

St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church
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Request for Proposals: Vestments for Clergy

I. *Mission statement:* St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church (St. Michael's), a welcoming community of faith in the Anglican tradition, invites all God's people to seek spiritual growth through a life of prayer, study, stewardship, and fellowship, in order that we may be transformed by the love of God in our midst and sent out to serve others.

Located in Albuquerque's North Valley, St. Michael's was established in 1950 and has grown to include approximately 700 parishioners, celebrating three services on Sunday & others during the week. It supports several outreach programs such as a food pantry and the All Angels Day School on site. The church has strong roots in its community and a broad outreach to people seeking a blend of the traditional and the contemporary, as symbolized in the beautiful combination of aesthetic features and buildings.

II. *Commission:* St. Michael's wants to commission the creation of five sets of vestments to be worn by its clergy during worship services. Vestments have functional and symbolic purposes. Because they are worn over street clothing, they bring focus to the role of the clergy in the celebration of the liturgy rather than on their personalities and personal attributes. In a sense, they render the celebrant invisible. Vestments bring beauty and a festive atmosphere to the worship service, and they reflect the glory of God. (See definitions and descriptions below.) Artists may submit proposals for one, or more, or all sets of vestments; and, artists may design and create the vestments, or work with sub-contractors to create portions or all of the vestments. The commissioning of these sets of vestments will take place over the next 1-4 years.

A. *Information about St. Michael's:* Since its inception, the church facility, programs and services have grown significantly. On Sundays, three services, each with distinct characteristics are held. The first is quiet and contemplative using chant and organ music. The second has a contemporary spirit, using an informal music group with varied instruments and several singers; alternative liturgical prayers and, frequently, Spanish language prayers and readings; and, a focus on family members of all ages. The third is more traditional, providing a sung liturgy, a choir and regular use of incense.

The sanctuary building, built in 1997, is a blend of architectural styles from the traditional to the contemporary, including numerous artwork by regional artists. The exterior is

of a Northern New Mexico style with a pitched tin roof and stucco walls which frame the ten contemporary, colorful, stained glass windows created in the 1950's by art professor John Tatschl of the University of New Mexico. Inside, the altar is oriented with the long side of the building, facing the windows, on a slightly raised dais, with the pews for the congregation arranged in a semi-circle facing the altar. Made by Albuquerque artist Chris Sandoval, the altar, the lectern and the cross are hand-carved in traditional New Mexico designs. The pews were built by Max Chavez and a large bulto (carved wood statue) of Mary the Virgin with the Christ Child, carved and painted by Santero Alcario Otero is placed in a nicho next to the cross.

B. Description of vestments: St. Michael's is interested in vestments created with designs and in styles which reflect the unique sense and spirit of the building, the services and ceremonies which take place there. The new vestments should serve the ritual of the liturgy but not overwhelm or interrupt the liturgy, nor become the focus of attention. The vestments should not be stage props or "costumes", but rather allow that the clergy inhabit them and thereby express meaning.

Natural fabrics, or blends including wool, silk, cotton, rayon, linen are preferred; those which are evocative of the Southwest, Central and South America; and, which are lightweight but still have body and texture so they flow well and move with the gestures of the person wearing them. Colors should reflect and be compatible with the colors of the windows, in more subdued tones or hues. The textures of the fabric and the colors should relate to one another. However, the separate pieces within a set do not necessarily need to match each other. For instance, fabrics from cultures around the world might be used and become a predominant expression.

Designs on the vestments should be abstract or impressionistic, using colors, patterns, or shapes, rather than specific religious symbols, and might refer to some of the designs or patterns found in the windows, the altar, the cross or other features of the sanctuary. The designs should evoke the sense of mystery engendered in the liturgy; engage the imaginative spirit of the congregation; and, provide elements of surprise and wonder that unfold with the movements of the wearer.

C. Definitions: Chasubles, priest's stoles, deacon's stoles and a cope are the vestments to be commissioned.

1. Chasuble: The sleeveless outer garment worn by the celebrant (priest or bishop) at the eucharist. It may be oval or rectangular with an opening for the head (somewhat like a poncho.) It typically reflects the liturgical color of the day or season of the church year.
2. Priest's stole: A long narrow band of fabric worn around the neck and hanging down to mid-calf. It is generally about 3-5 inches wide and can taper to a width of about 9 inches at the ends. It is the priest's distinctive insignia. The color reflects the liturgical color of the day or season.
3. Deacon's stole: A long narrow band of fabric placed diagonally across the body from the left shoulder to the right hip. St. Michael's will use the Byzantine stole whose center is placed about hip-level on the right side

under the arm and brought diagonally to the left shoulder with the tails hanging down both front and back. It is the deacon's distinctive insignia. The color reflects the liturgical color of the day or season.

4. The cope: An ornamental processional cape which may be worn by anyone in the altar party but is typically reserved for a bishop or for the celebrant of the eucharist on a special feast day. It usually has a large decorative shield or hood that hangs between the shoulders in the back. It is fastened by a large clasp for closure at the neck.

There are garments worn under the chasuble and stoles that are not part of the commission but must be taken into consideration when designing the vestments. The basic vestment is the alb, a white, long-sleeved floor-length garment that is girdled by a cord. The alb is worn over street clothes. The celebrant for the eucharist wears an alb with a stole over it and over all the chasuble. A deacon wears a dalmatic - a mid-calf tunic with wide elbow-length sleeves - over the alb. The stole is worn over the dalmatic.

D. Five Sets of Vestments: Each set of vestments includes a chasuble, three priest's stoles and two deacon's stoles. In addition, the Festal set includes a cope. Each set corresponds to a particular celebratory season and a symbolic, predominant color corresponds to those ceremonies. Additional stoles of both types may also be included. The number of stoles will be determined during negotiations with selected artists.

Festal set in whites or creams with golds and multi-color accents to be worn at Christmas, Easter, special feasts, All Saints Day and funerals. White is a symbol of purity, joy, holiness and celebration.

Set in greens for Ordinary Time (the season after Pentecost which generally runs from late May to the end of November) and Epiphany (the period after Christmas until Lent, about 6 weeks in January and February). This is the longest season of the church year. Green is the prevailing color of nature, represents growth, new life, and immortality.

Set in blues for Advent (the 4 weeks before Christmas). Blue is associated with the Virgin Mary, truth, constancy, fidelity and heaven. It expresses the hopeful expectation of Advent.

Set in violets for Lent (the six weeks before Easter). Violet represents suffering, penitence and humility.

Set in red for the Feast of Pentecost, Holy Week, martyrs' days, confirmation and ordinations. Red symbolizes fire, blood, divine love, the Holy Spirit and God's creative power.

In addition, a cope is to be commissioned to be worn with all the sets except the violet/Lenten set.

III. Funding: Up to \$4000 is available for each set of vestments. Each set consists of 5 – 7 items: 1 chasuble, and 5 or more stoles. In addition, up to \$2000 is available for the cope. Following selection of one or more artists, St. Michael's will negotiate with the artist(s) for specific prices for specific numbers of items. The price to be agreed upon will include all costs such as materials, sub-contracted work, studio expenses, and all fees including design or fabrication services.

IV. Artists' Proposals of Interest: All interested artists, including St. Michael's congregation members are eligible to submit proposals. There are no residency requirements. Everyone is welcome to visit the sanctuary building and grounds, or to attend a service, or to view further information about the church on the Web site www.all-angels.com .

Artists are required to submit the following information:

1. ~ 1 page written statement outlining your creative response to this project, including which set or sets of vestments you propose creating;
2. ~ a brief description of your proposed process to create the vestments, from creation of fabric, use of other fabrics, assembly of garments, production methods or collaborative work with others, to information regarding care requirements and durability;
3. ~ a brief resume, including experience regarding fabric arts & crafts, creation of garments, or possibly of liturgical vestments;
4. ~ examples of work: 3 – 5 images in photographs, slides or cd format.

All Proposals of Interest are due, hand-delivered or postmarked to the St. Michael and All Angels office by 5:00 PM Wednesday, February 18, 2009.

V. Process: The St. Michael's Vestment Committee, consisting of clergy and members of the congregation, is responsible for reviewing the Proposals of Interest. It is expected that several artists may be selected to submit specific design concepts, for interviews and discussion regarding design concepts, materials and assembly/production of garments. As artists are selected for specific sets of vestments, the Committee will meet with each individually to negotiate fees, contractual arrangements and a schedule for completion and delivery

VI. Resources:

Books:

David Philippart, ed., *Clothed in Glory; Vesting the Church*, Liturgy Training Publications: Chicago, 1997

Nancy Chinn, *Spaces for Spirit; Adorning the Church*, Liturgy Training Publications: Chicago, 1998

Barbara Dee Bennett Baumgarten, *Vestments for All Seasons*, 2002

Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum, eds., *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church; A User-Friendly Reference for Episcopalians*, Church Publishing Inc.: New York, 2000

John N. Wall, *A Dictionary for Episcopalians*, Cowley Publications: Boston, 2000

Websites:

Episcopal Church and the Visual Arts website (www.ecva.org)

St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church (www.all-angels.com)

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