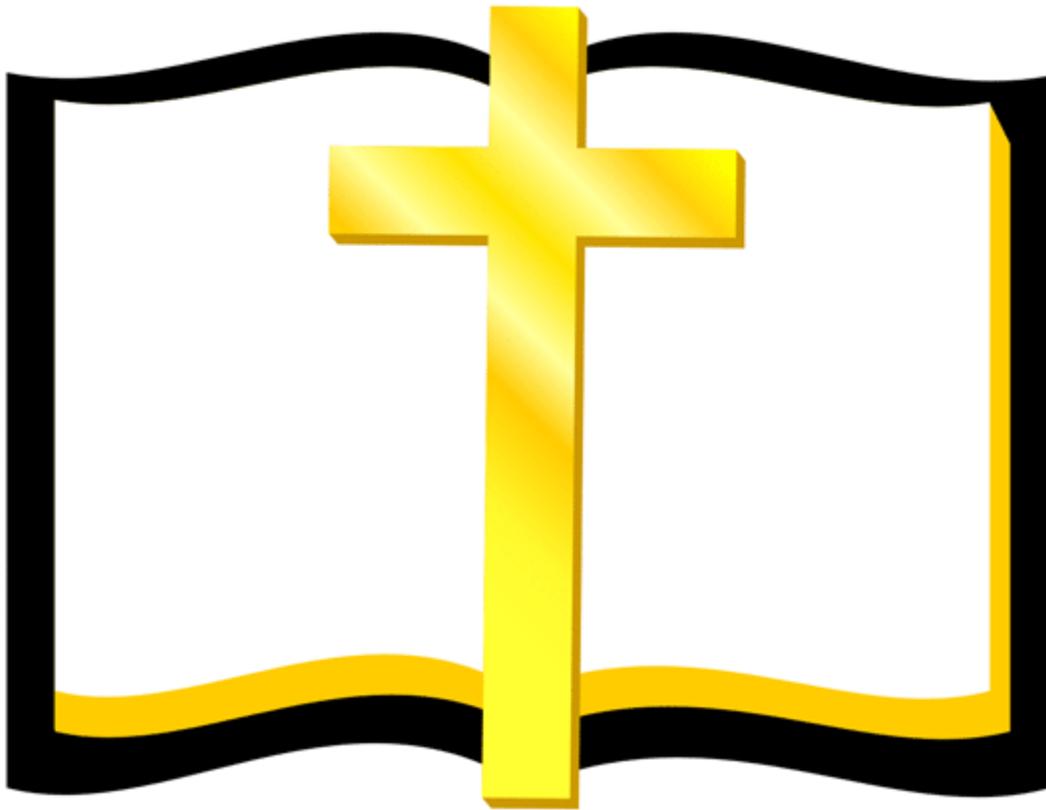


# THE LECTOR HANDBOOK



Holy Trinity Lutheran Church  
20735 Leonard Road  
Lutz, FL 33558

## **The Ministry of the Lector**

The assisting minister who reads the First and Second Lessons is called the lector. Along with the preacher, you will proclaim the Word of God to the gathered people. This is a major part of our worship. Hearing God's Word is one of the major reasons for gathering to worship. Without God's Word, we would be deprived of the counsel and consolation we all need. When the lector stands before the worshiping assembly to speak the words of Holy Scripture, God's voice is being heard and God's will is being revealed. These are "the words of eternal life," and it is the lector's job to deliver such words to the gathered assembly in such a way that God's voice can be heard and understood.

How the lector proclaims the Word is a witness to what the church thinks about God's Word. If a lector reads thoughtlessly, carelessly or irreverently, some people may think that our church holds the Bible in low esteem. Remember that you are reading our Christian family story. So, read as if you are telling the story just like you would tell your friends or family about something that happened to you—with expression, enthusiasm and ease. Sometimes it's tough because they seem like one long sentence or have names that are a struggle to pronounce—that is why it is important to read, understand and prepare ahead of time.

If you visited a Jewish synagogue service or attended the Divine Liturgy of the Greek Orthodox Church, you would be impressed with the reverence that surrounds the reading of the Word. It is always done with such a sense of caring and devotion; even a stranger can detect that something profound is happening. Although the Lutheran church is known as the church of the Bible and has a high regard for the Word, our worship practices have not always reflected such a tradition. This is especially true when lectors read from a bulletin or use a paraphrase of the Bible. The church and the Word of God

deserve better treatment. This is why we have the readings prepared in advance. Because of the lectors' important specialized ministry, lectors need adequate training to fulfill their ministry - to proclaim the written Word of God. This handbook along with regular training sessions will enable the lectors of our church to fulfill their calling.

## **Lector Duties**

### **Scheduling**

Lectors will be assigned to either the 8:00 am or 10:30 am service. All lectors will share in reading at special evening services (i.e. Lent, Holy Week, and Christmas Eve). The church office will email or mail out a Lector Schedule and the next week's Lector is included in the bulletin each week. **If you are unable to attend your assigned service, you are responsible for alerting the office at least a week in advance.** Once you have verified you will be absent call the church office (813-949-7173) to inform the church's office administrator.

If needed, you can call after office hours and leave a message on the answering machine, or e-mail [htlutzoffice@verizon.net](mailto:htlutzoffice@verizon.net). If it's a last minute change, please notify the pastor as well as the church office. Please contact an Elder if you have any questions or concerns.

*The following section lists step by step duties.*

### **Before the Service**

1. Prepare yourself to read the lessons using the following sections also in this Handbook: Preparing to Lector, Appendix A Reading Techniques and Appendix B Lectionary Pronunciation Guide.
2. Arrive 10 minutes before the service is to begin. Check in with the pastor and/or Duty Elder or both to alert them you are in attendance and also to get special instructions, if any.
3. **ADJUST THE MICROPHONE TO POINT TO YOUR MOUTH.** Don't be shy about touching it. It's important to be heard.

4. Check to see that the readings are on the Lectern and ready for you to read.
5. Sit toward the front of the sanctuary. This will enable you to quickly and unobtrusively walk to the pulpit.

### **During the Service**

7. The lector should walk to the pulpit immediately following the Prayer of the Day. Be careful going up and down the steps to the Lectern.
8. Announce the lesson EXACTLY as written:

**[L] The Old Testament Reading is from \_\_\_\_\_.**

**[L] The Epistle Reading is from \_\_\_\_\_.**

*There is no need to embellish the brief, succinct, and adequate announcement. Nor is there a need to indicate the verses that are included in the reading; the people need to give full attention to the hearing of the Word. Since people have different listening styles, some will be listening while watching the lector, some will be listening with their eyes closed and some will be following along in the bulletin. Also, it is sufficient to let the Word speak for itself, making it unnecessary to announce any greeting!*

9. Following the lesson, the lector and congregation will say:

**[L] This is the Word of the Lord.**

**[C] Thanks be to God!**

10. There may be a reading, choir piece or congregational hymn between readings. If there is a reading for the Lector you will receive that special reading when you receive the Bible readings. If there is a choir piece or congregational hymn, you may be seated in the front row during the singing.

11. Return to the pulpit during the singing of the final stanza.

12. Read the Second Lesson following the instructions in 7 and 8.

13. Return to your seat in the congregation.

## **Appendix A**

### **Reading Preparation**

#### **The Lessons**

The lessons for the day, so that you can prepare in advance, may be found at <http://www.lcms.org/resources/worship/lectionary>. The lesson for a particular Sunday may be changed due to special circumstances. As noted previously, you will receive a copy of the readings in advance via email or regular mail. When you lector, you will be reading from the Lectern which will have a copy of the lessons previously sent to you. You may want to bring your copy with you in case of slip up.

#### **Reading with understanding**

The lector's first responsibility is to study the appointed lessons, to know their meaning and to practice reading them aloud. Good reading involves understanding the meaning of the lessons. Lectors are encouraged to attend regular Bible study at church and to contact the pastor if you have any questions about the meaning of the lessons. The lector should read with clear and careful pronunciation and enunciation. This can best be achieved through several practice readings **aloud** and through learning to pronounce correctly the various languages and names found in the Bible. The lector should not resort to affectation or to a preacher's tone when reading the lessons. You can learn a lot from the clear and distinct diction of a top-

notch TV or radio news anchor. If your schedule is such that on a regular basis you are not able to practice reading the lessons prior to the service please step-back from this ministry until such time as you are able to give this office the dedicated attention it requires. The following Reading Techniques section and the Lectionary Pronunciation Guide will help you improve your public reading.

## **Appendix B**

### **Reading Techniques**

The practice of public reading requires at least four things: good tone production and projection, clear pronunciation and enunciation, a comfortable pace, and correct emphasis of words.

#### **Tone Production and Projection**

Lift your head and project your voice to the back of the room. Don't shout, but remember that bodies absorb sound, not to mention moving around makes some noise. Also, some folks are hard of hearing. Lifting your face will allow people to lip read, as well as help you to project. There are several basic rules of tone production and projection. A vocal tone is produced by a column of air coming from the lungs which causes the voice box to vibrate. For the column of air to be strong and regular, it must be supported from the diaphragm. When you are reading, stand up straight with your rib cage in an upright position and squeeze the air out of your lungs using your diaphragm. Breath support is the first essential to proper tone production.

The second essential is adequate quantities of air. This requires deep breathing, which is easy and natural when your posture is correct. One deep breath between major pauses, with smaller, “catch breaths” at natural breaks in the verbal line should keep adequate support under one’s tone. Try never to feel short of breath toward the end of a sentence. To improve your endurance, practice this simple exercise: Stand erect with your rib cage upright and your diaphragm tight. Take a long, deep breath and count slowly and aloud as you exhale. See how many numbers it takes before you run out of breath. Do this several times a day to build up your lung capacity and breath control. Another major element in tone production is pitch. The higher your speaking pitch the faster the air is being released from your lungs, the lower the pitch the more support the column of air needs because it is being released slowly.

A medium pitch within your normal speaking range will use your air supply the most efficiently. It is easiest to use your normal speaking pitch when reading aloud. Even though you are speaking louder than normal, speak at the same pitch.

### **Clear Pronunciation and Enunciation**

For speaking purposes, consider a word to be made up of vowel sounds that are cut off and divided by consonants. The sounds that project and can be heard in a large room are the vowels. The sounds that distinguish one vowel from another and make the word intelligible are the consonants. To make the word audible the vowels must project clearly. To make the word intelligible, the consonants must be crisp and distinguishable. Projecting a vowel sound is primarily a question of placement (where the vibration occurs in your head). The further forward in the head and the more rounded the lips during the production of the vowel sound, the more clearly it will project. For example, pronounce “alleluia,” with all its vowels; first with your lips nearly in a smiling position.

Listen to the “a” sound. Then produce just that “a” sound. Continue to make that sound while moving the lips more nearly into a circle and dropping your jaw. Listen for the difference in the “a” sound as it is transformed by the lip movement. Then try projecting several of the possible “a” sounds you have just produced, speaking as loudly as possible, the rounder the lips, the further the projection. A reading tone should be as round as the proper pronunciation of the words will allow.

For speaking purposes, consonants serve three purposes: they initiate words; they divide syllables; they end words and separate them from their neighbors.

Most consonants, as long as they are pronounced clearly, provide a minimum of difficulty. Some, however, especially as initiating or terminal consonants, need to be watched carefully. The “sharp” consonants (b, c/k, d, p, t) if not pronounced carefully, tend to disappear.

## **Pace**

As a general rule, all public reading should be slower than normal speech patterns, unless your patterns are unusually slow. Until you are sure of your reading pace, it might be well to have someone else listen to you practice reading aloud. Practice reading at several speeds, have them tell you at what pace the language was most easily heard. Then, practice at that pace until it becomes second nature.

## **Emphasis**

The proper emphasis on the various words within a sentence is derived from the role that the individual words and phrases play within the structure of the sentence. No matter how long or complicated a

sentence becomes, it has three benchmarks to which everything must relate: the subject, the verb, and the complement. Once you have identified these sentence parts, the structure of the sentence will be clear. It is then possible to emphasize the main words and relate the rest to each other by appropriate tone of voice.

There are several common pitfalls in public reading. One common one is to emphasize the preposition in a prepositional phrase (to, of, for, after, among, etc.). Only in the rarest of circumstances is the preposition emphasized. It is always the noun which receives the emphasis. In the Scriptures there is an abnormally large number of “and’s.” Quite often you will find these being emphasized. In classical times punctuation had not been invented, so the word “and” was ordinarily used much as we would use a comma today.

Until you are use to reading aloud at the lectern with the microphone on and the chairs filled with people, it would be helpful to have another lector give you some feedback on your reading. This is also a helpful practice on occasion for the “old pros.”

## **Appendix C**

### **Lectionary Pronunciation Guide**

Go to: <http://betterdaysarecoming.com/bible/pronunciation.html>

or contact the office