

Lector Training Notes

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Present: Millie Mitchell, Hannah Pots, Gary Pope-Sears, Mark Pritchard, Holly Stevens, Meg Bell, Mother Hannah Wilder.

Theology of the Ministry

- A lector is not merely “someone reading aloud.” A reading is not “something to get through.”
- This may be the only time people engage with the Bible all week, or all month.
- You are a minister of the Word.
- In the liturgy, scripture is proclaimed, not performed casually.
- Your task is to help the congregation hear and receive God’s Word clearly and reverently.
- Lector training required before serving. Lectoring is a real liturgical ministry worthy of formation.
- When you read in worship, you are not showcasing your personality. You are lending your voice to the Church’s proclamation of scripture. That theological framing matters. Shift out of “school presentation mode.”
- It’s also something we are presenting to the congregation, and it is good to connect with the words to help the stories come alive, without being theatrical.
- We want to make the scriptures accessible to people.
- Read Scripture like you would drink a fine wine, or other item you enjoy. Savor it. Relish it. Engage with it. Be present to it.

Understanding the Role

Expectations:

Before Sunday

- Read assigned lesson several times in advance
- Look up unfamiliar words/pronunciations
- Study context/meaning of passage
- Pray with the text before proclaiming it
- Feel free to create your own copy that is at the exact font size, color, and pagination preference. Just set it on the lectern before the service begins.

On Sunday

- Arrive early
- Check in with clergy/worship leader
- Review lectern/microphone setup
- Confirm reading assignment/translation
- Sit where you can move smoothly to the lectern

During Reading

- Walk reverently
- Pause before beginning
- Make eye contact if appropriate
- Read slowly and clearly; enunciate!
- Use your finger to guide you along and keep your place.
- Pause for punctuation and paragraph shifts
- Conclude properly, and with a good pause after the reading ends and before you say:
 - “The Word of the Lord.”
 - Wait for response before moving

Mechanics of Excellent Reading

Pace

- Slower than normal conversation
- Then slower than that
- Nervous readers rush

Volume

- Project from diaphragm
- Trust microphone but do not mumble
- Distance from mic matters
- Don't turn head away while speaking
- Breathe at punctuation
- Avoid running out of air mid-sentence

Punctuation Matters

Punctuation makes meaning; it is not grammar trivia.

- **Comma:** brief pause
- **Period:** full stop
- **Semicolon/colon:** thoughtful transition pause
- **Paragraph break:** larger pause/new movement of thought
- **Quotation marks:** slight tonal shift if natural

Emphasis / Inflection

- Read for meaning, not monotone
- Avoid theatrical overacting (very important, especially in the Episcopal Church)
- Natural reverence > dramatic performance

Eye Contact

- Brief glances up are welcome
- But clarity matters more than forced eye contact

Scripture Preparation Skills

Mark Up the Text

- Underline emphasis words
- Slash marks for pauses
- Circle difficult names
- Highlight paragraph transitions

Understand the Passage

Ask:

- Who is speaking?
- What is happening?
- What is the emotional tone?
- Where is the tension/turning point?
- What kind of literature is this?
 - Narrative?
 - Poetry?
 - Prophecy?
 - Epistle?

A lector who understands the text reads dramatically better.

Pronunciation Resources

If you read a name with one pronunciation, keep reading it with the same pronunciation throughout the whole reading.

Some trusted tools:

Biblical Pronunciation

- **BibleGateway Audio Bibles**
Hear many names pronounced aloud
- **YouTube pronunciation searches**
Search: “How to pronounce Habakkuk Bible”
- **Forvo**
Great general pronunciation database
- **Blue Letter Bible**
Includes pronunciation tools and lexical helps

Commentary / Context

Recommend simple accessible resources:

- **Working Preacher: workingpreacher.org**
Excellent lectionary commentary
- **The Bible Project: bibleproject.com**
Fantastic overview videos
- Ask clergy if uncertain: rector@stpaulssparks.org or 619-200-5036 (text).

St. Paul's Standards

These are a work in progress; feel free to discuss with Mother Hannah.

- Dress appropriately for worship leadership; a little nicer outfit can help us feel more confident
- No chewing gum/coffee at lectern
- Phones silenced
- No ad-libbing or commentary
- Use approved introduction/conclusion wording only
- If you make a mistake:
 - Don't apologize
 - Correct if needed and continue calmly