

LAY READERS
at Immanuel Lutheran Church

1. **The texts:** Please get a copy of your assigned texts as far in advance as possible. Note “Next Week's Readings” in the bulletin announcements the week before you read. We use the New Revised Standard Version, which is online at <http://www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.htm> You may also find the lectionary readings listed at <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Worship/Lectionary.aspx> or ask the Church Secretary to fax, mail or email the texts to you (816-931-8483 or office@immanuelkc.org) and practice, practice, practice. Read the texts through once for meaning, and once again to determine how the sentence structure flows –where are the pauses, the emphases, etc.? And then read it through aloud at least three more times so that the flow becomes almost automatic. Typically commas can be treated as though they are periods.

2. **Before the service:**
 - Wake up early enough to be fully coherent before worship begins.
 - Be careful with caffeine, which can dry your throat, and dairy products, which can put a frog in it.
 - Get to church early enough to make sure the Bible is marked with ribbons (and Post-Its, if you like). Please make certain that the first and second lessons are marked as well as the Gospel. If you read at the 10:30 service, please arrive early enough to ensure that all lessons are marked. Use the time before the service to familiarize yourself with the microphone. The microphone is set so that it will pick up your voice and it should not be moved in any way. Before the service make sure that it is on - look for the red light - and then read a sentence or two to get used to the sound. The microphone has been positioned high enough to allow you to turn the pages of the Bible when you read without needing to move it. Do not turn the microphone off after reading.
 - Look over the bulletin and *please* check with Pastor to see if there are any special items you need to be aware of.
 - Find a moment to pray for grace, patience and the help of the Holy Spirit.

3. **When you read:**
 - Approach the pulpit via the path that is most natural to you.
 - Bring your bulletin with you for the Psalm, place it on the side of the pulpit before you read.
 - The lay reader is reading from the Bible (the Word of the Lord) itself.
 - Turn on the microphone, announce the lesson simply—“A reading from Jeremiah” or “A reading from Philippians” and begin reading.
 - Read slowly, clearly, loudly, and e-nun-ci-ate the words. This will feel abnormal, but this is not normal speech. You are lifting God's Word from the text and giving it the life Luther said it always deserves and desires to have.

Please note: this is *not* a sales report, nor is it a dramatic reading. It is a living story, *our* story. It may help to think of reading it as you would a story. Too flat a reading deadens the Word; too evocative a reading draws attention *to* the reader and *away* from the Word.

- When you have finished the text, say, "**The Word of the Lord.**"
- Pick up your bulletin when you descend from the pulpit and be seated in one of the chairs or the front pew near the ministers/acolytes to join in the Psalm.

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- When it's finished, step into the pulpit for the second lesson, turn the pages of the Bible to the second lesson. Announce the second lesson simply—"A reading from Romans." When you have finished reading the text, say, "**The Word of the Lord.**"
 - Turn off the microphone, pick up your bulletin when you descend from the pulpit and return to your pew in the congregation via the most natural path.
4. **Details, details:** Dress appropriately for the occasion and the season; being over- or under-dressed will draw attention toward you and away from the Word. Consult the attached glossary or ask the pastor in advance (preferably more than five minutes in advance) how to pronounce words you're not sure about. Pay attention to other readers. Without being critical, ask yourself (in a context other than worship), Why is this reader effective/ineffective? What is distracting? What makes the message clear in her/his reading? Determine what you would like to emulate and what you would like to avoid. And practice!
5. **A final word:** While you should strive always to be so well prepared you never hesitate nor make a mistake, it WILL happen. Know that the God who equipped you for this ministry is a God whose grace can forgive; don't let a minor slip (or a major one, for that matter) hinder you as you carry on. If you get absolutely flustered, turn to the Pastor and gesture; help will be on the way. And be certain that, though there isn't always time to express it, you are greatly appreciated. Your service involves work and risk, and we who plan and assist in worship are grateful that you are willing to do it; as are the people whose worship you enrich in the process. *Thank you!*

Bible pronunciation guides on the web:

- Biblical Pronunciation Guide: <http://www.netministries.org/bbasics/bbasics.html>
- Bible Pronunciation Guide, No Frames:
<http://netministries.org/bbasics/bbwords.htm>
- Bible Pronunciation, allRefer.com:
<http://reference.allrefer.com/encyclopedia/categories/names.html>
- Bible Pronunciation, Better Days:
<http://www.betterdaysarecoming.com/bible/pronunciation.html>