

## Robes and Vestments

The practice in the Scottish Episcopal Church is that, for the public, statutory services of the Church, the customary robes are worn by clergy and lay readers. The robes are intended to emphasise the *office* or *role* of the leaders in worship. They de-emphasise the *personality* or the *personal dress taste* of the person leading worship, and signify that we are focused on Christ and his worship, rather than on ourselves, our own humanity, personality and style.



### Cassock

The ankle length garment with long narrow sleeves called a **cassock**, is not itself a vestment but is a robe usually worn under all other vestments. Its Latin name 'subtanea' (soutaine) indicates that it is an undergarment - however, it is worn as an outer garment. In 1602, Anglican canon law forbade clergy to go out in public "in the doublet and hose without coats or cassocks." The cassock is not only worn by clergy, although in black it has always been the basic item of a priest's or deacon's attire, and it is worn by lay readers. Today, bishops wear purple cassocks, while choirs and servers often wear them in red or other colours.

### Alb

The long white garment worn in Roman society by professional people. It did not become a specifically Christian vestment until the fifth century, by which time priests and bishops were wearing the long white garment called the **alb** (meaning 'white'). A belt made of rope (called a 'cincture') is worn around the waist with a traditional alb, while modern albs (often called 'cassock-albs' because they are made of heavier material) are designed to hang freely without a cincture.



### Stole

The stole is the long strip of material, like a scarf, often with religious symbols or decorations. A deacon wears the stole over the left shoulder, priests and bishops wear it with the ends hanging down the front. Since the Reformation, when the colours of the liturgical year were fixed, stoles have usually been in liturgical colours. The origins of the stole are unclear - it may have originally been a garland worn at a festival, a sign of magisterial authority, or a work cloth that slaves wore around their necks. It has come to symbolise the yoke of Christ taken on at baptism and at ordination; it marks the wearer as a servant of Christ and God's people.

### Chasuble

Over the alb Romans wore a conical tent-shaped garment with a hole cut out for the head, called a 'casula' ('little house') outdoors, and indoors for special occasions. We know it as the **chasuble**. It didn't become a vestment until about the ninth century, when in the West it was accepted that the priest or bishop presiding at the Eucharist wore a chasuble over their alb. It is generally in the appropriate liturgical colour, and may be decorated with strips of embroidered fabric or tapestry called orphreys, or with other liturgical symbols.





### Dalmatic

The **dalmatic** is a tunic shaped vestment in the liturgical colour of the season or occasion, worn by a deacon assisting at the Eucharist. It was originally a garment worn by officials of the Roman Empire but was adapted by deacons who had the care of the widows and sick, and has remained a deacon's garment. It is often decorated with two orphreys (embroidered fabric or tapestry strips) running vertically front to back, over the shoulder and connected by two horizontal orphreys.

### Liturgical Colours

The Episcopal/Anglican Church uses a range of **colours** to mark the different seasons of the Church year. Colours of vestments, altar cloths and other decorations change during the year, often with considerable variation from parish to parish. Consequently:

- the colour of Advent is *blue or purple/violet* to symbolise spiritual preparation;
- the colour Christmas and Epiphany is *white or gold* symbolising joy and purity;
- the colour of Lent is *purple/violet* to symbolise solemnity and penitence;
- the colour of Holy Week is *red* symbolising blood and sacrifice;
- the colour of Easter is *white*;
- the colour for the day of Pentecost is *red* symbolising fire of the Spirit.
- When there is no feast being observed, *green* is the ordinary colour, symbolic of God in creation.
- *White* is also used for marriage and many feast days, *red* for the commemoration of martyrs, *blue* for feasts of Mary, *purple/violet or black* for funerals, and *white* or the *colour of the Sunday* for baptism.

### Surplice

At the Reformation (16th century), much simpler dress became the norm in the Church of England. The alb was replaced by the shorter white gown with wide sleeves called the **surplice** which was worn over the cassock. Originally it was ankle length, but by the Reformation, it had been progressively shortened. In a shortened form today, sometimes decorated with embroidery or lace, it is known as the **cotta**. It is worn by lay readers, and often by the choir and servers.



### Tippet

The **tippet** or **preaching scarf** is a scarf, black for clergy and blue for lay readers, placed around the neck with ends that hang down in front, over the surplice. In low church tradition some Anglican clergy wear this for all services, instead of a stole, but it is generally worn only for non-sacramental services such as morning or evening prayer.