

Herewith a few *caveats*, suggestions, and reminders for our faithful lay readers, old and new:

1. Arrive fifteen minutes before the service and check off your name from the roster before seating yourself near the front of the church.
2. When reading at the 8:00 a.m. service, it is wise to double-check the lectern to be sure that the lectionary is open to the correct page, and that there is a copy of the psalm available. As a rule, these matters have been efficiently handled ahead of time, but you are the one who will bear the impact of any oversights! DO NOT, however, think that you can sneak in a little silent run-through/rehearsal at this time and not be noticed. If even one member of the congregation has arrived, he/she will know what you are up to—it looks very bad!
3. There is no need to genuflect at the end of the pew before proceeding to the lectern; bow after you have stepped onto the step before the altar and, after having read, turn before the altar to bow again before returning to your pew.
4. Turn on the microphone (and adjust its height if necessary) before beginning the reading. Turn it off before leaving the lectern.
5. PAUSES When reading the Lessons, pause after reading the prones and again after announcing the reading. Pause now and then during the readings to emphasize or separate important points. St. Paul, in particular, requires lots of pauses. Pause again at the end of the reading before looking up at the congregation to say, “The Word of the Lord.”
6. If you feel comfortable doing so, by all means look up occasionally during the reading of the Lesson(s) to engage the congregation in your words; however, remember that the Prayers of the People are just that—in speaking to the Lord, keep your head slightly bowed—but not too far lest your voice be buried in the lectionary.
7. Project your voice even though you have a microphone. I used to tell the St. John's school readers, “Pretend you are speaking to Moses or Jesus in the window at the back of the Church.” BE SURE NOT TO READ TOO FAST. **Even some of our very best, seasoned readers** are becoming a bit sloppy about enunciating. I sit in a “dead” spot in the Church and sometimes it is difficult to understand the readings.
8. Concerned about the pronunciation of some of those challenging words? There is a pronunciation booklet on the shelf in the sacristy, next to the Prayers of the People binder. Better still, check the pronunciation guide at <http://netministries.org/bbasic/basics.html>.
9. Do not stress the vowel in the word *the*—in other words, do not say “thee” unless the word appears before a vowel: “the pear,” but “thee orange.” The word *a* should be pronounced as a short vowel. (Do not say “ay” reading, or the congregation may be expecting that a “bee” reading will follow!)

10. *Judea* is another word often mispronounced. The *ae* should be pronounced as a double *ee*, not as a long *a*. (Would you say “Aysop’s Fables?”)
11. If there is a line drawn in the margin of the lectionary beside the appointed text, do not read this passage but skip to where the marginal line ends.
12. If you are scheduled for Prayers of the People, please contact the church office towards the end of the preceding work-week to find out if a baptism has been scheduled for “your” Sunday. If, indeed, there is to be a baptism, the Prayers of the People will not be read.
13. When reading the Prayers of the People, watch for the “pitfall” in Rite One. Do not repeat the prayer for the President *et al* when reading from the subsequent list of those for whom we are concerned.
14. If you are scheduled to read and have a last-minute emergency, it is your responsibility to find a replacement and to contact the office with the name of your replacement so that the bulletin will reflect any change.
15. The readings for all services are listed in the Book of Common Prayer starting on page 888. Page 888 also will help you to determine which year we are in (A, B, or C). If there is a choice of reading listed on Page 88 for your particular Sunday, you may have to call or e-mail the church office to be sure you are practicing the one listed in the bulletin.
16. If you have read Morning Prayer at Canterbury, please remember to fill out the Canterbury Report Form on the website or it must be reported to Jan Eliot Monday morning.
17. When reading the Prayers of the People ... kneel for the confession and wait for the peace to return to your seat.

Above all, rehearse, rehearse, rehearse ahead of time—preferably aloud—maybe before a mirror, and, above all, know that if you make a mistake your fellow readers have each done the same and probably will again. We are here to serve God; He knows, and presumably the Rector does too, that we are doing our best and that sometimes our best may fall a little short. We know those mistakes will be few, however, and we are blessed to have such a wonderful, willing, dedicated team on board at this particular moment in St. John’s history. Thank you very much indeed.

David Kenyon
Lesley Hanlon