



January 2018

Happy Xmas!

(I can't believe the pastor just used Xmas instead of Christmas! And doesn't he know Christmas is over already?)

The 12 Days of Christmas start on Christmas Day and last until the evening of the 5th of January – also known as Twelfth Night – the evening before Epiphany, which is the day the Magi visited the baby Jesus. The 12 Days have been celebrated in Europe since before the middle ages and were a time of celebration.

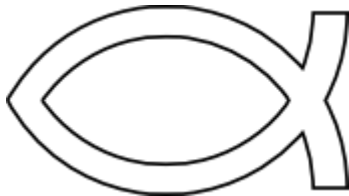
Christmas is also sometimes known as Xmas. Some people don't think it's correct to call Christmas 'Xmas' as that takes the 'Christ' (Jesus) out of Christmas. (Christmas comes from Christ-Mass, the Church service that celebrated the birth of Jesus.)

But that is not quite right! In the Greek language and alphabet, the letter that looks like an X is the Greek letter chi / X (pronounced 'kye' - it rhymes with 'eye') which is the first letter of the Greek word for Christ, Christos.

The early church used the first two letters of Christos in the Greek alphabet 'chi' and 'rho' to create a monogram (symbol) to represent the name of Jesus. This looks like an X with a small p on the top: ϰ



The symbol of a fish is sometimes used by Christians (you might see a fish sticker on a car or someone wearing a little fish badge). This comes from the time when the first Christians had to meet in secret, as the Romans wanted to kill them (before Emperor Constantine became a Christian). Jesus had said that he wanted to make his followers 'Fishers of Men', so people started to use that symbol.



When two Christians met, one person drew half a basic fish shape (often using their foot in the dust on the ground) and the other person drew the other half of the fish. The Greek word for fish is 'Ikthus' or 'Ichthys'. There are five Greek letters in the word. It can also make up a sentence of Christian beliefs 'Ie-sous Christos Theou Huios So-te-r' which in English means "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior". The second letter of these five letters is X or Christos! So, Xmas can also mean Christmas; but it should also be pronounced 'Christmas' rather than 'ex-mas'!

I hope everyone has had a wonderful Xmas with family and friends. If you have a friend or neighbor who does not attend a church, please invite them to join you in worship this new year. May the Lord bless you and keep you in 2018.

Rev. Wiley Gladney