# INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE FOR LECTORS

# *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. Luke 4:16*

# Lector

A lay person trained in reading scripture who is appointed by the clergy person in charge of the congregation.

The Ministry of the Lector is to proclaim the Word of God by reading from both the Old and New Testament at church services throughout the year, as well as leading the Prayers of the People.

Expectations

1. It is imperative you arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of service
   1. Check that the microphone is on
   2. Check that the readings are on the lectern
2. Review your assigned scripture
3. Read the Prayers of the People if you are the Intercessor
   1. If you are not sure how to pronounce a name, ask the celebrant.
   2. Be sure to pause and allow time for congregational responses where indicated
4. If you approach the altar from the front to read, a simple bow is appropriate. Take your time and adjust the microphone if needed. Look at the congregation and proclaim, “A Reading from ….” At the end of the reading, pause for a second or two, look at the congregation and proclaim, “The Word of the Lord”. Wait for their response before leaving the lectern.
5. If you are reading the Intercessions, please be at the lectern, in place, before the end of the Creed.
6. If you are unable to read on the assigned day, it is your responsibility to request a substitute through the scheduling software.

Prayers of the People

Because you will not have seen the Prayers of the People prior to the service, it is important to read them, check for names of parishes, priests, cities, etc., and ask the celebrant if you are not sure how to pronounce them.

**Names of recently deceased are particularly important**. A spouse, child or other relative may be in the congregation and it is important to not add to their grief by mispronouncing the family name. Unless you personally know the family, don’t assume!

Scripture Readings

If we are to proclaim the Word of God, we must understand the Word of God. No one can “cold read” scripture. The church office will send out the readings no later than Wednesday of the week they are to be read. **Please practice your readings in advance**.

Lectors are expected to read, meditate upon and understand **both** the assigned scriptures during the week prior to the Sunday’s service in case you are needed to read both at the last minute. There are many resources available (see “Resources” at the end of this Guide). The Bible texts of the Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel lessons are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible. You may wish to be sure you are using an NRSV when you prepare for the upcoming week’s readings.

Careful preparation will enable you to read with expression and to read from the heart, both of which are essential to make the reading a meaningful experience for your listeners.

Look beyond your assigned verses. Read the passage leading up to and beyond the assigned reading to make sure you understand the context. If possible, you should consult a good study Bible or commentary to make sure you understand the historical context in which the particular book was written and the meaning of any obscure references and allusions.

*A Lector’s Guide & Commentary Revised Common Lectionary* by J. Ted Blakley is an excellent resource and is available through Amazon or Cokesbury. The Guide is published by Year (see below “How the Readings are Organized”). The Guide provides a brief, reliable commentary for each lectionary reading, and then offers suggestions for how the text can be delivered. Pronunciations for biblical words and names are also included for each reading.

Reading Guide

Speak clearly and take your time. It’s almost impossible to read too slowly. Don't let your voice drop, particularly on the last sentence. Concentrate on the person in the last pew: that’s the person who needs to hear you.

Pause, prior to beginning the reading to ensure you have the attention of the congregation and they are ready to receive the Word. Pause after the reading and before saying “the Word of the Lord.” Wait for the congregation’s response before leaving the lectern.

It is usually sufficient to simply state the name of the book (e.g., A reading from the book of Genesis” or “the Letter to the Romans” or “the book of the prophet Isaiah”). There is normally no need to announce the chapter and verse when these are printed in the bulletin.

How the Readings are Organized

The scripture readings for the Sunday Eucharistic service are arranged in a 3-year cycle organized around the church year. The list of prescribed readings is referred to as the "lectionary" — a term that is also used to refer to a book containing the readings.

The lectionary in use at the present time is known as the Revised Common Lectionary. This lectionary, with minor variations, is also used by a number of other denominations.

The 3 years of the lectionary cycle are referred to as Years A, B, and C. The gospel readings for Years A, B, and C are assigned accordingly. The gospel readings in the first year (Year A) are taken from the Gospel of Matthew, those in the second year (or Year B) from the Gospel of Mark, and in the third year (or Year C) come from the Gospel of Luke.

Portions of the Gospel of John are read throughout Eastertide and are also used for other liturgical seasons including Advent, Christmastide, and Lent where appropriate.

Each year starts on the first Sunday in Advent, with Year A being any year divisible by 3 without a remainder. Thus, the first Sunday in Advent 2016 started with cycle A, Advent 2017 was Year B, Advent 2018 was Year C and Advent 2019 started over with Year A.

RESOURCES

The lectionary readings for any Sunday or festival can be found at:

a. [https://www.lectionarypage.net/](about:blank)

b. Forward Movement is an excellent resource for daily prayer and meditation: [https://prayer.forwardmovement.org/](about:blank)

c. Lectionary and commentary [http://montreal.anglican.org/comments/](about:blank)

d*. A Lector’s Guide & Commentary Revised Common Lectionary* by J. Ted Blakley

(these Guides are in St. Timothy’s Library)

e. [https://www.saint-tims.org/resources.html](about:blank)

**St. Timothy's Worship Service Participant Information**

* [Worship Participant Schedule](about:blank)
* [The Lectionary Page](about:blank) - readings for downloading and printing
* [Readings Pronunciation Guide](about:blank)