

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Rev. William R. White, Rector

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Jack Allen, '09, Junior Warden

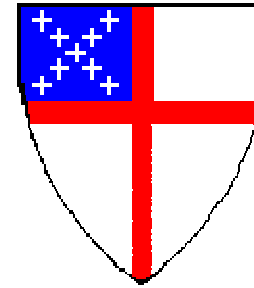
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Lynda Gilmore, '08
Patty Hourin, '09
Bob Saucier, '09
Don Ball, '10
Karen Hector, '10
Tyrone Sartin, '10

Lou Crowe, Treasurer
Gwen Montjoy, Interim Clerk

Debbye Jones, Parish Administrator
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Alana Rutledge, Organist and Music Director
Penny Edwards, Youth Minister
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ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

GUIDELINES FOR LECTORS

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. 2 Timothy 3:16

SOME DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

Lector: One of the ministers of the liturgy who reads the Scripture text for the service. At St. Thomas, the reader of the Old Testament lesson usually comes forward from the congregation to offer the reading. The Psalm (sometimes sung by the Cantor) and New Testament readings usually are offered by Chalice bearers who are vested and seated behind the communion rail. In these roles the Chalice bearers function as Lectors. Chalice bearers also usually read the Prayers of the People, and this booklet should be consulted for guidance in reading the prayers as well.

Lectionary: The cycle of readings specified for Sunday worship. Most services include readings 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.

Lectionary Book: The three ring binder containing the text of the readings for each service. It is on the Lectern on the Epistle side (right facing the altar) of the church. The readings are in 18 point type and are arranged in order of the Sundays of the church year, starting with the first Sunday of Advent. Lectors read from the Lectionary Book and not the service bulletin. Each reader, except the last, should leave the Lectionary Book in the proper place for the next reader. The Prayers of the People are not in the Lectionary Book, and are read from the service bulletin or Prayer Book.

Lectern: The stand for the Lectionary Book and the place from which the readings (other than the Gospel) are proclaimed.

still will go to the center to reverence the altar before and after the reading. Sometimes, however, the procession will not unfold in this way, and you will be seated on the left side. In this case, remember to reverence the altar both times as you cross in front of it.

6. The lessons should be read from the Lectionary Book on the lectern, and should not be read from your service bulletin. This book includes the Psalms. Do not carry your service bulletin to the Lectern. Again, leave the Lectionary Book on the proper page for the next reader.

Thank you for your commitment to proclaim God's word.

Fr. Bill

7. Read at a natural pace but pronounce each word distinctly. There is a tendency for some readers to read ponderously or unnaturally slow, which detracts from the reading. If you go too fast someone will advise you for future reference.
8. Follow printed punctuation. Avoid “verbal periods” (dropping your voice) where there are no printed periods. Also avoid this tendency to use verbal periods where there are commas or semicolons. If a word in mid-sentence is to be emphasized, then emphasize it by voice pitch. Do not hesitate before or after the word just for emphasis.

ADDITIONAL GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR LECTORS

1. 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. Please give your substitute the benefit of any preparation you have done. Also notify Debbye at 255-9213 or deb@stthomasdiamondhead.org that there will be a substitute reader.
2. Please be at church fifteen minutes before the beginning of the service and check in with someone in the sacristy to let them know you are present.
3. Fr. Bill normally will check that the correct readings are on the lectern and ensure that the Book is turned to the proper page. You might check with him to see if this has been done. In any event, you should know the name of the liturgical day (i.e., 2 Advent, 4 Easter, Proper 18) so that you easily can find the page if necessary when you read.
4. If you are vested and in the procession, please go to the foyer area as soon as you vest and be ready to join the prayer offered by those in the procession.
5. If you are in the procession, it might be easier to enter so that you are seated on the right side of the sanctuary as you face the altar (the Epistle side) because you will read from the right side. You

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 our 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.

THE LECTOR AND THE WORD

Therefore we thank you for undertaking the work of a Lector. As you respond to God’s call to the ministry of reading and proclaiming his Word, 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.

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.

THE FOUR “P’S” OF EFFECTIVE READING

Scripture should not be read for the first time at the lectern on Sunday morning. A Lector’s schedule is prepared prior to each month, and you will know when you are scheduled to read during the following month. The schedule is in the newsletter and on the home page of the website at www.stthomasdiamondhead.com.

The following steps should be considered in connection with your responsibility to effectively read Scripture:

Prayer. After you know you will be reading, it is helpful to review the text and pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit to open its meaning to you, and to guide you as you begin to prepare.

Preparation. Read the text several times in advance as you discern its meaning and significance. If you have questions, you might consult secondary sources for additional perspectives. These include footnotes in your Bible, commentaries from the church library, the internet, and other resources the church can provide.

Practice. After you have a sense of the 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.

EFFECTIVE READING ON SUNDAY

The way in which Lectors read will vary from person to person. There is no “one size fits all” approach, and your personality and understanding of the reading should be evident. Even so, certain common approaches are helpful. They include:

1. Readers at St. Thomas “reverence the altar” (stop on the first riser above the floor in front of the altar and bow slightly) before and after reading. This should be a normal and natural but deliberate movement, and it should not be casual or hurried.
2. Stand at an appropriate distance from the microphone for you. The equipment will pick up your voice at about 3 to 5 inches. Adjust the microphone so that it is directly in front of your mouth. Your toes should be not more than 1 inch away from the base of the Lectern and you may want to place your toes under the Lectern. If ever in doubt, stand closer.
3. Contrary to some views, it is not a priority 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. Feel free to use your finger to track your place along the margin as you read. This will not be visible to the congregation.
4. Announce the reading by saying “A reading from the [first][second] Book of xxxxx,” or “A reading from the [first][second] Letter to the xxxxx.” At St. Thomas we do not refer to the chapter or verse number. Also, do not refer to it as a first or second reading, or as an Old or New Testament reading, or as a letter of Paul. Psalms normally are read responsively by whole verse when they are not sung, although at times they might be read in other ways.
5. At the conclusion of the reading pause briefly, raise your eyes, look at the congregation, and firmly say “The Word of the Lord” (an exception is below). 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.”
6. 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 ends the reading.” The people obviously should not say “Thanks be to God.” The service bulletin should tell them there is no response.