

The Lay Reader – A Gentle Guide

General Instructions and Reminders

Your purpose as Lay Reader and worship leader is to set a tone and, by your leadership, support the congregation's worship. It is an opportunity to serve the church, connect the worship experience to each other, and experience our own growth. As such, we owe it to God, each other, and ourselves to take the responsibility seriously, prepare well, and boldly minister!

Worship Service starts at 10:00 AM (Summer 9:00AM). You should plan to arrive at least fifteen minutes before worship to check with the pastor about any details or changes and to test and adjust the microphone.

You should receive a packet of information by the Friday before the Sunday you are assigned to be Lay Reader. The packet should include a copy of the bulletin with your required parts highlighted, as well as a copy of the Bible passage you are to read.

Please adjust the microphone appropriately. It is important that your mouth be in front of the microphone, but not so close that words “pop.” Arrange your papers so that you can see them clearly and keep yourself aligned with the microphone.

Speak slowly and clearly. Remember that some in the congregation do not hear well. If reading a unison passage along with the congregation, slow your pace to match them. Reading in unison always moves at a slower pace than reading alone.

When reading a call and response passage, such as the Call to Worship, read along with the part of the People, but at a lower volume.

Take some time to choose a meaningful Prayer for Illumination. (Note: Please do not always choose Prayer #1).

Communicate! Use tone of voice, rhythm of speech and modulation that conveys the emotional and spiritual content of the reading.

Rehearse your parts so that you are speaking to the congregation rather than reading. It is more important for you to speak to the people rather than get all the words “right.” If you give the sense of the words, you have done the job.

Do not worry about pronunciation of Hebrew and Greek names. Decide how you are going to say it and speak with confidence. One website to check Biblical pronunciations is <http://netministries.org/bbasics/bbwords.htm>. You could also ask the pastor.

Any part of the service marked with double asterisks (“**”) indicates that the congregation should stand as able.

The Lay Reader will sit in the chair to the left of the altar (nearest the choir loft), and will use the Lectern. The Pastor will sit in the chair to the right and will use both the Lectern and the Pulpit.

There is no need to be self-conscious about the situation, but do keep in mind that since you are up front, many eyes are on you. The basic rules of public decorum apply.

Lay Reader duties may vary on occasion; be flexible. Don't forget to smile.

The Service of Worship

Greetings and Announcements:

1. General greeting
2. Welcome to visitors
3. Invitation to Fellowship Hour
4. Sign the Welcome cards
5. Announcements

Example:

Good Morning. Welcome to Sunday morning worship at Hamilton Union Presbyterian Church.

We would especially like to welcome those of you who are visitors this morning. We are glad to have you with us and hope that you will join us after worship for coffee and fellowship. This will be held in the Educational Building, which is located at the end of the hall through the door at your right.

We invite guests to fill out a Welcome Card found in each pew. These can be either handed to an Usher or placed in the offering plate.

Are there any announcements?

Call to Worship:

After the Choral Introit, ask the congregation to rise, as able, for the Call to Worship.

Prayer for Illumination:

1. This will usually follow the Children's Message. Wait for just a bit to let the children leave and the congregation to settle.
2. Introduce the prayer with "Let us pray" or some other meaningful phrase.

Bible reading (often the Old Testament)

1. Announce the book, chapter, and verse you are going to read, as well as the page number.
2. Wait a few seconds so those who want to follow along can find the passage.
3. When reading, speak slowly and clearly. Keep the pace slow enough so that those are reading along can keep up with you.
4. The Scripture reading traditionally finishes with "This is the Word of the Lord." The congregation will usually respond with "Thanks be to God."

When you are finished, quietly and without ceremony collect your belongings and sit with the congregation.