



Pastor's Notes

Dear Friends,

Continuing with the notion of “the way we worship is the way we believe,” I thought I would write to you about liturgical vestments. I begin by referencing one of the documents of the Lutheran faith, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession. We find in Article XXIV: “At the outset we must again make the preliminary statement that we do not abolish the Mass, but religiously maintain and defend it. And the usual public ceremonies are observed, the series of lessons, of prayers, vestments, and other like things. “

In other words, Lutherans assert that the vestments of the church, as well as our liturgies, hymns, and other items of worship, belong to all Christians, not just those of the Roman Catholic faith.

Let's begin with the **Alb**, worn by clergy as well as laity participating in the liturgy. This robe-style vestment originates from the white garments worn by early Christians after baptism. They provide a method of ensuring the wearer's clothing is not distracting to worshippers, and help to remove any signs of status among worship participants. A black alb could also be worn, particularly for evening services or during the church seasons of Advent and Lent.

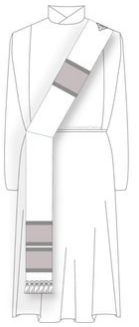


The **Cincture** is a rope or braided cord that is tied around the waist to secure the alb, (and also to secure the stole for the ordained.) It is worn by anyone wearing an alb. It symbolizes a commitment to purity and readiness for service.



The **Stole** is a long piece of tailored fabric that is worn around the neck of those who are ordained, symbolizing the yoke of Christ.

A Pastor's stole (ordained to Word and Sacrament) is centered on the back of the neck, and drapes over the shoulders, usually to knee length. A Deacon's stole (ordained to Word and Service) is worn over the left shoulder, and wraps across the body, coming together on the right side at waist level. In both cases, they are worn in the color of the church season, and can be plain or decorated.




The **Chasuble** is worn by the Pastor who is presiding over the Sacrament of Holy Communion. It's a poncho-like garment that drapes over the shoulders and falls nearly to the wearer's feet. It's origins are traced back to the early centuries of Christianity.

From the beginning of the Reformation, Lutherans wore the chasuble to highlight the vital importance of Holy Communion. As I mentioned in earlier writings, the altar is the focal point of our worship space, where we envision heaven and earth coming together in praise to our God. Moreover, the time of Holy Communion is understood as the ultimate intersection of the worldly and the divine. In this sacred moment, the veil grows thin and we stand on holy ground. We are surrounded by the angels, the saints and the souls of those who have gone before us, united in the body and blood of Christ.



Pastors have different preferences and theologies. The chasuble, like the alb, stole and cincture remind me of my own sinful heart and how I am covered by the grace of God. It feels appropriate to wear when serving as intermediary between heaven and earth, offering the body and blood of Christ to a repentant and thankful people.

What thoughts cross your mind as you approach the altar to receive the body and blood of Christ? Who do you envision being in the room with us as we give thanks and praise to our Triune God?

Wishing you the Lord's peace,
 *Pastor Brian Moeller*