

Serving as Lector (Scripture Reader)

The lector reads the Scripture lessons during the worship service. For some in the congregation, who read along in the pew Bibles, the lector leads the reading. For others, who prefer to listen, the lector reads to them.

Some Old Firsters admit to getting confused between the roles of lector and liturgist. In contrast to the lector, whose only role is to read the Scripture, the liturgist sits up front and helps the pastor during the entire service.

Preparing to Read Scripture

The Worship Leadership Coordinator will email a reminder early in the week prior to your scheduled Sunday. If you cannot serve, please let her and the church office know right away, so we can find a replacement.

Old First typically uses two readings in worship—one from the Hebrew Bible, the other from New Testament. Toward the end of the week, the pastor will email you the readings and brief introductions to each (an example is below). You may, if you wish, write your own introduction instead of using what he sends.

Read both passages through. What do they say to you? What might they say to the worshipers in church on Sunday? Think about the people themselves—their situations, celebrations, needs. Think about what is going on in our world. Your contemplation makes for a prayerful preparation to reading the Scripture.

You might practice the readings too. But don't get too nervous. You don't have to do anything special. The words themselves are sacred.

If you have any difficulties or questions (those Biblical names and places!), please contact the pastor. He can help with pronunciation and meaning. You might also consider the images of God used in the reading; especially ask yourself whether they are exclusively male. Be free to alter the wording slightly to accommodate a variety of images for understanding God. Again, the pastor can help you with this.

Reading the Scripture in Worship

On your scheduled Sunday, arrive at church a few minutes early. Check the Bible at the lectern to confirm that the pages for the Scripture readings are bookmarked. You might want to also confirm that you know precisely which verses to begin and end each reading.

You may sit in any of the pews during the service, but you might want to position yourself to make for an easy exit!

Come forward to the lectern during the part of the service that immediately precedes the first reading (typically the Passing of the Peace). That way the congregation doesn't have to wait while you walk forward.

Follow the order of the readings as listed in the bulletin. Typically you will read the passage from the Hebrew Bible first and then the one from the New Testament. Occasionally when the sermon focuses more on the Hebrew Bible text, the order of the readings is reversed.

Try to avoid greeting the congregation when you reach the podium. Simply begin with the introduction the pastor sent you (or your preferred version). Speak loudly, clearly and slowly, but you don't need to be dramatic or formal. More than anything else, your reading is made effective because in this ministry you are sharing your faith and your self.

God will be with you, the Spirit will enable you, and you will be fine.

Sample Introduction, as provided by the pastor the week prior

Our first reading comes from MICAH 6:1-8, found on page ?? in the Hebrew Scriptures portion of your pew bibles.

In spite of all that God had done for Israel, regardless of all the sacred rituals Israel performed, Micah declares, they often missed the essence of what it means to be religious. Totally rejecting their overt religious practice as besides the point, the prophet declares a simple truth: God requires only justice, kindness and humility.

In our time where money more than religious ritual seems to rule – in the debts of the middle class, the influence of the rich, in the lack of the poor... in taxes, welfare, and investment... individually and as a corporate society – how do we live justice, kindness and humility?

Let us listen for the word of God.

[*Read the text.* Note: Do you need to make sure that your reading does not leave God sounding like a male?]

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Our second reading comes from MATTHEW 5:1-12, found on page ?? in the New Testament section of your pew bibles.

The Sermon on the Mount is a collection of Jesus' sayings gathered at different times and places, rather than delivered all at once in a single discourse. There is much scholarly debate as to how much of it Jesus actually spoke himself and what was added later by the early church as the apostles reflected on and taught those first believers about him.

Let us listen again for God's word.

[*Read the text.* Note: Do you need to make sure that your reading does not leave God sounding like a male?]

For the word in Scripture
For the word in and among us.

For the word lived and shared.
We give thanks to you, O God.