

Lector's Advisory

Prepared February 5, 2006

Lectors:

Thank you for agreeing to read the lessons. This is a vitally important part of worship, and we deeply appreciate your willingness to serve in such a visible and, for many, anxiety-provoking way. Here are a few thoughts about the best lector's practices that your colleagues have been able to identify:

1. Preparation. Of course, you'll want to practice reading your texts aloud. They're listed in last week's bulletin and on the University Lutheran Church of Hope web site (<http://www.ulch.org/scriptures.asp>). Administrator Craig Wiester in the church office will also be happy to e-mail or snail-mail them to your home; he's at 612-331-5988, ex. 10.
2. Before the service, arrive early and check the Book at the pulpit to make sure that the text is the same as that printed in the bulletin. You wouldn't think this would ever be necessary, but safe really is better than sorry. Always take your bulletin with you when you go to read, just in case the Book is turned to the wrong page or whatever.
3. At most services, the children's sermon immediately precedes the first lesson. If you're sitting far away from the pulpit, this is a good time to make your way toward it. As soon as the kids are dismissed, move to the pulpit.
4. Don't wait for the kids to be entirely settled down in the pews; begin the first lesson as soon as you feel the attention of the congregation on you. There is no need to cite chapter and verse of the lesson you're about to read; that's all spelled out in the bulletin. It is enough to say, for example, "Our first reading is from Genesis." Then begin the reading. End it with "The Word of the Lord," as it appears on the page before you.
5. Usually the first lesson will be followed by a Psalm. Don't go all the way back to your seat, unless your seat is close. As the Psalm is ending, return to the pulpit for the second reading. Be ready to begin as soon as the Psalm has died away.
6. Now, about the reading itself: Strive to make your delivery clear and deliberate, but not ponderous. Remember that the congregation is reading along with you, because the text is printed in the bulletin. When their eyes are racing ahead of you, you'll frustrate them if you ... read ... too ... slowly. Try to read at a conversational pace. These are sacred texts, to be sure, but they are meant above all to communicate. Read them as you would a play: Know what the meaning is behind every line. If the meaning or a pronunciation isn't clear to you, do not hesitate to call the pastors for help.

Finally, remember that we are trying to pick up the pace of worship, to make people feel that we respect the demands we place on their time. Whenever worship seems too slow, we can be sure that some of our members are grumbling. We won't always be quick enough to satisfy them. But by showing that we are aware of the need to keep things moving, we at least show them that we understand and honor their concerns.

One more point: We're here because we love God and want to convey his message. Let's not be gloomy about it. Rejoice!