

Gatlinburg Presbyterian Church Chrismon Ministry



November 20, 1984 "Permission requested to allow WOC (Women of the Church) to place a Chrismon tree in the sanctuary. All Chrismon symbols of the Christian and Judean faiths. Motion by M. Jones and seconded by L. Timmons that this be approved. Motion carried." In August of 2013 the Session charged Bob and Debbie Crain with the honor of continuing the Chrismon ministry.

The tradition of Chrismons was started by the daughter of a Lutheran minister, Frances Kipps Spencer, who began thinking of ways to decorate the Christmas tree that would reflect the Christian faith. As she imagined what she could do, she created symbols that were monograms for the Greek word for Christ as well as crosses and other symbols of the Christian faith. These symbols speak of His life, ministry, activities, nature and teaching. Chrismons are decorated in gold and white.

Our tree is adorned with styrofoam, bead & wire, and cross stitch Chrismons. The styrofoam symbols were cut and prepared with glitter paint by Bob. The church family members finished the project with the gold and white materials. Classes were held by Debbie to create the symbols of bead and wire. The cross stitch symbols were sewn by the Women of the Church in 1984.

Our Chrismon tree was dedicated at the Dec. 1, 2013 worship service. Debbie gave the history and explanation of the Chrismons and The Rev. Joe Blevins gave the prayer of dedication.

Please visit our website at www.gatlinburgpresbyterianchurch.org to see our Chrismon Ministry booklet prepared with explanations, pictures and member participation. Gatlinburg Presbyterian Church is located at 237 Reagan Drive, Gatlinburg, Tennessee. 865-436-5592.

It is our prayer that all who see these beautiful pieces of art will feel Christ's presence just as we so lovingly worked on them. What a wonderful gift God has given to us all.



Chi Rho *The most widely known Chrismon is the combination of the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ. The Chi Rho (XP) was widely used by the early church. In that day, the shame and pain of the cross was too immediate for most people to use the sign of the cross openly.*



Iota Chi *The Iota (I), is the first letter of our Lord's given name Jesus in Greek. This name means "the promised One." The Chi (X) is the first letter of His Greek title Christ. When these two letters are superimposed, they become our Savior's cipher, the symbolic interweaving of initials that some people call a star.*



Tau Cross *So called because of the resemblance to the Greek letter T. This is the original form of the cross.*



Cross and Chi *The Greek Chi (X), the first letter of Christ, combines with the cross. The Christ and the cross--can we ever separate them? Only when we understand both the Christ and the cross can we begin to see the measure of God's love.*



Latin Cross *While no one today truly knows the shape of the cross on which our Lord died, the church uses this form, the Latin Cross, most widely.*

Draped Cross *Latin cross draped with the robe of the King.*



Celtic Cross *The cross has a circle at the top which represents “eternal life”.*



Greek Cross *When all extensions of a cross are of equal length, it is called a Greek Cross regardless of the shape of the arms or the designs on their ends.*



Anchor Cross *Reminds Christian’s that Jesus is the anchor of their faith.*



Round Cross



Triumphant Cross *The world (as seen by the latitude and longitude lines) with the cross on top, reminds us that Christ is triumphant over the challenges presented by living in the world.*



***IHS** A monogram of the name of Jesus Christ.*

***Circle** The circle is endless, the circle can symbolize eternity and, by extension, God, the only eternal One. In some instances the circle may also suggest eternal life with God.*



***Alpha and Omega** The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Only God is the beginning and the end.*

***Circle** The circle is endless, the circle can symbolize eternity and, by extension, God, the only eternal One. In some instances the circle may also suggest eternal life with God.*



***Dove** The Dove is a reminder of the Spirit of God descending to live in each one of us, bearing peace and comfort.*

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***Descending Dove** Symbol of the Holy Spirit, recalling the Holy Spirit's descent on Jesus as a dove at his Baptism and at Pentecost.*



Peace Dove A dove carrying an olive leaf is a symbol of peace.



Natal Star Cross Represents the sign of the night sky announcing Jesus' birth combined with a cross, symbolizing the salvation which the birth of this child brings.



Babe In A Manger A symbol of the baby Jesus.



Chalice The cup symbolizing the sacrament of Communion; it also represents forgiveness and reconciliation with God.



Butterfly Symbolizes the transformation.

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Five Pointed Star Medieval Christians believed the 5 points represented the five wounds of Christ and was believed to protect against evil.



Star of David The six points represent six aspects of God: love, mercy, wisdom, majesty, power, and justice. In this form, the two triangles represent the Trinity.



Angel Reminds Christians of the angels who told the shepherds about the birth of Jesus. It can also represent the second coming of Jesus, which the Bible says will start with an angel blowing a trumpet.



Epiphany (five point) Star and Rose Isaiah's prophecy "The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." In addition, the rose is a widely used figure for our Lord's mother, Mary. The Epiphany star points to Jesus' divinity.



***Crown** Is the symbol that Jesus is King. It shows that Christians believe Jesus is ruler over heaven and the earth.*



***Triquetra and Circle** The Trinity in Eternity, the Eternal Triune, and the Eternal One.*



***Shepherd's Hook with Alpha and Omega** The shepherd's hook shows that this staff refers to the eternal One, the Good Shepherd.*



***Triangle and Trefoil** The triangle, one of the oldest and most common symbols for the Triune. The trefoil, is a modification of three interlaced circles which suggest the eternal nature of the three Persons.*













*2013 CHRISMON MINISTRY
PARTICIPANTS*

Bill and Opie Ball

Joe and Sara Blevins

Lois Brickwood

Bob and Debbie Crain

Craig and Faye Gibbs

Bonnie Henderson

Alison Koprowski

John and Ann Lee

Evelyn Lewis

Peggy Noblitt

Rhonda Poste

Bob Spinney

Kevin and Lori Tierney