

A GUIDE FOR LITURGISTS



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COLUMBUS, OHIO

Thank you for agreeing to be a liturgist at First Congregational Church. The ministry you are undertaking is of great importance to the worshipping community. Liturgy is defined as “the work for the people.” In other words, it’s the work of praise and prayer that we, as leaders, undertake for the entire community. At our best, we facilitate the others’ worship of God, and, in doing so, facilitate our own worship of God.

What follows are some basic guidelines to assist you in your ministry. They are designed to be helpful, not restrictive.

Resources for you on the Church’s website:

www.first-church.org/LiturgistsPage.aspx. This page will contain a current schedule for both 9 and 11 am liturgists, as well as a copy of this manual. If you ever forget the schedule, please check here first to see when you are scheduled.

www.first-church.org/LiturgistsMembersArea.aspx. This password-protected page will contain the entire roster of liturgists including phone numbers and emails for easy contact when you need a substitute. Please contact Marty Worth, mworth@first-church.org for the password.

PREPARATION AS A LITURGIST

A. RECEIVING YOUR TEXTS

The Thursday or Friday before your assigned Sunday, you should receive an email from the Office Manager with the whole script for the Sunday morning service. This script will be printed out for you and placed into a Liturgist's Book that a Deacon will give to you on Sunday morning. The email is sent to you so that you will have a chance to prepare before Sunday morning.

B. WHAT TO DO ON SUNDAY

Please plan to arrive at the church no later than 10 minutes prior to the service time. Report in to the Deacon in charge in the Main Office so that they will know that you are present. At that time, this person will give you the Liturgist's Book.

The Liturgist should enter the Chancel with the other worship leaders during the Prelude. Please wait by the Chancel lectern door for the worship leaders and enter together.

Generally, the first thing you will say in the service will be the Invocation. Please plan to move to the Lectern on the last line of the first hymn so that you are in place for the Invocation as soon as the music stops. This should flow naturally and smoothly from the opening hymn without great pause so that the energy of the hymn is not lost.

C. PRACTICE READING THE SCRIPTURES ALOUD.

1. Read a few verses aloud each day - not necessarily from the Sunday readings, but as part of a habit of daily Bible reading and study.
2. Think about the meaning of the passage, and let the voice reflect the meaning and feel of the text.
3. If there are unfamiliar or difficult words, slow down, take them a syllable at a time, and repeat them a few times until they no longer give trouble.
4. If the meaning of a word is not clear, look it up in a good dictionary or Bible Dictionary.
5. If names are unfamiliar, use a Bible that has pronunciation helps. Practice saying the name aloud until it comes easily to the tongue. There is an online source for those difficult names. <http://netministries.org/Bbasics/bwords.htm#j>
6. There are some words that are potentially troublesome. Special care should be taken when encountering them:
7. statutes (laws and commandments) / statues (sculptures)
8. immortality (eternal life) / immorality (immoral behavior)
9. The word "bow" has two different meanings, according to its pronunciation.
When pronounced "b-Oh" it can refer to "bow and arrows", "rainbow", "bow, as in ribbons and bows". When pronounced "b-ow" it means to bend before, or make obeisance to someone. When encountering this word in a reading, glance ahead, to be sure of the context, and decide how it should be pronounced.
10. The word "show" is spelled "shew" in the Authorized (King James') Version.
Both spellings are pronounced "shoh"
11. The word "saith" is pronounced "seth" (similarly to "said") - not "say-eth"
12. The word "err" is pronounced "er" rather than "air". See the hymn "God moves in a mysterious way" for "err" as a rhyme for "interpreter"
13. The word "the" is usually un-voiced ("e" pronounced "uh"). "The" is only pronounced "th-ee" before a vowel or for exceptional emphasis of the following word
14. The word "a" is un-voiced - pronounced "uh"
15. The word prophecy (a noun) is pronounced "praw – fuh – see" / prophesy (a verb) is pronounced "praw-fuh-sigh"
16. The word "wreak" is properly pronounced "reck", not "reek."

B. LITURGICAL PRESENCE - THE GENERAL STANCE, PACE OF SPEECH, EYE-CONTACT

1. Posture should reflect the serious nature of reading the Scriptures in Public Worship.
2. Try to be alert but not stiff; relaxed, but not slouching.
3. Read with vitality. Use emphasis as appropriate. Vary the voice to reflect the message of the text, but avoid being overly dramatic. There is power in the Word of God, and you are the instrument of speaking that Word to the people.
4. Try to project the voice and speak to the center back wall or row of the congregation.
5. If using a microphone, be sure that you know how to use it, and position yourself so that the microphone will pick up your voice correctly. Be careful of sibilants (letters such as "s" which can give a hiss), and plosives (letters such as "p", which give a puff of air onto the mic). A cardioid mic with a breath screen is best for close-up speech.
6. Try to have occasional eye contact with the congregation. Practice reading and remembering a complete sentence, to enable you to glance up at the congregation while still completing the sentence.
7. The pace of speech should be quite a bit slower than that used for normal conversation - your hearers are further away, and there are more potential distractions. The longer the building, the slower the tempo. Slow down by using longer pauses between words, rather than by dragging out the individual words. Pause at commas and other punctuation marks, and where the sense of the text calls for a break. *e.g.* "O Lord, we beseech Thee, mercifully to hear us . . ." should be read as "O Lord, we beseech Thee, mercifully to hear us....." not "O Lord we beseech Thee. . . . mercifully to hear us..." (*The Lord hears mercifully, not we that are beseeching mercifully*)
8. Speaking loudly is not necessary. Of course, make certain you are heard, but overly loud speech through the sound system will come across to the listener as yelling.

C. INTRODUCING THE READING

1. Announce the Reading as "A reading from (Book – see below) _____, chapter _____ verses _____ through _____"
2. If the Reading begins with pronouns, it is recommended to substitute the names of the people involved, so as to give better sense to the Reading, or to use an introduction that will explain who the persons are. The script for each week will attempt to anticipate these issues. Most of the time you won't have to alter anything.
3. If using an introduction, make clear where the introduction ends and where the Scripture starts. *e.g.* A Reading which begins "They said to him . . ." could be read as "The Israelites said to Moses . . .", "The disciples said to Jesus . . .", etc. or "The setting for the Old Testament Reading is at the time of the Exodus, when the Israelites were questioning Moses. *(Pause)* A reading from the Book of Numbers, chapter . . . beginning at verse . . . *(Pause)* They said to him . . ."

4. Different books of the Bible are properly introduced in different ways:

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| "A Reading from | the Book of - | Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch |
| | the First Book of - | Samuel, Kings, Chronicles |
| | the Second Book of - | Samuel, Kings, Chronicles |
| | the Song of Solomon | |
| | the Book of the Prophet - | Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi |
| | the Gospel according to - | Matthew, Mark, Luke, John |
| | the Acts of the Apostles | |
| | the Letter of Paul to - | the Romans, the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, Titus, Philemon, the Hebrews |
| | the First Letter of Paul to - | the Corinthians, the Thessalonians, Timothy |
| | the Second Letter of Paul to - | the Corinthians, the Thessalonians, Timothy |
| | the Letter of - | James, Jude |
| | the First Letter of - | Peter, John |
| | the Second Letter of - | Peter, John |
| | the Third Letter of John | |
| the Revelation to John | | |

D. ENDING THE READING

At the end of the Reading, pause, look up, then say "The word of God for the people of God (or another seasonal response as indicated in the script)" and wait for the people to reply "Thanks be to God" before stepping away from the Lectern.

FIRST CHURCH IS A FAITH COMMUNITY:

- Called together by God, the Creator and Sustainer of life, to worship, pray and serve;
- Led by Jesus Christ, our Teacher and Savior, to learn the faith and welcome all God's children;
- Empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness to God's love and justice between ourselves, and throughout the world.

OUR OPEN AND AFFIRMING STATEMENT

We the members of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Columbus, Ohio, believe the following represents our commitment and desire to reach out and welcome all those in need of and searching for God's love: We believe that we are all created in God's image, female and male, and we are called to love our neighbors as Jesus loves us. We believe we are many members, but one body in Christ, and called to unite all people in God's love. We welcome and affirm all people. We invite those who are seeking God's presence in their lives to join us on our common journey. Our faith community seeks to unite persons of all ages, races, nationalities, ethnicities, sexual orientations, mental and physical abilities, socioeconomic levels and political and theological backgrounds. Together in our diversity, and being empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit, we will

“do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).”

(adopted September 8, 2002 by the congregation)

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