



# CHRISMON COLLECTION

Brentwood United Methodist Church

# A HISTORY OF CHRISMONS

The Chrismon Tree originated in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Ascension, Danville, Virginia in 1957.

The word Chrismon is made up of the words Christ and Monograms. Some Chrismons are simple copies of symbols of Christianity from its earliest days and others are new explanations of God's never-changing presence in our ever-changing world. Lastly, some are combinations of several elements, old and new. These symbols which are interdenominational and the heritage of all Christians, are the elements of the Chrismons. Although a few ornaments utilize only one or two element to present their message, most Chrismons combine several signs, symbols, and/or other elements.

All of the Chrismons are made in either white or gold or in combination of the two colors. White the Liturgical color for Christmas, suggests the innocence, purity, and perfection of our Savior. Scripture often uses white to portray purity and equates it with light to denote completeness. Gold, a symbol for the glory and majesty of God and the Son of God, is also derived from Biblical usage. For emphasis, certain Chrismons show a touch of red to remind us of the blood of Christ.

# A HISTORY OF CHRISMONS (cont,,,)

The ornaments are to be placed on the tree in an intentional order based on the church year.

The evergreen tree, which symbolizes the eternal life which our Savior has won for us, is a background for the tiny white lights and the white and gold Chrismons. The lights speak of Him Who is the Light of the World and the Chrismons proclaim the Name, the Life and the saving Acts of Jesus the Christ.

The Chrismon tradition is storied, complex, and the result of decades of respect and care for their meaning.

We hope this information and the following descriptions of individual Chrismons will help you better understand and appreciate the truths that our tree proclaims.

**MAY THESE SYMBOLS CONTINUALLY REMIND YOU OF GOD'S  
GREATEST GIFT TO ALL OF US...JESUS CHRIST.**

# BUMC CHRISMON COLLECTION

Brentwood United Methodist Church was blessed with a set of Chrismons as a gift from Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, KY, possibly in the 1960s. In 1973, BUMC member Ethel King worked with other members to enhance and honor our collection and to make it a visual way of praising and proclaiming Christ every year during our Advent season. With the support of the congregation, through memorial donations and the efforts of the United Methodist Women, we have been able to significantly add to the original Chrismons made by Ethel and her committee.

In 2024, several women started a project to repair and create a digital catalog of the BUMC Chrismon collection. Beads, wire, styrofoam, and glue were purchased and over several sessions, the fragile ornaments were revitalized by loving hands. They were numbered and photographed to better help us understand and study each precious item. Several BUMC women were involved in this project, along with the support of church staff and the Worship & Arts Team.





# BUTTERFLY IN CIRCLE

The butterfly represents transformation, resurrection, as well as the second coming of Christ.

The circle symbolizes eternity: God, the eternal One or eternal life with God.





# STYLIZED FISH

The letters spell the Greek word for fish and also form an acrostic on the first letters of "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior". The fish is one of the most ancient symbols for our Lord.





# SERPENT ON TAU CROSS

The serpent on the Tau Cross represents the sacrifice on the cross which reconciles God with the people.

“And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:14).





# SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

About 2,400 years ago, Prophet Malachi compared the Messiah to the sun, the brightest thing in the world.

“For you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings...” (Malachi 4:2).

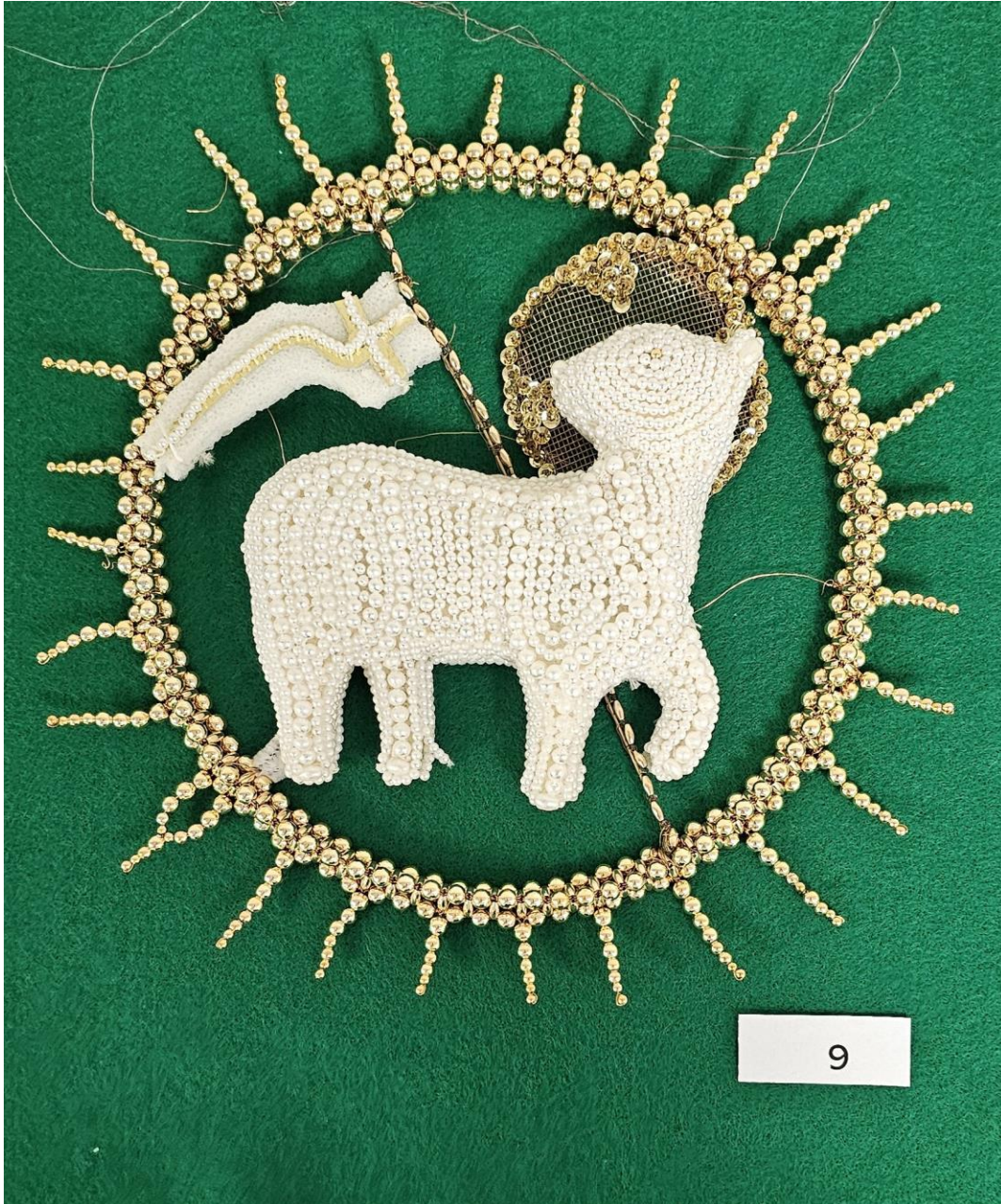




## CROSS PATEE WITH FOUR SCROLLS

The cross patee with scrolls represents our salvation as proclaimed in the four Gospels: winged man (Matthew); winged lion (Mark); winged ox (Luke); and eagle (John).





# LAMB WITH BANNER OF VICTORY

Angus Del or Lamb of God is derived from prophecy and is the most enduring figure for our Lord. It references the sacrificial lamb of Israel. The Banner of Victory represents the risen Christ (Isaiah 53:7, Revelation 5:6).





## 8- POINTED STAR

Eight-pointed stars represent regeneration through Holy Baptism (1 Peter 3:20-21).

In addition, the various Chrismon stars proclaim the ways in which God comes to us.





# WHEAT AND GRAPES

Wheat and grapes represent bread and wine; the Body and Blood of Our Lord (Luke 22:17,20).





# EPIPHANY STAR

The five-point Epiphany Star is sometimes said to represent a person. However, it also represents the star that guided the wise men to Jesus in the Christian feast of Epiphany.

The circle and square is used in several Chrismons; the circle suggests God and the square is the Earth. Representing God's saving action in the world.





# HAND

The hand was the only symbol that represented God during Christianity's first 1000 years. It is frequently used in the Old and New Testament (Psalm 1:8, 96:1). The raised two fingers and thumb represents the Trinity. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time" (1 Peter 5:6).





# DECENDING DOVE

The descending dove is another ancient symbol of scriptural origin that represents God, the Spirit. "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him" (John 1:32).





# CHRISTMAS ROSE/ GLADIOLUS

Christ's birth was prophesied in Isaiah 35:1. "...the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose". The Rose of Love sings to God's glory.

The gladiolus is another Christmas symbol representing the Incarnation, the Word becoming flesh (John 1:1, 15; Hebrews 4:12).



# SHAMROCK IN TRIANGLE

It is said Irish priest St. Patrick was the first to use the shamrock to explain the Triune God. The equilateral triangle has also been used to suggest God in three ways. The endless circle defines the eternal nature of God.







# BYZANTINE CROSS

An upright cross with outwardly widened ends. This cross is often seen in relics from the late antique and early medieval Byzantine Empire.



# CORNERSTONE

Many Cornerstones are on our tree: monograms for our Savior are on their sides while the bottoms show another symbol for "chief cornerstone." Jesus Christ is often referred to as the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20, Mark 12:10).





# CORNERSTONE

Jesus Christ, the chief  
cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20).







# TRIANGLE & TREEFOIL

The three aspects of the triangle and trefoil represent the Triune God.





# PRAYING ANGEL (RHO)

Over and over in scripture, God sends Angels as messengers of divine news. They are a prominent feature in Christian art and theology.

“For God will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways...” (Psalm 91:11).

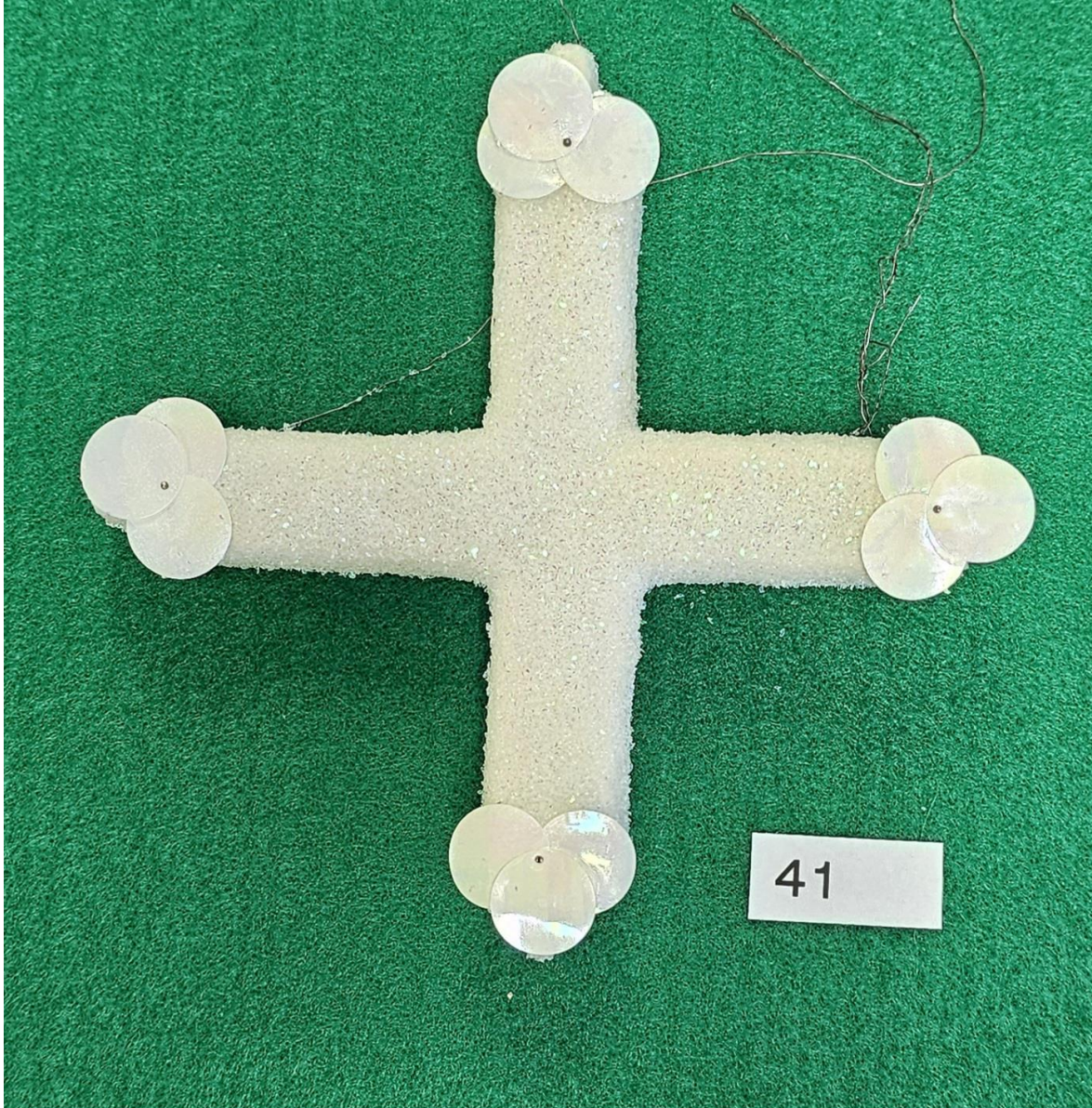




# CROSSLET

This Chrismon represents the spread of Christianity to the North, East, South and West...to the ends of the Earth (Matthew 28:19, Mark 8:34, Acts 1:8).





# CROSS TREFLEE

The Cross Treflee has three circles at the end of each arm, symbolizing the Holy Trinity (Matthew 28:19, II Corinthians 12:14).





# ST. ANDREWS CROSS WITH IHC

IHC represent the first three  
letters of Jesus in Greek.



# SHEPHERD'S CROOK WITH THE ALPHA AND OMEGA

The reference to shepherds reminds us of the shepherds at the manger and Christ's words, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11).

Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet represent God, before and after all things and are a symbol of divinity (Revelation 22:13).







# CROSS IN ETERNITY

The circle defines the eternal nature of God and the cross in the center represents the eternal nature of Christ's love.





# CHI CROSS WOVEN THROUGH 2 CIRCLES

Chi (x) is the first letter for the  
word Christ in Greek.





# THREE ENTWINED CIRCLES

The symbol for the Holy Trinity, one God in three persons, each eternal, all one.



# THE PALMS

Circled with the words, "Hosanna", the Palms represent Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and recognized on Palm Sunday.







# SHAMROCK

Another representation of St. Patrick's shamrock, used to explain the Triune God. The endless circle defines the eternal nature of God.



# ALPHA & OMEGA CROSS

Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet represent God, before and after all things and are a symbol of divinity (Revelation 22:13).

69





# EPIPHANY STAR & ROSE

Christ's birth was prophesied in Isaiah 35:1. "...the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." The Rose of Love sings to God's glory. The wise men followed the five-point Epiphany star.





# BUTTERFLY IN CIRCLE

This creature's transition from a caterpillar, to a hard-shelled cocoon, to a butterfly represents transformation and resurrection, as well as the second coming of Christ. The circle symbolizes eternity: God, the eternal One or eternal life with God.





# PHOENIX RISING FROM FLAMES

The Phoenix rising from flames represents the resurrection. In Egyptian fables, the phoenix destroys itself in flames only to rise again to a new life in three days. It is a symbol of immortality.



# JERUSALEM CROSS

A symbol of the Crusades, four Tau crosses meet to form a larger cross representing the five wounds of Christ or the Old Testament prophecies culminated in the crucifixion. The four smaller crosses represent the four Gospels, carried by Christ's followers to the corners of the world.







# TRIQUETRA CIRCLE

The triquetra is a symbol of the Holy Trinity. In Celtic culture, it also represents life, death and rebirth. The circle is a symbol of eternity.

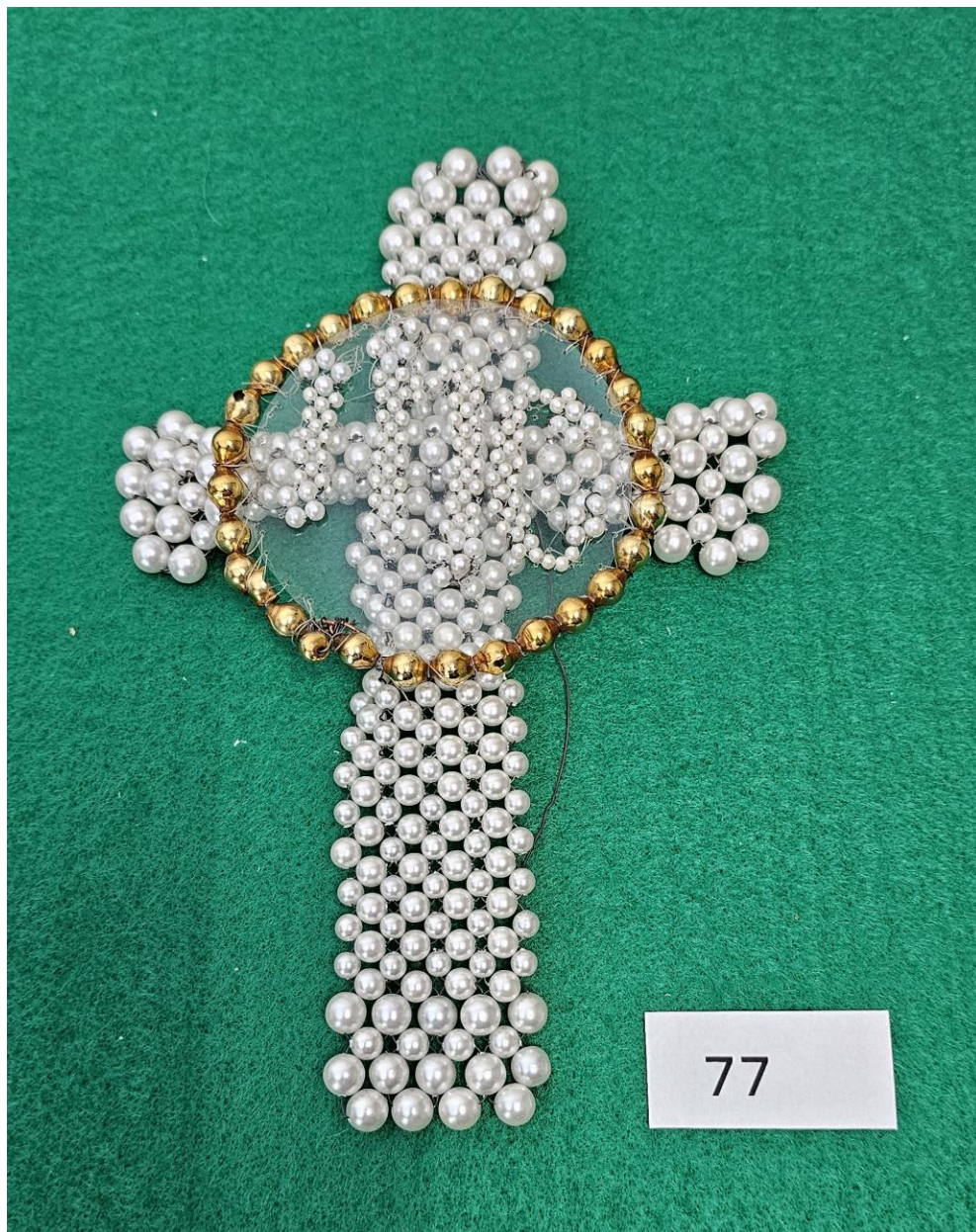




# EIGHT-POINTED STAR

Eight-pointed stars represent regeneration through Holy Baptism.





# CELTIC CROSS

Circular stones were a Druid symbol of eternity. St. Patrick drew a cross on top of the circular stone to bless it, creating the Celtic Cross, a symbol of combining two faiths. The cross represents Christianity and the circle represents eternity.





# CROSS FLAMANT FIERY

The flames on the Cross Flamant Fiery signify the fiery zeal of one filled with the Spirit of God (Romans 12:11).





# CROSS TRIUMPHANT

The Cross Triumphant represents a world united in Christ; the triumph of the Lord over earthly sin.





# SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Sun of Righteousness is our Lord, as prophesied in Malachi 4:2.

Chi-Rho (XP) are the first letters of Christ in the Greek alphabet. Or, in Latin, the X may sometimes become a cross.





# LATIN CROSS

The Latin Cross is the most widely used form of the cross among Christians.





# ANGEL

As God-sent messengers, Angels told people of the Birth, Resurrection and Ascension of God's Son. It was an angel who told the shepherds about the birth of Christ.

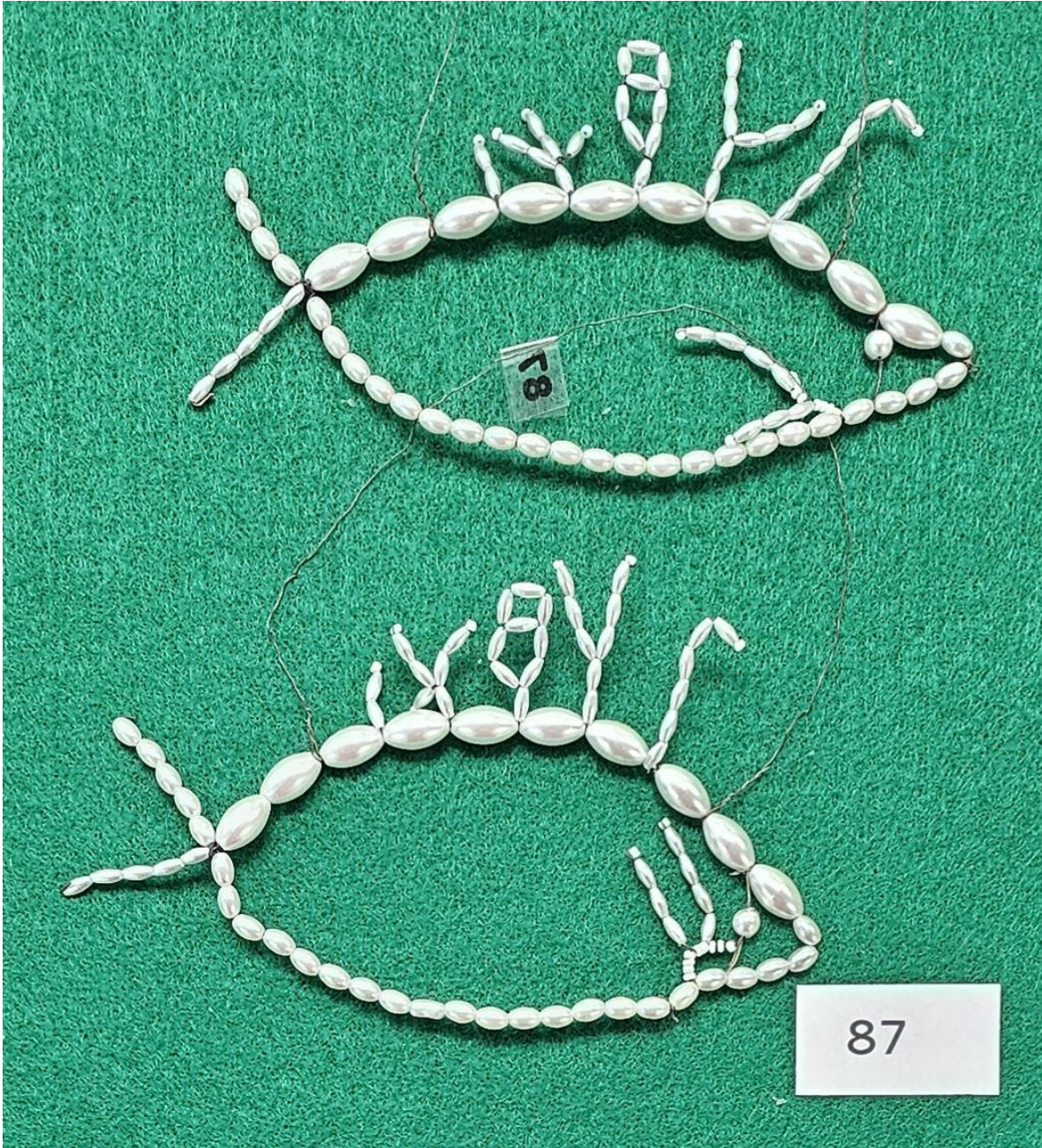


# SCROLL WITH PROPHECY

The Scroll with Prophecy is an Advent symbol, representing the coming of the Messiah who shall bring peace (Isaiah 9:6, Luke 1:79).







# TRIED: WHITE FISH

The fish is one of the most ancient symbols for our Lord. The letters are the Greek word for fish and also form an acrostic on the first letters of "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior."





# IOTA CHI

The Iota Chi (IX) is an early form of the monogram of Christ, which is created by combining the first to letters for Jesus (I) and Christ (X).





# BUTTERFLY

The butterfly represents transformation, resurrection, as well as the second coming of Christ.

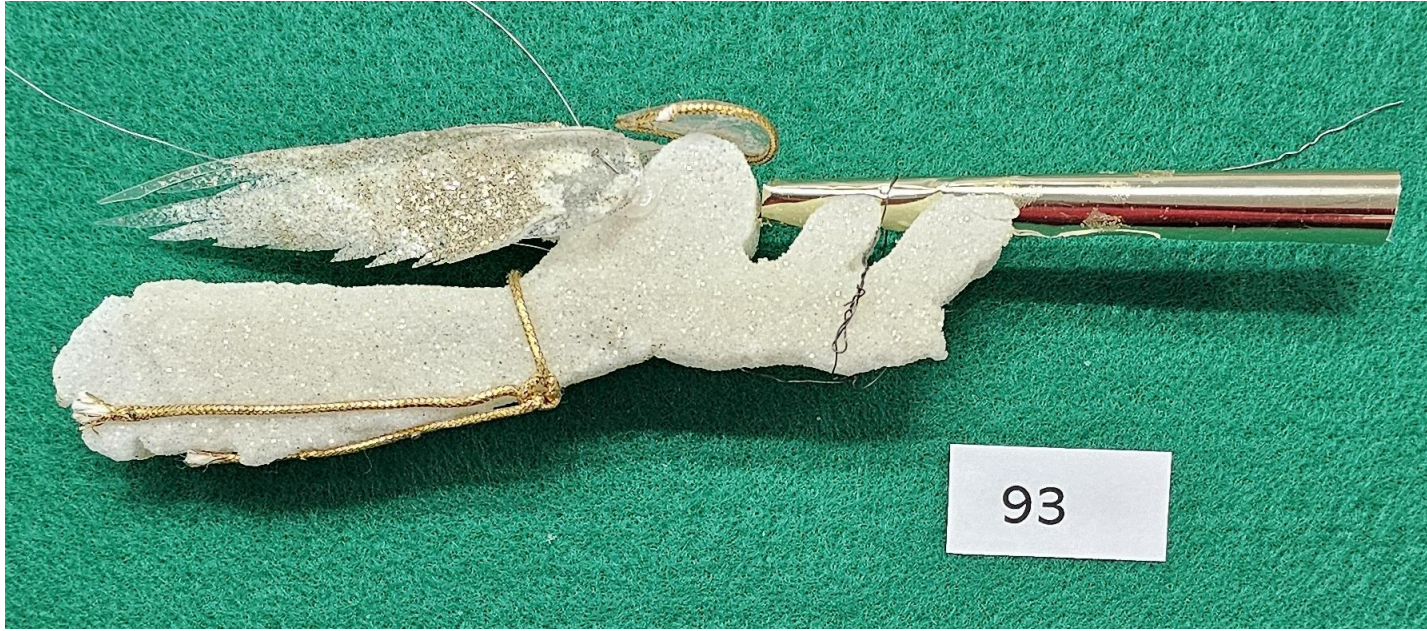




# CROSS ATOP ORB

A cross over the world or Christ over the world; "Go ye into all the world."





# ANGEL FLYING WITH TRUMPET

Portraying angels with wings symbolizes the fact that angels can go anywhere, show themselves in human form, and communicate with people. The second coming of Christ will begin with an angel blowing a trumpet.





# CROSS OF ETERNITY

The circle represents Eternity and with a cross in the center, this icon represents the eternal nature of Christ's love.



# LATIN CROSS FUSILEE WITH ALPHA & OMEGA

The Latin cross is the most widely used in Christianity. The Alpha and Omega are symbols of divinity: God is the first and last as these are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.





# IOTA ETA SIGMA IN CIRCLE OF GOLD BEADS

Iota, eta and sigma are the first three letters of the Greek name for Jesus, often abbreviated as IHC in Western Culture.





# IOTA ETA SIGMA IN CICLE ON CROSS

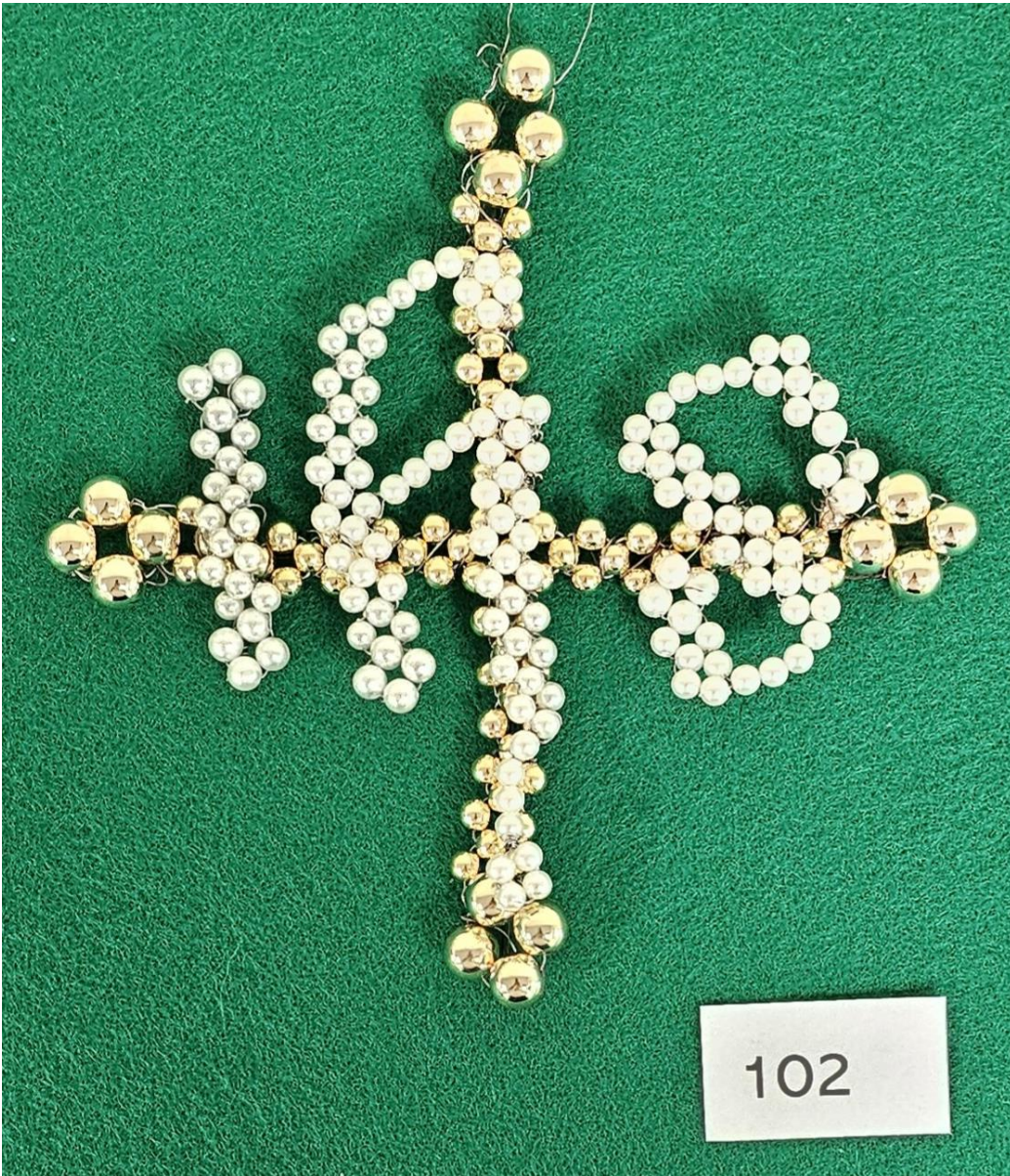
Often represented in our Chrismon collection, iota, eta and sigma are the first three letters of the Greek name for Jesus. The circle represents God's eternal nature and the Latin cross reminds us of Christ's eternal love.





# IOTA ETA SIGMA ON GOLD CROSS

Iota, eta and sigma are the first three letters of the Greek name for Jesus, often abbreviated as IHC in Western Culture. The Greek cross has extensions of equal length for design balance.







## ROSE ON PEARL CIRCLE WITH STAR

Christ birth was prophesied in Isaiah 35:1 "...the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." The Rose of Love sings to God's glory. The circle symbolizes eternity: eternal God and eternal life with God. Also, the five-pointed star represents Christ's Divinity and the rose refers to his humanity.

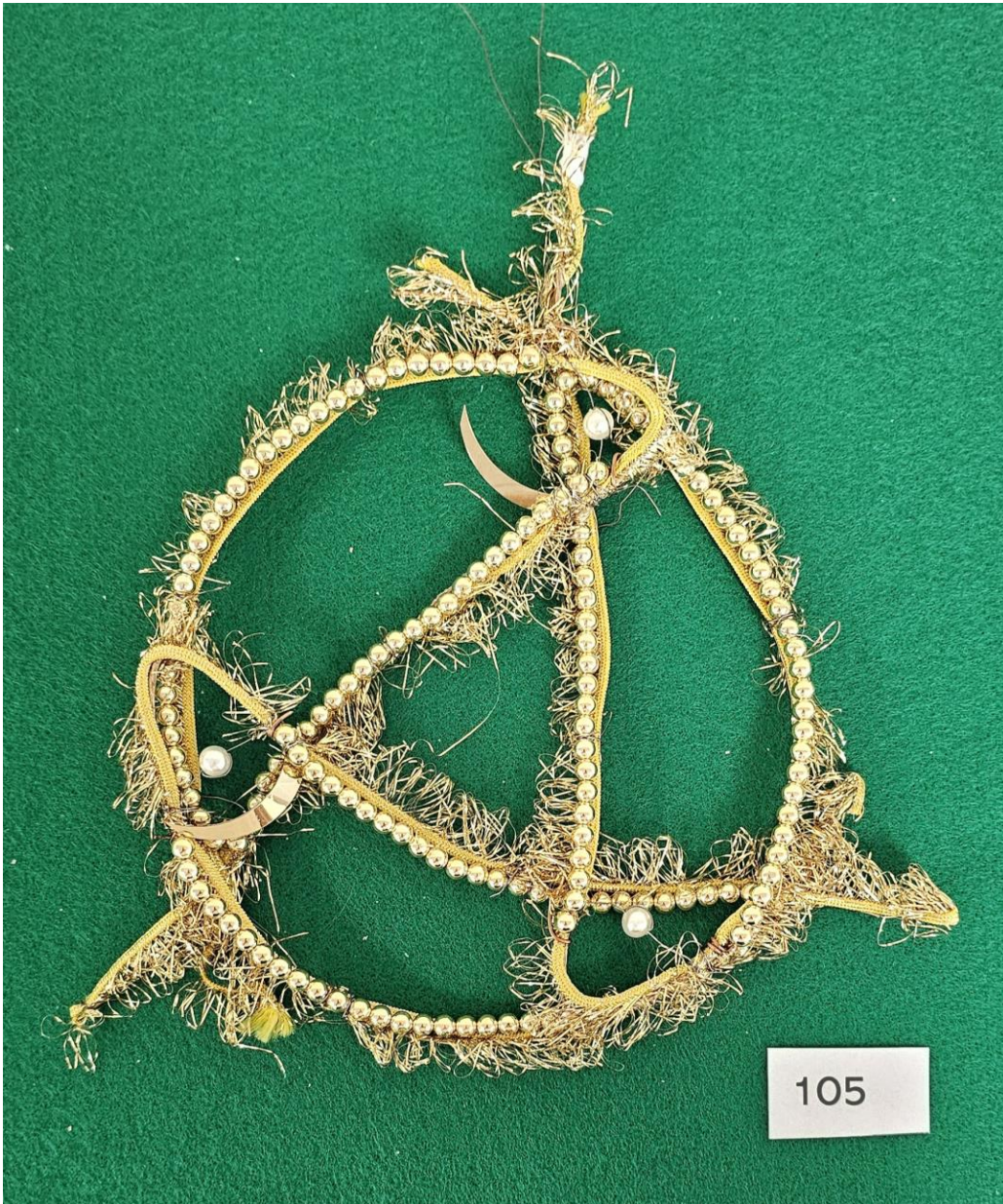




# LILIES IN PEARL CIRCLE

As Christian symbols, lilies represent purity, resurrection, renewal, and the Annunciation. Christ also reminds us to consider the lilies of the field...even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these (Hosea 14:5, Luke 12:27).





# THREE FISHES ENTWINED IN CIRCLE

The fish was once a secret sign used during times of Christian persecution to point the way to places of worship. Three fish in a circle remind us of the eternal nature of the Triune God's love.





# CROSS PATEE

Also called Cross Saltire, this represents the “first called” of our Lord’s 12. Andrew is said to have died on a cross of this shape. It also is described as representing the four Gospels.





## GOLD BEAD STAR WITH ROSE

The five-point star represents the star that guided the wise men to Jesus in the Christian feast of Epiphany. Christ's birth was prophesied in Isaiah 35:1, "...the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."





# CHARIOT IN CIRCLE

The Chariot represents the Ascension: the ascension of Elijah which parallels the ascension of Christ (II Kings 2:11, Actions 1:9-11).



INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK FOR  
ADDITIONS TO OUR CHRISMON  
COLLECTION





# REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Frances Kipps Spencer and The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Ascension, Danville, Virginia, have published several books documenting the Chrismon tradition and instructions:

- *Chrismons for Every Day*, 1971
- *Chrismons, Christian Year Series*, 1972
- *Chrismons, Basic Series*, 1972
- *Chrismons, Advanced Series*, 1973
- *Chrismons, The First 25 Years*, 1982