

## Understanding Episcopal Liturgy

*#3 What is the reason the priest and other worship leaders wear robes during worship?*

Our simple white robes are intended to imitate the most basic clothing worn by people during the times when the Old and New Testaments came into being. The white robes worn by worship leaders might look fancy or unusual to us, but simple unbleached linen or cotton robes were the least expensive, most common garments for people during Jesus' time. They are fastened with cotton ropes because in Jesus' time zippers, snaps, and velcro had not been invented, and it was far too much work to make button holes by hand.

The robes we wear at St. Paul's are called 'albs', which means 'white'. The priest and other worship leaders wear robes during worship so that the focus of attention during worship will not be on the clothes they have chosen to wear that particular day. During the hottest weeks of the summer worship leaders do not wear robes in order to stay cool, but you might notice that when they are not wearing robes they try to wear clothes in neutral colors that will not be distracting.