

# First Church of Christ, Scientist, San Juan Capistrano

## READER GUIDELINES

Updated June 2024

Reading is a sacred trust and a commitment that provides room for spiritual growth. We are a church of Readers. We elect Readers for our Sunday Services and Wednesday Meetings quarterly, and they serve on a voluntary basis. Readers must be members of The Mother Church and may be members or non-members of our branch church. If you feel you would like to participate in this way, please contact our church. The following are our Reader Guidelines.

### Philosophy

We are grateful for your willingness to serve as a Reader. Our philosophy is to provide attendees with a church service that leaves everyone with a heartfelt touch of Christian Science “afame with divine Love.” We try to approximate the welcome of a gathering of family and friends in a home living room and to help newcomers feel at ease. We have “blended” services that combine in-room and online elements. Our online attendees are a vital part of our congregation.

These guidelines reflect the current consensus of the members. They are not meant to be rigid and are subject to change. We leave a lot to the Readers’ inspiration, freshness, and spontaneity. If you’re a new Reader, please feel free to ask for individual help from any of our more seasoned Readers, who can provide mentoring. And please reach out to the Readers Team Coordinator with any questions.

You’ll find excellent direction for the Reader role in the *Manual of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts*, by Mary Baker Eddy. Relevant passages are printed at the end of this document. Please familiarize yourself with them.

Readers should strive to set a friendly, inspired, and reverent tone. They do not need to follow the traditional roles of First and Second Readers and may draw on contemporary translations of the Bible for Scriptural selections, benedictions, and I John 3, and for Wednesday readings.

We consider “reading from the books” to include Weekly Lessons as published by the Christian Science Publishing Society. Therefore, reading from printed Quarterlies, or reading from lessons printed from the Publishing Society are legitimate and proper. We do, however, ask that the print editions of the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* be physically present next to in-person Readers, and we suggest that Readers hold these up when explaining that these are our pastor.

### How to Sign Up to Read and How It Works

To read in the San Juan Capistrano church, you must be a member of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, and readers are expected to attend at least one SJC church meeting or service every month.

If you’d like to read, either on Sunday or Wednesday, please join the Readers Team. The Readers Team Coordinator emails a sign-up sheet to everyone on the team periodically—typically between one and 3 months in advance. Please sign up there.

Once all the slots are filled, the Reader Coordinator presents the slate of Readers to the membership at a Growing Church Workshop, so members can vote on them.

If you live within driving distance of the church, please consider reading in the church building. If you live far from church, you're welcome to read via Zoom. Either way, please be in church—either in person or remotely—at least 1/2 hour before the service starts, on both Sunday and Wednesday, for sound checks.

If you're reading remotely on Wednesday or if you and your fellow Reader are both reading remotely on a Sunday, please contact a local member who can act as the In-Room Host for that service. Once you've confirmed your In-Room Host, please send that information to the Readers Team Coordinator and the church's Communications Hub.

Music is an important element in our services; we strive for it to be lively, inspiring, and relevant. Readers are responsible for choosing the hymns for the services. Feel free to ask the Music Coordinator for suggestions. We draw from a variety of sources for hymns, including, but not limited to, the Christian Science Hymnals.

The day before the service, you'll be emailed prayer requests and announcements.

Please begin each service with a friendly welcome both to those present and to those attending via Zoom or phone. At the appropriate time during the service, please read the announcements and any prayer requests you've been sent. Invite the congregation to include the prayer requests in their prayers during the week. (Don't advise how to pray. Before the end of the service, you may invite the congregation to enjoy fellowship in the church or online after the postlude.)

If you find you're unable to serve on the Sunday or Wednesday you've signed up for, please try to find your own substitute from the Readers Team and let the Readers Team Coordinator know. If you're unable to find a substitute, please contact the Readers Team Coordinator.

Please support all our church services metaphysically.

## **Sunday Services**

Sunday Readers are asked to sign up as a team. If you want to read on a Sunday, but don't have a "buddy," let the Readers Team Coordinator know, and the Coordinator and members of the Readers Team will try to match you with someone. Please feel free to sign up for as long as an entire month, or for as short as a single Sunday.

The Program Coordinator will email an information request form on the Monday before the Sunday you'll read. Please coordinate with your fellow Reader and email the Program Coordinator any requested information regarding hymns, Scriptural Selections, or other info by the deadline requested (typically EOD on the Wednesday before). Please also copy the Audio Visual Manager. So as not to be repetitious, please be familiar with the hymns used in recent Sunday services, if possible.

On the Sunday you're reading, please arrive at church, or log onto Zoom, at least 1/2 hour before the service for sound checks.

During the service, please be prepared to introduce the Lord's Prayer with its spiritual interpretation from the Christian Science textbook. On Sundays, we also say together the Lord's Prayer in Spanish.

During announcements, please feel free to explain that we welcome financial contributions—in the yellow bowls or mailed or contributed online.

For Benedictions, the Bible is a primary source but not the only one. Many fine ones can also be found in *Prose Works* and in *Science and Health*.

## Wednesday Meetings

The Program Coordinator will email a request form on Monday of the week preceding the week you'll read. If you know the title of your reading, please fill that in and return the request form to the Program Coordinator by the deadline requested (typically EOD on Wednesday of that preceding week). Please also copy the Audio Visual Manager. If you don't have a title for your readings, no problem; just let the Program Coordinator and Audio Visual Manager know that.

Please email your hymn selections by EOD on Friday of the preceding week to the Music Coordinator, the Audio Visual Manager, and, if you're reading remotely, that service's In-Room Host. So as not to be repetitious, please be familiar with the topics and hymns used in recent Wednesday meetings, if possible.

If, because of world events or your own inspiration, you feel compelled to change the topic of your reading at the last minute, please feel free to do so.

Please try to keep your reading between 10 and 15 minutes long.

Material for readings should be from the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy. If you have brief remarks or a brief written selection to introduce your topic, please do this prior to the first hymn, in order to comply with the Present Order of Services given in the *Manual of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts*.

On the Wednesday you're reading, please arrive at church, or log onto Zoom, at least 1/2 hour before the service for sound checks.

At the appropriate time, invite those in the room and online to give testimonies, and ask the AV Director to explain how the online attendees can raise their hands electronically.

If you're reading remotely, please email a copy of your readings—the printed-out text, please, not just the citations—to that evening's In-Room Host and to the Audio Visual Manager. If you're reading in the church, please email a copy of your readings to the Audio Visual Manager. That way, if our Zoom or phone connections fail, all attendees can still hear the readings. Please email the readings by 4 p.m., Pacific time, on the Wednesday you're reading.

### HELPFUL TIPS (Suggestions from the Readers Team)

- Read out loud every day (the lesson-sermon, and also poetry or books)
- Research Bible and other pronunciations in advance - online, and by listening to The Mother Church Bible Lesson reading during the week
- Make eye contact with the congregation, whether you're reading in the church or online. Look up from the page occasionally and engage the audience.

Thank you for volunteering to read in the San Juan Capistrano church!

**From the *Manual of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts*, by Mary Baker Eddy:**

Article III Duties of Readers of The Mother Church and of Its Branch Churches  
(*Manual of The Mother Church*, Mary Baker Eddy, pp. 31:1–33:9)

**Moral Obligations.** Sect. 1. The Readers of The Mother Church and of all its branch churches must devote a suitable portion of their time to preparation for the reading of the Sunday lesson, — a lesson on which the prosperity of Christian Science largely depends. They must keep themselves unspotted from the world, — uncontaminated with evil, — that the mental atmosphere they exhale shall promote health and holiness, even that spiritual *animus* so universally needed.

**First Readers' Duties.** Sect. 2. It shall be the duty of the First Readers to conduct the principal part of the Sunday services, and the Wednesday evening meetings.

**Suitable Selections.** Sect. 3. The First Readers shall read, as a part of the Wednesday evening services, selections from the SCRIPTURES, and from SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES.

**Order of Reading.** Sect. 4. The First Readers in the Christian Science churches shall read the correlative texts in SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES; and the Second Readers shall read the BIBLE texts. The readings from the SCRIPTURES shall precede the readings from SCIENCE AND HEALTH. The Readers shall not read from copies or manuscripts, but from the books.

**Naming Book and Author.** Sect. 5. The Readers of SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES, before commencing to read from this book, shall distinctly announce the full title of the book and give the author's name. Such announcement shall be made but once during the lesson.

**Readers in Branch Churches.** Sect. 6. These Readers shall be members of The Mother Church. They shall read understandingly and be well educated. They shall make no remarks explanatory of the LESSON-SERMON at any time, but they shall read all notices and remarks that may be printed in the CHRISTIAN SCIENCE QUARTERLY. This By-Law applies to Readers in all the branch churches.

**Enforcement of By-Laws.** Sect. 7. It shall be the duty of every member of The Mother Church, who is a First Reader in a Church of Christ, Scientist, to enforce the discipline and by-laws of the church in which he is Reader.

**A Reader not a Leader.** Sect. 8. The Church Reader shall not be a Leader, but he shall maintain the Tenets, Rules, and discipline of the Church. A Reader shall not be a President of a church.

Article VIII Guidance of Members, Sections 1 and 2  
(*Manual of The Mother Church*, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 40:2–21)

**A Rule for Motives and Acts.** Section 1. Neither animosity nor mere personal attachment should impel the motives or acts of the members of The Mother Church. In Science, divine Love alone governs man; and a Christian Scientist reflects the sweet amenities of Love, in rebuking sin, in true brotherliness, charitableness, and forgiveness. The members of this Church should daily watch and pray to be delivered from all evil, from prophesying, judging, condemning, counseling, influencing or being influenced erroneously.

**To be Read in Church.** Sect. 2. The above Church Rule shall be read in The Mother Church and in the branch churches by the First Reader on the first Sunday of each month. On Communion day the Church Tenets are to be read.

Article XVIII Communion, Section 2  
(*Manual of The Mother Church*, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 61:11)

**Communion of Branch Churches.** Sect. 2. The Communion shall be observed in the branch churches on the second Sunday in January and July of each year, and at this service the Tenets of The Mother Church are to be read.

## **SUNDAY SERVICES**

1. Hymn.
2. Reading a Scriptural Selection.
3. Silent Prayer, followed by the audible repetition of the Lord's Prayer with its spiritual interpretation.
4. Hymn.
5. Announcing necessary notices.
6. Solo.
7. Reading the Explanatory Note on first leaf of *Quarterly*.
8. Announcing the subject of the Lesson-Sermon, and reading the Golden Text.
9. Reading the Scriptural Selection, entitled "Responsive Reading," alternately by the First Reader and the congregation.
10. Reading the Lesson-Sermon. (After the Second Reader reads the BIBLE references of the first Section of the Lesson, the First Reader makes the following announcement: "As announced in the explanatory note, I shall now read correlative passages from the Christian Science textbook, SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES, by Mary Baker Eddy.")
11. Collection.
12. Hymn.
13. Reading the Scientific Statement of Being, and the correlative SCRIPTURE according to I John 3:1–3.
14. Pronouncing Benediction.

The services should be preceded and followed by organ or piano music of an appropriate character in all cases where this is possible.

On the first Sunday of each month Article VIII, Sect. 1, *A Rule for Motives and Acts*, is to be read.

## **WEDNESDAY MEETINGS**

1. Hymn.
2. Reading from the BIBLE, and correlative passages from SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES.
3. Silent Prayer, followed by the audible repetition of the Lord's Prayer, its spiritual interpretation being omitted.
4. Hymn.
5. Announcing necessary notices.
6. Experiences, testimonies, and remarks on Christian Science.
7. Closing Hymn.

The services should be preceded and followed by organ or piano music of an appropriate character in all cases where this is possible.

## **Thanksgiving Day**

### *Order of Service for The Mother Church and Branch Churches*

1. Hymn.
2. Reading the Thanksgiving Proclamation of the President of the United States, or the Governor of the state, or both.
3. Reading a Scriptural Selection.
4. Silent Prayer, followed by the audible repetition of the Lord's Prayer with its spiritual interpretation.
5. Hymn.
6. Reading the Explanatory Note on the first leaf of the *Quarterly*.
7. Announcing the subject of the Lesson-Sermon, and reading the Golden Text.
8. Responsive Reading by the First Reader and the congregation.
9. Reading the Lesson-Sermon prepared by the Bible Lesson Committee.
10. Solo.
11. Testimonies by Christian Scientists, appropriate for the occasion.
12. Hymn.
13. Reading the Scientific Statement of Being, and the correlative SCRIPTURE according to I John 3:1–3.
14. Pronouncing Benediction.

No collection is to be taken at this service.

The services should be preceded and followed by organ or piano music of an appropriate character in all cases where this is possible.

## Present Order of Communion Services in Branch Churches

1. Hymn.
2. Reading a Scriptural Selection.
3. Silent Prayer, followed by the audible repetition of the Lord's Prayer with its spiritual interpretation.
4. Hymn.
5. Announcing necessary notices.
6. Reading Tenets of The Mother Church.
7. Collection and Solo.
8. Reading the Explanatory Note on first leaf of *Quarterly*.
9. Announcing the subject of the Lesson-Sermon, and reading the Golden Text.
10. Reading the Scriptural Selection entitled "Responsive Reading" alternately by the First Reader and the congregation.
11. Reading the Lesson-Sermon. (After the Second Reader reads the BIBLE references of the first Section of the Lesson, the First Reader makes the following announcement: "As announced in the explanatory note, I shall now read correlative passages from the Christian Science textbook, SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES, by Mary Baker Eddy.")
12. The First Reader briefly invites the congregation to kneel in silent Communion. This is concluded by the audible repetition of the Lord's Prayer (spiritual interpretation omitted).
13. Singing the Doxology:

"Be Thou, O God, exalted high;  
And as Thy glory fills the sky,  
So let it be on earth displayed,  
Till Thou art here and now obeyed."
14. Reading the Scientific Statement of Being and the correlative SCRIPTURE according to I John 3:1–3.
15. Pronouncing Benediction.

The Church Tenets shall be read at this service.

The services should be preceded and followed by organ or piano music of an appropriate character in all cases where this is possible.