

# *A Word About Liturgical Colors*

Ask an American what “red, white and blue” represents, and probably the answer will be: “my country” or “my flag”. Ask an Virginian what orange and blue symbolize, and you will hear “UVA”. Ask someone to name the colors of Christmas and the answer most given is “red and green.” Colors play an important role in our lives, because people use colors as symbols and associate specific colors with significant events.

The Christian Church also utilizes certain colors to symbolize its scriptural teachings, to express the spirit of the days and seasons of the Church Year, and to set the mood for its services of worship. These colors come out of the life and history of the Church. Because of their symbolism, these colors visually remind and teach.

## The Liturgical Colors, and their meanings, are:

**White:** The color of perfection, glory, purity, joy, the robe of the glorified Christ and the angels. White is used on the “joy” days and seasons (Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Thanksgiving) or on the festival of the Godhead (Holy Trinity Sunday).

**Gold:** The color of majesty, power, and significance. Gold is used on Easter (though it can be used on late Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship).

**Red:** The color of fire, fervor, martyrdom; of the victory and triumph of Christian teaching based on the blood and righteousness of Christ. Red is used on days which mark the great events in the live of the Church (Pentecost, Reformation) and which memorialize the lives of the Apostles and Martyrs.

**Green:** The color of life, nourishment, growth, rest; the dominant color in nature. Green is primarily used during the later Epiphany Season and the Sundays after Pentecost.

**Blue:** The majestic color of the sky; of waiting and expectation. Blue is used only during the Advent Season.

**Violet** (or **purple**): The color of royal mourning, preparation, and repentance. Violet is used during the Lenten season.

**Black:** The absence of color, a symbol of deep sorrow, utter darkness, and death. Black is used on Ash Wednesday (*the most penitential day of the Church Calendar*) and Good Friday (*the most solemn day on the Church Calendar*).