

## More Questions about Lent

**Question(s): Why are the crucifixes (the one on the right when you face the altar and the one that is processed in with) covered during the Lenten season? And, why do we use the stoneware chalice and plate during the Lenten season?**

During the Lenten season things are much more subdued and unadorned in keeping with the penitential nature of the season:

1. The Paschal Candle (the tall decorated candle which most often stands near the baptismal font) is removed from the church. A new candle will be blessed and lit at the Easter Vigil service on the night before Easter day.
2. There are no flowers adorning the altar and all the plants are removed and live in the Great Hall for the duration of Lent.
3. At Saint David's, the vestments for Lent are a coarsely woven material in a natural state – unbleached and un-dyed. Many other churches use purple vestments, purple being the traditional color associated with the penitential seasons of Lent and Advent.
4. All ornamental objects – flags, banners, crosses, and statues (if we had any) – are either removed or covered. Since a crucifix is a particular kind of cross that depicts the passion of Jesus, which event culminates the season of Lent, it is left uncovered. We have one crucifix over the side altar and it is uncovered. However the icons that usually hang to either side of this crucifix have been removed. Because the processional cross is plain with no "body", and the cross to the right facing the altar depicts Christ as King (called a "Christus Rex" cross), they, along with any other cross in the church, are covered. Since it is impossible to cover the large cross over the altar, a piece of unbleached muslin (same material used to cover the other objects) is draped across the arms of the cross.
5. We used pottery vessels and candle holders instead of silver or brass.

Another less obvious difference during Lent is that we try to avoid any festive celebrations that can be put off till after Easter, such as weddings and baptisms. Any church suppers or gatherings are simple meals of soup, salad and bread (usually no dessert). Funerals are, of course, unavoidable and when a funeral does occur during Lent all the silver and fine festive vestments are brought out because a funeral service is always a celebration of the Resurrection.

The idea is to simplify as much as possible, to get things down to the bare minimum so that we can focus on our Lenten disciplines of "prayer, fasting and study of God's holy Word". In a way, this is our corporate "giving up something for Lent" so that we can fully appreciate the ecstatic joy and celebration of a new Easter at the end of the forty days.