

Worship - Liturgical Colors

A Colorful Complement

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Color, like music, plays an important role in worship. Liturgical color complements the message of the seasons during the church year and aids in establishing a climate in which Law and Gospel may be heard.

However, color can easily be taken for granted or mistaken in its purpose. The paraments, vestments, altar clothes and banners must be seen as more than decoration.

Blue, used at Advent, communicates the message of hope, Our Christian faith rests on the hope that Christ, who came in history assuming our flesh, will return on the last day from that same blue sky into which He ascended long ago.

Green, is used during the seasons of Epiphany and Pentecost. It is appointed color for Epiphany's message of Christ's revelation to the gentiles and growing His kingdom through missions. Green is the color of growth. The Sundays following Pentecost emphasize our need to grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ.

The calendar calls for **black** only twice: on Good Friday and Ash Wednesday. There's no mistaking the message that this sober color gives. Black is the absence of light. These are times for reflection on the cost of our redemption.

Gold is the optional color for Easter Sunday. It is also suggested for the last Sunday of the church year – Christ the King Sunday. It represents value and growth. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ gives our lives meaning and worth.

Scarlet is called for during the Holy Week, from Palm Sunday to Maundy Thursday. It is associated with the passion – the color of blood.

Purple, like black, is a penitential color. It is used during the Lent and, in many parishes, during Advent. This deep rich color represents somberness, penitence and prayer.

White is the color of purity and completeness. Used primarily during the 50 days of Easter, it bears the message that "though yours sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." His purity before His Father becomes our purity.

White is also used for Christmas and its 12 days, Epiphany and the first Sunday following it, Transfiguration Sunday and Holy Trinity Sunday.

Red is a power color. It is appropriate for Pentecost Sunday when we remember the power and fire of "the Lord and Giver of Life," who reveal Himself as the Promised One.

The thing to remember is that we use color to server God's worshipping community by assisting in communicating the holy faith from generation to generation.