

CHRISMON TREE  
NEW COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
MIDDLETOWN, DELAWARE



GUIDE TO  
SYMBOLISM OF CHRISMONS

# HISTORY AND MEANING OF CHRISMONS

Chrismons are ornaments for Christmas trees that were first made by Frances Kipps Spencer at the Ascension Lutheran Church in 1957 in Danville, Virginia. She also thought of the word “chrismon” which is a combination of “Christ” and “monogram” (meaning symbol). The idea of telling the story of Christ through ornaments on a Christmas tree quickly spread to many churches.

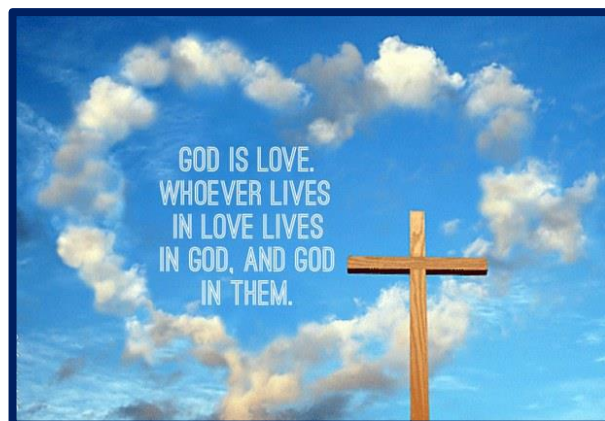
Originally, Mrs. Spencer put Christ’s name on the tree at her church, by designing a set of ornaments based on symbols of Christ, including monograms of his name in Greek. The colors of *white and gold* were chosen for the *purity* of Christ, and his *majesty* as part of the Trinity. The tree was so popular that she shared her patterns and taught workshops, expanding this ministry around the world. The number of designs grew to include the teachings of Christ, and many other symbols of religious significance.

During the fall of 2020, several of our own crafty ladies met to make these symbols of our faith. This year, at New Covenant Presbyterian Church, it is our hope that the chrismons which adorn our new large sanctuary tree, will be a teaching tool about our faith. It is our hope and prayer that the congregation will be blessed by the presence of these symbols of the love of God for all people. We also hope that you will take the opportunity to observe these new religious ornaments, and reflect on their significance for your life, as a Beloved Child of God.



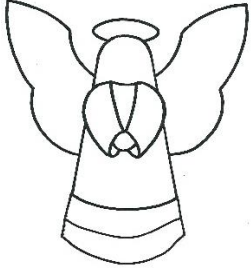

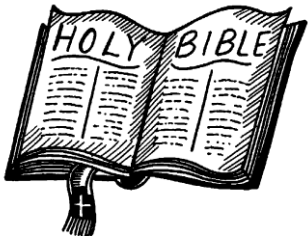
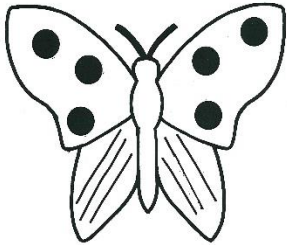
Each family is invited to take a copy of this booklet, in order that you might use it as a learning opportunity to strengthen your faith. Consider focusing on a few symbols each week, and then bring your Chrismon Booklet to church with you, looking for those symbols, and admiring the work of your sisters in Christ. There are 40 Chrismons on the tree and 3 on the tree skirt. We pray that this ministry will bless you and draw you closer to God, during the Advent and Christmas seasons. This booklet is my Christmas gift to each of you, as I give thanks for the opportunity to partner with you in ministry.

Your friend and partner in ministry,

*Carol*



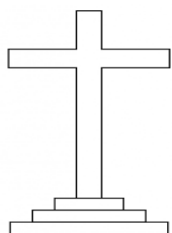
# NEW COVENANT CHRISMON LEGEND

SYMBOL	MEANING OF SYMBOL
	<p><b>THE ADVENT WREATH</b> - The Advent wreath symbolizes the passage of the 4 weeks of Advent, with 4 blue candles, and the Christ Candle for Christmas Eve. Each one represents one aspect of the spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.</p>
	<p><b>THE ALPHA &amp; OMEGA</b> - The Greek letters "alpha" and "omega" are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Used together, they symbolize that Christians believe that Jesus is the beginning and the end of all things. He has come, and will come again.</p>
	<p><b>THE ANGEL</b> - Angels of God announced the birth and resurrection of Jesus. The purpose of angels is that they are messengers or envoys from God, sent to convey very specific messages to God's people.</p>
	<p><b>THE BELL</b> - The bell is a later western symbol that arose from church bells, calling people to worship. It represents the proclamation of the Gospel to the world.</p>
	<p><b>THE BIBLE</b> - A symbol of the Bible and the word of God spoken through Scripture. The open Bible symbolizes the truth and revelation of God.</p>
	<p><b>THE BUTTERFLY</b> - The butterfly symbolizes the transformation we go through as new creations in Christ. The butterfly emerges from the chrysalis as a symbol of Christ rising from the tomb. The stages of the butterfly are wonderful analogies to our life as Christians.</p>

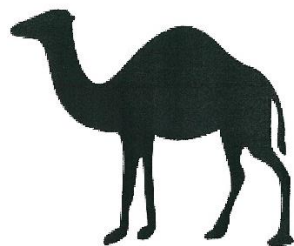
# NEW COVENANT CHRISMON LEGEND

## SYMBOL

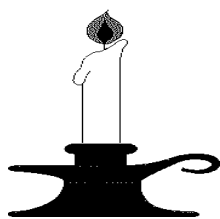
## MEANING OF SYMBOL



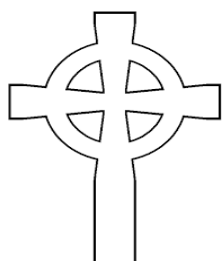
**THE CALVARY CROSS** -Also known as the stepped or graded cross has three steps leading up to it, which are said to represent the Hill of Calvary Jesus was crucified. They also remind us of faith, hope and love.



**THE CAMEL** - The magi rode camels when they travelled to find the baby Jesus. To show the difficulty for a rich man to enter into the kingdom, our Lord said it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.



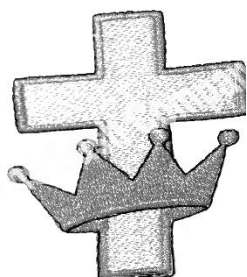
**THE CANDLE** - Represents the Light of God or Christ, and the belief that Christ is the light of the world.



**THE CELTIC CROSS** - A Celtic Cross looks like is a cross with a circle, symbolizing eternity. Some are much more ornate. It originated during the early Middle Ages in Europe. Some say that St. Patrick introduced the Celtic Cross in attempt to convert pagan kings to Christianity.



**CREATION** - Christians believe that God created all that is for God is the author of creation. We believe that the earth and all that dwells within it belong to God, and that humans are called to be good stewards, in charge of caring for creation.

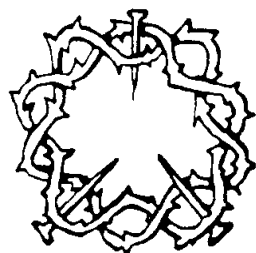


**THE CROWN AND THE CROSS** - A King's Crown is the symbol of royal power and authority. It symbolizes Jesus as King of the Jews, in fulfillment of prophetic expectation, as well as the exalted Christ, as King of Kings.

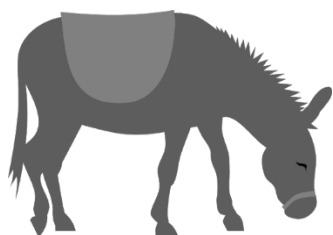
# NEW COVENANT CHRISMON LEGEND

## SYMBOL

## MEANING OF SYMBOL



**THE CROWN OF THORNS** - This crown was placed on Jesus' head during the Passion. It was one of the instruments of the Passion, employed by Jesus' captors, both to cause him pain and to mock his claim of authority.



**THE DONKEY** - In Bible times, donkeys were a symbol of industry and peace. Jesus, the King of Kings, chose to demonstrate his humility by riding on a humble beast as he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.



**THE DOVE** - This dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit at Jesus' baptism; also points us to remember the dove bringing peace to the world at the time of Noah and his ark.

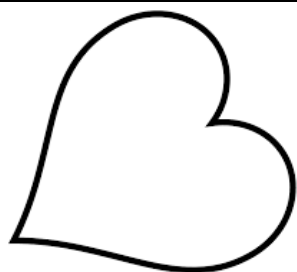
**HE IS RISEN**



**THE EMPTY TOMB** - The empty tomb symbolizes the power of God to raise Jesus from the dead. As a result, all Christians claim belief in the resurrection.



**THE FISH OR IXTHUS** - This is one of the oldest Christian symbols. The letters, from the Greek word for fish (ichthus) stand for Jesus (I), Christ (X), God (Q), Son (Y), Savior (S). It is an acrostic for the Greek words meaning Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior.

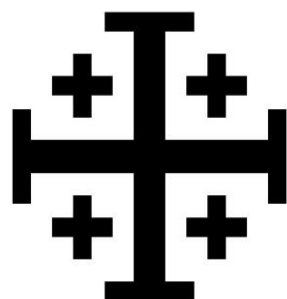


**THE HEART** - This is a symbol for the call to Christians to be people of compassion, love and care for each other and for all of creation. It also symbolizes the flow of creative energy that animates us.

# NEW COVENANT CHRISMON LEGEND

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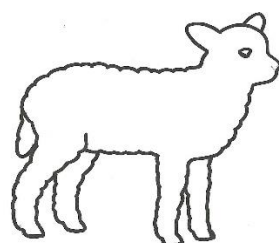
## MEANING OF SYMBOL



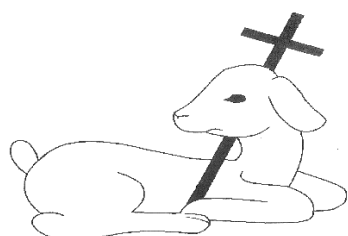
**THE JERUSALEM CROSS** - The total of 5 crosses represent the 5 wounds suffered by Jesus at the crucifixion. This cross has also been used to represent the mission of the church. The large center cross represents the main church at Jerusalem, and the other 4 represent the 4 corners of the earth.



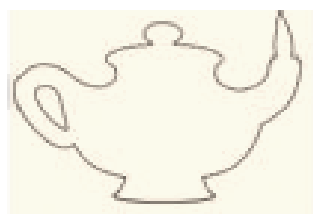
**THE KEYS** - They are a symbol for the Church throughout the world. Jesus told Peter that "I will give you keys to the kingdom of heaven," which means that Christians are called to share the Good News of God's love to all people.



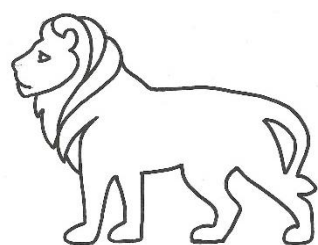
**THE LAMB** - This is a popular symbol in the early church. It reminds us of the role of shepherds tending for their flocks. In the same way, God is our Shepherd, caring for us as his flock.



**THE LAMB OF GOD** - Judaism believed the lamb was a sacrificial offering. Christians think of Jesus as the Lamb of God, who was sacrificed to forgive our sins.



**THE LAMP** - Represents Jesus as the Light for the path Christians are called to follow through the world.



**THE LION** - is a symbol for Jesus, who is sometimes called 'The Lion of Judah.' Jesus is also represented as Aslan, the Lion, in the Chronicle of Narnia books by C.S. Lewis.

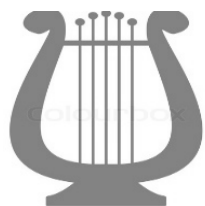
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## SYMBOL

## MEANING OF SYMBOL



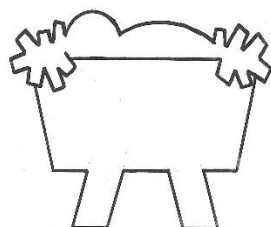
**THE LORD'S SUPPER** - The sacrament of Holy Communion, where God makes use of the physical elements of bread and wine, to represent the blood and body of our Lord which were given for us.



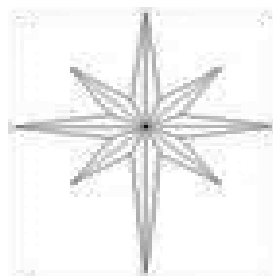
**THE LYRE OR HARP** - The lyre, or harp, is associated with David as a shepherd boy, and so it represents praise to God. It symbolizes the angelic chorus, who sang praises to the shepherds, at the birth of Jesus.



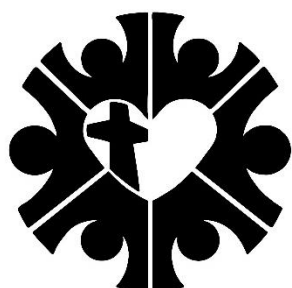
**THE MAGI** - The magi, or wise men, were a group of distinguished foreigners who visited Jesus after his birth, bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.



**THE MANGER** - Jesus was born, wrapped in cloth, and laid in a manger (an animal's trough), as there was no place for him, and his parents, in the inn.

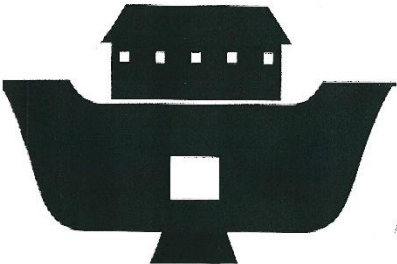


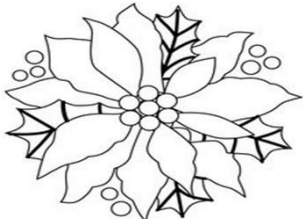




**THE NATAL STAR CROSS** - A natal cross, with a four-pointed Bethlehem Star, representing the sign in the night sky, announced Jesus' birth combined with a cross, symbolizing the salvation which the birth of this child brings. It's also a symbol of when the magi visited Jesus.



**NEW COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH** - Our church's logo is in the shape of a circle of people with arms open wide, reaching out to welcome ALL. We are a community of love who desires to love others, as well as each other. We welcome all to join us as we discover the joy of living as disciples of Christ within the Body of Christ.

# NEW COVENANT CHRISMON LEGEND

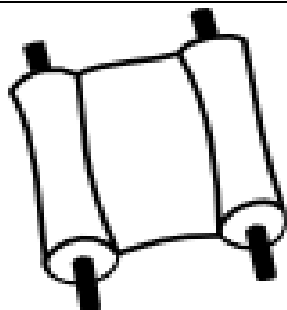
SYMBOL	MEANING OF SYMBOL
	<p><b>NOAH'S ARK</b> - Noah was told by God to build an ark and have his family and 2 of every animal enter it, within which they would survive a worldwide flood. God sent the flood due to the corruption of the world, and God's plan to re-store it. It rained for 40 days and nights, until only what was contained within the ark, survived. God restored creation, by wiping out all that was sinful.</p>
	<p><b>THE P.C.U.S.A. SEAL</b> - The symbol of the P.C.U.S.A. (Presbyterian Church of the USA) contains many elements of the faith, some of which are the Holy Spirit (dove), the Bible, a pulpit, a chalice (the Lord's Supper), a baptismal font, flames (the burning bush), a cross, etc. The colors mimic the colors within the American flag.</p>
	<p><b>PITCHER, TOWEL &amp; BASIN</b> - This symbol reminds us of the role of a servant which we are called to take on. We remember Jesus wrapping a towel around himself, pouring water from a pitcher into a small basin, before kneeling before his disciples as he washed their feet.</p>
	<p><b>POINSETTIA</b> - The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are sometimes thought as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem, which led the magi to Jesus. The red-colored leaves symbolize the blood of Christ.</p>
	<p><b>THE RAINBOW</b> - A rainbow appeared as a sign of promise, pointing to the future God promised to Noah and his family, after a great flood had devastated the earth. It is a sign of God's mercy, and the covenant made with Noah, that God would never destroy the earth again.</p>
	<p><b>THE SCALLOP SHELL</b> - The scallop is a symbol for the sacrament of Christian baptism, and the spread of the Gospel to the world. One who desires to follow Jesus Christ has water sprinkled/ poured on her, as a symbol that the old has passed away, and new life in Christ has begun.</p>



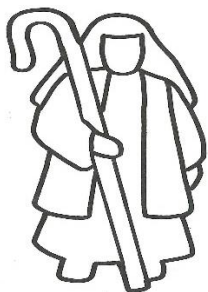
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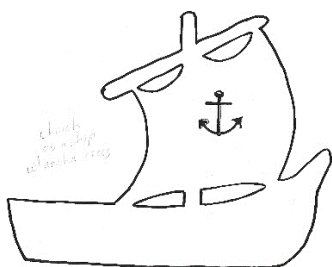
## MEANING OF SYMBOL



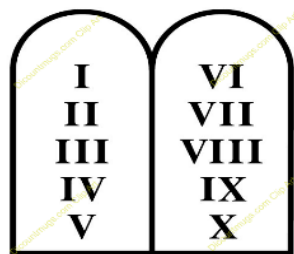
**THE SCROLL** - This represents scripture (the Word of God) which was originally written on parchments scrolls.



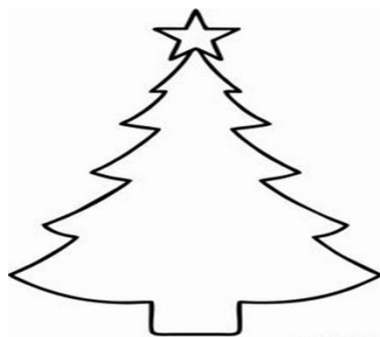
**THE SHEPHERD** - Many biblical figures were shepherds. Shepherds cared for their flocks, and shepherds were the first to hear God's message, and come to see the baby Jesus. Jesus is known as the Good Shepherd who takes care of every sheep, never leaving one behind.



**THE SHIP** - This is a symbol for the Church, sailing towards heaven. The Anchor Cross on its sail reminds us that Jesus is the anchor of our faith. The purpose of an anchor is to hold a ship in a particular place. In the same way, Jesus helps to keep us attached to him.



**THE TABLETS** - Moses received the Ten Commandments on two tablets.

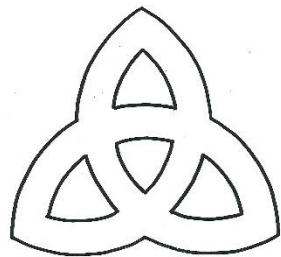


**TREE** - The Christmas tree symbolizes the spirit of the Christmas season and, to Christians, the everlasting life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In the Bible, the cross upon which Jesus was crucified is often referred to as a tree. The light and decorations represent the wonder and glory associated with the birth and resurrection of Jesus.

# NEW COVENANT CHRISMON LEGEND

## SYMBOL

## MEANING OF SYMBOL



**THE TRINITY** - A form of the triquetra, a symbol of the Trinity from Great Britain. The three loops make a triangle representing the three parts of the Trinity which represent Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



**WREATH** - The wreath is an ancient symbol of victory. It symbolizes the victory of Jesus over sin and death. The circle also symbolizes eternity and eternal life.