

GUIDELINES FOR LECTORS

All Hallows Parish, South River

BACKGROUND

The Lectionary is the cycle of readings specified for Sunday worship. Most services include readings (lessons) from the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), a Psalm, 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.

For the service of Holy Eucharist, Lectors are specified for the two lessons preceding the Gospel.

THE WORD OF GOD

The Word of God, contained in the Scripture we read each Sunday, is the way through which we understand the relationship between the Bible and God who revealed it to us. While Scripture contains history, it is not a history lesson. While it contains stories, it is not just stories. God's Word is a living and dynamic presence in our lives, and through it, as you read it, God speaks to his people. It is your voice, but it is God's word.

THE LECTOR AND THE WORD

As a Lector you have responded to God's call to the ministry of reading and proclaiming his Word, and you have an important responsibility in our worship services. As a Lector, you enter into a relationship with God's Word as revealed in sacred Scripture, and you take upon yourself the duty and privilege of bringing the printed word to life for the benefit of others.

When you stand at the lectern on Sunday morning, you give voice to ancient words that heal, strengthen, encourage, proclaim, and exhort. In a very real sense you do what the prophets once did — you, in the tradition of John the Baptist, help to prepare the way for the Lord.

Not everyone who goes to church reads the Bible, so what he or she hears you read on Sunday may be the only Bible they know. It is important that parishioners and visitors hear and understand what you read!

THE WORK OF THE LECTOR

The Lector's task is both simple and complex. You read Scripture to the congregation, but you also present it to them for their understanding. Your work requires some preparation.

Your purpose is to convey the meaning intended by the original writers of Scripture, who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Your reading should help edify and enlighten listeners about the attitudes and feelings of those early Jews and Christians as they wrote the original texts.

In doing this you bring God among us on Sunday morning. It is an important responsibility and the way in which you approach and perform this task should reflect its holy nature.

Lectors now volunteer and sign up at

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050C4EABAD2CA57-allhallows>. The service rota for the month, reflecting those who sign up, is published once a month in Tidings; lectors for the next two Sundays are listed in the weekly eTidings; lectors also receive an email with a Lector's Guide extract that can serve as a reminder of their commitment.

If you are scheduled to read and intervening circumstances prevent you from being in church, it is your responsibility to find someone to take your place. If you switch with someone, please forward your Lector's Guide materials to your replacement and be sure to let Pam Ausiello know at 410.798.0808 or info@allhallowsparish.org so she can update the bulletin listing.

THE FOUR "Ps" OF EFFECTIVE READING

Always prepare, having read and practiced reading the Scripture prior to the worship Service. You should consider the following steps in connection with the privilege and responsibility to effectively read Scripture:

Prayer. After you know you will be reading, you will find it helpful to review the texts and pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit to open their meaning to you, and to guide you as you begin to prepare. All Hallows uses the Revised Common Lectionary. The printed church calendar lists the lessons to be read on the back of each month's page by book, chapter, and verse. Then you can go to <http://bible.oremus.org>, type in the book, chapter, and verses, and print out your reading assignment. Another source for the readings is <http://www.lectionarypage.net>. Click on the desired date to get the complete text of the lessons, which you can open, copy, paste, reformat, and print out. Be shameless in setting up, highlighting, and annotating the material so you can read from it meaningfully.

Preparation. Review the Lector's Guide extract that is sent to you for your readings. Then read the texts several more times in advance as you discern their meaning and significance. If you have questions, you might consult secondary sources for additional perspectives. These include footnotes in your Bible, commentaries from the parish library, and the Internet.

Practice. After you have a sense of each text, it is helpful to read it aloud at home as you would in church. Make sure that you can pronounce biblical names — stumbling over names reveals a lack of preparation. A good website with both audio and phonetic pronunciations of biblical terms is: <http://netministries.org/Bbasics/BBwords.htm>.

Performance. This refers to how you read the text to the congregation on Sunday morning. These guidelines contain suggestions that can make you a more effective reader. Think about how to express the emotions of the reading with your voice — does the passage express joy, frustration, anger, bewilderment?

EFFECTIVE READING ON SUNDAY

The way in which Lectors read the lessons will vary from person to person, but your personality and understanding of the reading should be evident. Even so, certain common approaches are helpful:

1. Lectors at All Hallows "reverence the altar" by stopping in front of the altar and bowing slightly before and after reading. This should be a normal and natural but deliberate movement, and it should not be casual or hurried.
2. When using a lectern microphone (this applies now only at the Brick Church), adjust it to be at the height of your nose, not to your mouth — that will avoid explosive sounds when you speak words beginning with "p."
3. Breathe deeply.
4. Announce the lesson by reading the appropriate introduction (see the list attached to these guidelines).
5. Pause between the introduction to the lesson and the lesson itself.
6. Look at the congregation and take a breath before beginning. Contrary to some views it is not a priority to continue to make eye contact with the congregation as you read. Many people are reading along in the service bulletin anyway, and are not looking at you. It is more important that you focus on the printed page in front

of you, so that you can concentrate on the way you read and not lose your place. If your reading has logical paragraphs, it is appropriate to look at the congregation between paragraphs.

7. Read clearly and plainly, with appropriate emphasis. Do not rush; do not “drag.” Try to tell a clear story or make a clear argument.
8. Follow printed punctuation, and avoid dropping your voice when approaching punctuation at the end of a phrase or sentence.
9. At the conclusion of the reading, pause briefly, raise your eyes, look at the congregation, take a deep breath and firmly say “The Word of the Lord.” This should not be hurried or muffled, or sound like an afterthought. It is an important part of the reading. Remain in place until the congregation responds “Thanks be to God.”
10. On occasion a reading from the Apocrypha will be substituted for the Old Testament reading. The Apocrypha is not part of the Canon and is not the “Word of the Lord,” although it is important literature. If a reading is from the Apocrypha, the closing is “Here endeth the reading” at the Rite I service at the Chapel and “Here ends the reading” at the Brick Church. The people obviously should not say “Thanks be to God.” The service bulletin should tell them there is no response.
11. If you are in the Choir or are a Eucharistic Minister or Acolyte and have revered the Altar at the beginning of the service and also will serve as a Lector, you may reverence the altar before and after the reading.
12. First-time Lectors should familiarize themselves with the lectern a week or two before they read. Make sure you know how to turn on the light at the Chapel lectern. If you change the height of the lectern but will be followed by someone else in the same service who needs a different height, be considerate and adjust the height back before leaving the lectern.

Thank you for serving in this vital ministry. Well-read lessons can enhance and deepen someone’s experience of worship.

Portions of the above are adapted from St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Diamondhead, Massachusetts.

This set of guidelines was prepared by Rich Johnson, ceulung@comcast.net, ph 410.867.1593; please contact him with recommended corrections or updates.

Guidelines for announcing lessons:

Lesson is from:

Announce as:

Close with:

(Old Testament)

Genesis	A Reading from the Book of Genesis	The Word of the Lord
Exodus	A Reading from the Book of Exodus	The Word of the Lord
Leviticus	A Reading from the Book of Leviticus	The Word of the Lord
Numbers	A Reading from the Book of Numbers	The Word of the Lord
Deuteronomy	A Reading from the Book of Deuteronomy	The Word of the Lord
Joshua	A Reading from the Book of Joshua	The Word of the Lord
Judges	A Reading from the Book of Judges	The Word of the Lord
Ruth	A Reading from the Book of Ruth	The Word of the Lord
1 Samuel	A Reading from the First Book of Samuel	The Word of the Lord
2 Samuel	A Reading from the Second Book of Samuel	The Word of the Lord
1 Kings	A Reading from the First Book of Kings	The Word of the Lord
2 Kings	A Reading from the Second Book of Kings	The Word of the Lord
1 Chronicles	A Reading from First Chronicles	The Word of the Lord
2 Chronicles	A Reading from Second Chronicles	The Word of the Lord
Ezra	A Reading from the Book of Ezra	The Word of the Lord
Nehemiah	A Reading from the Book of Nehemiah	The Word of the Lord
Esther	A Reading from the Book of Esther	The Word of the Lord
Job	A Reading from the Book of Job	The Word of the Lord
Psalms	The Appointed Psalm for today is . . .	<i>Normally no closing</i>
Proverbs	A Reading from the Book of Proverbs	The Word of the Lord
Ecclesiastes	A Reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes	The Word of the Lord
Song of Solomon	A Reading from Song of Songs	The Word of the Lord
Isaiah	A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah	The Word of the Lord
Jeremiah	A Reading from the Prophet Jeremiah	The Word of the Lord
Lamentations	A Reading from Lamentations	The Word of the Lord
Ezekiel	A Reading from the Prophet Ezekiel	The Word of the Lord
Daniel	A Reading from the Prophet Daniel	The Word of the Lord
Hosea	A Reading from the Prophet Hosea	The Word of the Lord
Joel	A Reading from the Prophet Joel	The Word of the Lord
Amos	A Reading from the Prophet Amos	The Word of the Lord
Obadiah	A Reading from the Prophet Obadiah	The Word of the Lord
Jonah	A Reading from the Book of Jonah	The Word of the Lord
Micah	A Reading from the Prophet Micah	The Word of the Lord
Nahum	A Reading from the Prophet Nahum	The Word of the Lord
Habakkuk	A Reading from the Prophet Habakkuk	The Word of the Lord
Zephaniah	A Reading from the Prophet Zephaniah	The Word of the Lord
Haggai	A Reading from the Prophet Haggai	The Word of the Lord
Zechariah	A Reading from the Prophet Zechariah	The Word of the Lord
Malachi	A Reading from the Prophet Malachi	The Word of the Lord

(The Apocrypha)

1 Esdras	A Reading from the First Book of Esdras	Here ends* the reading
2 Esdras	A Reading from the Second Book of Esdras	Here ends* the reading
Tobit	A Reading from the Book of Tobit	Here ends* the reading
Judith	A Reading from the Book of Judith	Here ends* the reading
Additions to Esther	A Reading from Additions to Esther	Here ends* the reading
Wisdom of Solomon	A Reading from the Wisdom of Solomon	Here ends* the reading
Ecclesiasticus	A Reading from the Book of Ecclesiasticus	Here ends* the reading
Baruch	A Reading from the Book of Baruch	Here ends* the reading

Guidelines for announcing lessons, continued:

Lesson is from:

Announce as:

Close with:

Letter of Jeremiah	A Reading from the Letter of Jeremiah	Here ends* the reading
Prayer of Azariah	A Reading from the Prayer of Azariah	Here ends* the reading
Susanna	A Reading from Susanna	Here ends* the reading
Bel and the Dragon	A Reading from Bel and the Dragon	Here ends* the reading
Prayer of Manasseh	A Reading from the Prayer of Manasseh	Here ends* the reading
1 Maccabees	A Reading from the First Book of the Maccabees	Here ends* the reading
2 Maccabees	A Reading from the Second Book of the Maccabees	Here ends* the reading

(* In Rite I, at the 8 AM service, use "endeth")

(New Testament)

Matthew	A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew	The Word of the Lord
Mark	A Reading from the Gospel According to Mark	The Word of the Lord
Luke	A Reading from the Gospel According to Luke	The Word of the Lord
John	A Reading from the Gospel According to John	The Word of the Lord
The Acts	A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles	The Word of the Lord
Romans	A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans	The Word of the Lord
1 Corinthians	A Reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians	The Word of the Lord
2 Corinthians	A Reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians	The Word of the Lord
Galatians	A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Galatians	The Word of the Lord
Ephesians	A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians	The Word of the Lord
Philippians	A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians	The Word of the Lord
Colossians	A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Colossians	The Word of the Lord
1 Thessalonians	A Reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians	The Word of the Lord
2 Thessalonians	A Reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians	The Word of the Lord
1 Timothy	A Reading from the First Letter of Paul to Timothy	The Word of the Lord
2 Timothy	A Reading from the Second Letter of Paul to Timothy	The Word of the Lord
Titus	A Reading from the Letter of Paul to Titus	The Word of the Lord
Philemon	A Reading from the Letter of Paul to Philemon	The Word of the Lord
Hebrews	A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews	The Word of the Lord
James	A Reading from the Book of James	The Word of the Lord
1 Peter	A Reading from the First Letter of Peter	The Word of the Lord
2 Peter	A Reading from the Second Letter of Peter	The Word of the Lord
1 John	A Reading from the First Letter of John	The Word of the Lord
2 John	A Reading from the Second Letter of John	The Word of the Lord
3 John	A Reading from the Third Letter of John	The Word of the Lord
Jude	A Reading from the Book of Jude	The Word of the Lord
Revelation	A Reading from the Revelation of Saint John the Divine	The Word of the Lord