

ST AGNES
LONGSIGHT



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

St Agnes Longsight

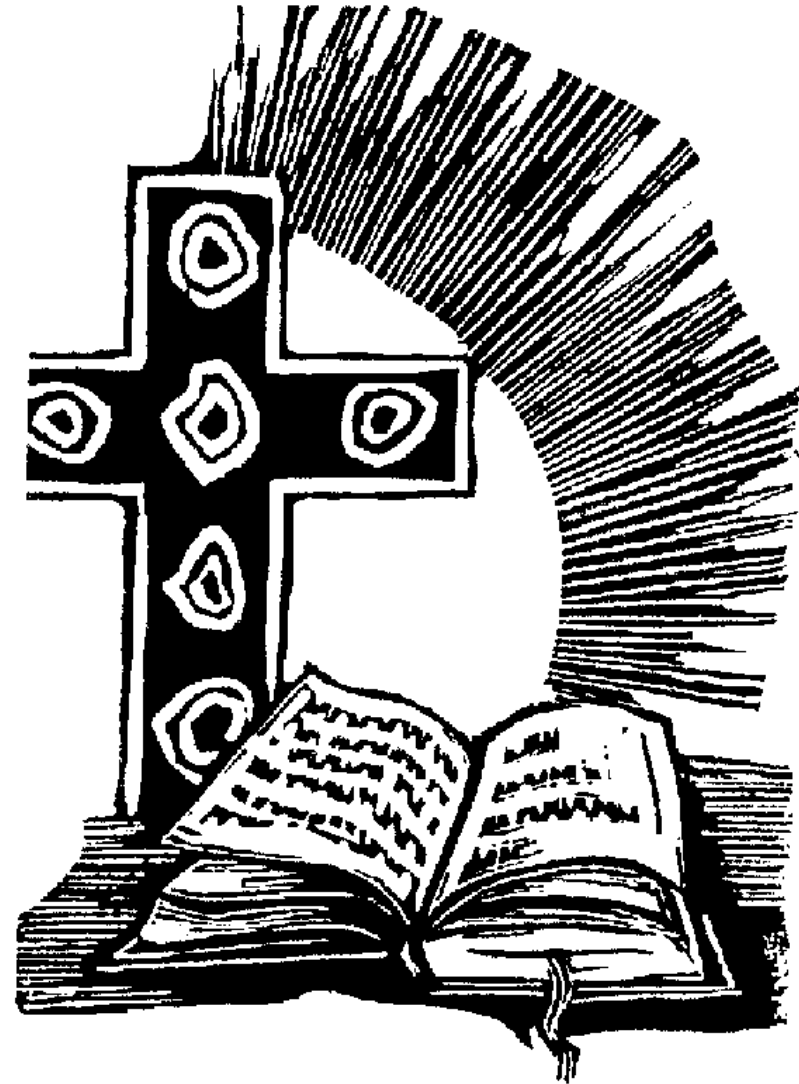
Slade Lane
Manchester
M13 0GN

0161 224 2596

www.stagneslongsight.org



ST AGNES
LONGSIGHT



Reading the Bible in Church

READING THE BIBLE IN CHURCH

Reading from the Bible means presenting, as effectively as possible, the Word of God to the congregation. It is therefore a great responsibility as well as a privilege and a joy.

You may feel pleased to have been asked to contribute to the worship in this way, but you may also feel nervous too. We have all enjoyed listening to someone reading with confidence and good expression; even the good experienced reader should prepare carefully and prayerfully beforehand. Unfortunately there are also careless readers and readers who think they have nothing to learn.

Meaning & Presentation

Your task is to communicate the meaning of the passage to the congregation not merely to read the words out loud. You need to proclaim the word of God and that cannot be done without understanding it yourself first.

Talk to others about the reading, read it over and over. Is it taken from a letter of St Paul to the Churches? If so, is he praising them or admonishing them? Is the passage a dramatic story, a parable, or a passionate plea by the prophets? It is your task to proclaim the wonder, the excitement, the seriousness or the beauty of the passage.

All this said, remember you are in church and not on the stage of the Palace Theatre. Too much dramatisation, too much emphasis and an over-proclamation may prevent the reader from hearing the Word of God. Be natural, expressive and clear.

On the day itself

- Arrive at the lectern (or wherever the Readings are being led from) in good time. Do not run or rush to be there! It is better for there to be a period of silent waiting than a rushed confusion.
- Place your reading on the lectern carefully. Please try not to let papers scrape against the microphone! Although you may not hear it, everyone else does – and loudly! The same when you are turning pages or sheets of paper: please remember that the microphone is sensitive.
- Before you begin, wait for everyone to settle. Five seconds of silence may seem a long time to you stood at the lectern but it really helps people to prepare to hear the Word of God. If you make a point of waiting for the congregation to settle it shows them that you expect them to listen!
- Speak clearly, slowly and at a normal volume. Do not be afraid to leave time for silence.
- Don't be tempted to add an introduction unless you are perfectly prepared.
- Announce the reading as simply as possible: for example

a reading from the book of...

a reading from the prophet...

a reading from Paul's (first) letter to the ...

At the end of a reading, simply add

This is the Word of the Lord

The Word of the Lord

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

or
or