

Lector Customary

Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration

God is made known to us in the sacred words of Scripture, and the opportunity to proclaim the readings is a privilege and joy. Those who are called to the role of Lector are entrusted with this holy work, and by their faithful proclamation they help us all experience God speaking to us afresh each time we are gathered together.

Given the importance of Holy Scripture, at Transfiguration we expect that all of our lectors:

- Desire to animate the spirit and meaning of the lessons to the congregation;
- Possess a clear and pleasant speaking voice;
- Have the ability to read aloud slowly, with natural inflection;
- Commit to ascertaining the essential meaning of the lessons being read;
- Be willing to practice reading the assigned lessons aloud before the service;
- Be open to constructive feedback; and
- Be willing to attend one or more of several lector training sessions to be held throughout the year.

Preparation

The Lector must study and practice before reading at a service.

First, read the lesson slowly aloud. *www.lectionarypage.net* is an excellent online resource for finding the readings. Careful, prayerful private reading better prepares us to read Scripture publicly.

Second, it is important to understand the meaning of the reading. *workingpreacher.org* provides information about each text's context and meaning.

Third, look up the pronunciation for any unfamiliar words/names/places. For an easy, online resource for Biblical pronunciation, try *www.thebibleworkshop.com/bible-name-pronunciation/* The Clergy Sacristy has a pronunciation guide on the bookshelf, or you can purchase a personal pronunciation guide in the Kay Andrews' Bookstore.

Finally, on the day of your assigned lector duty, arrive 30 minutes early and check-in by signing the sheet located in the Sacristy. Verify the readings are properly marked in the Lectionary Book on the Ambo, and read through it carefully to ensure there are no surprises or differences. Lector Two should check the Prayers of the People in the Book of Intercessions. They are printed and enclosed at the front of the book.

Note: In the event that there is any confusion or discrepancy with the Lectionary Book or Prayers, please check in with the Emcee or a member of the clergy.

Dress Guidelines for Lectors/Readers

Vesting is not required for Lectors. In recognition of our position as liturgical ministers, we offer these dress guidelines so that attention is not focused on the lector, but on the Word:

Women

Comfortable shoes. No flip-flops or sneakers, please.

Pants suit or appropriate dress. Bare shoulders and short skirts are discouraged.

Hats are discouraged. Hats can be a distraction and overhead lighting causes faces to be obscured.

Men

Comfortable dress shoes or loafers. No flip-flops or sneakers, please.

Suit or sport coat and tie are encouraged.

Slacks and dress shirt (button-down), with or without a tie.

No t-shirts, please.

Vocal Technique

Speak clearly in a natural tone, being careful to enunciate without over-pronouncing words.

Use a volume that is clear without straining or shouting, and be careful not to lower your volume or speak softly.

Breathe deeply.

Don't rush sentences, and pause in appropriate places for breaths and to benefit the meaning or understanding of the reading.

Do not hesitate to smile, if the reading is joyful, funny, or particularly hopeful.

Do not use different voices for different characters in the passage.

Bearing /Attitude

Walk to the Ambo at a normal pace, with hands folded or at your sides. Stand directly behind the Ambo, placing hands either at your sides or placed lightly on the Lectionary Book.

The microphone is highly sensitive and does not need to be adjusted, regardless of its direction.

Do not gesture with your hands during the reading and keep your feet flat on the floor.

Read with a spirit of hopefulness. You are proclaiming the Word of God, and though this is a holy task, we perform it with gladness.

Introduce the reading clearly and deliberately. After the introduction ("A reading from..."), pause of a moment before beginning the first sentence of the reading.

Make eye contact with the People upon arrival at the Ambo, but do not feel obligated to make eye contact with the People during the reading, as it may cause you to lose your place. It is preferable to read with clarity and effectiveness with eyes down than to look up occasionally and stumble over the reading.

After the reading concludes, pause for a moment (2-3 seconds) before saying, "The Word of the Lord." This is not the next sentence in the reading, but rather a concluding response.

Quickly saying this conclusion after the final sentence of the lesson conveys a sense of rush or hurriedness, which is not fitting.

Procedure

Before the Service

Arrive 30 minutes early to sign-in (register located in Sacristy).

Lectors are seated in the front pew in the North Transept.

Check the Lectionary Book to be sure that the marked reading and the one you have prepared are the same.

Although it is discouraged, if you choose to utilize your own printout of the reading, place it in the Lectionary Book prior to the service and ensure it is stable and will not slide out of the book. *Do not* carry a leaflet or printout to the ambo when it is time for your reading.

Lector Two leads the intercessions and should *always* check the Prayers of the People located in the Book of Intercessions. They are enclosed at the front of the book, and they are often changed weekly, so it is important to review them before the service.

The Readings

During the Collect of the Day, Lector moves to the space immediately behind the Eucharistic Minister's box. Lector bows toward the Altar as he/she steps up into the chancel.

As the People are seated, Lector moves up the steps and across to the Ambo. Do not bow toward the Altar or Tabernacle, as you have already bowed upon entering the chancel.

Lector waits a moment for everyone to finish being seated, then introduces the reading. Pause just a moment after introducing the reading before beginning the first sentence.

At the conclusion of the reading, pause for 2-3 seconds, then look up and say, "The Word of the Lord."

When there are two lectors

After the first reading, Lector One turns and walks back the same way and returns to his/her seat. Lector Two moves to position behind Eucharistic Ministers during the Psalm.

When the Psalm concludes, Lector Two moves up the steps to the Ambo and begins the reading. The same instructions apply as in the first reading.

At the conclusion of the second reading, Lector Two closes the Lectionary Book and places it on the Ambo shelf to clear the Ambo for the preacher.

When there is only one lector

Lector remains after the first reading, but steps back slightly from the Ambo during the Psalm. Then Lector steps forward again to read the second lesson.

At conclusion of second reading, Lector closes the Lectionary Book and places on the Ambo's shelf to clear the Ambo for the preacher.

The Prayers of the People

The Prayers are led by Lector Two, except for the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter, when they are sung. The Bulletin should be consulted, if you have any confusion on whether they are said or sung.

As the final paragraph of the Creed begins (“We believe in the Holy Spirit...”), Lector Two takes the Parish Intercession Book from its stand and moves behind the Eucharistic Minister box. At the end of the Creed, Lector Two moves to the Ambo, opens the Intercession Book and follows the script for the prayers.

At the conclusion, Lector Two remains in place until the Celebrant finishes the concluding collect. Then Lector Two turns and places the Intercession Book on the left side of the altar (south side), then returns to his/her seat the same way (no bowing).

Cancellation or Scheduling Conflict

In the event that you are unable to read when you are scheduled, it is your responsibility to arrange for a substitute. You may call another lector, or utilize the Ministry Scheduler on line (www.rotundasoftware.com/ministry/transfig).