



# DIOCESAN LAY READER TRAINING

Preaching 1

# Welcome and Introductions

- Who am I?
- What's your name? Where do you serve? What is your preaching experience? What is one thing you would like to learn about preaching.

# What this session is (and is not)

- introduction to what preaching is and why it matters in the life of a parish
- This is **NOT** a 'how to' preach session, but is more about the fundamentals of how we approach preaching, before we move onto the how to
- This is just part one in a series of conversations we will have about preaching in the life of a parish

Any Questions?

# Framing the Conversation: A Shared Ministry of the Word

- Preaching cannot be a 'one and done' training
  - *Ministry of discernment and ongoing growth*
- Clarity, accountability, and collaboration

# Discernment

- Treat these sessions as moments for reflection and prayer: what are YOU being called to at this time and in your current context?

# Ministry is a Privilege, Not a Right

- Goes for the ordained too (we have NOT earned ordination!)
- Preaching: not a reward for years of service, but a sacred trust
- preaching must be rooted in humility, shaped by Scripture, and responsive to the context of your community
- In parish WITH clergy
  - *Align with vision and teaching of the incumbent, who holds responsibility for the overall spiritual care of the congregation*
- In parish WITHOUT clergy
  - *Work with wardens, vestry and others to ensure preaching supports the mission, needs and direction of the parish as a whole.*

# Ministry is a Privilege, Not a Right

- Preaching is not about you
- Reflective Questions
  - *Why do I want to preach?*
  - *What posture do I bring to this ministry? (“posture” means the inner stance, attitude, or way of showing up in ministry—not just body language. A posture of humility, openness to learning, patience, curiosity, or servant-heartedness)*
  - *Do I see preaching as a gift, or as something I am owed?*
  - *How do I ensure I am preaching in alignment with the vision and needs of your particular church family?*



Any Questions?

What is a sermon?

# A sermon is...

- A regular moment of spiritual formation and guidance for the whole congregation.
- A primary means of offering pastoral care, encouragement, and theological reflection.
- A time to **cast vision, call people to discipleship, and speak into the real life of the community.**

# The Three P's of Ministry

- **Preaching** – Proclaiming God's Word faithfully and clearly.
- **People** – Preaching arises out of love for the people you serve.
- **Prayer** – Preaching is grounded in a life of prayer and listening.

# The Tone of Every Sermon

- Offer **hope**, even when addressing hard truths.
- **Avoid** despair or hopelessness.
- **Point** to God's presence and action in the world.
- Be **shaped** by the needs, context, and direction of the church family

Any Questions?

# Who Preaches and Why?

- In parishes WITH clergy
  - *Incumbent preaches, part of pastoral role and their spiritual responsibility*
    - Hold the overall **vision** for the parish.
    - Know the **people** and their stories.
    - Preach in response to **current events**, pastoral needs, or shifts in the congregation.
    - Use the sermon to **shepherd and guide the church** toward its mission

# Who Preaches and Why?

- In parishes WITHOUT clergy
  - *lay preachers serve as primary proclaimers of the Word. This role carries great responsibility*
    - Reflects the mission and values of the congregation.
    - Is informed by the spiritual, emotional, and social context of the parish.
    - Is shaped in consultation with wardens, vestry, or regional mentors to ensure pastoral care is consistent and wise.



In both contexts, preaching is never about the individual preaching—it is always about serving the Church faithfully and pointing people to Christ.

# Lay Preachers vs. Pulpit Supply

Aspect	Lay Preachers on a Roster	Pulpit Supply
Frequency	Regular preaching (monthly or quarterly)	Occasional, usually when clergy are away
Rector Presence	Rector is present, hears the sermon	Rector is absent; preacher is the sole voice that Sunday
Purpose	Integrated into ongoing formation and worship rhythm	Provides continuity of worship during clergy absence
Theological Alignment	High—sermons align with rector's vision and teaching arc	Moderate—more flexible, but must support worship with integrity
Accountability	Sermon drafts submitted for review and feedback	Sermon drafts submitted for awareness/pastoral oversight
Expectations	Sermons reflect parish vision, liturgical season, theological tone	Sermons uphold dignity, hope, and the love of God
Formation	Ongoing training, reflection, growth encouraged	Encouraged to attend formation, but not always required
Tone & Role	Collaborative voice within leadership team	Temporary voice for coverage in absence
Oversight	Active and consistent, working closely with rector	Lighter oversight; rector informed and available for concerns
Qualities of Preacher	Teachable, collaborative, open to feedback, aligned with parish vision	Independent, confident, respectful, able to preach within general guidelines

Any Questions?

# What Is Expected of Lay Preachers?

- ✓ Preach from a posture of humility and service
- ✓ Commit to ongoing learning and feedback
- ✓ Stay grounded in prayer and Scripture
- ✓ Preach in alignment with the theological direction of their parish or Diocese
- ✓ Collaborate with clergy or lay leadership as appropriate

# In parishes with clergy...

- Submit a sermon draft ahead of time for review.
- Be open to revisions or suggestions.
- Defer preaching if the incumbent needs to speak to a pastoral situation.

# In parishes without clergy...

- Preachers might **meet with a small group or mentor** to reflect on sermon drafts.
- **Record or write out sermons** for accountability and growth.
- Be in regular contact with the Regional Dean or Diocesan mentor for ongoing formation.

# Final Thoughts for Discernment

- Being faithful to Christ
- Listening deeply to the Spirit and the church family
- Growing in humility and courage
- Walking with others in shared formation

# Session Recap

Today, we learned:

- What a sermon is and how it serves the spiritual life of the church.
- Why preaching is a sacred responsibility rooted in context and care.
- The different roles lay preachers hold in parishes with and without clergy.
- The distinction between **Roster Preaching** and **Pulpit Supply**, and how expectations differ in each context.
- The expectations for preaching, including alignment, accountability, and humility.
- That preaching must always reflect core values of hope, love, dignity, and shared ministry.
- That this is a process of ongoing discernment—not a task to complete, but a call to grow into.



Any Questions?

# Upcoming Sessions

DATES TBC (always a Wednesday evening on Zoom)

- Listening to the Text, the Spirit, and the People (November 12)
- Crafting the Sermon (January 6 (\*tentative\*))
- Voice, Delivery, Embodied Presence (March 4 \*tentative\*)
- Preaching as a Spiritual Practice and Ongoing Formation (April 8 \*tentative\*)