



Lector's Meeting

July 19th, 2026

St Andrew's Episcopal Church, Sedona, Arizona

The Lector's Role

In the Episcopal Church, worship is a participatory act that unites the congregation as the Body of Christ. Lectors serve as the voice of Scripture in our services, proclaiming God's Word to the gathered community.

When a Lector reads, they do more than simply convey words. They bring life to the sacred stories that form the foundation of our faith. Whether it's a passage from the Hebrew Bible, an Epistle, or a Psalm, their delivery enables God's Word to resonate in the hearts of those who listen.

This ministry also reflects the communal nature of Episcopal worship. While clergy preside over the sacraments and typically preach, the ministry of the Word is shared with laypeople. Lectors remind us that we are all called to participate in and share God's story.
(Rev. Kevin Powell)

Proclaiming the Word

The ministry of a Lector is to proclaim the Word.

From the Catechism (BCP, 853)

Q: Why do we call the Holy Scriptures the Word of God?

A: We call them the Word of God because God inspired their human authors and because God still speaks to us through the Bible.

Q: How do we understand the meaning of the Bible?

A: We understand the meaning of the Bible by the help of the Holy Spirit, who guides the Church in the true interpretation of the Scriptures.

Liturgy invites us to engage with God by utilizing all our senses. Scripture has, up until recently, been an oral and aural tradition. Hearing scripture read in liturgy provides a space to allow our hearts and imaginations to be drawn into the stories of God and God's people. Lectors tell these stories.

As a lector, you are a liturgical leader inviting people to hear something new, renewing, comforting, challenging, or disconcerting in God's Word. The focus is on God, the Word, and what God is speaking to each of us. You are involving people in the ancient and forever-continuing story of God's love for all creation.

Reading as Prayer in Liturgy

Prepare

- Read the passage aloud multiple times, perhaps in front of others.
- Take the time to study it, reflect on it.
- As you study a reading, reflect on its fundamental nature. Is it a letter? A discourse to a crowd? A story? Is it dialogue? A poem? A song? A metaphor? A warning? What is the passage's context in its Biblical book? Who wrote or said it? What are the emotions to be conveyed?
- If you aren't sure of how to say something, ask someone (your clergy probably has an opinion). Regardless, pronounce it with confidence. Honestly, very few other folks know how to say the word either.
- Read the passage again, aloud, as if you are telling the story, or reading the letter to an eagerly waiting community.
- If you are the intercessor, read the prayers of the people from the previous bulletin or the upcoming bulletin throughout the week. Make them a part of your regular prayer time.

Get in position

- Please be at church early enough to review your reading at the lectern and be done by 9:50 (the church is usually open by 8:30 for choir rehearsal).
- Upon arrival, practice placing the microphone at the lectern and work with James, our sound technician, in the back to ensure your volume and clarity are strong.
- Pray with the liturgical leadership team at 9:55 by the choir area.
- First Reader: Come to the lectern during the Collect of the Day.
- Second Reader: Come to the lectern at the end of the Psalm.
- Don't run or move too quickly. Walk with a good speed, but reverently.
- On special occasions, when the vergers are present, the vergers will meet you at your place and lead you to the lectern.
- Be in position and ready to read before the previous section of the service is complete.
- As you enter/leave, walk to the front of the altar table, pause, and bow your head towards the altar table. If you cross the main aisle, it is appropriate to reverence the altar before and after moving to the lectern.

- If you are reading scripture, use the lectionary book at the lectern (see details below). If needed, you can bring up a larger printed copy with notes or leave it at the lectern under the lectionary book.
- Intercessor: The Prayers of the People will be printed for you, or you can bring your Order of Service with you to read the prayers of the day.

Proclaim the Word

- Open the passage simply: “A reading from (name of the book)” or “A reading from Paul’s letter to the church at (name of city). Please do not cite the chapter and verse numbers or include any additional introduction (including a greeting).
- Tell the story, read the letter, say it like you mean it, but also be careful not to overdramatize the reading. The emphasis of the reading is on the Word, and the Lector’s ministry is to draw attention to the Word (not to themselves).
- Speak slowly and clearly to the people. Take your time reading. Force yourself to be slow and deliberate, never hurried. Let no one have a problem understanding or following you.
- Know when to pause. A slight pause after each sentence, sometimes more than once within a sentence, helps listeners follow the passage more intelligently. Pauses also mark transitions - from a narrative to a quotation, or a change in the situation being described.
- Speak loudly, even though we have a sound system. Speak to the last pew, not the first.
- If you know the passage well enough, look up, make eye contact.
- Pause at the end to allow everyone to digest the story in silence.
- After a brief pause, conclude with the phrase, “The Word of the Lord”, or “Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people,” depending on the Liturgical Rite of the Liturgy.
- If you make a mistake, ignore it and keep going. If you mangle the meaning of a sentence, simply back up and say it correctly. Don’t apologize, don’t be flustered, just clarify and go right on.
- If you are the intercessor, give people time to add their own prayers. You may also do so briefly.

Reading Source

- St. Andrew’s wants to use resources in ways that better impact the environment – i.e., by using less paper.
- We are returning to the use of the Lectionary Book, located on the Epistle Side lectern. This is a bound copy of the Sunday readings in large print.
- Lectors may add sticky notes to the pages in preparation for their proclamation of the word (these are found along with pencils in the lectern).
- Requests for printing can be accommodated, but to save paper and office time, Lectors are encouraged to print the readings at home.
- Prayers of the People – will continue to be printed.

Scheduling

- The Lector schedule coordinator is Richard Schreve. An email will be sent out a month in advance to schedule the lectors and intercessors for the coming month. Please watch for this email and respond promptly to assist in the scheduling.