest; and
 - ask if they would like to be presented at Mass.
- Don't overstay your welcome.
- After the visit record all information in your notebook.
- Pass information in notebook on to the visitation and phone ministry coordinator.

FOLLOW-UP

- After about two weeks make phone contact:
 - check everything is okay;
 - anything else we can do; and
 - advise the visitation and phone ministry coordinator of date and result of follow-up call.

WELCOME MINISTRY COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

NEW PARISHIONERS

- Collect new parishioners' contact details from the office.
- Arrange for a minister to visit them and pass all necessary information on to the minister.
- Make up a pack including:
 - a suitable gift;
 - the parish booklet;
 - the current newsletter;
 - an automatic payment form;
 - the community information.
- Enter the date contacted and date of visit on the New Parishioner Record form.
- Enter date of follow-up on the New Parishioner Record form.
- Take action on any problems identified by minister's follow-up call and record in the Comments section of the New Parishioner Record form.