

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church Guidelines for Lectors

The reading of the Word of God is an awesome and joyful responsibility. It is in fact another important ministry of our Church. The reading of the Word should be thought of more as a proclamation than a reading. By taking great care with this task, the lector becomes an agent of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the worshippers and makes a strong statement about the high esteem in which scripture is held. The following tips will help you proclaim the Word of God.

Live with Word During the Week – You will get the reading, along with tips, in advance from Harriet. It is difficult even for a skilled lector to grasp the meaning of the text and communicate that meaning in a quick look. A reading is ready to be proclaimed out loud when you have familiarized yourself with the text. You should learn the type of readings they are (e.g. letter, prose, poetry, history, etc) and about the context and content of the message. You will know why the reading is of value to the worshippers because it is of value to yourself.

Practice Your Reading Style – You should try different ways of reading that are appropriate to the type of text being proclaimed. You need not read like it's a grocery list (i.e. too fast and monotone) or so dramatically that people feel like you are "acting" (i.e. being what you are not). Preparing and practicing your communication style is key. Your goal is to tell the story of salvation and make it exist for the believing community on that Sunday through your voice.

We communicate meaning by changing the four elements that make up the spoken word: pace, pitch, volume, and quality. We speak slowly; we speak quickly; we raise our pitch or we lower it; sometimes we are loud; sometimes we almost whisper we speak so softly. Sometimes our voice has an angry edge to it; other times we speak in a loving, sympathetic manner. The key to the voice that invites and holds the attention of the listener is a dynamic change.

Don't be afraid to include intentional pauses. Pausing at the right moment for the right length of time can help bring out the meaning of the text. Practice reading and looking up as much as possible to maintain eye contact with the worshippers to whom you will be proclaiming. You need not memorize the scripture, but there may be key times for you to have eye contact – especially at the very beginning and the very end of the reading). Remember that it is through eye contact that you build a relationship with worshippers. It is by looking at the Lectionary that you reaffirm your connection with the Word. If there are difficult words, find out how to pronounce them from either the pastor or Harriet

Plan Ahead for the Worship Service – You should be at the church early to see if there are any last minute changes. You should check in with the Pastor. Go up to the lectern to make sure that everything is in order. You will likely read from the large print sheet provided to you by Harriet.

You are in Service to the Word – Stop and bow before the altar before proceeding to the lectern. Remember, it is not about you (don't say "hi" or "good morning"). You should look at the reading, look at the worshippers, announce the reading and pause. Remember the goal is to read the Word of God aloud so that the worshippers can hear the Word clearly, understand its meaning, and be moved by the revelation of God. You should read as though the passage you are proclaiming reveals a living truth of God's relationship to your community. End the reading with "Here ends the reading" or "The Word of Life" or whatever has been designated in the bulletin. Wait for the worshipper's response to the Word – it is printed in the bulletin. Walk back to your seat.

Thank you for your willingness to help with this important ministry and for telling our precious Christian stories. If you find that you are unable to fulfill duties due to absence or illness, please call the church office at 932-2394.