

"The Tools We Use"
THE PARAMENTS
By Shirley Stephan

We come to our worship services anticipating a fine sermon and good music, but don't give a lot of thought about the people who make the space around us worshipful and inspiring. When we walk through the door, the heat is on, the lights are bright and the bulletins are given to us, the hymn numbers are on the boards, the sound and visual systems are working and our Pastor has a fresh glass of water at the pulpit. Our thanks go to the ushers and a whole host of other individuals who serve each Sunday in a variety of ways.

We enjoy the flowers under the cross or we expect the window decorations as part of our Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. We like our big tree that is up during the Advent celebration. We are grateful that these things are here because of the efforts of the members of our Worship Committee.

DID YOU KNOW that the theological symbols of the seasons of our church year, the paraments, hanging from the pulpit and the lectern, are much more than a decorative fashion statement? The colors are changed at specific times during our church calendar. Do you know the significance of each color?

GREEN is displayed as a promise of new life from the time of Epiphany until Ash Wednesday at the beginning of Lent.

PURPLE is then shown, which brings to mind pain, suffering and therefore mourning and penitence. It is the liturgical color for the season of Lent from Ash Wednesday to Easter.

During the week before Easter, the paraments are taken away. This is a time of sober reflection on events of the last week of Jesus' life on earth.

WHITE paraments are brought back into our sanctuary on Easter Sunday. White signifies purity, holiness and virtue as well as respect and reverence. Some churches also use white at baptisms, marriages, and also for funerals as a symbol of the resurrection.

RED is the color seen at Pentecost, not only in the paraments but customarily worn in various ways by individuals in the congregation. This signifies the Holy Spirit coming to the Apostles.

GREEN paraments return during the summer to signify the renewal of vegetation and other living things. Green stays with us until the Advent season.

BLUE paraments are brought out during the Advent season.

WHITE is the color of the celebration of Christmas and the birth of the Christ child. This takes us through the full year until the Epiphany in January.

We are grateful for the many individuals, who over the years, have taken on the responsibility for seeing that these symbols of our Christian year are in place and are changed at appropriate times. They help to focus our worship on the important seasons of the Christian year.