



Clergy Vesture Policy

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TYPE	Policy
SUBJECT	What clergy wear for church services
AUTHORISED BY	DIOCESAN COUNCIL
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SCOPE

The Clergy Vesture policy sets out the requirements for clergy vesture while ministering in Divine Service in the cathedral and churches of the diocese, as well as implications of the Canon Concerning Vesture of Ministers. It applies to all clergy licensed in the diocese to conduct services. This policy is designed for use by ministers and to inform others, where necessary, of the Diocese of the Northern Territory's approach to clergy vesture.

CLERGY VESTURE

The following are allowable as clergy vesture when ministering Divine Service in churches in the Diocese including the cathedral:

- A white shirt with the diocesan crest on the shirt. Such a shirt may be in polo or button-up style. This is to be worn with other clothing suitable to the occasion. A stole is not to be worn with the diocesan shirt. These shirts must be ordered through the diocesan office and are to be worn only by clergy.
- A clergy shirt with clerical collar, without surplice or alb. A stole need not be worn.
- On certain occasions a minister may consider it appropriate to wear a stole with non-clerical vesture, where this has been the custom, such as prison ministry.
- The Canon Concerning Vesture of Ministers indicates that a minister may wear a surplice when ministering on any occasion. This would be accompanied by a preaching scarf or stole.
- Further, the Canon Concerning Vesture of Ministers indicates that ministers may also wear the vesture which has customarily been worn in the place in which the service is being held. In most cases in the Northern Territory, this will be the alb (or cassalb) and stole.
- Canon 24 of the Canons of 1603 prescribed the wearing of a cope at Holy Communion services in cathedrals in the Church of England. The Canon Concerning Vesture of Ministers explicitly repeals Canon 24, but customary usage allows the wearing of the cope for the presiding minister at the cathedral.

Clergy will be sensitive to the nature of the particular service and dress appropriately for it. It may be helpful for clergy to hear from parish councils what is considered appropriate, but this is not determinative.

AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE VESTURE

The parish rector has the authority to require other clergy licensed to the parish to adopt a particular form of allowable vesture, noting that under the Canon Concerning Vesture of Ministers, clergy may not be prohibited from wearing the surplice. In cases of dispute, the bishop will make a determination. The bishop retains the authority to require particular clergy vesture for special occasions, such as ordinations, synod services and inductions.

BACKGROUND

Under the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia, the authorised standard of worship and doctrine is described as the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, together with the Thirty-Nine Articles. Notwithstanding controversial interpretations of the *Ornaments Rubric* in BCP, the authorised vesture for clergy was the surplice in all ministrations, and rochet and chimere for bishops. Despite this, one effect of the Oxford

Movement in nineteenth century England, which became influential in many parts of Australia, was the introduction of pre-Reformation clergy vesture, such as albs, stoles, chasubles and mitres.

Within the context of the Constitution, the General Synod passed the Canon Concerning Vesture of Ministers 1991 (replacing the earlier Use of the Surplice Canon 1977), which was adopted by the Diocese of the Northern Territory through the Canons of General Synod Ordinance 1996. That canon prescribes that while ministering in Divine Service in a cathedral or church a minister shall comply with such standards of vesture as may be prescribed by ordinance of the synod of the diocese in which the service is being held or, in the absence of any such ordinance, by the bishop. At present, there is no such ordinance in the Diocese of the Northern Territory and so standards of vesture may be prescribed by the bishop.

In the Presidential Charge at the 2017 diocesan synod, the bishop prescribed the minimum standards of clergy vesture set out in this policy. Those standards are designed to maintain the Anglican tradition of distinct clergy vesture (see Canon Concerning Vesture of Ministers Section 2), to accommodate practical aspects of the climate of the Northern Territory, and to present a more modern approach to clergy vesture.

The Canon Concerning Vesture of Ministers makes clear that no doctrinal significance attaches any longer to any kind of clergy vesture.

CHANGES TO THIS POLICY

From time to time it may be necessary to make changes to this policy. Until such time as the synod may establish an ordinance prescribing clergy vesture, the person responsible for making changes is the bishop.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any further questions about this policy, please contact the diocesan Bishop.
bishop@ntanglican.org.au

For completion when document supersedes an existing policy, procedure or protocol.

VERSION NUMBER OF THIS DOCUMENT	DATE OF PREVIOUS DOCUMENT	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	REASON FOR CHANGE