

SERVING AS THE LAY READER IN WORSHIP



Second Presbyterian Church

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Pastor

THE WORK OF THE LAY READER

RESPONSIBILITIES

As a Lay Reader, you have the opportunity to assist the pastor in leading the congregation in worship. This booklet is designed to cover the various parts of the worship service which you will lead, including giving some suggestions for what to say at different points of the service. *Feel free to make any changes which so that you are comfortable with what you are being asked to do.*

The Pastor will assign the portions of the worship service which you as Lay Reader will lead. These will be noted on a copy of the bulletin provided by the Church Office prior to the service. Please read over the materials provided, and rehearse them prior to Sunday, so that you might sense the flow of the service.

Usually, your specific responsibilities as Lay Reader will be:

1. Greet the congregation, extend a welcome to visitors, and invite the congregation to greet one another
2. Lead the Call to Worship and introduce the first Hymn.
3. Lead the Prayer of Confession or Prayer of Affirmation sequence (Call to Confession and Declaration of Pardon or Unison Prayer).
4. Read the first Scripture lesson.

When all of the morning's responsibilities are finished, you may leave the chancel area and take your usual seat in the congregation.

WORSHIP MECHANICS: HELPFUL HINTS

1. Before the service.

- Meet the pastor prior to the service to see if there are any last-minute changes in the service. This would be a good time to ask any questions which you might have.
- About ten minutes before to the service, go to the “Oak Room” just outside the Sanctuary, to gather with the pastor and choir(s) prior to entering the Sanctuary.

2. Seating. Sit in the chair behind the lectern (Lewis Street side of the chancel). A hymnal is located in the rack attached to the right side of the lectern, as you face the congregation.

3. Relax! When speaking, relax, and project your voice out into the sanctuary. The microphone will pick up your voice; there is no need to lean over closer to it. (It is best to act as if the microphone is not even there!) Pick out a person in the middle or back of the sanctuary (or even an object on the back wall) and pretend that you are having a conversation with him or her.

4. Greeting and welcome.

- a. Greet the congregation with an appropriate scriptural greeting.

GREETINGS

Please say, “Good morning!” and follow it with one of the following greetings:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Through Jesus, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name.

Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

A time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and truth.

- b. Welcome all guests and encourage them to make their presence known by filling out the information cards in the pew racks.

WELCOME TO GUESTS

Immediately follow the Greeting with the following (or, something similar):

We welcome all to worship at Second Church. We extend a special welcome to our guests and request that they fill out the information card in the pew rack, and place it in the offering plate. Please know that you are welcome on any Lord’s Day! And now, take a moment to extend a warm Christian greeting to those seated nearby.

NOTE: Please note the opening music which follows this segment. Do not go directly into the Call to Worship!!!

5. Call to Worship. Introduce this using a phrase such as “Please join in the responsive Call to Worship.”

6. **First Hymn.** Introduce the hymn by giving both the number and title: “Our first hymn is *or* Let us join to sing hymn number 485, ‘To God Be the Glory.’” Be sure to note which hymnal is being used: Celebration Hymnal or Presbyterian Hymnal.
7. **Prayer of Confession Sequence.** Proceed to the lectern during the last line of the final verse of the opening hymn.
 - a. Introduce the prayer with an appropriate Call to Confession.
 - b. Pause one second, then begin the printed prayer.
 - c. After the prayer, immediately start the Declaration of Pardon.
 - d. After the congregational response, introduce the Affirmation of Faith, such as, “Let us affirm our faith as we join together in the *<name of creed>*.”
 - e. *During certain times, such as Easter season, the Prayer of Confession is replaced with a Prayer of Affirmation. All you need to do is introduce the prayer with words such as “Let us pray together.” or “Let us join together in unison prayer.”*

CALLS TO CONFESSION – Use to introduce the Prayer of Confession:

The proof of God's love is this: while we were sinners, Christ died for us. Because we have faith in him, we can approach God with confidence. Let us admit our sins before God:

If we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In penitence and faith, let us admit our sin before God:

God is love. It is this amazing love that makes it possible for us to ask God's forgiveness with confidence and hope. Let us confess our sins to God:

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a humble spirit; a broken and contrite heart God will not despise. In the full assurance of faith, let us confess our sin before God:

Let us approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

8. **Scripture Lesson.** If you are reading a Scripture lesson ...
 - a. Introduce the first Scripture lesson
 - “Hear the word of the Lord from *<text>*.”
 - “The first lesson this morning is from *<text>*. Hear the word of the Lord:”
 - b. After reading the passage, conclude with one of the following:
 - “This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.”
 - “May the blessing of God be added to this reading from the Word.”