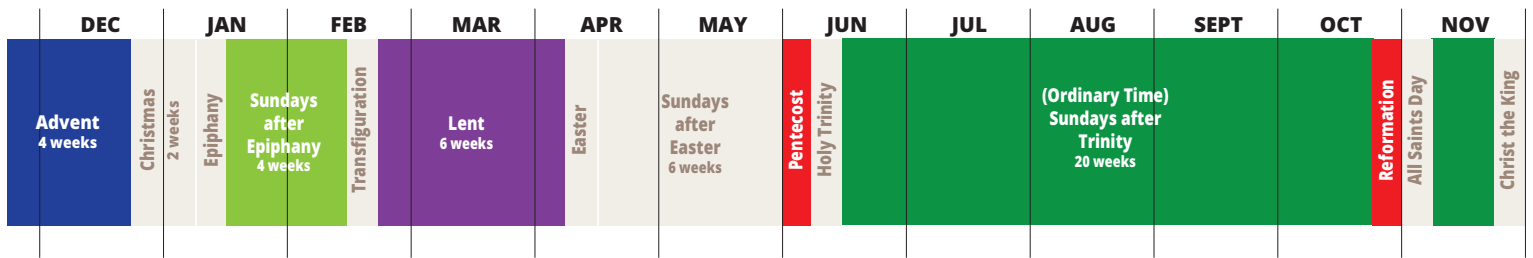
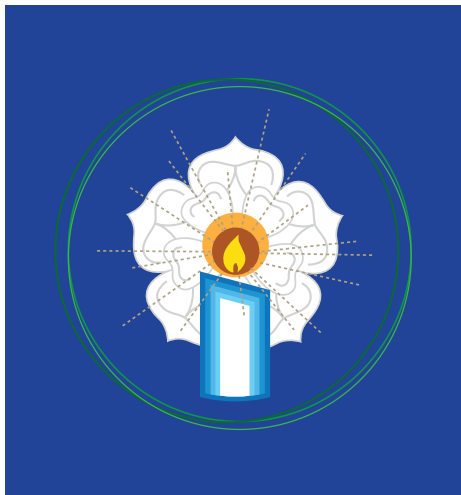


LITURGICAL CHURCH YEAR & COLORS AT CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN



Color is God's way of filling his world with beauty and giving pleasure to those who live in this colorful world. Christians, for centuries, have used color in worship to emphasize the redemptive action of God through his Son. However, color and its bright message can easily be taken for granted or mistaken in its purpose. The paraments, vestments, altar clothes, banners, traditionally employed each Sunday, must be seen as more than an attempt to decorate, or give accent to the chancel. They serve to communicate the message of salvation and reinforce a specific chapter in the life of our Lord and his church, retold annually by the church calendar.

Traditionally, five basic colors of a festive, penitential, and neutral nature have been used in most liturgical congregations. These colors are White, Red, Purple, Green and Blue. Below is an explanation of the meaning behind these colors, when they are used and the symbolism of Christ the King's liturgical paraments and banners.



BLUE | ADVENT

The Church Year starts with Advent, a preparatory time of waiting and watching. BLUE, the color of the sky, helps convey the powerful message of hope. Our Christian faith rests on the hope that Christ, who came in history assuming our flesh, will also return on the last day of time from that same blue sky he ascended long ago.

The symbolism of our Advent parament set is a stylization of the commonly used Advent Wreath. The three green intersecting circles represent the wreath of evergreen branches – a representation of life, even after all else has died. The four candles are represented with one large candle of four overlapping shades of blue moving towards the central white Christ Candle. These four Advent blue candles represent 1) hope & prophecy, 2) peace & forgiveness, 3) joy, and 4) love. The background of the central flame of Jesus Christ is the Messianic Rose. The Messianic Rose is a symbol of the promised Messiah (Isaiah 35:1). When the Messianic Rose is combined with a candle, it becomes a symbol for the prophecy and fulfillment. Christ, the Light of the World, (John 8:12) is the fulfillment of Old Testament promise. The design of the Messianic Rose is taken from the white rose of the "Luther seal" that Martin Luther used to represent faith that gives joy, comfort and peace.



WHITE & GOLD | CHRISTMAS

WHITE is the color of purity, completeness, and light reinforcing the message of joy in the birth of the long-awaited Messiah. The color White along with Gold is used for the most festive observances in our liturgical calendar.

The symbolism of our Christmas parament set is different from the other sets in that the altar frontal is in three pieces – a triptych of the Nativity. To the left is a field where the angels first announced the birth of the Messiah to shepherds. To the right is a distant procession of the wisemen in search of the new King guided by the star which rests over the manger with Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus in the center. The three intersecting circles symbolizing the Trinity are on both the altar and pulpit pieces.

The pulpit frontal incorporates both a manger and a Chi Rho. The Chi Rho is one of the earliest forms of a christogram, a type of monogram used by Christians. It is formed by superimposing the first two capital letters chi and rho (XP) of the Greek word ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ – Christ. Although not technically a cross, the Chi Rho invokes the crucifixion of Jesus – the reason he was born into our world.



GREEN | EPIPHANY

GREEN is used for the season of Epiphany since it has traditionally been considered the color of life, the symbol of vegetation and growing things. Therefore, it represents our growth in faith as we follow Jesus. The style of the center cross is formed by expanding ripples of water which remind us both of our Baptism and that through this Baptism, which waters our growing faith, our everyday living should reflect Jesus by “rippling out” to touch and help others around us.

Our Christian growth starts with the saving grace of Christ at the center. This is represented with the Greek letters Chi and Rho – a commonly used Christian symbol since early church times. These letters are the first two letters in the Greek word for Christ (ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ) the Messiah. This is the symbol on the altar piece and a Greek cross is on the pulpit piece. The lighter green of these centering symbols represents new beginnings and renewing growth.

The other two Greek letters on the altar piece, Alpha and Omega, represent Jesus as eternal God and our hope in eternity. They are in gold to represent his majesty. In Rev. 21: 6, he said to John, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.”



PURPLE | LENT

PURPLE or violet is the color used for Lent. This deep, rich color is a penitential color which has come to represent somberness, solemnity and prayer. Purple was also a very cherished and expensive color in the world Jesus lived. It was worn most exclusively by the rich and royalty. Jesus, “The King of the Jews”, wore a purple robe only once as soldiers mocked and tormented him. Therefore, purple is used during the 40 days of Lent as a vivid reminder of the contempt and scorn he endured, and the subsequent sacrifice he made for our eternal salvation.

Our Lent paraments use a combination of blue-purples on a red-purple background connoting a feeling of tension. In the center of each of the pieces is an angular, broken cross with sharp spike shapes representing pain, suffering and our broken relationship with God which was made whole again through the blood of Christ which is represented by the three red circles. The Altar frontal has a gold-edged crown of thorns in the center reminding us of Christ’s passion and suffering though he is truly the King of kings and Lord of lords. The Pulpit frontal has three gold-edged nails representing the nails that pierced Jesus’ hands and feet.



WHITE & GOLD | EASTER

WHITE is the color of purity and completeness. The theme for the “great fifty days” of Easter is supported by the use of white. This color assists in bearing the message that “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.” Christ’s triumph from the grave on Resurrection Day is the cause for our rejoicing. His purity before his Father becomes our purity. White reinforces that message of joy. Gold is also used as it represents value and worth. The golden festival of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the event that gives our lives meaning and worth. He is worthy of our praise as we adorn his altar with the color of splendor.

The symbolism of our Easter set’s altar piece depicts Christ as the victorious and final Passover Lamb sacrificed for the sin of the world. (1 Cor. 5:7 – “For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.” and Rev. 7:10 – “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”) The color scarlett is used on the victory banner which represents our victory over death through the cleansing blood of Christ. The large background of solid circles behind the Lamb represents both light rays and the empty tomb. The pulpit piece depicts the empty, victorious cross. Three outer intersecting golden circles – a reoccurring theme through all the parament sets – are a symbol of eternity and the Trinity.



RED | PENTECOST & REFORMATION

RED is traditionally the color of power, strength and fire. This color is appropriately used on Pentecost Sunday when we remember the Holy Spirit coming in the power of wind and tongues of fire. Red is also a festive color, consequently, it serves in the Lutheran church year as the color for Reformation Sunday and other congregational festive occasions such as dedications, ordinations and installations.

The symbolism of our Red set is one of simplicity with a large, square-shaped cross at the center. The square cross is often used as a symbol of strength and stability. It has been divided into 4 parts reminding us of the four evangelists/gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John – and Christ’s great commission that we are to go out to the four corners of the world with his gospel and “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19). The cross is surrounded by a single red circle of representing unity and stylized symbols that can be viewed as crowns, rays or flames. Three outer intersecting golden circles – a reoccurring theme through most of the parament sets – are a symbol of eternity and the Trinity.



GREEN | ORDINARY TIME

The times in the Church year between special seasons is sometimes called “Ordinary Time” because these Sundays have no seasonal names. Instead, these “extra” Sundays are designated solely by “ordinal” numbers–hence the term “ordinary.” The 20+ Sundays after Pentecost that fall in the summer months center on Christian growth and missions. Many of the readings for these Sundays are of Jesus’ teachings and parables, and of Paul’s letters to the fledgling churches.

The Sundays following Pentecost, observed as “the time of the church,” share a somewhat similar theme as that of Epiphany. Affectionately called the season of the “green meadow,” no doubt due to the fact of green being the established color, these Sundays also emphasize the subject of growth. Green is a neutral color, but there is nothing colorless about our need to grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ. That’s why the “green meadow” time of the church year is so lengthy. Time must be given to encourage all worshipers to maintain their faith through the constant use of God’s means of grace.



WHITE | FESTIVAL SUNDAYS

White is the color of purity, completeness, and light reinforcing the message of joy. The color White along with Gold is used for the most festive observances in our liturgical calendar. In addition to Easter and Christmas (which have their own special parament sets) the other festive Sundays throughout the year that display the White paraments are Christ the King Sunday, All Saints Sunday, the Baptism of Our Lord Sunday, Transfiguration Sunday, and Holy Trinity Sunday.

The symbolism of our new White set is one of simplicity with a large, shimmering gold, silver and copper colored cross. The shape of this cross represents light rays of the risen, glorified Christ – “His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.” (Rev. 1:16) The cross is surrounded by three outer intersecting golden circles, a symbol of eternity and the Trinity and is a reoccurring theme through the parament sets.