

# **The Prince of Peace Chrismon Tree**

**A history of  
our love of God  
and the symbols  
of our faith**



The Prince of Peace Christmas Tree is adorned by three different and important decorations: White lights, the Chrismons that were made by members of the congregation, and the Gold Christmas balls from the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the congregation that were given by members in memory or in honor of loved ones. These three decorations are important for Prince of Peace in that they speak of our faith and who we are as children of God and the importance of who we are called to be as a family of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The small white lights on the tree simply point to Christ as "The Light of the World". "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." – John 1:5

The Chrismon Tree was first developed in 1957 by Frances Kipps Spencer, a member of the Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia. Even though Christian symbols have been used for centuries to share about the ministry of Jesus Christ and/or the history of the Christian church, Ms. Spencer developed these symbols into a form that would be appropriate for a church tree. Additionally, she created the word "Chrismon" by combining the words "Christ" and "monogram." "Chrismon" actually became a trademarked word in 1957. Even though Chrismons are based on the original Christian symbols which date back to the early Church, other Christian symbols continue to be developed for the Chrismons which reflect other symbolisms in the Bible.

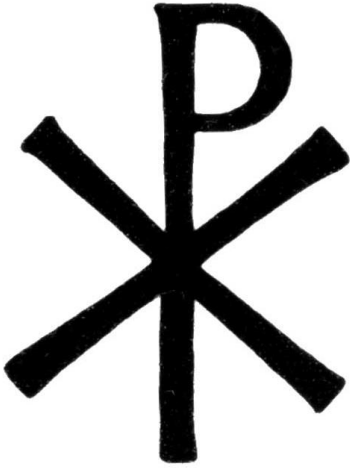
All of our Chrismons are made of white and gold. White, the liturgical color of Christmas, refers to our Lord's purity and perfection; Gold refers to His majesty and glory.

The Chrismons that you see on the tree are not the original Chrismons that were made by the Prince of Peace congregation. The original Chrismons were made during the early years of the church between 1964 and 1966 and were removed from use 1997. The current Chrismons were made in 1997 and were put into service in 1998. They have hung on the tree during each Advent and Christmas Season since.

The following pages share the various Chrismons that adorn our tree and their meaning.

# Chi Rho

## Alpha Omega



The **Chi-Rho** is a Christian symbol consisting of the intersection of the capital Greek letters Chi (X) and Rho (P), which are the first two letters of "Christ" in Greek (ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, Christos). The Chi-Rho can represent either Christ or Christianity and is also known as a **Christogram**.



**Alpha and omega** are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, signifying that God is "the beginning and the end," or eternal. The symbols were used in early Christianity and appear in the Roman catacombs.

The Alpha and Omega symbols are often combined with the cross, chi rho, or other Christian symbols.

# IHS



A monogram meaning the name of Jesus Christ. In Christian inscriptions the *nomina sacra*, or names of Jesus Christ, were shortened by contraction, thus IHS for *Iesous Christos*.

## The Fish or ICHTHUS

The fish is thought to have been chosen by the early Christians for several reasons:

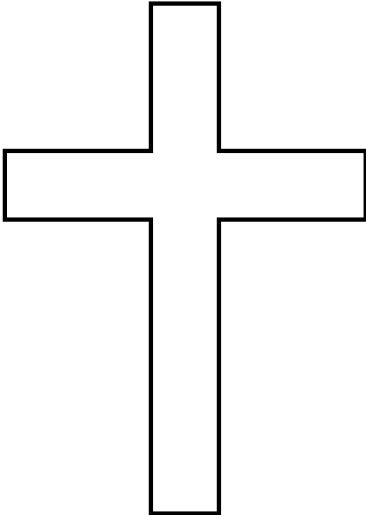
the Greek word for fish (ICHTUS), works nicely as an acrostic for "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior"

the fish would not be an obvious Christian symbol to persecutors

Jesus' ministry is associated with fish: he chose several fishermen to be his disciples and declared he would make them "fishers of people."

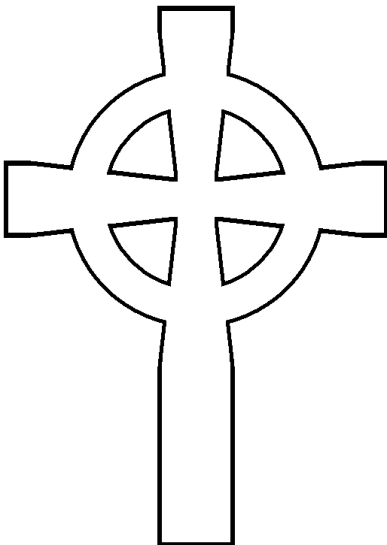


## The Latin Cross



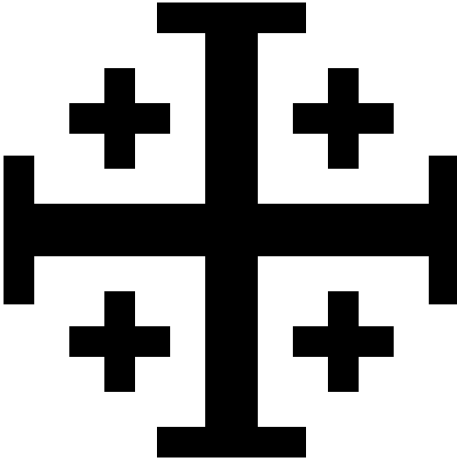
The simplest and most common Christian cross is the **Latin cross**. It may not have come into use until the 2nd or 3rd century. The empty cross reminds Christians of the resurrection, while the crucifix, with the body of Jesus on it is a reminder of Christ's sacrifice.

## The Celtic Cross



An Irish legend tells how St. Patrick created the first **Celtic Cross** by drawing a circle over a Latin cross to incorporate a pagan moon goddess symbol. For an Irish Catholic, the circle in the Celtic cross may be a symbol of eternity and the endlessness of God's love. It can even represent a halo emanating from Christ

## The Jerusalem Cross



**The Jerusalem Cross** was worn by the crusaders going to Jerusalem, in the middle ages. It can symbolize the Four Gospels in the Bible, the spread of the Gospel to the four corners of the earth or the five wounds of Jesus when he died on the cross.

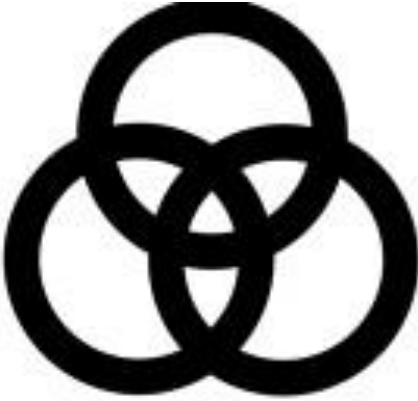
## The Greek Cross



The **Greek Cross** has four arms of equal length and has been used for centuries.

When five Greek Crosses appear on an altar under the fair linen, it usually symbolizes the five wounds of Jesus' Crucifixion.

# The Holy Trinity



There are many symbols of the **Trinity** in Christianity. The Borromean Rings are three interlocking circles that symbolize the Christian trinity. The word "trinity" comes from the Latin noun "trinitas" meaning "three are one." The trinity represents the belief that God is one Being made up of three distinct Persons who exist in co-equal, co-eternal communion as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

# The Descending Dove



The use of a **Descending Dove** to represent the Holy Spirit is based upon the account of Jesus' baptism found in Luke 3:22: "and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are my Son, the beloved; in you I am well pleased."

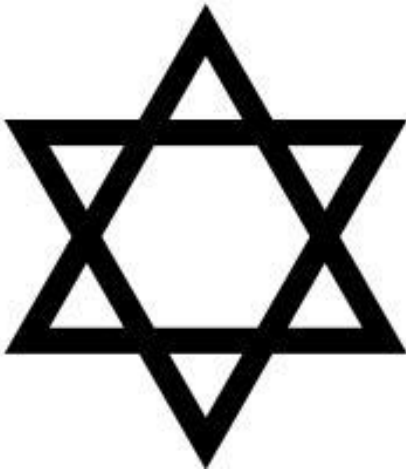


## The Oil Lamp



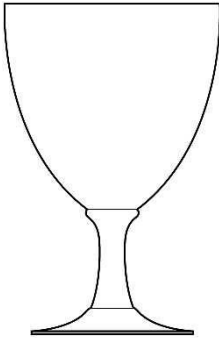
The Psalmist David wrote: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105) In ancient times, an **Oil Lamp** provided the most common means of illumination for those traveling after dark. Jesus the Christ is our light in the darkness of this world.

## The Star of David/The Creator's Star



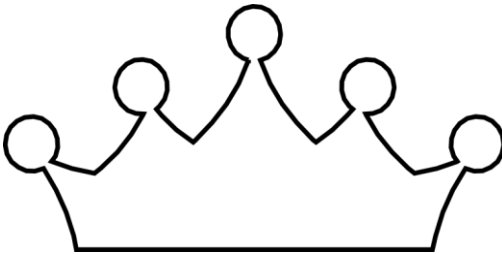
The **Star of David** or the **Creator's Star**. The six points represent six aspects of God: love, mercy, wisdom, majesty, power, and justice.

## The Cup of Christ



**The Cup** symbolizing the Sacrament of Holy Communion and its grace filled presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## The Crown



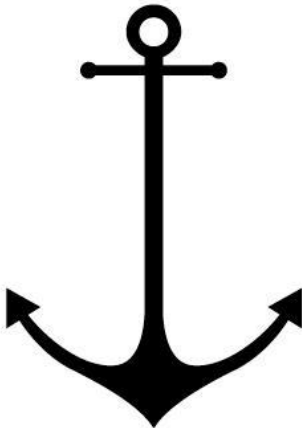
**The Crown** represents the kingship of our Lord, Jesus Christ, his victory of sin and death and his place of honor at the right hand of God.

# Fire



**Fire** is a symbol of the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Disciples on Pentecost in the Book of Acts.

# ANCHOR CROSS



The **Anchor Cross** is the Cross of Hope. This Child is the hope of the world. A cross rises out of a crescent moon, which is a symbol of the mother of Jesus, Mary.

# The Five Pointed Star



The **Five-Pointed Star** is the great symbol of the Epiphany; the star that led the three wise men to the nativity.

*The Balls on the Christmas Tree were given:*

*In memory of:*

- ❖ *Whitey Koontz by Pam Yuhaniak*
- ❖ *David Kelley by Shirley Kelley*
- ❖ *David Kelley by the Brewer Kids*
- ❖ *Fred and Gal Bolyard and Priscilla Shawley by The Bolyard Family*
- ❖ *Verna Allen by Gus and Esther Toth*
- ❖ *Glenn and Mary Thompson by Glenn Thompson*
- ❖ *Tim Daily by Rosie Nickle*
- ❖ *Neida Costabile by Heather Schmitt*
- ❖ *Eleanor and Andrew Kells by Kathy Bangor*
- ❖ *Alice and Walter Williams and Annabell and Wib Kuhns by Sheila Thompson*
- ❖ *Mary and Wiljo Maatta by Pat Maatta*
- ❖ *Vance Keslar by Vanessa Baran*
- ❖ *Bill and Marguerite Beehner and Minnie and Harford Williams by Margy Williams*
- ❖ *Bernice Doris, Frank Doris Sr. and Rosemary and Ted Gerhart Sr. by The Gerhart Family*
- ❖ *Verna Allen by the Sunday School Children*
- ❖ *Catherine and Robert Kaylor by Debbie Lindsey.*
- ❖ *Parents by Bob and Elaine Woller*
- ❖ *Jacob Hayden by Mary Jane Hayden*
- ❖ *Bonnie Bigo by Joe Bigo*
- ❖ *Estella Forsha, June Buncie, Barney Helfferich and Ron Forsha by Sherry Stahl.*
- ❖ *Jay Fry, Verna Allen, Family and Friends, by Pat and Ray Fry.*
- ❖ *David Johnson by Ron and Ruth Kozar*
- ❖ *Rickey Warren by Ginger and Don Warren*

- ❖ *Virginia Stuempfle and Steve and Catherine Horgos*  
*by Andria Wood*
- ❖ *William Spangler* *by Audrey Spangler*
- ❖ *Catherine Schaefer* *by Pastor Bill, Jen, Noah and*  
*Angeline Schaefer*

*In honor of:*

- ❖ *Past and Present Pastors* *by Sue Tschupp*
- ❖ *Paul, Barb, Courtney & Aaron Volpe*  
*by Pat and Ray Fry*



*This book is dedicated to the  
glory of God and in memory and  
honor of the hands of all the  
saints at Prince of Peace  
Lutheran Church throughout the  
years whose handiwork and skill  
have become a beautiful  
reminder of our love of Jesus  
and the work of God in our lives.*