

# THE SYMBOLISM OF THE CHRISMONS\*

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**St. John Ev. Lutheran Church**  
**Forest Park, IL.**

\*The word Chrismons is copyrighted by the Lutheran Church of the Ascension, Danville, VA.

The word “Chrismons” means Christ’s monogram. St. John first used them in 1968. They were all made by members of our Congregation.

All Chrismons are made in combinations of gold and white beads. White is the liturgical color for joy, purity and perfection. The gold represents our Lord’s majesty and glory. The evergreen Christmas tree is a symbol of God’s constancy. The white lights on the tree represent Christ’s constant presence as the “light to the World”.

### ***THE CHRISTIAN YEAR***

Depicted in the Chrismons on the grill work behind the altar, these follow the Life of our Lord.

#### **Left side of the Crucifix:**



At the top on each side of the Crucifix is the *Latin Cross*. This is the most used form of the cross among Christians. Hanging from the crossbar is the Alpha and Omega—the beginning and the end declaring the divinity of the Saviour.



**ADVENT** - The “*Golden Scroll of Prophecy*” symbolizes the promises of salvation which God gave His people. “His name will be called, Wonderful Counselor . . . Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6



**CHRISTMAS** - “*Gladiolus*” symbolizes the Incarnation, the Word made flesh. In Latin gladiolus means sword. The leaves of the plant look like a two-edged sword. Thus, gladiolus is a sword in plant form or a “living” sword. Hebrews 4:12 says “the word of God is . . . sharper than a two-edged sword and in John, Christ is called the “word made flesh” and the Word is a two-edged sword.



**EPIPHANY** - The “*Five-Pointed Star*” or the Epiphany Star which the wise men followed. Matt. 2:2, the Manifestation to the Wise Men.”



**LENT** - *“Pelican in Her Piety”* Christ died for our sins. Long ago, people believed that in time of famine a mother pelican would pierce her breast so that her young could drink her life’s blood and live. This is the only Chrismon using a color—the drops of red blood. Ps. 102:6



**GOOD FRIDAY** - *“The Cross”* Our Lord’s sacrifice for our sins. Matt. 27:50



**EASTER** - *“Phoenix Rising from Flames”* The Resurrection 1 Cor. 15:3,4. The Phoenix is from Egyptian fables of the miraculous bird that would destroy itself in flames only to rise again to a new life. Thus, it became a symbol of immortality.

**Right side of Crucifix:**



**ASCENSION** - *“Chariot of Fire”* The ascension of Elijah in a fiery chariot parallels the ascension of Christ bodily ascending into heaven. 2 Kings 2:12; Acts 1:9-11.



**PENTECOST** - The *“Seven-Tongued Flame”* symbolizes the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and the outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit of wisdom, power, riches, strength, honor, glory and blessings. Acts 2:1-4, Is. 11:2, Rev. 5:12.



## THE TRINITY



**GOD THE FATHER-** *“The Hand”* O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvelous things; his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. Ps. 98:1.



**GOD THE SON** - *“The Lamb of God”* The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John 1:29. Here the Lamb of God bears the banner of victory over sin and the death of the cross.



**GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT** - *“The Descending Dove”* And John bore record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. John 1:32



**WHEAT AND GRAPES** - This symbolizes the Body and Blood of our Lord...; i.e., the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. Luke 22:17, 20.



**TRIQUETRA and CIRCLE** - The *“Circle”* defines the eternal Nature of God who was before time began and who will be when time is no more. The *“Triquetra”* represents the Holy Trinity. This symbol is used at the bottom on each side of the grill.



**CROWN and WHEAT** - The “*Crown*” is a symbol of the kingship of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The “*Wheat*” is a symbol of the Lord, the Bread of Life.

## CHRISTMAS TREE CHRISMONS



**SHAMROCK IN TRIANGLE INTERWOVEN WITH CIRCLE** - The circle symbolizes eternity, the triangle is the Triune God and the shamrock is the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.



**FISH BEARING BASKET OF BREAD** - The fish is a symbol of our Lord in the early church but in modern times it symbolizes Christ. The basket of bread is a recollection of the miracle of feeding the five thousand with fish and bread. It is also a symbol of Holy Communion of our Lord’s gift of Himself for us.



**ROSE IN CIRCLE** - The circle symbolizes eternity. The origin of the rose symbol is Isaiah 35:1 King James Version. The most popular symbolism is that of the Nativity. Isaiah’s prophecy was that one day “the desert would blossom as the rose.” This prophecy was fulfilled when a virgin conceived and bore a son and called His name Jesus.



**SHELL WITH EIGHT-POINTED STAR** - The “*eight-pointed star*” is the Star of Regeneration and associated with the regeneration of baptism symbolized by the shell. The eight-pointed star also symbolizes the Kingdom of God.





**CHALICE ON SIX-POINTED STAR** - The “*six-pointed star*” is the Creator’s star or the symbol of creation because of the six days of creation. It also emphasizes the Holy Trinity in the process of creation. The “chalice” represents the Lord’s Supper.



**CROWN OF THORNS** - “*Crown of Thorns*” This can also be called the mockery crown. It is the symbol of humiliation and suffering, plaited by the soldiers and imposed upon Jesus during his trial before Pilate. John 19:2. “*INRI*” is Latin for Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. John 19:19.



**THREE ENTWINED CIRCLES** - This is the symbol for the unity of Holy Trinity, yet the separate Persons thereof.



**EAGLE**– The eagle is the symbol of St. John as he reaches greater heights of revelation than any other Evangelist. It is placed on a shield.



**SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** - The CHI RHO in the middle represents Christ and the rays are beaming out from the sun. “But for you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings.”



**FUSILEEA CROSS** - These first two crosses on this page are crosses fused with the Alpha and Omega reminding us that Jesus is the beginning and the end.



**GOSPELS AND PATEE CROSS** - "*Patee or Maltese Cross*" The eight points of this cross represent the beatitudes. Matt.5:3-10. The four gold scrolls surrounding the cross are the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John reminding us of our salvation that is revealed by these Evangelists.



**CHI RHO CROSS**– PX are the first letters in the Greek word for Christ and the symbols hanging from it are Alpha and Omega.



**ORB AND CROSS OF TRIUMPH** - The orb represents the earth and the cross over it reminds us that the world needs Christ. It is also known as the Cross of Victory signifying the conquest of the world by Christianity.





**CROSS AND CROWN** - The cross symbolizes death and the crowns symbolize the reward of the faithful in the life after death. The letters “NIKA” is the word for “victor” over sin and death of the Cross. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” Rev. 2:10



**CELTIC CROSS** - The circle signifies eternity. This type of cross is often seen on the covers of hymnals.



**TAU CROSS AND BRASS SERPENT** - The serpent is lifted up on the cross and is a sign of salvation coming from the Old Testament when Moses lifted the brazen serpent. In John 3:14-15 Christ says “as Moses lifted up the serpent..., so must the Son of man be lifted up...”. The Tau Cross is one of the oldest forms and said to be the true cross held up by Moses in the wilderness.



**GREEK CROSS WITH WORDS** - “*Jesus Christ Conquers*” IC XC is the abbreviation for Jesus Christ and the NI KA means conquers or victor. The lily of the valley means humility and purity. (Note this Chrismon was hung backwards)



**IOTA CHI LILY CROSS** - This means Jesus Christ, the lily of the valley. The CHI “X” portion with the lilies stands for humility and purity of the man, Jesus. The daisy on the IOTA points to the innocence of the Child in the manger.





**FISH - “IXOYC”** In the second century, Christians were using the fish to symbolize Christ. It is believed this developed because the letters of the Greek word for fish, “ICHTHUS or IXOYC formed an acrostic on the Greek phrase, Jesus (I), Christ (X), God’s (O) Son (Y), Saviour (C).



**LATIN CROSS** - We are reminded that Christ died on the cross for us. This cross has roses on it for the Flower of Mary. The top of the cross is a shepherd’s crook. The triangle is the trinity but also the Alpha. What looks like an “M” at the bottom of the cross is the Omega.



**V.D.M.A. SIX-POINTED STAR** - “*Verbum Dei Manet in Aeternum*” The Word of God Endures Forever.



**PALM BRANCH**– The “*palm branch*” reminds us of Jesus triumphant entry into Jerusalem. It is surrounded by a mandorla or almond-shaped aureole symbolizing the glory surrounding Christ. At the bottom is a crown for Christ the King.



**EMMANUEL IN THE MANGER AND MARY** - Emmanuel means Christ with us. The rose is the symbol of Mary. The Chi (X) is the manger. Chi is the first letter in Greek for Christ. These symbols inside a square is the symbol for earth and it is made of circles, which are the symbols for eternity.

## ANGELS



**ANGELS AND ARCHANGELS** - These portray the spirits God created to praise and serve Him. As God-sent messengers, angels told men of the Birth, Resurrection, and Ascension of His Son. The Gospels tell how they ministered directly to our Lord and God's redeeming Love. The archangels are those named in the Bible; Michael and Gabriel and those in the Apocryphal; Raphael and Uriel.



**ARCHANGEL MICHAEL** - He led God's armies, thus the armor and sword.





**CORNER STONE** - Christ is the stone that the builders rejected, but which has turned up to be the most important in the construction of God's eternal Temple. It has various symbols on it. Here the circle with the Chi or the "X" represents the manger with Christ in the manger.



**CROWN** - Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

### PARABLE BALLS



**Luke 15:4-7** Parable of the lost sheep (God's children) wandering in the wilderness. These children are just floating around.



**Mark 4:26-29** - Parable of the growing seed being the Kingdom of Heaven.