

# Christmas

at the Maryland State Fairgrounds

## 2025 Host Instructions

*These are the mechanics of hosting on Christmas Eve. The most important instruction, however, is to be a reflection of Christ's love for all. You are about to be part of an event that could serve as a spark that lights the fire of faith for those who are lost.*

We are humble servants whose radical hospitality comforts the 99 and clears the path for God to enter the heart of the 1 who is lost.

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### Overview

- The Host Team lead at 3pm Mass is Andrew Mercer.
- The Host Team lead at the 5:15pm Mass is Roger McDonnell.
- 3pm Mass:
  - There are 8 "Section Directors," each with responsibility for 4 sections.
  - Every Section has at least two Host Ministers. All issues and questions should go to the Section Director.
- 5:15pm Mass: There are no Section Directors. One Host per section.
  - Many sections that were open at the 3pm Mass will be cordoned off for the 5:15pm. Some of them will be reopened if more seating is needed.
- Host Team radio channel: 4.
- Emergency channel: 1 ("9-1-1 emergency," location and short description).

### Arrival Time and Procedures on Christmas Eve

- There is free parking in the Kaiser Permanente garage off Greenspring Road next to the Light Rail lot OR, please park in the Minister Parking Area (Timonium Road Entrance) on the right, near the stables. A shuttle will take you to the Cow Palace.
- Please arrive at the Ministry area NO LATER than the following times:
  - 3pm Mass, no later than 1:30pm, to serve until approximately 4:15pm.
  - 5:15pm Mass, no later than 3:45pm, to serve until approximately 6:30pm.
- Once you've arrived, please go to the minister area to pick up your name tag and lanyard and immediately head to your section to check in with your Section Director.

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love **God**. love **others**. make **disciples**.

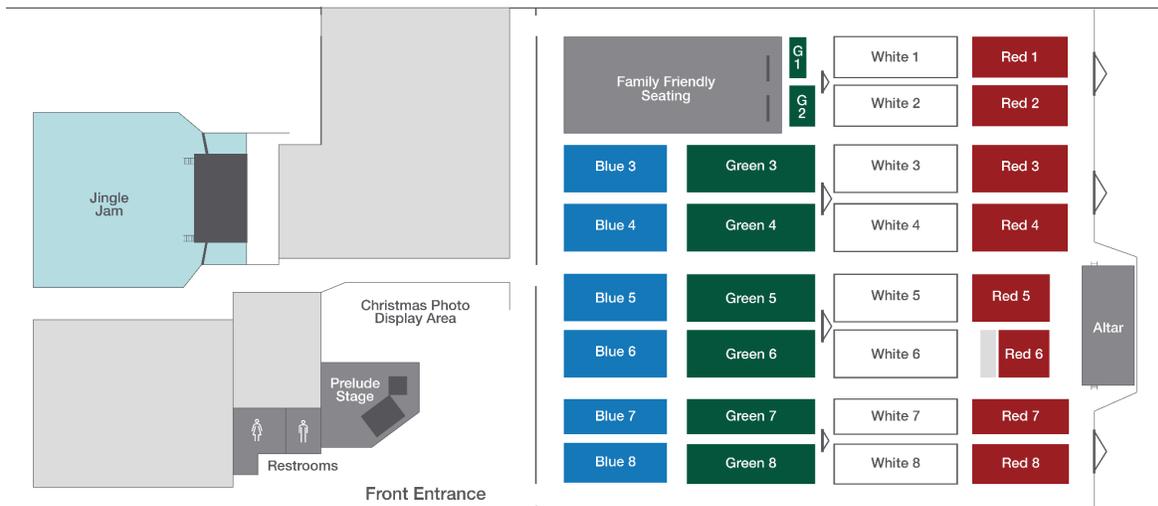
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Please familiarize yourself with the general setup/map of the Fairgrounds/Cow Palace:

- Restrooms
- Accessible Seating – Section Blue 8 will be reserved for guests who need accessible seating and their families
  - o To make room for a wheelchair in any section, cut connectors off the chairs (scissors/wire cutters are in a supply basket under a chair in the back row of each section).
- After you've checked in, confirm which section you'll be hosting, and head to that section. Be sure to find the closest emergency exits near your section.



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### BEFORE MASS BEGINS

*Pray: Please pray over your section before guests arrive, and pray for the guests you will be serving, and that through you, guests may experience Christ's love.*

#### Seating

- Make a personal connection with as many guests as possible.
- Kindly ask guests to close gaps to create open seating.
- It is okay for guests to save seats! In fact, you can help them by making sure they text their section number to their later-arriving guests. Those guests should then ask a Host where to go once they arrive.
- You may reserve a seat for yourself in the back of your section.
- Ministers serving may reserve seats. The signs will be white for the 3pm Mass and green for the 5:15pm Mass.
- 3pm Mass: Inform the Section Director when your section is full, and they will inform the Host Team leads.
- Supply basket: Each section will have one supply basket under a seat in the last row. It contains scissors/wire cutters, small flashlights, lighters, tissues, earplugs, a small plastic trash bag, extra candles, and maps/radio cards.
- Special needs: recognize guests who may have special needs and ask if they would like us to bring them Communion. Use scissors/wire cutters to cut zip ties to chairs at the end of rows to accommodate wheelchairs, and place chairs along the back or a side wall.

#### Jingle Jam

- This is the Christmas Eve version of Time Travelers. It's meant for elementary school children, but kids of any age can attend as long as they understand there's no going back and no bathroom breaks.
- Each section should have two Jingle Jam Guides. They will give each child a glow bracelet with a color that corresponds to the section, and will write the section number on each child's hand. Parents will also be given a card with a QR code so they can quickly give us their contact info in case we need to get a hold of them. The Jingle Jam Guides will lead all children from that section to and from Jingle Jam while the parents stay in their seats for the message. Host Ministers are especially helpful in directing the kids as they depart for Jingle Jam and as they return to their sections after Jingle Jam.

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### AFTER MASS BEGINS

#### Lost Children (or Parents!)

- Be alert for suspicious behavior, and please alert your Section Director or any other member of the staff or a minister who is wearing a radio. Do NOT approach the adult, but keep the adult in your sight from a distance until an officer arrives.
- Parents looking for children; Children looking for parents: please take them to the nearest Section Director. Please do not lead them around the sanctuary. The less they move around the sanctuary without someone who has a radio, the better.

#### Counting/Attendance: After kids go to Jingle Jam.

- 3pm Mass: Hosts count section and give total to Section Director.
- 5:15pm Mass: Host Lead will give an estimate.

#### Collection

- Two baskets under a chair in the back of the section with glow sticks to help track where the basket is moving.
- Prepare for collection at the start of the Creed (“I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth . . .”) by retrieving the baskets and standing at the rear of the section.
- Collection will always occur from the Altar side of the section.
- The first basket is dropped at Row 1 as soon as the collection song starts.
- The second basket will be dropped about midway between the first and last rows of the section, where there will be a yellow dot.
- PLEASE WATCH AND KEEP TRACK OF THE BASKETS AT ALL TIMES.
- 3pm Mass: Give both baskets to your Section Director, who will take them to the Ministry Area.
- 5:15pm Mass: take your section’s basket to the Ministry Area.

#### Communion

- 3pm Mass: Eucharistic ministers (“EMs”) will be stationed in the front and back of each section. The Host Lead will coordinate any additional EMs who may be needed for those standing along the back and sides of the sanctuary.
  - Front EM: first distributes Communion to special needs guests in the front row only. Then proceed with distribution as normal.
  - Back EM: One host first leads the back EM to special needs guests in the section (except the front row). Then, walk the Back EM to the rear of the section and begin by

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inviting guests in the last row to stand and receive Communion from the back. The Host should walk slowly backward to invite each next row toward the back.

- 5:15pm Mass:
  - All sections should have an EM in the front and back of the section. If you are hosting in one of those sections, please follow the instructions above.
  - If your section has one EM, first lead the EM to serve special needs guests, then return EM to the front and invite guests to come forward.

### Candlelight Vigil

- Lighters are in the supply baskets for each section.
- When about half the section has finished Communion, start lighting candles for guests at the end of each row who've had Communion and are finished praying.
- Please light only on the side of the section that is *opposite* the Communion lines.
- If something were to catch on fire, there will be small water bottles in each host basket.

### Goodbye

- Wish everyone a Merry Christmas and thank them for coming.
  - Candles: Guests may take home or deposit them in the cardboard boxes positioned just outside the building as they exit.
  - There will be ministers/staff with baskets to collect Jingle Jam glow bracelets at the doors at the end of Mass.
  - Guests may exit through any doors in the sanctuary.
  - 3pm Mass: After guests have left, please check your section for any trash left behind, collect it in the small trash bag in your supply basket, and dispose of it. You may dispose of all the Minister white reserved signs. If you are in a section that will not be cordoned off for the 5:15pm Mass, please make sure that your section basket has all the items that it had at the start of the 3pm Mass.
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## We are thankful that God has called you to serve!

We pray that you will continue to be a reflection of God's love by serving others on our Ridgley Road campus in 2026.

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