

BARE BRANCHES AND PURPLE CLOTH



We use colors and symbols to express the themes of the liturgical year. When you understand their significance, they can be very powerful and meaningful. One example of this is the bare branches and purple cloth that are hung on the pillars in the sanctuary during Lent. As you know, Lent is the forty-day season of preparation for Easter. It is considered a time for reflection and self-examination, a time to contemplate our need for renewal in both mind and spirit. The paraments for Lent are purple, the color of penitence, also the color of royalty. We decorate the sanctuary for Lent with bare branches because branches can evoke the wilderness, the burning bush, the fig tree given another chance to bear fruit. They can be signs of the brevity of life, and perhaps even heralds of the life to come. They also can reflect a time of the year when buds are preparing to open. On Easter morning as we remember the resurrection and proclaim that Christ is risen, the bare branches will be replaced with glorious blooming white flowers and the sanctuary will be filled with fragrant Easter lilies, all representing transformation and new life.

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