



Parking Attendants

Islington's Belonging System

Mission Action Plan
Expanding Our Welcoming & Belonging Strategies



Open Hearts
Open Minds
Open Doors

Parking Attendants Are Important

- ❑ Every year approximately 200 individuals visit Islington United for the first-time for Sunday service.
- ❑ Research has shown that the guests' first visit to a Church has a large impact on whether they will return to attend Sunday service in the future and ultimately become part of our Faith Family.
- ❑ Islington has always done a great job at welcoming guests to our Church. The Islington Belonging System is intended to build on this excellent tradition and fill in the gaps to increase the likelihood that first-time guests not only feel welcomed, but are proactively helped to find their way in our Church.
- ❑ Many individuals who visit our church for the first are uncertain where to park. Research has shown that if they cannot find a convenient parking spot they may experience frustration or even leave without attending the service. The role of the Parking Attendants is intended to fill this gap and represents an important component of our Belonging System.
- ❑ The Belonging System is part of the Mission Action Plan program commissioned by Church Council to help Islington continue to grow. It is based on best practices from many churches who have evolved their welcoming strategies to make guests feel more at home when they visit.

Sunday Morning Belonging System

- ❑ Islington's Sunday Morning Belonging System is an integrated network of six teams (**Parking Attendants**, Greeters, Ushers, Section Elders, Welcome Table Attendants, Church Ambassadors) with special training & tools to make first-time guests feel welcome, to help them make connections and to encourage them to attend in the future.
- ❑ The Sunday Morning Belonging System introduces 3 new teams (Section Elders, **Parking Attendants**, Church Ambassadors) and refines the role of 3 existing Sunday morning teams (Greeters, Ushers, Welcome Table Attendants).
- ❑ Sunday Morning Belonging System introduces the role of the **Parking Attendant**:
 - ❑ There will be three Parking Attendants at each Sunday Morning service, one in the North West parking lot and two in the main parking lot. The number of Parking Attendants may be increased for special services (e.g., Easter).
 - ❑ Parking Attendants will have a florescent vest to indicate their role as an attendant
 - ❑ Parking Attendants will be responsible for setting up the Guest Parking signs (3 in the back, 3 in the North West lot) before the service and removing the signs after service
 - ❑ Parking Attendants will be responsible for inspecting the parking lots before the service and cleaning away any debris before the service
 - ❑ Parking Attendants will have knowledge of additional places to park (and where not to park) if the church parking lot is full.
 - ❑ Parking Attendants will have umbrellas in the event of rain.

Section Elders Play a Critical Role in the Sunday Morning Guest System

There are twelve components in our Sunday Morning Belonging System

Long Term/
Seasonal
Preparation

Sunday
Morning
Preparation

Parking
Attendants
(New)

Guest Greeters
(New Role)
& Greeters

Ushers

Section
Elders
(New)

Worship
Service Guest
Greetings

Connect Cards
(New/Revised) &
New Pew
Material

After Service
Greeters
(New Role for our
Guest Greeters
and Greeters)

Islington's
Welcome
Table Attendants

Church
Ambassadors
(New)

Minister's
Next Day Email/
First Month
Follow-Up Letter

Sunday Morning First-Time Guest Experience Before the Service Begins

The first seven minutes of a guest's first visit are crucial!

Parking Attendants will help guests to find a parking spot (as required). If a Parking Attendant believes the individuals are first-time guests they may be directed to a reserved Visitors Parking spot. The Parking Attendant will escort guests to the appropriate Church entrance.



Guest Greeters will identify first-time guests if possible, introduce themselves, welcome them to Islington, and offer to escort them to the sanctuary or nursery if needed. They will also give out and explain the Connect Card and encourage guests to complete it.



Guest Greeters will introduce guests to an usher; The usher will ask the guest if they have any seating preferences;

Ushers will introduce the guest to the Section Elder (when appropriate). The Section Elder will welcome the guest to Islington.



Guests (and the congregation) will hear the "Sunday Morning Guest Welcome" from the lectern and presiding Minister as part of the Sunday Morning Announcement. The announcement will encourage guests to approach their Section Elder if they have any questions.

Note: Not all guests will experience all activities.

Sunday Morning Guest Experience

After the Service and Beyond

Guests who make even one connection are much more likely to return.

The Guest Greeter or Section Elder will invite guests to attend our Coffee Hour and if they agree, escort them to SEH, point out the Welcome Table and/or introduce them to a Church Ambassador or a Minister.



If the guest prefers not to attend Coffee Hour, the Guest Greeter or Section Elder would escort the guests to either the Sun Rise Room or the nursery (to pick up their children) or to an exit and, where possible, introduce them to a Minister or Church Ambassador.



Completed Connect Cards¹ will be deposited in the Church Office locked mail slot. Grace will forward the guest emails from the Connect Cards to Mark on Monday morning. Mark will send a personal email welcoming the guest to Islington.



The guest may receive a handwritten letter after one month; They may be offered complimentary concert/event tickets. Guests may also be paired with a gender, age & lifecycle-stage appropriate Church Ambassador.

1- Guests who complete the Connect Card will be asked if they wish to receive the Church weekly email. If so, they will be added to our email list.

The Belonging System Compass



The role of every member of the Belonging Team is defined by our Belonging System Compass:

- ❑ Welcome guests to our Church and make them feel at home;
- ❑ Provide guidance and direction (as required) to help guests before, during and after the service;
- ❑ Provide useful information and answer questions to help our guests;
- ❑ Connect our guests to others (e.g., Guest Greeters, Ushers, Ministers, Church Ambassadors) to help them make connections in our Church.

Attributes of a Good Parking Attendant

- ❑ Reliable - serves when asked; will arrive on time; will notify the coordinator if unable to attend
- ❑ Willing to serve as a Parking Attendant on a rotational basis once a month
- ❑ Knowledgeable about where to park at Islington United and where additional parking is when the Church parking lots are full
- ❑ Knowledgeable about where not park and able to redirect individuals if they park in an unauthorized area
- ❑ Knowledgeable about public transit options for those without vehicles
- ❑ Friendly – likes people
- ❑ Accepting, tolerant, respectful and non-judgmental
- ❑ Comfortable with all walks of life and all age groups
- ❑ Kind and empathetic to the needs of others
- ❑ Has a sense of mission and recognizes the importance of making guests and regular attendees feel at home at Islington on Sunday mornings.

Recognizing First-Time Guest

- ❑ It's not always possible to recognize a first-time guest, but here are a few signs that individuals may be new to our Church:
 - ❑ They appear uncertain of where to park
 - ❑ They appear uncertain about Church entrances
 - ❑ They park in an authorized lot
 - ❑ You don't recognize them
 - ❑ They look lost or hesitant
 - ❑ They ask questions
 - ❑ They look uncomfortable or nervous

Greeting First-Time Guests

- ❑ Parking Attendants should not presume it is an individual's first visit to Islington. If the individual indicates that they are new to the church direct them to a Visitor Parking spots. Otherwise, allow the signs to do the work.
- ❑ If uncertain whether the individual is a guest do not say:
 - x “Is this your first-time at Islington?” or “Are you new here?”
(Awkward if they are first-time guests – even more awkward if they aren't)
 - x “You look lost”, “Are you confused?”, “What do you need?”
- ❑ Rather say something like this:
 - ☺ “Hello. I'm _____. Is there anything I can help you with?”
 - ☺ “Good morning! Can I help you find a parking spot?”
- ❑ If it is clear that the individual is a guest (i.e., they park in a guest parking spot or spontaneously indicate that they are new to Islington):
 - ❑ Welcome them to Islington
 - ❑ Thank them for joining us in service today
 - ❑ Escort them to the door and introduce them to a Guest Greeter