

## Altar Cloths



One of the wonderful things about embroidery is that our skills - and results - are portable. After only a few hours with our machines and we're ready to embroider everything in our home, our neighbors' homes, children, grandchildren - the list goes on and on.

Churches are a great place to bring your skills. Altar cloths and pulpit paraments are perfect places for religious designs to give a favorite place of worship a new, faith-focused look.

Find out who is in charge of the altar duties; it may be a committee or group of people. Contact them and get their permission to make the church some new altar decor. Take care to give the church input on embroidery designs as well as the color of the background fabric. Most churches have liturgical guidelines that they follow.

After you have that information, go back on a quiet day to take measurements of the area that you will be making new cloths for.



Measure the front part that hangs vertically and where the fabric attaches to the altar. Take special care to note how the altar cloth attaches, so that you can reproduce it. You might even ask permission to borrow an existing cloth to bring home to use as a model.

To make a 6-foot-wide altar cloth, and two 18-inch-wide cloths for the pulpit and lectern.

## Supplies needed:

- 5-6 yards of white fabric
- 5 yards of welting trim
- Embroidery designs:  
[He is Risen](#)  
[Cross & Lilies](#)  
[Lamb & Lilies](#)

## Instructions:

Prewash your fabric to shrink it before embroidering or cutting.

Lay the fabric out, and, with a disappearing marking pen, mark the dimensions of the front of the altar cloth plus seam allowances. Now, embroider designs at the desired placement. We placed the end designs so that they would be an equal distance from each end and centered vertically. The large center design was centered at the widest point.

After embroidering, cut out each front piece and a backing the same size.

On the right side of the embroidered piece, position and pin the welting to the fabric.





With right sides together, pin on the backing piece.



Using a zipper foot, stitch the three edges with welting together.



Trim the corner seam allowances if necessary. Turn and press.



To make the piece that attaches the front of the parament to the pulpit or altar, I cut a piece of fabric the size of the pulpit or altar, plus seam allowances, hemmed the sides, then made a 2-inch casing at the back of the attachment piece. A heavy bar goes through the casing to hold the cloth in place.



With right sides together, attach the end opposite the casing to the upper, non-trimmed edge of the completed front piece.



After attaching the two pieces, turn the raw edges to the inside and press in place.



Stitch very close to the pressed edge to finish the altar cloth.



Sarah presented the paraments to Pastor David Everett at Christ Lutheran Church in Somerset, Wisconsin, for use during their Easter Services.

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