



The Tree of Life

"The tree is one, and all Christians are one."

Looking up at the top of the sacristy vault, one can see a striped diagonal cross formed of red and white bricks. In the center of the cross, there is a white wheel motif, and from its joints, a painted cross, formed by flowering branches, grows. The supporting arches of the vault spread out from the cross like fertile streams, likewise sprouting painted branches.

The sacristy vault is adorned with the symbols of the four evangelists: the lion of Mark, the angel of Matthew, the eagle of John, and the ox of Luke. The chalk paintings on the vault date back to the late 1400s – half a millennium ago.

The diagonal cross and paintings of the vault symbolize the tree of life, under which the congregation gathers to receive communion. The tree of life is a common theme in Christianity as well as in many cultures around the world. The tree symbolizes life, the universe, and the family, providing a shelter where one can peacefully grow.

In the Christian tradition, the tree is present from the very beginning: in the first book of Moses, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil grow in the middle of paradise. By eating from the tree of knowledge, humanity loses access to paradise.

The New Testament expands the symbolism of the tree of life in the Bible: the cross of Jesus is the tree of life that brings eternal life. The horizontal and vertical directions of the cross represent the union of heaven and earth.

Today, people in St. Catherine's Church can gather under the same tree of life as over five hundred years ago. What thoughts, concerns, and hopes did people bring with them at that time? What could we have in common with them?

The theme of the tree of life in St. Catherine's Church is continued by the baptismal tree designed and implemented by Silja van der Meer, named "Valon pisaroita" (Drops of Light). The baptismal tree is a tree found in the church space, on which objects are hung for children baptized during the year. During the year, the tree gradually fills, reminding us of new life and new little members of the congregation.

The baptismal tree is handcrafted and designed specifically for St. Catherine's Church. The trunk and branches of the tree are knitted from linen yarn, the leaves shaped from crocheted linen. The white doves hanging on the branches are also handmade.

The tree gets its name from the glass beads resembling drops of dew attached to the delicate green leaves of the tree. As light filters in through the side windows of the church, the glass beads shimmer like a beautiful and delicate morning dew.

