Lector Procedures

Christ the King Lutheran Church

God's Word comes into our community of faith as scripture is proclaimed and preached. Lectors bring voice to God's word in our weekly worship while preparing people to hear the gospel and the sermon. Lectors do not merely read a script. They speak God's word for God's people.

As a lector, you will be God's voice in our community. You perform an important function on behalf of all who are gathered. You speak God's direct address to us, helping us hear God's love and call to mission. Your ministry as a lector is very important to our faith community.

God has a Word to speak to us and you will be proclaiming it. Therefore, prepare for your ministry carefully. Yours is a ministry of interpretation that goes beyond the words you will speak. It is important for you to go beyond practicing the words. You will be best prepared when you understand the message. So, attempt to go beyond pronouncing each word correctly. You need to understand the scripture you are reading, as best as you can.

When reading a lesson aloud, you need to think about how to communicate the message contained in the scriptures you read. Yours is a ministry of interpretation. Let your voice do the interpretative work. Use inflection proper to the passage. Think about the rate of delivery you employ. You can convey a lot by attending to the tones of voice you use.

The following are resources to help you in your interpretative task:

- Prayer – ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in your preparation.
- The texts themselves are the best starting place. Read them well.
- Note that the reading your receive from the office has helps for each reading. They are located at the bottom of the page. They will help you with pronunciation of strange words. You will also find helpful hints on how to read the text so that it is well communicated.
- Read chapters leading up to your reading. Use your Bible to learn the scripture's context. In doing so, you'll discover more about the fuller message of the scripture you're reading.
- Prayer – ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in your preparation.
- CTK's library has resources – commentaries – on the scripture. If you don't find what you need there, PJ's personal library has resources.
- "Enter the Bible" from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. This is a free website to help people further their understandings of the Bible. It is available at: http://www.enterthebible.org/
- "Working Preacher" from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. This is another free website to help people do interpretative work. It is geared toward preachers, but contains information highly valuable for any student of the Bible. It is available at: https://www.workingpreacher.org/
- Schedule a sit down or a phone call with our pastor. PJ is available to help you interpret what you're reading.
- Prayer – ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in your preparation.

Sunday mornings, we use a lectionary (means "readings") for ritual use. It is a Bible that has been arranged according to how the scriptures are read in worship. You will find it very helpful because the readings are in a larger print and arranged on the page so that phrases are not broken up by breaks in the lines. It will help you speak God's Word more clearly in the community. Please use this on Sunday

mornings. The lessons you receive from the office are a smaller version of what you will find in the lectionary. The page numbers are also the same.

To strengthen your ministry as a lector, please note the following:

1. You need to arrive at worship no later than 15 minutes prior to the service so that you can locate the readings in the lectionary and practice from the pulpit.
2. Locate the lectionary. The Lectionary Bible will be in the pulpit in the front of the sanctuary. If the Lectionary Bible is not in its place, locate it and put it in the pulpit so that it is ready for worship. You are preparing the lectionary not just for your own use, but for Pastor's use, as well. So, please use it.
3. Locate the readings in the lectionary. The lectionary contains all readings for the current year. For this reason, you need to make sure you find the correct page in the book: You will need to know the day's date, the scriptures to be read, and the day of the church year (eg: the second Sunday in Lent) which can be found in the bulletin.
    a. When locating scripture, think about the church year. Everything in the lectionary is arranged according to the church year's order, beginning with Advent, ending with the Sundays after Pentecost (Ordinary Time). During much of the year, lectionary pages are titled according to the Day of the Church year. This is true during Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent and Easter.
    b. During Ordinary Time (mostly the Sundays after Pentecost, Sundays in Summer and Fall), lectionary pages are titled according to the date.
    c. During Ordinary Time, it is important to differentiate between the "complementary" series of scripture and the "semi-continuous" series of scripture. We use the complementary readings. You can tell that you are using complementary readings because the footer of the page on the right will indicate that it is complementary. The semi-continuous series of scriptures for Ordinary time is located in a separate section after the complementary series. So, if the footer of the page on the right says "semi-continuous" move to earlier pages in the lectionary.
    d. BIG HELP: To find the correct page, look at what was sent from the office. The page number found on the readings you received will tell you the correct page in the lectionary used on Sunday mornings.
4. Mark the day's location with one of the ribbons provided, so that if the book is closed you can find the readings easily.
    a. TIP: use a colored ribbon and put out to the side of the book, so that you can use the ribbon as a tab. This allows you to lift the ribbon and it will open the book.
5. There are times that Pastor may be deviating from the scriptures appoint from the day. When this happens, other scripture will be provided for you from the office. You will recognize this to be the case because the formatting of that scripture will be different.
    a. It may be that Pastor still intends to use the Gospel appointed for the day, so it is very important that you still locate the day's appointed readings.
    b. Place your readings into the lectionary and still use the book as if the readings were present within it.
6. Sit near the front of the church, so that when it is time for you to read, you are able to do your ministry without taking too much time getting to the pulpit. Always move to the altar via the opening in the middle of the altar rail. Do not scoot into the pulpit area from the side near the choir loft. When passing the altar, you can pause and venerate the altar, if you wish. You can do the same when you return.

7. DO NOT USE YOUR BULLETIN TO READ THE LESSONS. Continuous use of the Lectionary Bible will be a symbol that the Word of God continues from week to week, and is part of a larger message to all the people.
8. Each lesson begins with the words noted in the lectionary. The format is the same each week: "A reading from _____." Fill in the blank with the name of the book from which the reading is taken. Do not list chapter and verse. Doing so puts the focus on the reference and disrupts the proclamatory nature of your ministry. The words are printed at the beginning of each reading to help you remember what to say.
9. Read lessons clearly and speak God's Word with dignity and boldness. God needs you to communicate with God's people. Use proper inflections. Think about how your tone of voice and rate of delivery helps convey meaning.
10. End each lesson in the following format: lift the lectionary from the lectern and say, "The Word of the Lord." In this action and with these words you are announcing to the people what you are reading: The Word of the Lord. Again, don't worry about remembering this phrase. It is printed in the lectionary following each reading. You will, however, have to remember to raise the lectionary for the people to see. Be sure to lift the book above the reading lamp. It's OK if it blocks your face when you lift it.
11. If there is a Psalm between the lessons, it will normally be done by PJ, the choir or the Assisting minister. During a Psalm, you should step out of the pulpit. You can take a seat with the worship leaders, if there is room. You could also step out of the pulpit and just turn toward who is leading the Psalm.
12. When you finish reading, leave the lectionary open the appointed scripture for the day. Pastor will be using it next. If you don't leave it ready for him, it disrupts the flow of worship.

Thank you for taking part in this important ministry. Again, please remember that you serve as God's voice for all who gather for Worship. Prepare well. Know the meaning of what you are reading. Speak God's word clearly and effectively so all can hear God in our Worship. Your ministry in worship setting matters.