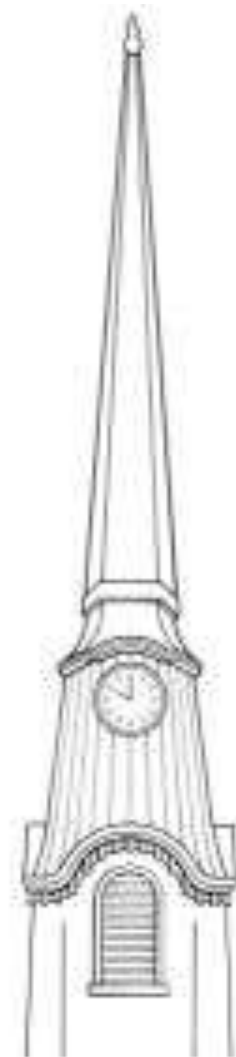


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ROME, NY

**General Instructions**

- Your purpose as Lay Reader and worship leader is to set a tone and by your leadership, support the congregation's worship.
- Please adjust the microphone to your height. It is important that your mouth be in front of the microphone. Arrange your papers so that you can see them clearly and keep yourself aligned with the microphone.
- Communicate! Use tone of voice, rhythm of speech and modulation that conveys the emotional and spiritual content of the reading.
- Speak clearly. Remember those in the congregation who do not hear well.
- Eye contact! Rehearse your parts so that you are speaking to the congregation rather than reading. It is more important that you speak to the people rather than get all the words “right.” If you give the sense of the words, you have done the job.
- Don't worry about pronunciation of Hebrew and Greek names. Decide how you are going to say it and speak with confidence. If you really want to know, ask me and I'll make something up!
- Arrive fifteen minutes before worship to check with pastor about any details or changes.
- Lay Reader duties may vary on occasion; be flexible



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**Where to Begin...**

As the opening hymn is ending, come to the pulpit and read the *“Invitation to Confession”* that you have selected from the options below:

1. If we claim we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sin, God is faithful and just, and will forgive our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Let us confess our sin against God and our neighbor.
2. Our God is a God of justice, waiting to be gracious to you, yearning to have pity on you. Blessed are all who wait for the Lord. In penitence and faith, let us confess our sin to almighty God.
3. How can we say we love God, whom we have not seen, if we do not love our neighbors, whom we can and do see every day? Let us confess our need for God's daily grace and forgiveness.
4. If anyone sins, we have someone who pleads with God on our behalf – Jesus Christ the righteous one. And Christ himself is the means, by which our sins are forgiven, and not our sins only, but also the sins of everyone. Let us confess our sin before God and one another.
5. The Lord is merciful and gracious; slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. God will not always chide nor be angry forever. Let us, then, approach God in confession.
6. Let us draw near to God with sincerity of heart and full assurance of faith, our guilty hearts sprinkled clean, our bodies washed with pure water. Let us confess our sin before God and one another.

7. This is the covenant which I make with the house of Israel, says the Lord: will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. I will forgive their evil deeds, and I will remember their sin no more. In penitence and faith, let us confess our sin to almighty God.
8. Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Let us ask God to forgive us.
9. Remember that our Lord Jesus can sympathize with us in our weaknesses, since in every respect he was tempted as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us trust in God's love, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in every time of need. Let us confess our sin against God and our neighbors.
10. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Let us admit our sin before God.
11. Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need. Let us ask God to forgive us.
12. Come to the water of life and drink deeply, for our God is a God of mercy, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, eager to cleanse those who repent of their sin. Let us turn to God, seeking healing and grace.
13. For God so loves the world that God gave the only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Let us confess our sin against God and our neighbor.
14. The proof of God's amazing love is this: While we were sinner Christ died for us. Since we have faith in him, we dare to approach God with confidence. In faith and penitence let us confess our sin before God and one another.
15. "Choose life!" said Moses. Yet we all sin, and turn away from God. So we turn away from life. Trusting in God's mercy revealed in our Lord Jesus, let us confess our sin and seek God's healing grace.
16. The light of Christ, shining full upon us, reveals all our faults and imperfections. Yet it is also the light of grace, calling us to repentance and faith. Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin together.
17. Holy ground and holy places are not hidden on high mountains or in distant countries. Holy ground lies beneath our feet. In our brokenness we fail to realize the sacredness of familiar places and people. Let us confess our sin.
18. Though we hurt each other and break God's law, God is full of love, quick to offer forgiveness, and eager that we would be made new and whole. Let us turn from our wrong doings, confess our sin and ask God to forgive us.

Advent Suggestions:

- There is one coming who will baptize us with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Let us purify ourselves, and seek his presence and mercy as we confess our sins against God and one another.
- The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Let us turn to God in confession, that the light of Christ might overcome the darkness in us.

Easter Suggestions:

- Christ has risen, and has brought new life. Yet we are rebellious and slow to live the joy of the resurrection. Together let us turn to God, confessing our sin and seeking the forgiveness and renewal promised to those to are repentant.

Lead the *Confession of Sin Unison Prayer*

After the unison prayer, allow about 30 seconds for silent prayer. (This may feel long to you, but it allows enough time for some true reflection). Following the silent prayer, give the *Declaration of Pardon* choosing one from selections that follow:

1. Hear the good news! If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. So we also must consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Friends, believe the good news: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.
2. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. May the God of mercy, who forgives all our sin, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. I declare to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.
3. Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and Christ died for us; Christ rose for us; Christ reigns in power for us; Christ prays for us. Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The past is finished and gone; everything has become altogether new. Believe the good news: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.
4. Hear the good news! This saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He himself bore our sin in his body on the cross, that we might be dead to sin and be alive to all that is good. In the name of Jesus Christ we are forgiven.
5. This is the message we have heard from Christ: that God is light and in God is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. Friends, believe the good news: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.
6. God does not deal with us according to our sin, nor requite us according to our iniquity. As the heavens are high above the earth, so great is God's steadfast love toward those who fear God. As far as the east is from the west, so far does God remove our transgression from us. As a father pities his children, so God pities those who fear the Lord. Friends, believe the good news: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.
7. The name, "Jesus," means "God saves." God is full of steadfast love and mercy, and has come to be with us. God will never fail or forsake us. Believe God's promise; trust in God's love. Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. He shares our flesh and blood, so that, because he was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested. Friends, believe the good news of forgiveness in Christ.
8. Once you were no people; now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy; now you have received mercy. In Christ you are forgiven. Believe the good news and be at peace.

**Conclude by saying, "As God in Christ has forgiven us, so let us forgive one another. I invite you to greet your neighbors with a sign of God's peace."**

Advent Suggestion:

- Every valley shall be raised up and every mountain brought low. The rough places will be made smooth. God's glory will be revealed and we will all see it! Open yourselves to the power of forgiveness made real to us in Jesus our Lord, who makes all things new!

Pentecost Suggestions:

- God's Spirit has come, just as Jesus promised, bringing new life and sanctifying us in holiness and service. Brothers and sisters, open your hearts to the warmth of God's grace, to receive forgiveness and to live in faith.
- Jesus came that we might know ourselves to be God's children. And so we are! Children of God, believe the good news: through Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

**Go into the congregation for the passing of the peace. As the response begins, normally “Glory Be to the Father”, return to the pulpit. If people are not already being seated, say “Please be seated” and then say, “Let us pray”.**

Read the one of the *Prayers for Illumination* that you’ve chosen from below”

1. Gracious God, give us humble, teachable, and obedient hearts, that we may receive what you have revealed, and do what you have commanded. Make us hunger for your word, that it may nourish us in the ways of eternal life. Amen.
2. God our helper, show us your ways and teach us your paths. By your Holy Spirit, open our minds that we may be led in your truth and taught your will. Then may we praise you by listening to your Word and by obeying it. Amen.
3. Lord our God, your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Give us grace to receive your truth in faith and love, That we may be obedient to your will and live always for your glory. Amen.
4. God, source of all light, by your Word you give light to the soul. Pour out upon us the spirit of wisdom and understanding that, being taught by you in Holy Scripture, our hearts and minds may be opened to know the things that pertain to life and holiness. Amen.
5. Almighty God, in you are hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Open our eyes that we may see the wonders of your Word; and give us grace that we may clearly understand and freely choose the way of your wisdom. Amen.
6. God of mercy, you promised never to break your covenant with us. Amid all the changing words of our generation, may we hear your eternal Word that does not change. Then may we respond to your gracious promises with faithful and obedient lives. Amen.
7. Blessed Lord, who caused the scriptures to be written for our learning, Grant us so to hear them that we may embrace and ever hold fast the hope of eternal life. Amen.
8. Guide us, O God, by your Word and Holy Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find freedom, and in your will discover your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
9. Prepare our hearts, O God, to accept your Word. Silence in us any voice but your own, that, hearing, we may also obey your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
10. God, tell us what we need to hear, and show us what we ought to do to obey Jesus Christ. Amen.
11. Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the Scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.
12. Gracious God, we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from your mouth. Make us hungry for this heavenly food, that it may nourish us today in the ways of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, the bread of heaven. Amen.
13. Living God, help us so to hear your holy Word that we may truly understand; that, understanding, we may believe, and, believing, we may follow in all faithfulness and obedience, seeking your honor and glory in all we do; through Christ our Lord. Amen.
14. Almighty and ever-living God, increase in us your gift of faith, that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to that which is before us, we may travel the way of your promise and will, and so live in your eternal joy; through Jesus our Lord. Amen.
15. Almighty God, your grace is poured into our hearts as our lives are joined to Christ and by the work of your Spirit in us. Speak your word to us today, that we may not be fearful, but eagerly put your gifts to work, and so enter the joy you have prepared in our Lord Jesus. Amen.

16. Ever-loving God, whose Word is life, and whose touch brings healing and salvation, make your Word real to us now. Speak your presence in our hearts and lives, that we may know the reality of your grace, and bear it to others in your name. Amen.
17. God of light, may the brightness of heaven shine through the scriptures today, and shine in us as we listen. May your Spirit speak to us and teach us to be citizens of your realm that is coming into being among us. Prepare us to come with joy to the feast you have prepared, through our Lord Jesus. Amen.

**Advent Suggestion:**

- God of angels and sheep, God of the poor and meek, in these few days before the celebration, quiet us to hear where new life is struggling to be born. Slow our rush so we may hear the faint sound of angel wings and the words whispered in dreams. Open our hearts to the wonder of Immanuel – God with us. Amen.

**Lent Suggestion:**

- Eternal God, whose word silences the shouts of the mighty, quiet within us every voice but your own. Speak to us through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, that by the power of your Holy Spirit we may receive grace to show Christ's love in lives given to your service. Amen.

**Easter Season:**

- Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your Word and obey it. May we drink deeply of the water of life, that we may become instruments of your saving love. Amen.

**Read the first lesson in the Today's English Version (Pew Bibles) Kari will send you. Conclude by Saying: "The Word of the Lord." Be seated in the chair on the chancel.**

(The choir will sing the Anthem between the first and second lessons.)

**Read the second lesson. (The pastor may read the second lesson. He will communicate with you about this)  
Conclude by Saying: "The Word of the Lord."  
You may then sit where you with church family members & friends.**