

# The Ministry of Lectors and Intercessors

## St. Thomas Episcopal Church

### Lectors: Introduction

Lectors are those appointed to proclaim the Word of God at celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, the Daily Offices, and other liturgies.

By custom and rubric, at the Holy Eucharist a Deacon (or priest) proclaims the Gospel; the Lector reads the passages appointed from the Old and New Testaments, other than the Gospel.

*"How beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim the good news."* Says Paul, quoting Isaiah.

The faithful, intentional proclamation of the Word blesses the hearers and the one proclaiming.

### Fulfilling the Ministry of Lector

1. Readings are sent from the Church Office in advance. It is crucial that you practice the Readings in preparation for worship. Do this aloud. If unable to serve as scheduled it is the Lector's responsibility to secure a replacement.
2. If you encounter difficult words, consult the Pronunciation Dictionary in the Clergy Sacristy, or ask one of the clergy well in advance of worship.
3. Arrive for worship at least 10 minutes before worship begins. Check that book at the Lectern contains the appointed Readings. Check that the microphone is in proper position: directly in front of your mouth, at a distance of about 8 inches.
4. It is best to sit more near the front of the Church, on the Lectern side.
5. At the Holy Eucharist the first Reading occurs after the Collect of the Day (printed in the 10am bulletin). At the conclusion of the Collect of the Day, move to the Chancel steps; do not come forward during the Collect of the Day.
6. You may reverence the Altar (bowing from the waist) either before or after you negotiate the steps. After negotiating the steps (and reverencing if not done so before) move to the Lectern. By this the time congregation should be "settled" after sitting down.
- 7.

Acoustically, St. Thomas is a sound absorbing space. Speaking in a normal voice will not get the job done, even with a microphone. *You must **pro-ject** your voice. It is especially deceiving that the Lector & Intercessor are closer to a speaker than anyone in the building. The volume at which you hear your own voice is **NOT WHAT THE CONGREGATION HEARS.** Before beginning take a very large breath through your nose. During the reading, take deep breaths. Someone behind the closed Narthex door should be able to hear you.*

8. Introduce the first reading: "A Reading from \_\_\_\_." Keep it simple. Example: "A Reading from Romans. Do not use complicated designations, such as: "A Reading from Blessed Paul the Apostle's Epistle to the Christians in the city of Rome".
9. Proclaim the reading intentionally. It is better to be a bit slow, than too fast. Read in such a way that you will insure every *one* will hear *every* word.
10. At the conclusion of the 1st Reading, pause briefly and say, "'The Word of the Lord.'" No other 'epilogue' is used. This is the cue for the congregation to express thanks to God for the gift of Scripture just heard.

11. Step back a pace or so from the Lectern and turn to face the pulpit. The Psalm follows.
12. At the conclusion of the Psalm, step back to the Lectern and proclaim the 2nd Reading, practicing the ideals contained in numbers 7, 8, 9 and 10 above.
13. At the conclusion of the 2nd Reading, the Lector reverences the Altar, before or after descending the Chancel steps and returns to his/her place in the congregation (if a Chorister, reverence the Altar appropriately and return to her/his place).

#### **Intercessors: Introduction**

1. Intercessors share with Lectors the ministry of proclamation: in this case the proclamation of the congregation's prayers for the Church, the world, the Diocese and the parish.
2. By rubric and the ancient custom of the Church Catholic, at the 10am Eucharist the Deacon presides during the Prayers of the People. At 81. Thomas this is accomplished by the Deacon introducing the Prayers of the People, offering intercession according to the Anglican, Diocesan and parish cycles of prayer, and bidding the people to pray. The Intercessor voices and leads the congregation's prayers.

#### **Fulfilling the Ministry of Intercessor**

3. The Prayers of the People are sent from the Church Office in advance. It is crucial that you practice in preparation for worship. Do this aloud. If unable to serve as scheduled it is the Intercessor's responsibility to secure a replacement.
4. Arrive at least 10 minutes before worship. Check the Lectern that the right form is there. Insure that the book is opened to the first reading before leaving the Lectern.
5. See Lector 4. above. The Prayers of the People occur after the Nicene Creed. Do not move towards the Lectern until the Creed has concluded. Having arrived at the Lectern, check the position of the microphone; see Lector 3. above.
6. See Lector 6, 7 and 9 above.
7. At the 10am Eucharist, the Deacon introduces the Prayers, offers the intercessions from the various prayer cycles, directs the congregation to the proper page in the Prayer Book, and bids the people pray. As clearly indicated on the Intercession form, the Intercessor then leads the prayers.
8. At the conclusion of the prayers, step one or two paces back from the lectern and turn to face the pulpit. Remain in this position until the peace is announced and the congregation responds. As the Peace is being exchanged you may return to your place, making the appropriate reverence to the Altar.

## **Basic Techniques of Successful Lay Readers**

- Practice your assigned reading aloud several times before Sunday
- Move to the Lectern quickly – no actual running, but no holy “Procession of the Reader” either.
- Reverence the Altar before moving to the lectern.
- Read slowly and pause briefly at each period.
- Stand tall and take a deep breath before beginning.
- Read slowly and pause briefly at each period.
- Check with one of the clergy if you have questions about the pronunciation of words in the passage
- Read slowly and pause briefly at each period.
- At the end of your reading, pause briefly before you say (with confidence) “The Word of the Lord”.
- As you return to your seat, reverence the Altar.
- If you think you are reading too slowly, it’s probably just about right for the congregation. If you pause briefly at each period, it gives the congregation time to “catch up” with you.

***Thanks for your dedicated service to God and God’s people!***