

4. After the service:

- a. [10:30 Second reader] Retrieve the Gospel book and the lectionary book. Put them in the sacristy.

Defining some terms:

Lector: one of the ministers of the liturgy who reads the scripture text(s) for the service.

Lectionary: the cycle of readings specified for liturgical celebrations. Most services include readings from the Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament), the epistles (New Testament writings other than the Gospels) and one of the Gospels. The lectionary is arranged in a three-year cycle, so that most of the Bible is read over three years.

Lectionary book: the book containing the text of the readings for each service. These are arranged in order of the Sundays of the church year, starting with the first Sunday of Advent. Lectors will normally read from the lectionary book.

Lectern: a stand for the lectionary book and the place from which the readings (other than the Gospel) are proclaimed.



Guidelines for Lectors

St. Philip's Episcopal Church

Public reading of the scriptures is one of the oldest and most important of the aspects of the liturgy. From its pre-Christian roots in the Jewish synagogue, proclamation of the scripture has consistently characterized Christian worship.

The role of the lector is, in one sense, very simple. It is to read the given text (or texts) for the day out loud to the congregation. "Lector," in fact, is the Latin word for "reader." At the same time, the task of the lector is tremendously important. As one of the worship leaders, along with the celebrant and preacher, the lector helps to guide the congregation in their worship. In the synagogue, being chosen to read the scriptures remains a great honor, and the same is true in Christian worship. It is a serious responsibility and a great privilege to serve as a lector.

1. Before Sunday:

- a. **Check the roster.** A roster will be created showing which days each lector will be reading, and what the readings will be.
- b. **Find a substitute, if needed.** If you cannot proclaim the readings at a the service for which you are assigned, you are responsible for arranging for another lector to take your place. A complete listing of all lectors along with their phone numbers will be included with the schedule you have been issued. Every service must be covered.
- c. **Prepare, prepare, prepare.** You must prepare sufficiently so that you can proclaim the readings comfortably and fluently. Some readings are easier and won't require as much preparation. Other readings will require substantially more preparation. Until you go through your readings, you can't tell how much time you will need for preparation. The earlier you start, the better.
- d. There are times you may be called upon at the last minute to proclaim the readings at a the service at which you are not scheduled. Become familiar with each Sunday's readings as if you are assigned to proclaim that Sunday.
- e. **Check the pronunciation** of unfamiliar words.
- f. **Pray.** Being a lector is a ministry. It is a ministry within the body of Christ, a calling of service to that body. The effective lector not only pays attention to the mechanics of proclaiming the word, but also to his or her relationship with God and God's people. This means that each one of us must work on maintaining an active spiritual and prayer life on both the personal and communal levels.
- g. **Dress appropriately.** Your dress and appearance should be such that it does not call attention to yourself to the detriment of that portion of the word you are proclaiming.

2. Before the Service on Sunday:

- a. Arrive 10 to 15 minutes ahead of your scheduled service
- b. *[10:30- First reader]* Make sure the lectionary book is located on the lectern and opened to the appropriate Sunday.

3. At the time of reading:

- a. Leave your seat and proceed to the lectern to proclaim the reading. Read from the lectionary book, not from the insert flyer.
- b. Proclaim the readings as they are contained in the lectionary. You may not like how something is worded in a reading or find it doesn't fit your particular verbal style, but do not make editorial changes or comments.
- c. The purpose of reading is to engage the congregation with the scripture. Be sure you are projecting so that all can hear. Use intonation and animation in your reading, but do not turn the reading into a "performance."
- d. Readings are prefaced with the words "A reading from [name of the book]." End with the words "The word of the Lord;" the people will respond "Thanks be to God." (The appropriate preface and closing are printed in the lectionary book).
- e. *[10:30- last reader]* When you have finished proclaiming the second reading, close the lectionary book and place it on the shelf in the lectern before returning to your seat. At this point, the deacon or the celebrant will remove the Gospel book from the front of the sanctuary and take it to the appropriate place to proclaim the gospel.
- f. At the conclusion of the gospel, the Gospel book should be placed on the stand in front of the church, open to the gospel for that the service. This should be done by the gospel proclaimer for that the service.