

# Customary for Lay Reader

(Instructions & Processes, November, 2025)

*“Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall declare your praise.” Psalm 51:16)*

*As a Lay Reader, you will never be perfect, but nobody expects you to be perfect, but they love you and are pulling for you. Thank you for Serving as a Lay Reader!*

## **Schedule Coordinator & Orientation Contact Information**

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## LAY READER ASSIGNMENTS & PREPARATION

### LAY READER ASSIGNMENTS & PREPARATION

- IMPORTANT: Substitutions:** *Scheduled Lay Readers are responsible for finding substitutes. DO NOT assume automatic coverage by others*
- Assignments and Preparation: The assigned service and links to the reading are provided in advance to Lay Readers. Up to four readers are assigned per service for First Lesson (Old Testament), Psalm, Second Lesson (Epistle), and Intercessory Prayer.
  - Reading assignments are sent via an email and also posted on St Matthew Website (“About” tab, “Resources” tab; right side of screen)
  - The text of readings & Intercessory Prayer are included in the Order of Service on St Matthew’s Website under the Worship tab at (<https://www.stmattsaustrin.org/Worship/newservices.html>) Click on the specific Date & Time entry to review Readings & Intercessory Prayer. Note: Readings & Prayers are posted on Thursday, prior to Sunday’s service.
  - To review readings earlier than Thursday, access the Episcopal Lectionary Calendar ( [www.lectionarypage.net/](http://www.lectionarypage.net/)). Readings are listed by month & date. Note: Intercessory Prayers are not included on this Website.
  - If reading changes occur then Schedulers will alert the assigned readers as soon as possible.
- Each Reader should note the identity of the other Readers for that particular Sunday, and the associated reading in case a Reader is absent. The readers present should be prepared to also read the absent reader assignment.

### Speaking Tips:

Your reading is for God and the congregation, not about how well you read. To best prepare and overcome nerves, practice the reading. Consider having someone listen and comment on your practice or videotape yourself.

Recite the passage at a moderate rate (140-180 words per minute). To practice, set a timer for 1 minute and read aloud a selected passage. Count the words spoken aloud during this 1 minute. The faster the speech rate, the more likely the speaker trips over words and loses listeners' attention. The slower the speech rate, the more likely it is to lose listeners' attention.

For unfamiliar words and names ask clergy for pronunciation, or visit <https://biblespeak.org/b-words/>, which provides audio assistance.

Read with inflection, but without drama. Do not insert commentary about the reading.

During the reading, minimize body and arm movement.

## **LAY READER AT START OF SERVICE**

### **15 minutes before start of Service**, arrive at Church

Alert the Altar Coordinator (AC) to your presence, so the AC is not seeking substitutes, unnecessarily.

Reconfirm your assigned reading with the AC.

Check that your reading is on the Ambo (large-print version).

Ensure there are four chairs behind the choir for seating of 3 Readers & 1 Acolyte. Alert Ushers to add chairs if needed.

### **5 minutes before start of Service**

Time permitting, join the Processional team at the Font in the Lobby for last minute changes and the Processional prayer.

Suggestion: Take a temporary seat in Section 1 (choir side, close to the west side alcove), near the front to reduce travel time. This seating also reduces congregation distraction when Readers take temporary seats behind the Choir.

## **Readings (First Lesson, Psalm, Second Lessons, and Intercessory Prayer**

Readings in a large font have been placed on the Ambo (lectern) prior to the start of the service. Readers do NOT need to take an Order of Service or a Book of Common Prayer to the Ambo.

Rarely do large-print readings on the Ambo differ from the scheduled readings. If there is a difference then the Ambo readings take precedence.

## **Ambo Readings**

The Ambo has the large-print readings, an Order of Service, Preacher notes, announcements. Take your time to ensure your reading is readily accessible.

Words of introduction for the reading (Example: "A reading from Paul the Apostle") are included in the large print version. If this introduction is missing then Page 8-9 in this Customary has the formal announcement, Ex: The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians)

It is preferred that Readers do NOT include chapter or verses in announcing the reading, just the book name.

## LAY READER DURING SERVICE

### Readers moving from congregational seating to Ambo and back:

1. During the KYRIE, before the Presider delivers the Collect of the Day, Readers for the 1st Lesson, Psalm, & 2nd Lesson walk to the left of the choir, behind the organ to chairs at the back wall, near the foot of the Chancel (red carpeted platform). Readers are encouraged to be seated to reduce congregational distraction.
2. Be aware of the other Readers and their readings, so there is no confusion on reading order in stepping onto the Chancel to the Ambo. If a Reader is absent, then one of the Readers present should be prepared to read that lesson as well.
3. To avoid interference between readers as they are concurrently ascend & descend to the Ambo, the reader ascending keeps on the side of the handrail nearer the back of the chancel, while the reader descending keeps on the side of this handrail nearer the congregation.
4. At the Sequence hymn, all these Readers return to their congregation seats.
5. Overall:
  - While the Altar Coordinator checks the AMBO to ensure all large-print readings are in-place and in order, as a Reader, consider checking yourself, so you are familiar. The overlapping order from left to right is 1st, Psalm, 2nd, & IP.
  - During the Order of Services' Gloria (before the Collect), Lesson Readers should already be seated behind the CHOIR.
  - To avoid delay, Readers are to ascend & descend to the Ambo from behind the Choir, by having the ascending reader keep to the side of the handrail nearer the back wall of the chancel, while the descending reader keep to the side of this handrail nearer the congregation.
  - At the Sequence hymn, all these Readers return to their congregation seats.

### Reader Order:

**Reader #1** (Old Testament): Immediately at the conclusion of the COLLECT, Reader #1 should already be at the foot of the Chancel and stepping onto the Chancel and to the AMBO (lectern), ascending on the back wall side of the handrail. At the end of the reading, the Reader descends on the congregation side of the handrail to a seat behind the Choir.

**Reader #2** (Psalm): Immediately at the conclusion of the 1st Reading, Reader #2 should already be at the foot of the Chancel and stepping onto the Chancel and to the AMBO (lectern), ascending on the back wall side of the handrail. At the end of the reading, the Reader descends on the congregation side of the handrail to a seat behind the Choir.

**Reader #3** (New Testament/Epistle): Immediately at the conclusion of the Psalm, Reader #3 should already be at the foot of the Chancel and stepping onto the Chancel and to the AMBO (lectern), ascending on the back wall side of the handrail. At the end of the reading, the Reader descends on the congregation side of the handrail to a seat behind the Choir.

**Intercessory Prayer Reader:** Immediately at the conclusion of the Nicene Creed, this should already be at the foot of the Chancel and stepping onto the Chancel and to the AMBO (lectern), ascending on the back wall side of the handrail. At the end of the Prayer, the Reader stays at the AMBO, until the Priest delivers the concluding prayer.

The Reader then descends on the congregation side of the handrail, and returns to their preferred seat.

### **First Lesson Reader:**

1. As the Collect is read (not after), this Reader steps to the foot of the Chancel. When Collect is completed, the Reader steps onto the Chancel, proceeds to the Ambo, adjusts the microphone, so it points to their mouth, and announces the reading.
2. After announcing the reading the Reader commences to read. This Reader finishes the reading with "The Word of the Lord." Congregation responds, "Thanks be to God."
3. The Reader steps off the Chancel, staying to the handrail closer to the congregation, and returns to a seat behind the Choir.

### **Psalm Reader:**

1. Before the First Lesson is completed, the Psalmist steps to the foot of the Chancel. When the First Lesson is completed, the Psalmist steps onto the Chancel, and ascends at the handrail nearest the back of the chancel, as the First Reader is descending on the opposite side of this rail..
2. This reader proceeds to the Ambo, adjusts the microphone to their mouth, and announces the "The Psalm appointed for today is Psalm and also announces how it is to be read (Ex: "Congregation reads responsively by half verse." x or whole verse)." The large print version and the Order of Service indicate these instructions.
3. This reader leads the reading. If reading order not printed in the order of service or on the Ambo copy then the following rules apply:
  - For 6 or fewer verses, Psalmist & Congregation read the complete psalm in unison
  - For an even number of verses exceeding 7, Psalmist & Congregation read by alternating whole verse.
  - For an odd number of verses exceeding 6, Psalmist & Congregation read by alternating half-verse.
4. There is no response from the congregation when finished.
5. The Reader steps off the Chancel, staying to the handrail closer to the congregation, and returns to a seat behind the Choir.

### **Second Lesson Reader:**

1. Before the end of the Psalms, the Second Readers steps to the foot of the Chancel. When the Psalm is completed, the Second Reader steps onto the Chancel, and ascends at the handrail nearest the back of the chancel, as the Psalmist is descending.
2. This reader proceeds to the Ambo, adjusts the microphone to their mouth, and announces the reading with words such as "A reading from...." followed by its title included in the large printer version on the Ambo (if missing then see Pages 7-8 for proper announcement of the reading).
3. After announcing the reading the Reader commences to read. This LR finishes the reading by saying, "The Word of the Lord," and after the congregation responds, "Thanks be to God."
4. This Reader steps off the Chancel, staying to the handrail closer to the congregation, and returns to a seat behind the Choir.

**Sequence Hymn preceding the Gospel Reading:**

During the Sequence Hymn, preceding the Gospel, the readers depart from their temporary seats behind the choir and return to their seats in the congregation.

**Intercessory Prayers Reader (Intercessor):**

1. Given the Intercessory Prayer is in Large Print on the AMBO, this Reader does not need to bring an Order of Worship or BCP with them.
2. As the Presiding Priest begins the reading of the Nicene Creed, this Intercessor proceeds to the left of the choir, and behind the organ to chairs near the foot of the Chancel at the back wall and sits. The Intercessor is encouraged to be seated in one of the empty chairs to be less distracting to the congregation. If chairs are not available then the reader stands on the tile floor next to the wall at the foot of the Chancel.
3. During the final paragraph of the Nicene Creed, the Intercessor steps to the foot of the Chancel.
4. When the Creed is finished, immediately steps onto the Chancel; proceeds to the AMBO; adjusts the microphone to their mouth, and announces with these words "Prayers of the People are found in the The Order of Service (no page need be indicated) or in the Book of Common Prayer, Page No. & Form No."
5. When the Intercessory Prayer is read from the BCP allow a 3-5 second pause to enable congregants to locate the prayer form in the BCP.
6. When the Intercessory Prayer is completed, the Intercessor pauses at the AMBO, until the Presiding priest delivers the concluding Collect
7. After the Concluding Collect, the Intercessor descends from AMBO and off the Chancel and returns to their congregation seat.

**Conclusion:** You will never deliver a perfect reading, and nobody expects you to be perfect, but they love you and are pulling for you.

## **SCHEDULING: Lay Readers**

1. A typical 10:30 Service has 1-4 Priests, 1-3 Acolytes, 1 Altar Coordinator, 4-7 LEMs, 1 LEMALT, and 3-4 Lay Readers, including Youth Readers (normally Epistle).
2. Availability requests are issued by Schedule Coordinators through email and a Google Shared document link. Requests are issued mid-month of the preceding month for the month to be scheduled.
3. Please ensure Coordinator EMAILS are accepted in incoming email, not routed to spam.
4. Typically, Readers are scheduled once or twice a month, but for a 5 Sunday month may be scheduled a 3<sup>rd</sup> time.
5. Availability requests for non-Sunday Services, such as Easter, Christmas, & funerals, will occur.
6. Please respond to these availability requests as quickly as possible. If you are not sure of your availability during the month, then at least provide specific dates that you know that you will NOT be available to serve. Not responding by the requested date will indicate you have no conflicts and you may be scheduled as needed.
7. Monthly schedules are distributed via email prior to the first Sunday of each month, and posted on bulletin boards in the Lobby, Office, & Sacristy, and to St Matthew's Web at <http://www.stmattsAustin.org/About/lem-lector-and-evening-prayer.html>
8. Updates are published as needed.
9. Weekly reminders are sent via email several days prior to the assigned service date to only those scheduled to serve on that date. This Reminder supersedes the Monthly posted schedule, reflecting real-time changes.
10. If you are unable to serve your assigned date, please seek your own substitute. Open the monthly LEM-LR schedule assignments email, and REPLY ALL to request a substitute. Then inform the Coordinator and scheduled Altar Coordinator for that service with the name of the substitute. Reminder: Do not assume other assigned Readers will cover your assignment.

## EXAMPLE AVAILABILITY REQUEST & READER SCHEDULE

### LAITY Availability for OCT, '24 (due SEPT 28th)

Laity (AC, LEM, & LAY READER) Availability for OCTOBER, 2024 is requested by SATURDAY, Sept 28.

Please "Reply ALL" to this email with availability dates or input into below linked shared doc.

READER, ONLY, SHARED DOC:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C7wg0iREqR79mP3JdzahWdCJrIFHwchBgDTsAYInicA/edit?usp=sharing>

<b>OCTOBER, 2024</b>
<b>10/6, 20th Sunday after Pentecost</b> Family First Sunday (K Dugat) 10/3-5 School Holiday 10/4-6 ACL
<b>10/13, 21st Sunday after Pentecost</b> 10/13 Clergy Appreciation Day 10/14 School Holiday
<b>10/20 22nd Sunday after Pentecost</b> 10/18-20 US Grand Prix/COTA
<b>10/27, 23rd Sunday after Pentecost</b> 10/31 Vigil of All Saints

### LAITY SCHEDULE for Oct'24 (issued on 9/30/2024)

Attached is the OCTOBER, 2024 St Matthew Services Assignments.

- REVIEW your assignments (Weekly Reminders, sent prior to each Sunday, is the more accurate schedule, reflecting changes, not reflected in the Monthly View.
- REPLY-ALL to seek a substitute for your assigned service.
- When a substitute has committed then forward the substitutes name to the assigned Altar Coordinator and Schedulers (Chris Hansen & Don Neely).
- Send Questions and Suggestions to Chris Hansen or Don Neely

<b>First Lesson (RCL)</b>	T Keith	
<b>Psalm</b>	K Niendorff	
<b>Second Lesson</b>	J Watkins	
<b>Intercessory Prayer</b>	W Lutz	
<b>Readings (on Thur.)</b>	<i><a href="#">Order of Service</a></i>	
<b>Lectionary (prior to Thur.)</b>	<a href="https://www.lectionarypage.net/">https://www.lectionarypage.net/</a>	

END OF EXAMPLES

## LITURGICAL DEFINITIONS & REFERENCES

### Definitions and Expansion of acronyms to full form (listed alphabetically)

- AC: Altar Coordinator
- Altar - "The Lord's Table," "the Holy Table," or "the Table," positioned at the Center and atop of the Chancel where the offerings are presented, and the elements of bread and wine are consecrated.
- Altar Cross: The large wooden cross to the east (right) side of the Altar.
- AMBO: The lectern on the Chancel with a microphone and readings.
- Chancel - The "red-carpeted" raised platform set apart from Nave (congregation) seating, where the Altar, Altar Cross, Ambo (lectern), Credence Tables (rear of Chancel on Cross-side, Choir-side, & Center behind Altar), and seats for Officiates.
- Chancel Rails: Low railing separating the chancel from the nave, where choir & congregation are seated.
- Intercessor - leader of the congregation in praying the Intercessory Prayers, also called Prayers of the People.
- Lay Reader: lay person assigned to read Liturgical Readings and Intercessory Prayers

### REFERENCE:

This procedure document, schedule, and readings are posted on St Matthew's web site under ABOUT then RESOURCES and on right side Schedule "LEMLR/EP" tab

## OPTIONAL: ANNOUNCING HOLY BIBLE READINGS

### Formal Announcement of a Reading from the HOLY BIBLE

**Note:** Rarely is the “announcement of the reading” missing from the large print version on the Ambo.

- Column #1: the Book Title with Chapter & Verses assigned to the Reader
- Column #2: the formal announcement of the reading.
- Optional: Chapter Number is optional
- Preference: It is requested to NOT cite Verse numbers.

Example: Introducing Romans 8:12-17” is formally announced as :“A reading from The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, Chapter 8”

<b>Book Title</b>	<b>Announcing the Proper Title.... “a reading from...”</b>
Acts	The Acts of the Apostles
Amos	Amos
1 Chronicles	The First Book of the Chronicles
2 Chronicles	The Second Book of the Chronicles
Colossians	The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians
1 Corinthians	The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians
2 Corinthians	The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians
Daniel	The Book of Daniel
Deuteronomy	The Fifth Book of Moses: Deuteronomy
Ecclesiastes	Ecclesiastes
Ephesians	The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians
Esther	The Book of Esther
Exodus	The Second Book of Moses: Exodus
Ezekiel	The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel
Ezra	Ezra
Galatians	The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians
Genesis	The First Book of Moses: Genesis
Habakkuk	Habakkuk
Haggai	Haggai
Hebrews	The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews
Hosea	Hosea
Isaiah	The Book of the Prophet Isaiah
James	The General Epistle of James
Jeremiah	The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah
Job	The Book of Job
Joel	Joel
John	The Gospel According to Saint John
1 John	The First Epistle General of John
2 John	The Second Epistle General of John
3 John	The Third Epistle General of John

## Introducing the Reading (cont.)

<b>Book Title</b>	<b>Announcing the Proper Title.... “a reading from...”</b>
Jonah	Jonah
Joshua	The Book of Joshua
Jude	The General Epistle of Jude
Judges	The Book of Judges
1 Kings	The First Book of the Kings
2 Kings	The Second Book of the Kings
Lamentations	The Lamentations of Jeremiah
Leviticus	The Third Book of Moses: Leviticus
Luke	The Gospel According to Saint Luke
Malachi	Malachi
Mark	The Gospel According to Saint Mark
Matthew	The Gospel According to Saint Matthew
Micah	Micah
Nahum	Nahum
Nehemiah	The Book of Nehemiah
Numbers	The Fourth Book of Moses: Numbers
Obadiah	Obadiah
1 Peter	The First Epistle General of Peter
2 Peter	The Second General Epistle of Peter
Philemon	The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Philemon
Philippians	The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians
Proverbs	The Proverbs
Psalms	“The Psalm appointed for today is Psalm xxx. Please read responsively by half verse or whole verse or unison”
Revelation	The Revelation of Saint John the Divine
Romans	The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans
Ruth	The Book of Ruth
1 Samuel	The First Book of Samuel
2 Samuel	The Second Book of Samuel
Song of Solomon	The Song of Solomon
1 Thessalonians	The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians	The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians
1 Timothy	The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy
2 Timothy	The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy
Titus	The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Titus
Zechariah	Zechariah
Zephaniah	Zephaniah

**END OF DOCUMENT**