Chrismons
and
other symbols of Christmas

The Hanging of the Greens
November 27, 2011
Call to Worship

Call: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of the King?  
**Response:** With branches of cedar, the tree of royalty.  
Call: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of the eternal Christ?  
**Response:** With garlands of pine and fir, whose leaves are ever living, ever green.  
Call: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of our Savior?  
**Response:** With wreaths of holly and ivy, telling of his passion, death, and resurrection.  
Call: How shall we prepare our hearts for the coming of the Son of God?  
**Response:** By hearing again the words of the prophets, who foretold the saving work of God.  
Call: For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.  
**Response:** Glory to God in the highest!

Hymn  
*Angels We Have Heard on High*  
(verses 1 and 3)  

Reader 1: **What is Advent?**

Advent is a season of four weeks including four Sundays. Advent derives from the Latin adventus, which means “coming.” The season proclaims the comings of the Christ—whose birth we prepare to celebrate once again, who comes continually in Word and Spirit, and whose return in final victory we anticipate. Each year Advent calls the community of faith to prepare for these comings; historically, the season was marked by fasts for preparation. Each Sunday of Advent has its distinctive theme: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love. Advent is a time of preparation, not in getting ready for Christmas but a time of preparing our hearts for Christ to reside.

Hymn  
*Prepare the Way of the Lord*  

Choir
What are Chrismons?

The Chrismon tree was begun in the Lutheran Church of the Ascension in Danville, Virginia, has now spread to many other congregations. This evergreen tree is covered with signs of Christ, such as stars. Many congregations save the live Chrismon tree trunk to make a cross for Lent.

Hanging of the Chrismons

O Chrismon Tree

To the tune of “O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree”
Words by Susan Duty

Oh Chrismon Tree, Oh Chrismon Tree
The Alpha and Omega.

Oh Chrismon Tree, Oh Chrismon Tree
He brought His Son to Save Us.

With signs of Christ do we adorn
the Cross and Stars reflect His Son.

Oh Chrismon Tree, Oh Chrismon Tree
Christ our Eternal Savior.
What is the Advent wreath?

The Advent wreath, four candles on a wreath of evergreen, is shaped in a perfect circle to symbolize the eternity of God. In some churches, four purple candles, one for each week in Advent, are used with one larger white candle in the middle as the Christ candle. Other churches prefer three purple or blue candles with one candle being rose or pink, to represent joy.

The lighting of the first candle symbolizes expectation, the second symbolizes hope, the third joy and the fourth purity. The Christ candle is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day reminding Christians that Jesus is the light of the world.

Placing the Advent Wreath

Call: Christ came to bring us salvation and has promised to come again.
Response: Let us pray that we may always be ready to welcome him.

Call: Come, Lord Jesus that the keeping of Advent may open our hearts to God's love,
Response: That the light of Christ may penetrate the darkness of sin,

Call: That this wreath may constantly remind us to prepare for the coming of Christ,
Response: That the Christmas season may fill us with peace and joy

Call: as we strive to follow the example of Jesus.
All: Loving God, your Church joyfully awaits the coming of its Savior, who enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin. Pour forth your blessings upon us as we light the candles of this wreath. May their light reflect the splendor of Christ, who is Lord, for ever and ever. Amen.
Scripture

John 1:1-5, 9-14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

Hymn

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Sending forth
The Bell:
Rings out to guide
lost sheep back to the
fold, signifying that
we all are precious in
His sight.

The Gift Bow:
Tied as we should all be tied
together in bonds of goodwill
forever.
The Candle:

A mirror of starlight, reflecting our thanks for the star of Bethlehem.

The Candy Cane:

Represents the shape of the shepherd’s crook, used to bring lost lambs back to the fold.
The Star:
A heavenly sign of prophecy fulfilled long, long ago—The shining hope of mankind.

A Red Christmas Ball

The Color Red: The first color of Christmas, symbolizing that Savior’s sacrifice for all.
The Fir Tree:

Evergreen -
The second color of Christmas shows everlasting light and life. The needles point up to heaven.

The Wreath:

A symbol of the never ending eternal value of love... having no end.
Chi Rho was used by the early church because the shame and pain of the cross was too immediate to use the sign of the cross openly. XP are the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ (XPICTOC). The Alpha and Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet when linked with XP) show the eternalness of Christ: the beginning and the end.

Greek Cross
All extensions or arms are of equal length. It probably was developed by early Greek artists as a more perfect form. At one time, it was used to show loyalty to the Eastern Church.

Cross in Eternity
Combines the Latin cross with a never-ending circle suggesting eternal life with God, by way of the cross, through Jesus.

Eight-pointed Star
Eight is symbolically used to mean regeneration through Holy Baptism. Baptismal fonts are commonly eight-sided.

Latin Cross with Alpha and Omega
The Latin cross is most widely used in the church. The Latin cross' leg is longer than the arms are wide. Early Christians combined alpha and omega with the cross to declare Christ's divinity.

Cross atop Orb
This symbolizes Christ's dominion over the earth, also the command “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit . . .” - Matthew 18:20

Iota Chi
The Iota (Ι) is the first letter of Jesus in Greek, which means “the promised one.” The Chi (Χ) is the first letter of His Greek title Christ, meaning Messiah in Hebrew: “The one anointed by God.” These letters, superimposed, become our Savior's cipher.
**Ichthus**  
Stylized Fish. Early Christians used the fish as a secret sign of recognition during times of Roman persecution. The letters for ichthus, the Greek word for “fish”, hang down the center of the fish chrismon: I-Iota=Jesus, X-Chi=Christ, O-Theta=God, Y-Upsilon=Son, C-Sigma=Savior.

**Triquetra and Circle**  
The endless circle suggests eternity. Three separate and equal arcs symbolize the one God who showed Himself to man in three separate and distinct persons, God the father, Son and Holy Ghost.

**Epiphany Star and Rose**  
The five pointed star and white rose symbolize Christ and Mary, showing both His humanity and divinity. The Hebrew form of Mary is Miriam, meaning “star.” The epiphany is when the Wise Men, representing the gentiles, paid tribute to the Christ child. “The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.” - Isaiah 35:1

**IHS**  
Iota Eta Sigma. Older letters - IHS - abbreviations for the name of Jesus in Greek (IHCOYC or IHSOYS) to remind us of Jesus and the life He lived.

**Three Entwined Circles**  
Three interwoven circles of equal size indicate the equality, eternity and unity of the three persons in the trinity.

**These are the designs that have been lovingly cross-stitched by members of GSUMC. There are some differences in the way the design is portrayed but the meaning is still the same.**

*See how many of these Chrismon designs you can locate on our tree.*
Beaded Crosses

The photos below are what these crosses look like when done by others. Find our interpretation on our Chrismon Tree.

Anchor - Passion

Latin

Greek

Chi Rho

Celtic
Shell Chrismons
Did you ever think about using something like a shell for a Chrismon ornament?

Clam shell signifies Baptism.

Angels can be crafted by using a variety of shells.

Starfish painted gold or white signify the star that led the wise men.
Originally Chrismons were made of felt, styrofoam, glitter, etc. In keeping with that theme, we have the following on our tree.

Alpha-Omega Cross  Manger

Ichthus  Heart
PAX - Peace of Christ

Star of David

Dove

Heart

Crown
The ones on our tree may look different, but they are no less beautiful.

Embroidery is a close cousin of cross-stitch and is reflected in some of the chrismon contributions. The photos below are the work of others but you will find similar items done by folks at GSUMC.

Have fun with your search! May the peace of Christmas be with you and those important to you throughout not only the season but thereafter.

Thanks to Everyone that participated in making this a success.