

# Serving the Sunday Assembly as a Lector

## *Background*

For over 2,000 years, Scriptures have been read aloud to Christians gathered together. The shared stories and experiences are one of the profound ways we connect with God and the tradition of believers who have gone before us. So, too, we offer this as a wonderful and meaningful way to participate in the worship service. Lectors who speak the Word with confidence have a strong positive impact on everyone's worship experience.

## *Preparing to Lector*

- 1) In the week prior to serving as lector, please read through the readings multiple times. Generally we use the *Revised Common Lectionary*, which is divided into three annual cycles of readings. The readings are linked to each week's e-newsletter (sent on Thursdays) and can usually be found at <http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>. (Please note that from time to time we will not follow the appointed readings for the upcoming Sunday, and in this case the e-news is the most authoritative source.)
- 2) To prepare for the readings, you will want to come to an understanding of the text yourself so that you will be able to convey the meaning more readily to the congregation. What you emphasize, your tone, and your speed all communicate meaning. Some of our readings have a mythical nature, others are deep theological discourses, and some are narrative. To understand the context you will, at a minimum, want to spend time reading the entire chapter where the reading is found and more if necessary. You may also want to use a study Bible to help you with context if you're having trouble. A few questions to think about as you ponder the texts include the following: a) What is the author attempting to communicate? b) What is mood of the passage—joyful, anxious, instructional, compassionate, angry, sorrowful? c) What church season are we in? Is this the hopefulness of Advent, the penitential season of Lent, or the joyful time of the Easter season? Take time to get to know the text. (In church we use the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV] of the Bible. If you'd like to access this version of the Bible online, visit <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-Revised-Standard-Version-NRSV-Bible/>.)
- 3) "Wait, what is that word?" If you're wondering whether you're pronouncing a word correctly, double-check your pronunciation by visiting <http://netministries.org/resources/resource-pronunciation-guide>.
- 4) Remember that eye contact is an effective way to communicate a message, so you may want to practice reading the text aloud a number of times (in front of a mirror is one way) while looking up to engage the congregation.

## *As Lector on Sunday*

- 1) You should arrive 15 minutes before the service begins.
- 2) Upon arrival, ensure that the readings on the ambo (the combined word for lectern/pulpit) and in the bulletin are the same as those you prepared to read.
- 3) The first time you lector you should arrive 20 minutes before service and check with the parish assistant or pastor for instructions on how to use the microphone and to see exactly where the readings are located on the ambo.
- 4) During the service, the first reading is generally after the prayer of the day, and you may come forward after that prayer. There is no need to rush with the readings or your movements to or from

the ambo—it's all a sacred moment, and silence is good for our souls. Before you step up onto the chancel (the raised space in the front of the sanctuary), show reverence with a bow or a pause.

- 5) When you arrive at the ambo, turn the microphone on. It is a push-to-talk microphone, so press the button that says “push,” and the microphone will turn on. You do not need to hold the button the entire time. The light should be bright green when the microphone is on and ready for you to read.
- 6) The readings should be on the ambo for you, so you will not need to bring anything forward with you.
- 7) Take a moment to pause, and begin the reading with the printed introduction. Use the introductory phrase to ensure that you are close enough to the microphone and that the microphone is indeed on. Change your volume or the location to the microphone as needed. You should hear yourself through the speakers if you are loud enough. If at anytime there appears to be significant feedback, turn off the microphone and continue reading *loudly*.
- 8) After the first reading, there will often be a Psalm. During all liturgical seasons except Lent, you will take a copy of the Psalm that is printed for you on the ambo and sit in the chair behind the ambo. Help lead the congregation by your example as you participate in the Psalm. During Lent you will leave the chancel during the Psalm and sit behind the piano where you will find the Psalm printed for you.
- 9) After the Psalm, return to the ambo for the second reading.
- 10) After the second reading, turn off the microphone (using the same button you used to turn it on) and return to your seat.
- 11) Any time you enter or exit the chancel, please take a moment to pause or bow.

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Jason ([pastor@wickerparklutheran.org](mailto:pastor@wickerparklutheran.org)) and he'll be happy to assist you further.

### ***A Word of Thanks***

Thank you for helping to lead our liturgy at WPLC. Liturgy literally means “the work of the people” or alternatively “the work for the people.” As we gather in worship, we work together to reflect on and experience God’s presence in the world, and we also know that it is God’s work in which we participate. Yet our worship is not the end of it—we go out into the world to engage in a holy liturgy each week as we work, learn, grow, rest, and dwell with others and our God. Thanks for serving and helping us participate in God’s holy liturgy!