

ST. THOMAS EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

READER GUIDELINES

Revised: October, 2015
Oct 1998; Oct 20015; Jul 2015

Thank you for agreeing to read the Holy Word of God. Your readings are one of the few times in the Service that are strictly just the Word of God as contrasted to the remainder of the Service such as the sermon, creed, liturgy and prayers which are man's words. It is indeed a privilege to read God's word.

1. Please prepare yourself both spiritually and mentally, as you are delivering a very important message.
2. You will receive an e-mail (or hard copy via the USPS) before your Sunday to read, which will contain the actual lessons you will read. If you do not receive your lessons within a week of your scheduled date to read, please call the church.

The Key is Preparation

1. Enlarging the print will make it much easier to read. A good guideline is to have each reading on its separate page.
2. **Practice reading** the lessons before Sunday (remember, we use the New Revised Standard Version). If it doesn't make sense to you, you cannot possibly tell it to someone else with any depth of meaning or passion. The readings have been selected to convey a unified message. See if you can connect the readings to find that message.
3. Go to the website <http://www.netministries.org/resources/resource-pronunciation-guide> for words you don't know how to pronounce. Type in the word and you will get the correct pronunciation. For additional assistance, contact the pastor **before** Sunday morning.
4. **Highlight/Underline Key Words/Phrases** that you want to emphasize. You have to be convincing, and this takes preparation. Almost anyone can get up on a Sunday morning, grab the readings for the day and read them. What does it sound like? Monotone, no emotion, no conviction.
5. **Add interest and meaning** by using the following techniques to emphasize your key words/phrases.
 - a) Change tone, up or down, especially when a character is speaking, e.g., different for when Jesus or a Pharisee is speaking.
 - b) Change your reading pace, sometimes slower or faster.
 - c) Vary your volume, to emphasize a point.
 - d) A pause is a good technique to focus attention
 - e) Use complete thoughts. Do not pause at each comma, or at the end of a line in the text. This is where prior study is a big help.
 - f) Don't rush! This is the biggest fault. Deliberately concentrate on reading at a pace which may seem very slow. Remember, those sitting before you have not read the text in advance.
6. **Practice aloud.** How do you sound?
7. **Stand straight, chin up, occasionally look at the congregation, and read loudly** - you do not have to lean into the microphone to be heard. This is where large print will be a big help.

8. **Walk** to the lectern and back to your pew, please don't run.
9. **Join with the pastors and other leaders of worship** in the sacristy 15 minutes before the beginning of worship for prayer, for any last minute instructions.
10. The focus is on the Word of God. This is not an appropriate time to say "Good Morning" to the congregation, or make announcements - this distracts from our focus on the Word.
11. During the singing of the Psalm, the reader may remain standing at the lectern.
(Please note that from time to time special music may be offered in place of the Psalm. Be sure to double check your bulletin as soon as you arrive to see if the Psalm has been omitted.)
12. Follow the prescribed beginning and closing for readings in the ELW:

Begin: "The first lesson (or reading) is from the ____ chapter of _____.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Please PAUSE for 2 seconds after the last word of the Reading is spoken, and before saying to the congregation, "The Word of the Lord".</i></p>
--

Congregation response: "**Thanks be to God.**"

13. If you are unable to read on your assigned Sunday, please line up a substitute, and inform the church office no later than Wednesday at Noon. This allows time to have the correct information in the bulletin.

Thank you for your service at St.Thomas Lutheran Church!