

St. John's
Episcopal
Church



LECTOR HANDBOOK

A MESSAGE

As the congregation listens to our reading of God's Word, they are especially open to the message that, through our lips, will be passed on to them. The transmission of the Word is an event that we cannot know how it will be received or understood or how it might touch an emotion or event that has occurred in another person's life.

Some may come to worship with questions on their hearts and minds, "How can I deal with the problem I am facing this week? What has God to tell me? What do the events of the Bible mean to my life?"

We need the reality of the Word of God. We need to know, to feel, that the Bible story we hear is real, nourishing, relevant to our lives. At a wedding, we think of our responsibility to love all human beings. Will that love be exemplified in the presentation of the readings? When we gather at a funeral service to celebrate the life of a loved one, will the reading ease our own fear of death? We need the reassurances of the Word, as it speaks to the fullness of life, available in our every circumstance.

As Lectors, we are the transmitters of that Word. Our voice, our inflections, our very manner with the sacred Book, will nuance the reception of the Spirit of God for our hearers.

Every one of the writers – most of them unknown to use – burned with a passion to share their reflections on the human condition and on our relationship to the mystery of God. What we have today is the written word on dry ink across a lifeless page. The Bible at our lectern needs the human voice to transmit it, to infuse it with life, to bring home to those who hear it the immediacy that its messages had when the authors took pen in hand.

When we take our place at the lectern and open the Bible to read, then, we are no less actors – storytellers of God's Story. We strive to re-create, through their lines written thousands of years ago, to

10 TIPS

FOR READING

1. **Preparation.** Read over your assignment – and its context – enough to find some meaning for yourself in it. Know what book of the Bible it comes from and what the idea of the passage is.

2. **Practice.** Read your lesson aloud. Hear it yourself. Try varying speeds. Vary stresses until it makes sense to you. Read it aloud to someone else.

3. At the lectern, control the **volume of your voice** so that you speak each word clearly, with special attention to sentence endings.

4. **Read loudly.** Even though we have a sound system (and make sure the mike is next to your mouth) the people in the last row need to hear you. Never shout, just read with intensity.

5. **Figure out the ‘mental period.’** Drop your voice, either to isolate a thought, to conclude it, or emphasize it.



10 TIPS

FOR READING

6. **Take your time reading.** Force yourself to be slow and deliberate, never hurried. Let no one have a problem understanding or following you.

7. **De-emphasize the words “said” or “saying.”** These are often the least important words in a sentence. It is merely a connecting link between the speaker and the text.

8. **Know when to pause.** A slight pause after each sentence, sometimes more than once during a sentence, allows listeners to follow the passage more intelligently. Pauses also mark transitions – from a narrative to a quotation, or a change in the situation being described.

9. Remember that for some people this is the only time they ever hear Scripture.

10. **Arrive before the service** begins to make sure the readings are correct on the lectern. Please also tell the clergy you are here.





WEBSITES

The Text This Week: www.textweek.com

Pronunciation Guide: www.netministries.org/bbasics

Readings for the Coming Week from Vanderbilt Divinity Library:
<http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu>

The Lectionary Page: www.lectionarypage.net

The Prayer Book for Christian Education: www.prayerbookguide.com

THE BIBLE AND WORSHIP USED IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Bible Used in Worship: **New Revised Standard Version**

The First Reading usually comes from: **The Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament)**

The Psalms are from: **Old Testament**

The Second Reading comes from: **New Testament Letters (Epistles)**

Gospel means: **“Good News” (of Jesus Christ)**

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

LECTOR PROTOCOLS

- You will be contacted by our parish administrator at the beginning of each month to indicate your Sunday availability
- The schedule will come out and be emailed to you
- If you have to switch at the last minute, please find a replacement and notify the office. 717-243-4220 or admin@stjohnscarlisle.org
- You will receive the readings by email on Friday before Sunday's liturgies
- Please arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled liturgy. If you come to the 8, please swing by the sacristy and tell the priest you are here. If you come to the 9:30, please swing by the parish hall and let the clergy know you are here.
- If you are late, please sit in the front pews so we can see that you are present.
- Check the lectern before you read. Adjust the microphone and make sure the readings match the bulletin you were emailed.
- After you read, please do an elongated pause before you say, "The Word of the Lord."
- If you are the intercessor, please stay at the lectern until the peace is offered. Just stand still and participate in the liturgy, but do not use the microphone at that point.