

TIPS for CLEANING ALTAR LINENS

1. Inspect linens first: If they are NOT stained, do NOT wash again. Every time you wash them, there is a breakdown of fibers. You can re-wet and press stain-free linens if they are wrinkled.
2. Wine Stained Linens: Immerse and soak in a container of cold water as soon as possible after bringing home from Sunday service. You can add a small amount of oxygen bleach such as Oxy-Clean to the soak water, but dissolve the powder completely before adding the linens. DO NOT USE CHLORINE BLEACH. It yellows and damages linen. If the wine stain is still there after a 24 to 48 hour soak, you can dab on a 3% hydrogen peroxide solution, or use a small amount of "Carbona Stain Devils #8 Fruit and Red Wine" (found at Kroger in a small yellow bottle) and rinse under warm water until the stain is out.
3. Lipstick Stains: Use a small amount of liquid dish detergent or stain remover like "Carbona Stain Devils #6 Makeup". Lipstick may require some gentle scrubbing to remove, but do treat the linen and the embroidery gently!
4. Wash linens in a mild detergent or soap and rinse thoroughly.
5. Iron linens DAMP! If ironing immediately after washing, you can roll linens in clean terrycloth towels to leave the right amount of moisture. If you can't iron right away, you can store damp linen in a clean plastic bag in the refrigerator (to prevent mildew) until you are ready to iron. Make sure your iron has no rust or other soil on it before turning it on. If you clean your iron's sole plate, test it on a paper towel or clean white cloth before using it on the altar linens. Use the LINEN (hottest) setting on your iron, and add steam if needed. Starting with dry linen or using an iron that is not hot enough can result in a wrinkled finished product.
6. Fold After ironing until flat and dry, fold each piece in thirds both ways. Do NOT iron creases. A natural crease is fine.
7. Fair Linen (the long white table cloth on the altar). We have three fair linen cloths. Two of them are made of very thin linen and are quite fragile. We have had to retire two other fair linens in the last few years because holes had developed in them. Please handle these delicate items with care when washing! The spares are wrapped in tissue paper rolled up in the bottom of the parament storage box in the church attic.

Only wash the fair linen when wine-stained or visibly dirty. If there is only a tiny wine stain, we have been known to spot clean: Use cold water or a 3% hydrogen peroxide solution (small brown bottle in the sacristy hallway cabinet) and a damp cloth; place plastic underneath and dab until clean.

When bringing the whole fair linen home, soak and wash in cold water in the same way smaller linens are done.

Iron fair linen while damp, and roll on a large cardboard tube as you iron. Only attempt to iron if you have the large cardboard roll. Use the roll and tissue from the spare fair linen which replaced the one you are cleaning, or the empty roll near the linen box in the sacristy.

If you have questions, please call Arlette Stobbe or Doris Tomlin