



SAINT MARK'S  
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

## Reading Ministry Customary

9 am and 11 am services

*The Reading Ministry at Saint Mark's includes the roles of **Lector** (those who read the scripture), **Intercessor** (those who lead the Prayers of the People), and **Land Acknowledgment (LA) Reader** (those who offer the Land Acknowledgment at the beginning of the service).*

This Reading Ministry Customary provides general information, including:

- [Arrival Information](#)
- [Reading Tips](#)
- [Scheduling in Ministry Scheduler Pro](#)

and role-specific training details:

- [Lector](#)
- [Intercessor](#)
- [Land Acknowledgment Reader](#)

[GENERAL]

### Arrival Information

- **Arrive at least 15 minutes before each service. If you arrive later than 15 minutes, you will likely be replaced.** Please know that texting or emailing the day of the service is not likely to be seen/read and does not ensure your place is held. **Repeated late arrivals can result in being moved off the regular scheduling rota.**
- **Check in with the Sound Technician** (usually Michael Perera).
- **Make time to proceed to the [ambo](#) for a sound check prior to the service beginning.**
  - Review the text in the notebook/binder to ensure that it is correct.
  - Read over the text again out loud. Confirm with the Sound Technician that you are heard from the back of the nave.

- Practice any pronunciations.
- Ask if you have any additional questions – Sound Technician (9 am) and the Verger (11 am).
  
- **Dress with a mindset of not being a distraction** to the words that you are mediating to the congregation (ex: no ripped jeans, flip flops, cutoff shorts, hats, shoes with loud heels, tank tops, distracting patterns/colors). Vesting for reading ministries is not required.
  
- **Sit in an area that is accessible to the ambo** (center or right sections of the nave, preferably toward the front and on or close to the aisle). For the 11 am service, ensure that the Verger knows where you are sitting *before* taking your seat for the service.

### Reading Tips

- **Remove your mask**, if wearing, before ascending the stairs to the ambo.
  
- **Slow down your pace.** The two biggest complaints received are: 1) *“They read too fast,”* and 2) *“I can't hear them.”*
  - Avoid these by:
    - Steadying your pace.** You are probably talking too fast if you don't feel that you are speaking slower than you usually speak.
    - Articulating your words.** Remember to breathe and that the microphone is there to pick up your voice – you don't have to shout to be heard.
  
- **Be mindful of the microphone.** The microphone is highly sensitive and does not need to be adjusted, regardless of its direction. **Please, please, please do not touch the microphone.**
  - **Tip:** When reading from pages on the right side of the binder, try to move your body (and the binder) to the left and NOT to the right. This makes it easier for the microphone to pick up the sound more clearly.
  
- **Enunciate your words** – especially the consonants – by clearly articulating all the sounds that make up the word. A common mistake in enunciation is to drop the “d” or “t” sound from the end of a word. This can create a *very different* meaning.
  - Examples:
    - “Mend” without the d can sound like “men.”
    - “Sent” without a “t” can sound like “sin.”
    - “Peter and Paul” with “an” can sound like “Peter n Paul.”

- **Pause at the punctuation.** Commas, semicolons, and periods are guides for pausing – do not run through these. Take an extra pause after a period.
- **Avoid choppy reading by being aware of your breath.** Practice breathing and reading – it helps you find your rhythm.
- **Keep going if you make a mistake.** There is no need to draw further attention by saying “oops” or appearing flustered. All will be well.
- **Focus on the text, not making eye contact.** It is preferable to read with clarity and effectiveness with your eyes down rather than looking up and stumbling over the reading or losing your place. It is fine to make eye contact when first arriving at the ambo.
- **Focus on the words instead of adding emotion or emphasis.** The goal is to read with confidence and clarity, not to dramatize or be lively.
- **Turn the page for the next Reader once you are finished.** It sets them up to start well.

### Scheduling in Ministry Scheduler Pro (MSP)

- **Use the “My Profile” tab to indicate your preferred service time(s) and any dates you are unavailable.**
  - You will receive an email reminder 5 days before serving by default. You can change the timing of the reminder to be earlier or later by clicking on “My Profile” in MSP. You can also opt to receive a text message. *Remember, when making changes to your profile, you must hit “submit” for these to be saved.*
  - Keep your contact information up-to-date in MSP using the “My Profile” tab.
- **Please request a substitute in MSP if you are unable to serve on your scheduled date.** Unless for illness or emergency, please do not wait until the day that you have been scheduled to find a substitute unless it is due to illness or emergency.
  - **If you are running late on the day of your reading, even if only by a few minutes, you will likely be replaced.** Texting or emailing to let us know you are running late is not likely to be seen as we prepare for the service. We understand that running late may happen at some point – please do not take this personally if you are replaced.

## **Lector**

### **PREPARING**

*The BCP says, “We call them [the Holy Scriptures] the Word of God because God inspired their human authors and because God still speaks to us through the Bible.”*

- **Take time to read the text prior to coming to the service.** It will help in your delivery and enrich your experience of sharing the Word of God. If you have extra time, read the text before and after your assigned text for context on what you are reading – it will show in your delivery.
- *Resources include:*
  - [The Lectionary Page](#) - This can be accessed in advance. In the event of two options for a reading, you can wait until the leaflet (link below) publishes on [saintmarks.org](http://saintmarks.org), or practice both readings.
  - [Service Leaflet Page - Saint Mark's](#) - Leaflets usually post on Thursday evening or Friday morning each week but sometimes it may be later.
  - Pronunciations - Check the pronunciation of any names or difficult words in advance. You can also check [Bible Speak](#) to listen to pronunciation.
  - [A Lector's Guide and Commentary](#) to the Revised Common Lectionary (Year A) can be a resource to learn more context about the text in which you are reading.

### **PROCEEDING TO READ**

*The moment you step forward you are sending signals to your listeners. Are you reverent, dignified and sincere or hurried and anxious or cavalier? These signals come from how you carry yourself. Walk with your hands folded or kept naturally at your side.*

*Proceed to the ambo from the front, not around the pillar. Return to your seat in the same way (unless for safety reasons you need to walk around the back of the pillar).*

*While listed below, if you are unsure about any details, please ask the Sound Technician (9 am) or the Verger (11 am).*

For the 9 am:

● **For the first reading:**

1. Go to the ambo during the last verse of the Song of Praise.\*
2. Wait at the bottom of the ambo steps.
3. Once the Presider finishes offering the Collect of the Day (*Amen*), quietly ascend the ambo steps to begin your reading.
4. Introduce the reading clearly and deliberately: “*A reading from...*” After the introduction, pause for a moment before beginning the first sentence of the reading.
5. Pause before the closing line, “*Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.*”
6. When finished, turn the page to the second reading for the next Reader.
7. Quietly return to your seat in the same way (unless for safety reasons you need to walk around the back of the pillar).

*\*When there are baptisms, you will instead go to the ambo during the last verse of the opening hymn.*

● **For the second reading:**

1. Go to the ambo during the last verse of the Psalm.
2. Wait at the bottom of the ambo stairs until the Psalm is completely finished. Once the Psalm ends, quietly ascend the stairs to begin reading.
3. Introduce the reading clearly and deliberately: “*A reading from...*” After the introduction, pause for a moment before beginning the first sentence of the reading.
4. Pause before the closing line, “*Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.*”
5. When finished, please turn the page to the Prayers of the People for the Intercessor.
6. Quietly return to your seat in the same way (unless for safety reasons you need to walk around the back of the pillar).

For the 11 am:

■ **For the first reading:**

1. The Verger will come to where you are sitting (make sure you have shown them where prior to the start of the service) toward the end of the Song of Praise and walk with you to the bottom of the platform steps. Do not bow when the Verger comes to your pew/seat.
2. The Lector and Verger bow to each other at the bottom of the platform steps before the Lector proceeds to the ambo. You will only bow once.
3. Wait at the bottom of the ambo steps.
4. Once the Presider finishes offering the Collect of the Day (*Amen*), quietly ascend the ambo steps to begin your reading.
5. Introduce the reading clearly and deliberately: "*A reading from...*" After the introduction, pause for a moment before beginning the first sentence of the reading.
6. Pause before the closing line, "*Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.*"
7. Be sure to turn the page to the second reading when you're finished with your reading for the next Reader.
8. Quietly return to your seat in the same way (unless for safety reasons you need to walk around the back of the pillar). You do not need to wait for a Verger. If you would like the Verger to wait for you to help you down the stairs, just ask.

■ **For the second reading:**

1. The Verger will come to where you are sitting toward the end of the chanting of the Psalm (be sure you have shown them where prior to the start of the service) and walk with you to the bottom of the platform steps. Do not bow when the Verger comes to your pew/seat.
2. The Lector and Verger bow to each other at the bottom of the platform steps before the Lector proceeds to the ambo. You will only bow once.
3. Wait at the bottom of the ambo steps until the Psalm is completely finished, then quietly ascend the stairs and begin your reading.

4. Introduce the reading clearly and deliberately: “*A reading from...*” After the introduction, pause for a moment before beginning the first sentence of the reading.
5. Pause before the closing line, “*Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.*”
6. Be sure to turn the page to the Prayers of the People when you’re finished.
7. Quietly return to your seat in the same way (unless for safety reasons you need to walk around the back of the pillar). You do not need to wait for the Verger. If you would like the Verger to wait for you to help you down the stairs, just ask.

### **Intercessor:**

#### **PREPARING**

- The Prayers of the People are formed by the prayers shared from the community the week prior to the service. A copy of the Prayers of the People is not available for review until Sunday morning, so be sure to arrive early enough to be able to review the printed sheet in the notebook on the ambo before the service begins.
- Part of reading of the Prayers of the People will include saying the names of parishioners and others in the community. As much as possible, please try to pronounce their names correctly. Names that may be more challenging will usually include phonetic listings. During your sound check on the day of reading, review the cues/instructions listed before/after names. Please ask questions to clarify pronunciation if needed.

#### **PROCEEDING TO READ**

##### **For the 9 am:**

1. During the third section of the Nicene Creed (“*We believe in the Holy Spirit*”) begin to make your way to the ambo.
2. Wait at the bottom of the ambo steps until the “*Amen*” concludes the Creed, then quietly ascend the stairs while the Deacon bids prayers.

- *Do NOT wait until after the Deacon bids the prayers.* You want to be in position at the microphone by the time the Deacon has finished the bidding (you will be ascending the stairs as the Deacon is saying the bidding). Return to your seat the way you came.

*\*\*On Sundays that include the renewal of baptismal vows only, with no candidates for baptism, proceed to the ambo after the clergy begin sprinkling the congregation and say, "Remember your baptism." Quietly ascend the ambo when the Deacon returns to their seat at the altar platform.*

For the 11 am:

1. The Verger will come to where you are sitting during the Nicene Creed (be sure you have shown them where prior to the start of the service), generally during the third section of the Creed ("*We believe in the Holy Spirit*") and walk with you to the bottom of the platform steps. Do not bow when the Verger comes to your pew/seat.\*
2. The Intercessor and Verger bow to each other at the bottom of the platform steps before the Intercessor proceeds to the ambo. You will only bow once.
3. Wait at the bottom of the ambo steps until the "*Amen*" of the Creed, then quietly ascend the stairs while the Deacon bids prayers.
  - *Do NOT wait until after the Deacon bids the prayers.* You want to be in position at the microphone by the time the Deacon has finished the bidding (you will be ascending the stairs as the Deacon is saying the bidding). Return to your seat – you do not have to wait for the Verger.
4. Quietly return to your seat in the same way (unless for safety reasons you need to walk around the back of the pillar). You do not need to wait for the Verger. If you would like the Verger to wait to help you down the stairs, just ask.

*\*\*On Sundays that include the renewal of baptismal vows only, with no candidates for baptism, proceed to the ambo after the clergy begin sprinkling the congregation and say, "Remember your baptism." Quietly ascend the ambo when the Deacon returns to their seat at the altar platform.*

## **Land Acknowledgement Reader**

### **PREPARING**

- Please review the [Land Acknowledgment Reading Guide](#) developed by the Vestry prior to your first time reading the Land Acknowledgment.

### **PROCEEDING TO READ**

#### ***9 am and 11 am services***

1. Take a seat along the west wall behind the ambo during the prelude. Please be seated there five minutes before the service starts.
2. Wait for the prelude to end and then quietly ascend the stairs.
3. Make sure to pause five seconds after saying the text and stepping down from the ambo.