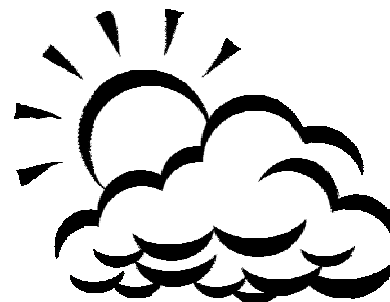


**2010 Meeting and Special Activities Schedule  
Rising Sun Usher Federation**



**The Revitalized  
Rising Sun Usher  
Federation**

*Serving Northwest  
Mississippi*

**Pastor Bernard Montgomery, President**

Jan 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

January 30  
Oak Grove  
2:30 p.m.

Jul 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 6

Faith Community Nurse/Lay  
Health Advocate Training  
Graduation at NWCC-  
Senatobia Campus  
Morning

Aug 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Feb 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

April 24

Second Baptist-Hernando  
2:30 p.m.

Sep 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Mar 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

May 23

Global Day of Prayer  
Desoto Civic Center  
6:00 p.m.

Oct 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Apr 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

July 19-23

Hammond Hill Congress  
Nightly

Nov 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

May 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August 7

St. Paul  
2:30 p.m.

Dec 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Jun 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 9

Healthy Congregations  
Conference & Annual Session  
Desoto Civic Center  
8:00 am – 3:30 p.m.

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# *2010 Usher Ministry Guide*

*Let's Do It Again in 2010!*

**Dr. Michael O. Minor, Editor**  
***Tenth Anniversary Edition***

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## **Usher Ministries – 2010 Call to Service**

Greetings in the name of our Risen Savior fellow ushers and health and wellness champions!

We thank God for ten years of the Federation *Usher Ministry Guide!* The first guide in 2001 had only 17 pages and was 8 ½ by 11. There were no sections on health and wellness but it was filled with very practical useable information for our different usher ministries. This 2010 tenth edition is 28 pages in a compact size packed full of helpful ministry tips including extended sections on health and wellness and spiritual enrichment. The Federation was honored last year to have our guide serve as the basis for the Healthy Congregations Faith Community Health Guide.

This Tenth Edition continues our current emphasis on expanding our health and wellness activities. Our general theme is "Let's Do It Again in 2010!" We did a lot last year. So, it will be our goal to, at the very least, match last year's effort. However, we know we will continue to do more this year than the previous year not necessarily in the quantity of our activities but in the quality of our efforts.

We should focus on being "U.S.H.E.R.S." in 2010. That is a call for us to have Unity, be Servants, be Humble, be Excellent, Rejoice, and, of course, be Saved! Remember we have drawing/driving power. An usher can serve as a representative for Christ, either drawing people to Him or driving them away. We must continue to be faithful. Can the other ushers count on us? Despite world circumstances, we must continue to be joy-filled. Joy is not dependent on outward circumstances but an inward relationship with the Lord.

In all we do, let's continue to strive to be the *best-trained ushers in North Mississippi, highly motivated, and most of all ushers that are in touch with the Lord!*

Yours for the cause of Christ,



Michael O. Minor, EdD  
Editor

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Hernando, MS 38632

mom@midsouthchurches.org

www.midsouthchurches.org/rising\_sun\_usher\_federation

### **6. What is the signal from the floor ushers to the pastor for distress such as a fire?**

The floor Ushers turn to the pulpit and brush both hands backward over the sides of their head. The pastor would then give the appropriate instructions.

### **7. What is the signal from the Usher in the aisle to the Usher in charge to request bulletins or other literature needed?**

The aisle Usher places the first two fingers of his/her right hand straight across the breast.

### **8. What is the signal from the Usher in the aisle or side wall that allows the Usher in charge to know that offering envelopes are needed?**

The aisle Usher places the first three fingers of his/her right hand straight across his/her breast.

### **9. What is the signal from the front Usher, which informs the Usher in the rear of the sanctuary to seat a visitor?**

The front Usher extends his/her hand politely while keeping the elbows close to the body.

### **10. What is the signal from the Usher in the aisle or on the side wall which informs the Usher in charge to send relief at once?**

The aisle Usher gets the attention of the Usher in charge and then places the first finger of his/her right hand straight across the breast.

### **11. What is the signal from the Usher in charge, which says to the Ushers who are serving that they should exit their assigned areas?**

The Usher in charge will take the fingers of his/her left hand and make a quick brush across the forehead to the right.

## Signs Commonly Used in Worship (Revised 1/2008)

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**1. What is the signal from an Usher to get the attention of another Usher before a signal of request is made?**

The Usher presses together the fingers of his/her right hand together at the base of his/her neck.

**2. What is the signal from the Usher in charge, which informs other Ushers when they are to go on the floor?**

The Usher in charge will take the fingers of his/her right hand and brush his/her forehead to the left.

**3. What is the signal from the Usher in the aisle or at the side wall which informs the Usher in charge that seats are available?**

The aisle Usher raises his/her right hand to the level of his/her face and extends the palm of the right hand out if there are more than three seats. Otherwise, the Usher designates the number of seats, which are available by using the fingers. If no seats are available, the Usher raises his/her right hand with a closed fist.

**4. What is the signal from the Usher in the aisle or on the side wall to the Usher in charge which allows him or her to know that they are to send a message?**

The aisle Usher holds up the first four fingers of his/her hand to the level of the face until the attention of the Usher in charge has been obtained. The Usher who is to send the message should then deliver it to the person who is to receive it. Messages on paper are permissible from each Usher until it reaches the person who is to receive the message.

**5. What is the signal from the Usher in the aisle or on the side wall which alerts the Usher in charge that he or she should send someone to help in time of distress?**

The aisle Usher places his/her right hand at the upper chest area and does not remove it until someone comes to where he/she is standing.

# 2010 Usher Guide

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### Abbreviations:

NIV – New International Version

KJV – King James Version

NKJV – New King James Version

## **Ushers: Our Biblical Foundations and Sanctuary Security**

The Biblical foundations of the usher are revealed in the service of the “*gatekeepers and doorkeepers*” as described in the Old Testament:

Jeremiah 35.4, NIV, “*I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the room of the sons of Hanan son of Igdahiah the man of God. It was next to the room of the officials, which was over that of Maaseiah son of Shallum the doorkeeper.*”

2 Kings 22.4, NIV, “*Go up to Hilkiah the high priest and have him get ready the money that has been brought into the temple of the LORD, which the doorkeepers have collected from the people.*”

2 Chronicles 9.19, 26, NIV, “*Shallum son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his fellow gatekeepers from his family (the Korahites) were responsible for guarding the thresholds of the Tent just as their fathers had been responsible for guarding the entrance to the dwelling of the LORD...But the four principal gatekeepers, who were Levites, were entrusted with the responsibility for the rooms and treasuries in the house of God.*”

(Sources: Evangelical Commentary on the Bible – Walter A. Elwell and A Guide for the Church Usher –Thomas L. Clark)

Gatekeepers refer to involvement in the protection of the premises and management of resources. This is ironic considering the recent addition of unarmed and armed security by many churches across the country. Security has always been a concern for the House of God. Even more so today, assaults in the church are on the rise; what was once considered a safe-haven has at times become a place where some have come to cause havoc.

How would your church handle a *physical* attack towards your pastor or fellow member? Is your ministry prepared to *effectively* handle an aggressive or hostile person? Ushers (or security ministry) provide a safe place to worship removing fear from the minds of the members and visitors who attend. They provide physical security of the building and its contents working with local law enforcement agencies to prevent crime and protect financial assets of the church. They often provide protection and security for the pastor both at home and on the road.

Article 9. This Federation shall represent in the North Mississippi Baptist Education Convention as a permanent body with whatever the body deems best.

Article 10. Any church may become a member of the Federation. Faithfully submitted by your Constitution Committee on this day, Saturday, February 14, 1998, at Second Eudora Baptist Church, Eudora, Mississippi

Pastor Michael O. Minor, Chairperson  
Sister Joanne Wright, Secretary  
Minister Emma Hardiman

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### **Brief History**

The Rising Sun Usher Federation was originally founded in 1944 at the Rising Sun Baptist Church, Pastor C. C. Cathey, by Pastor R. L. Jones and Sister Vernice Williams. The purpose of the Federation was to foster the Kingdom of Christ on earth and to train young people. Pastor T. H. Hibler was chosen as the first president and provided dynamic leadership for the first nine years of the Federation. The Federation lay dormant for a number of years until 1997.

- April 19, 1997: Pastor Minor looks through the *North Mississippi Baptist Education 1992 History Book* and takes an interest.
- April 20, 1997: While eating dinner Pastor Minor, speaks with his mother-in-law Earnestine Bennett, former secretary, about the Usher Federation.
- May 26, 1997: Pastor Minor and Pastor Montgomery discuss the possibility of re-constituting the Federation.
- February 14, 1998: At Second Eudora, the constitution was adopted and officers elected: President – Pastor Bernard Montgomery; Vice – President – Vacant; Secretary – Sis. Joanne Wright; Lady Chief – Sis. Pearl Wilson; Man Chief – Vacant; and Education Department Chair - Pastor Michael O. Minor.
- May 9, 1998: First official meeting at St. Mary. Pastor Curtis White, Second Eudora delivered the first message
- November 8, 1998: Pastor Montgomery's first annual address
- April 24, 1999: First Federation-wide call for churches to sponsor an annual health fair
- January 27, 2001: First Federation *Usher Guide* published
- April 20, 2001: First Health and Wellness only educational period
- April 27, 2002: First Federation-wide health observance calendar distributed
- January 25, 2003: First Federation *Usher Guide* including expanded health and wellness information published

## Report of the Constitution Committee

*Brother President, we your committee on the constitution wish to make the following report. We present the following document as the working constitution for the Rising Sun Usher Federation.*

### Constitution

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Article 1. Resolve that this Federation be known as the Northwest Mississippi Usher's Federation of Rising Sun, commonly known as the Rising Sun Usher Federation.

Article 2. The object of this federation shall be to foster the Kingdom of Christ on earth and to train the young people.

Article 3. The officers of the federation shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, and Treasurer, Chaplain, Man Chief, and Lady Chief. All officers shall be elected annually by a majority of the body present on the day of the election.

Article 4. It shall be the duty of the President to preside through the session of the Federation, but in his absence or at his request the Vice President may preside. The president shall appoint standing committees as needed.

Article 5. This Federation shall not adopt rules and regulations that infringe upon the rights of churches, but the constitution together with its by-laws and amendments will constitute the rule of government for this Federation.

Article 6. (a) The officers of this Federation shall constitute the Board of Control and shall be paid annually. Salaries shall be set annually by the body.

(b) This Federation shall hold its rally between each session of the Federation. Each Board shall represent with \$25.00, or whatever it is financially able to do, and the money raised in each rally shall be used for ways and means.

Article 7. (a) The Federation shall have three regular meetings and one annual session each year at whatever church and time chosen by the body, except that the annual meeting of this Federation shall be held on the last Saturday in October.

(b) Resolve that each Usher register with \$3.00.

Article 8. This constitution may be altered or amended at any annual meeting with two-thirds of the members present with proper notice.

## Ushers: Worship Directors

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Ushers are "worship directors." They keep order ensuring worship runs smoothly. We greet worshipers before and after worship with a smile.

1. Ushers should position themselves at their stations making sure there is *always* someone at the sanctuary door.
2. Attend to the needs of the pastor.
  - a. Make sure there are fresh beverages (at the temperature the pastor desires) and the candy dish is full in the pulpit.
  - b. Make sure the pastor has a program/bulletin.
  - c. Ushers should escort in the pastor and the choir.
  - d. Find out what visiting speakers prefer to drink if possible.
3. Seat worshipers during worship.
  - a. Seat worshipers as near the front of the church as possible, back seats can then be filled with late comers. (However, if worshipers insist on sitting in certain places, let them be). Approach worshipers by saying, "May I show you to a seat?"
  - b. When having special worship services, always be aware of all available seats.
  - c. Distribute church programs/bulletins, hymnals, bibles, visitors' cards, and any other materials in connection with worship.
  - d. Be aware of worshipers arriving.
  - e. Do not allow worshipers to enter the church sanctuary during scripture reading, prayer, offering, and invitation to Christian Discipleship. Doors to the sanctuary should also be closed during these times. Politely ask worshipers to wait at the entrance.
  - f. Help the elderly, disabled, and parents with children.
  - g. Be alert to the worshipers; be ready to pass out fans, tissue, and donation envelopes.
4. Ushers will assist as needed during offering times.
5. Ushers should return to their stations during the Invitation to Christian Discipleship.
6. On the first Sunday, Ushers will assist during the Holy Communion by collecting the empty communion containers.
7. Ushers should clear the sanctuary after service.
  - a. Remove refreshment containers (glasses) and wash them.
  - b. Pick up any bibles, hymnals and fans, and return to appropriate place.
  - c. Check the sanctuary and remove anything that may have been left behind.

## For New Ushers: Usher Ministry Basics

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### What Are They About?

Ushers are to be representatives of Christ and of your church. They are the first persons that people meet when they come to church. Their job is to make all feel welcome, wanted, valued, and special. People who are called to this ministry have a positive, loving, and welcoming attitude, *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord...it is the Lord Christ you are serving"* (Colossians 3.23-24).

### What Do They Do?

Ushers provide the logistical services that allow worship to run smoothly and attend to the myriad details that are part and parcel of large gatherings. They welcome people into the church and escort them to a pew as required. During worship, they are available to handle accidents or emergencies. They also greet as many people as they can before and after worship. When overflow crowds or unexpected disturbances make the job hard to do, they just take a breath and know that everything will work out. The unpardonable sin of a church usher is inattention. Signals and communications are missed, people's needs are ignored, and the quality of an ushers' effectiveness drops to zero when their attention wanders. *Be ye always ready!*

### What Are Their Responsibilities?

Must Do:

1. Ushers should gather together before service for prayer.
2. Ushers should be properly dressed with a badge and gloves.
3. Ushers should attend meetings or let an officer know if they are unable to attend.
4. Ushers should call an officer at least two to three days in advance if unable to usher on assigned Sunday to allow enough time to find a replacement.

Don't Do:

1. Ushers should not eat or chew gum while on duty.
2. Ushers should not engage in casual conversation inside the Church. (If something has to be said, speak discretely and quietly. If something is really important and needs to be discussed, leave the sanctuary.)
3. Ushers should not stroll up and down the aisle unnecessarily during worship.
4. Ushers should never seat a worshiper by waving their hands.

## Annual Ushers' Day (con't.)

### V. Bearing Burdens

The congregation celebrates its usher ministry on Ushers' Day because the usher ministry, in its care of the church's worshippers, offerings and the physical church, celebrates the congregation all year long. Ushers are there through shouts of joy, moans of disappointment, and groans of grief. Throughout the year, ushers bear the burdens of the people.

I often wonder how, week after week and year after year, our ushers are able to bear what they bear. For example, funerals of babies, beloved elderly members and pastors, and the funerals of Emit Till, the four little girls who were murdered during the Birmingham church bombing, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

During these stressful times, ushers are required to forget their own feelings and needs, because the needs of the people are so great. They are required to put on the "service mask" and wear a stiff upper lip. Somehow, they manage to transcend self to provide *agape* love for others—gifts of love for those who most need it. What strong spiritual immune systems!

### VI. Moments of Hilarity

Stress does not always color the usher's work. There can be genuine moments of hilarity while ushers are at their posts...Recently, I had a meeting with an African American minister of music who reminisced about the times when he was a young musician and saw wigs flying across pews and isles when members of the congregation were overcome with joy. With a wide smile, he said, "But everything that happened in the Baptist church stayed in the Baptist church."

### VII. Songs for Usher's Day

There are staple songs in the African American church for any Usher's Day celebration. Three of the most noted are "Walking Up the King's Highway," "When the Saints Go Marching In," and "Till We Gather Again." Other staples include "We are Soldiers" and "In the Army of Lord." Make your Ushers' Day worship 2010 spiritually uplifting; to God be the glory!

Source: Ralph Wheeler (2009). (Excerpts from) Usher's Annual Day (2009). Retrieved from [http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/PDF/UshersDay\\_CR\\_June0709.pdf](http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/PDF/UshersDay_CR_June0709.pdf).

### ***Annual Ushers' Day (con't.)***

In addition, some usher ministries also use their annual day to make special contributions in the name of deceased ushers, to support special church projects, and to support their church's scholarship fund for college students.

#### **IV. The Grand March**

One of the highlights of Usher's Day is the Grand March. All ushers, including the host ushers, participate in the grand march of the ushers. Those churches with children and youth usher ministries add a youthful energy to the procession.

The nurse's ministry is also a special attraction. Modernly nurse's ministries have become part of usher ministries and, most often, are present to assist persons who experience illnesses during a worship service and, in some churches, to aid in the needs of the pulpit. The nurses can often be seen in white uniforms, with hats and, in some cases, with capes.

The Grand March is a time that the congregation eagerly awaits. Prodded by the organist playing one of the great marching songs of the church, the ushers line up in the back of the church and begin their march around the entire inner confines of the sanctuary, leaving their love gift on the collection table. In almost every church, one waits to see the ushers "cut the corners." Cutting the corners refers to sharp, precision-like turns made by ushers as they march around the entire church. The turns bring to mind a battalion of soldiers quickly turning from one formation to another or a marching band doing the same. Ushers of the host church march last. It is a time of high celebration.

When they get to the front of the church, the ushers, to the delight of the audience, move into an almost syncopated genuflecting movement, as they cut the corners during their grand march. By now, the crowd is on its feet, applauding the ushers on their day.

Over the years, I have seen older female ushers wearing three to four inch high heels and crisp uniforms participating in the grand usher march. I have also seen disabled ushers, some in wheel-chairs, participating in the grand usher march. They marched, while singing along with the congregation and their fellow ushers as if they had the energy of teenagers. This was done after many of them had stood at their posts for several hours, in perfect formation, throughout the Ushers' Day worship service.

### **Health and Healing Are from God**

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Christians know that health and healing are from God, "*who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases*" (Psalm 103.3). We wait patiently and hopefully for healing, which may come through cure or in reconciliation with God, our neighbor, and our own selves, even without cure. Sometimes reconciliation with God or the neighbor may be a prelude to physical healing: "*Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed*" (James 5.16). Such healing may not result in complete health, but it reflects God's goodness and mercy and anticipates the full healing of life and the peace that is to come.

Accepting health care as a shared endeavor requires commitment of all people to the well-being of their neighbor and themselves. It also requires the commitment of all to work for change in a political, economic, and cultural environment that often is more adversarial than cooperative. The Church is a community that, through Word and worship and the actions of its faithful, can bear witness to the commitments of love and justice that change will require.

The Gospel offers the world the hope of abundant and everlasting life that liberates us from idolatry of health and fear of death. Out of this freedom, Christians can accept the limits of this life and seek to realize a vision of health care for all people as a shared endeavor.

Source: The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (n.d.). What Is Congregational Health Ministries?

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Mark 1.34, NKJV, "*Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.*"

Mark 3.10-11, NKJV, "*For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, 'You are the Son of God.'*"

Mark 3.14-15, NKJV, "*Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons...*"

Mark 5.34, NKJV, "*And He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.'*"

## About Healthy People 2010/2020

**Healthy People** provides science-based, 10-year national objectives for promoting health and preventing disease. Since 1979, Healthy People has set and monitored national health objectives to meet a broad range of health needs, encourage collaborations across sectors, guide individuals toward making informed health decisions, and measure the impact of our prevention activity. Currently, Healthy People 2010 is leading the way to achieve increased quality and years of healthy life and the elimination of health disparities. The 2010 Leading Health Indicators are listed below.

- Physical Activity
- Overweight and Obesity
- Tobacco Use
- Substance Abuse
- Responsible Sexual Behavior
- Mental Health
- Injury and Violence
- Environmental Quality
- Immunization
- Access to Health Care

**Healthy People 2020** objectives, listed below, will reflect assessments of major risks to health and wellness, changing public health priorities, and emerging issues related to our nation's health preparedness and prevention.

Access to Health Services	Heart Disease & Stroke
Adolescent Health	HIV
Arthritis, Osteoporosis, & Chronic Back Conditions	Immunization & Infectious Diseases
Blood Disorders & Blood Safety	Injury & Violence Prevention
Cancer	Maternal, Infant & Child Health
Chronic Kidney Diseases	Medical Product Safety
Diabetes	Mental Health & Mental Disorders
Disability & Secondary Conditions	Nutrition & Weight Status
Early & Middle Childhood	Occupational Safety & Health
Educational & Community-Based Programs	Older Adults
Environmental Health	Oral Health
Family Planning	Physical Activity & Fitness
Food Safety	Public Health Infrastructure
Genomics	Quality of Life & Well-Being
Global Health	Respiratory Diseases
Health Communication & Health IT	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
Healthcare-Associated Infections	Social Determinants of Health
Hearing & Other Sensory or Communication Disorders (Ear, Nose Throat, Voice, Speech, & Language)	Substance Abuse
	Tobacco Use

Source: Healthy People. Retrieved from [www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov).

## Annual Ushers' Day (con't.)

Without us fully understanding it, each week Mr. Patton and the other senior ushers were passing the torch—preparing yet another generation for life and service. On the Sundays we ushered, the senior ushers were always there with a hand full of assistance, in case we needed help. They chastised us if it was warranted. They praised us if it was deserved. They helped raise money for our trips. They supported our programs and they supported us.

All of this was part of the senior ushers' service. They had a serious commitment to preparing the next generation of ushers—the next generation of African American leaders. Most of the service performed by them was never seen by the general church on Sunday mornings. In pure usher fashion, most of it was done behind the scenes.

### III. Help Your Sister Ministry

In addition to being a day of celebration and gratitude, **Ushers' Day** is also a major day of fundraising for the African American church. The ushers' fundraising formula is a simple one: help your neighbor and your neighbor will help you. Usher ministries help each other throughout the year. They assist each other with big events such as anniversaries, conventions, and large funerals.

On **Ushers' Day**, usher ministries from many different churches including usher ministries from different denominations are invited to participate in the annual day activities of the host church. On that day, the ushers of the host church do not work. For them, it is a day of rest, except for the grand usher march, which usually comes at the end of the program. Ushers from the invited churches do all of the work that is normally done by the host church ushers. It is not uncommon for usher ministries from five or more guest churches to attend the anniversary service of a sister church.

Each of the invited churches comes with a major donation which is presented during the usher ministry roll call and march. These "gifts of love," depending upon the number of sister churches invited, can, and do often, amount to thousands of dollars. Usually, all of the money, except for expenses, goes into the coffers of the host church. This is repeated year after year. Ushers refer to it as helping the usher ministry of a sister church.



### ***Annual Ushers' Day (con't.)***

Usually, ushers are at their posts for most church services, including all worship services, special programs, celebrations, weddings and funerals. For this reason, the church family, in many churches, set aside a day once each year to celebrate the role and work of its ushers—**Ushers' Day**. At the least, this annual day on the church's liturgical calendar is a statement of gratitude and a formal recognition of the importance of the role of ushers in the African American church.

### **II. Passing the Torch and Lessons of Discipline**

Although I have never served as an adult church usher, I joined the Youth Usher Ministry at my Mississippi home church when I was in junior high school. I remained in the usher ministry through my second year of college. At times, I resented the weekly usher practice—I would often say to myself and my friends, “How many times do we have show our knowledge of these signs, offering collection, and tissue and fan handing?”

Mr. Patton, who was president of the Senior Usher Ministry and also trainer and leader of the youth ushers, constantly reminded us that “practice makes perfect.” He pushed us week after week to learn our usher signs. He also taught us the importance of self-discipline, timeliness and the rules of church decorum.

Mr. Patton and other senior ushers, without seeking reimbursement for gas or food, frequently took us to other churches for usher programs. We were taught how to represent our church, pastor and family at those churches. We were also taught the duty, necessity and purpose of giving to those churches and our own church. In that little usher ministry at the Holy Ghost Missionary Baptist Church, we were taught the meaning of service, and we were given a strong foundation for negotiating life generally.

At the time, I did not fully appreciate these gifts. Later, however, I came to understand that those weekly Youth Usher Ministry meetings were much more than repetitive instruction periods. They were character building periods. They were discipline building periods. They were youth investment periods, where our elders poured pounds of kindness, months of discipline, and years of knowledge and mother wit into us. Our parents sent us to them and trusted them for those purposes and they honored that trust.

### **2010 Monthly Health Observances**

#### **“Let's Do It Again in 2010!”**

**DISCLAIMER: We caution that this ministry does not practice nursing as done in a hospital, doctor's office or nursing home environment. The focus is strictly educational.**

Focusing on specific health issues each month is one way to ensure coverage of a wide range of health topics of interest and concern to your congregation. We had a successful 2009 campaign. *Let's do it again in 2010!* What *should* ministry members do?

- Ask God for guidance and His blessing.
- Gain the blessing of your congregation's leader.
- Follow the monthly guide of health observances.
- Make brochures, handouts, and worship bulletin inserts.
- Make announcements early and often each month.
- Involve other congregation members, neighbors, and co-workers.
- Take pictures; keep a scrapbook.
- CREATE EXCITEMENT!!!

#### **January**

#### **Thyroid Awareness Month**

“Check your neck” to change your life. Some health experts estimate that upwards of 60 million Americans are suffering from thyroid disease, but because thyroid problems can be tricky to recognize and diagnose for patients and doctors, the majority of sufferers are not even diagnosed. In the past year, one of America's most famous celebrities, Oprah Winfrey, even went public about her own thyroid problem and resulting 40-pound weight gain. (Source: <http://www.thyroidawarenessmonth.com>)

#### **National Volunteer Blood Donor Month**

Blood is traditionally in short supply during the winter months due to the holidays, travel schedules, inclement weather and illness. January, in particular, is a difficult month for blood centers to collect blood donations. A reduction in turnout can put our nation's blood inventory at a critical low. Contact Lifeblood at (901) 529-6320 or send an e-mail to [lifeblood@lifeblood.org](mailto:lifeblood@lifeblood.org) to learn more about how you can save lives in our community by donating at a donor center or hosting a blood drive with your congregation.

## **Monthly Health Observances (continued)**

### **February**

#### **National Wear Red Day (NWRD) (Heart Disease and Women)**

1 – Monday: On NWRD, everyone is encouraged to wear something red to bring awareness to the number 1 killer of women – heart disease. (Source: [www.goredforwomen.com](http://www.goredforwomen.com))

#### **National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM)**

The American Dental Association (ADA) sponsors NCDHM to raise awareness about the importance of oral health. E-mail [ncdhm@ada.org](mailto:ncdhm@ada.org) for more information including collateral material.

### **March**

#### **Taste Test Sunday**

14 – Sunday: Prepare appropriate desserts for persons with diabetes. Ask all church members to sample them after worship. Are they able to really tell the difference? Bring copies of the recipes to the April session of the Federation.

#### **National Nutrition Month®**

National Nutrition Month® is a nutrition education and information campaign sponsored annually by the American Dietetic Association. The campaign is designed to focus attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. E-mail [nnm@eatright.org](mailto:nnm@eatright.org) for more information.

### **April**

#### **Counseling Awareness Month**

Counseling Awareness Month is an opportunity to recognize and show appreciation for the counselors and therapists who make a difference in the lives of so many people. You don't have to be "sick" to benefit from counseling. Counseling is much more than a treatment for mental illness. It can help you in dealing with difficult issues from your past. (Source: [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org))

#### **World Health Day (WHD) 2010**

7 - Tuesday: WHD 2010 will focus on urbanization and health. With the campaign "1000 cities - 1000 lives," events will be organized worldwide calling on cities to open up streets for health activities. Stories of urban health champions will be gathered. (Source: <http://www.who.int/world-health-day/2010/en/index.html>)

## **2010 Spiritual Enrichment Section: Annual Ushers' Day in the African American Church by Ralph Wheeler**

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### **I. Introduction and Historical Overview**

The African American church in the United States, as an institution, functions with and is supported by numerous ministries. These working arms of the church enable the body of Christ to carry out its basic missions of spreading the gospel, attending to the needs of the people, and assuring the church's administrative, physical and spiritual components remain in accord with governing Biblical principles and accepted religious beliefs.

Generally, the form of ministries in individual African American churches is determined by the age, denomination, size, location and specific needs of the church body. However, there is one ministry that most modern African American churches have, regardless of their age, denomination, size or location - an usher ministry.

The pulpit, music, and usher ministries of the African American church are often the three most visible ministries of the church. Each has an important servant role in the church's overall ministry. Yet, each plays a different but essential role.

A major part of the public role of the pulpit and music departments is oral service. In contrast, ushers perform most of their public role in the church in silence or through restrained speech. In many respects, the service that church ushers provide in God's house and to God's people is a testament of humbleness and selflessness. Only their service and uniforms speak for them.

Each Sunday, ushers are usually some of the first servants to arrive at the church house. They make sure things are in order and get into their positions to greet members and visitors. During the worship service, ushers safeguard church entrances, aisles, exits, and financial offerings.

So as not to be disruptive, ushers master directional signs; so their work can be done in relative silence. They are the sources of order and decorum, even during the most stressful moments of the church's services and proceedings. Also, they are often the last to leave the sanctuary as they remain after the worship service to retrieve discarded church bulletins and other items that the audience has left on pews and the floor.

## ***Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans (continued)***

### **Older Adults (aged 65 and older)**

- Older adults should follow the adult guidelines. If this is not possible due to limiting chronic conditions, older adults should be as physically active as their abilities allow. They should avoid inactivity. Older adults should do exercises that maintain or improve balance if they are at risk of falling.

For all individuals, some activity is better than none. Physical activity is safe for almost everyone and the health benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks. People without diagnosed chronic conditions (such as diabetes, heart disease, or osteoarthritis) and who do not have symptoms (e.g., chest pain or pressure, dizziness, or joint pain) do not need to consult with a health care provider about physical activity.

### **Adults with Disabilities**

Follow the adult guidelines. If this is not possible, these persons should be as physically active as their abilities allow. They should avoid inactivity.

### **Children and Adolescents with Disabilities**

Work with the child's health care provider to identify the types and amounts of physical activity appropriate for them. When possible, these children should meet the guidelines for children and adolescents—or as much activity as their condition allows. Children and adolescents should avoid being inactive.

### **Pregnant and Postpartum Women**

Healthy women who are not already doing vigorous-intensity physical activity should get at least 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week. Preferably, this activity should be spread throughout the week. Women who regularly engage in vigorous-intensity aerobic activity or high amounts of activity can continue their activity provided that their condition remains unchanged and they talk to their health care provider about their activity level throughout their pregnancy.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2008). 2008 Physical Guidelines for Americans. Retrieved from <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/factsheetprof.aspx>.

## ***Monthly Health Observances (continued)***

### **May**

#### **Mothers' Day "Bells for Remembrance": Breast Health Awareness**

10 – Sunday: The Bells for Remembrance Program is a public awareness campaign designed to increase awareness of the importance of good breast health and assure that women are aware of the resources within their community for information, screening, treatment and support. Usher ministries are asked to ring a hand-bell, organ, or chime:

1. once in support of the importance of good breast health: annual mammography, clinical breast exams and monthly breast self-examination;
2. twice in support of those struggling with and surviving breast cancer; and
3. thrice in memory of those who lost their lives to breast cancer and in support of their families and loved ones.

#### **Global Day of Prayer – Sunday, May 23, 6:00 p.m.**

People of faith from all over Northwest Mississippi will participate in a one hour celebration of international unity - praying globally and gathering locally. (Source: [www.gdopusa.com](http://www.gdopusa.com))

#### **National High Blood Pressure Education Month**

About 73 million people in the United States have high blood pressure, which is also called hypertension. High blood pressure increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, the first and third leading causes of death in the United States. (Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/highbloodpressure>)

### **June**

#### **National Scleroderma Awareness Month**

Scleroderma (literally means "hard skin") is a rare connective tissue disorder characterized by abnormal thickening of the skin. Currently, there is no definitive cause for this progressive disease. (Source: [www.scleroderma.org](http://www.scleroderma.org))

#### **National Cancer Survivors Day**

7 – Sunday: National Cancer Survivors Day® is an annual, worldwide Celebration of Life that is held in hundreds of communities throughout the United States, Canada, and other participating countries. Participants unite in a symbolic event to show the world that life after a cancer diagnosis can be a reality. Recognize cancer survivors in your congregation and/or community.

## Monthly Health Observances (continued)

### July

#### **Eye Injury Prevention Month**

The focus is placed on protecting our eyes in various environments, namely the workplace. The best ways to prevent injury to the eye is to always wear the appropriate eye protection. (Source: <http://www.foh.dhhs.gov/public/NYCU/eyeinjury.asp>.)

#### **National Therapeutic Recreation Week**

11-17: The purpose of National Therapeutic Recreation Week is to enhance public awareness of therapeutic recreation programs and services and expand recreation and leisure opportunities for individuals with disabilities. (Source: <http://www.nrpa.org/Content.aspx?id=1041>.)

### August

#### **Cataract Awareness Month**

Cataract is the leading cause of blindness in the world. By age 80, more than half of all Americans will have cataract. (Source: [www.aao.org](http://www.aao.org))

#### **National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM)**

The goal of NIAM is to increase awareness about immunizations across the life span from infants to the elderly. (Source: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines))

### September

#### **Prostate Cancer Awareness Month**

Encourage all men over 50 to take a prostate exam. Prostate cancer is a common, but typically slow growing cancer when compared to other types of cancer. (Source: [www.zerocancer.org](http://www.zerocancer.org))

#### **National Sickle Cell Month**

The observance originated in 1975 to call attention to sickle cell disease and the need to address the problem at national and local levels. (Source: <http://www.sicklecelldisease.org/news/events/month.phtml>)

### October

#### **National Church Safety and Security Month**

Churches are asked to perform a “top down” safety and security inspection of all church facilities and grounds including fire evacuation and tornado drills. With the blessing of your pastor, involve church leaders in contacting your insurance company, local fire department, and law enforcement agency about other tips on safety and security measures. Conduct fire, tornado, and intruder drills.

## Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

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The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans At-A-Glance: A Fact Sheet for Professionals is designed as a quick desk-side reference to the *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These Guidelines are needed because of the importance of physical activity to the health of Americans, whose current inactivity puts them at unnecessary risk. The latest information shows that inactivity among American children, adolescents, and adults remains relatively high, and little progress has been made in increasing levels of physical activity among Americans.

### **Key Guidelines**

Substantial health benefits are gained by doing physical activity according to the Guidelines presented below for different groups.

#### **Children and Adolescents (aged 6–17)**

- Children and adolescents should do 1 hour (60 minutes) or more of physical activity every day.
- Most of the 1 hour or more a day should be either moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity.
- As part of their daily physical activity, children and adolescents should do vigorous-intensity activity on at least 3 days per week. They also should do muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening activity on at least 3 days per week.

#### **Adults (aged 18–64)**

- Adults should do 2 hours and 30 minutes a week of moderate-intensity or 1 hour and 15 minutes (75 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity. Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, preferably spread throughout the week.
- Additional health benefits are provided by increasing to 5 hours (300 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity or 2 hours and 30 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity physical activity or an equivalent combination of both.
- Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups performed on 2 or more days per week.

**Member Churches' Usher Day Schedule**

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- Dean Hill \_\_\_\_\_
- Enon Springs \_\_\_\_\_
- Faith Temple \_\_\_\_\_
- New Bethany \_\_\_\_\_
- New Fellowship \_\_\_\_\_
- Oak Grove \_\_\_\_\_
- Oak Hill \_\_\_\_\_
- Rising Sun \_\_\_\_\_
- St. Paul \_\_\_\_\_
- Second Baptist-Hernando \_\_\_\_\_
- Second Eudora \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes**

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**Monthly Health Observances (continued)**

**October (con't)**

**“Talk about Prescriptions” Month (TAPM)**

TAPM focuses on the fact that better medicine communication between consumers and their healthcare providers is the key to safe and appropriate medicine use and better health. (Source: <http://www.talkaboutrx.org/rxmonth2009.jsp>)

**Healthy Congregations 2010**

3 – Sunday: Health and Wellness Emphasis Worship at Area Churches  
9 -Saturday: Second Annual Healthy Congregations Conference at Desoto Civic Center; Southaven, MS. Go to [www.kidsgetalife.org/faithbasedefforts.htm](http://www.kidsgetalife.org/faithbasedefforts.htm) for more information.

**November**

**American Diabetes Month**

American Diabetes Month® is a time to communicate the seriousness of diabetes and the importance of proper diabetes control including diet and weight. (Source: [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org))

**National Donor Sabbath Weekend (NDSW)**

13-15: NDSW, an annual three day period, raises awareness about the critical need for organ and tissue donors and encourages individuals to register as organ and tissue donors sharing their decision about donation with family members today in order to save lives tomorrow. (Source: <http://donatelifetn.org/cms/Sabbath+Weekend/36.html>)

**National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month (NADAM)**

NADAM promotes national awareness about Alzheimer’s disease and the needs and concerns of family caregivers. (Source: [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org))

**December**

**National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month**

National 3D Prevention Month asks everyone to take a stand against impaired driving by focusing on a Safe Communities approach targeting the 21- to 34-year-old age group, the largest part of the impaired driving problem. (Source: <http://stopimpaireddriving.org>)

**World AIDS Day**

1 – Wednesday: World AIS Day promotes strategies to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. Wear a red ribbon. (Source: [www.worldaidscampaign.org](http://www.worldaidscampaign.org))

## Call to Worship Guide

### **The Usher's Psalm**

The Lord is my light. He is the joy of my salvation, of whom then shall I be afraid.

I am a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord. Yea though I meet with unpleasant conditions, I must keep smiling, for I must enter into His presence with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise.

Yea, though I walk through the shadow of unkindness, I must smile, for the beauty of the Lord is upon me; my countenance is filled with light, the light of love, patience and endurance. I shall strive to give joy to the sorrowful, hope to the lost, sunshine to the darkness, and I shall remain a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord, as long as I live.

### **Church Usher's Prayer**

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, bless O Lord, this your servant as You did bless the sons of Levi who ministered in Your Holy Temple. Grant me devoutly to minister in Your house. Your name be hallowed. Your Kingdom come and Your will be done through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Healthy Living Goal: **Personal Responsibility:** "...do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6.19, NKJV)

### **Usher's Platform**

Preamble: **Doorkeeper:** *"I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."* (Psalm 84.10)

Aim: **Service:** To serve the Lord Jesus, through the service we render to humanity.

Motto: **Ready to serve:** *"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."* (Colossians 3.24)

Watchword: **Study:** *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* (2 Timothy 2.15)

### **Usher's Pledge** (*place right hand over heart*)

I pledge by the help of God to do my best to serve my church with a pure heart, clean hands, and a breath that will not be offensive to those I welcome into the house of the Lord.

I further pledge to abide by the rules and regulations of the ministry and my superior officers; to attend my meetings and serve when called upon, unless I can give a reasonable excuse; and to keep my financial obligations of the ministry as near as possible.