

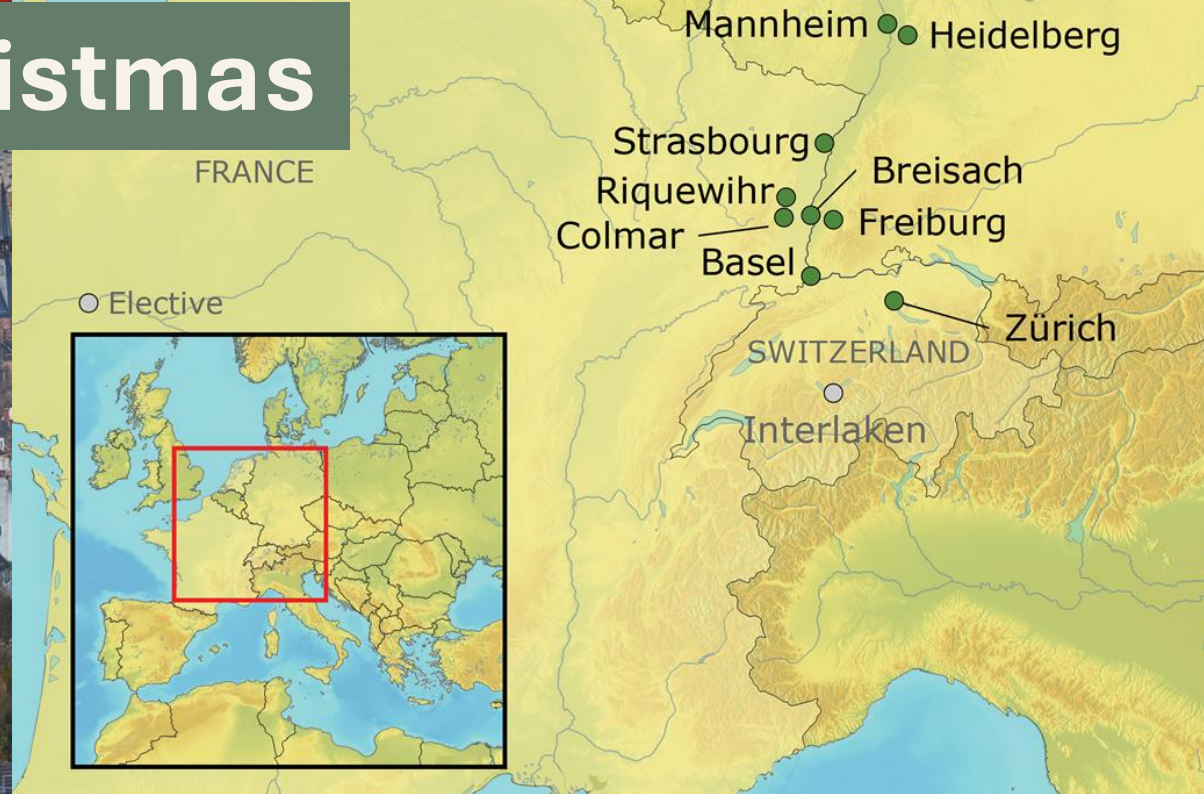
PRINCIPIA | **ALUMNI&FRIENDS**

Holiday Markets Cruise – The Festive Rhine River
MS Amadeus Cara
November 28 to December 6, 2026





The Cradle of Christmas





German prayer card, ca 1850
St Nicholas Center Collection



German *ChristKind* angel

Sunday, November 29, 2026 - Welcome reception and dinner Dusseldorf, Germany

Hello, fellow Principia travelers, we
will soon gather here!
For Christmas magic is almost near!
Our ship, the beautiful Amadeus Cara
will glide us softly, town by town,
As winter's sparkle settles all around.

Along the Rhine, beneath the sky,
We'll chase the lights as they drift by—
With markets bright and spirits high,
And memories awaiting, you and I.



MS Amadeus Cara

A topographic map of Europe showing the Rhine river highlighted in red. The map uses green for low-lying areas and brown for mountainous regions. The text 'RHINE explained' is overlaid on the map.

RHINE explained

Monday, November 30



After breakfast, we are off to the very historic, ancient, imperial city of Aachen – to celebrate the Emperor Charlemagne (748-814).

First stop: Aachen, where bells may ring,
And Christmas cheer makes spirits sing.
The Cathedral—majestic, grand—
Has watched the ages cross the land.

Then through the market, stall by stall....

A handmade gift, a Christmas star,
A little something from afar.
And when the winter air turns cold,
Perhaps a warm cup of chocolate we'll hold?
While Printen, Aachen's gingerbread,
Adds festive sweetness as we tread.

Tuesday, December 1

Then Cologne!
Ah, what a sight—
The mighty Cathedral glowing bright!
Its Gothic towers rise so high,
They seem to pierce the winter sky.

Beneath that splendid sacred dome,
The Christmas market feels like home.
With twinkling lights and music sweet,
And festive aromas on every street.

Then sample *Bratwurst*, roasted nuts,
Reibekuchen—crispy, golden delights—
And maybe *Lebkuchen*, soft and sweet,
Before we wander back to meet.



Cologne in Cologne

Original Eau de Cologne 4711, is named after its location at Cologne's Glockengasse No. 4711. Produced in Cologne since at least 1700; therefore, probably one of the oldest fragrances still produced in the world.



Wednesday, December 2

Cruising the Upper Rhine Valley passing the famous Lorelei rock...



Up the Rhine, the story flows,
Past castle walls and winter
snows.

The river carries us along,
With Christmas scenes and
laughter strong.

Today the famous Upper Rhine
reveals the legend of the Lorelei
rock.

No worries, yes, there will be time
to shop!

Thursday, December 3



Then Heidelberg, romantic and
bright,
Its castle rising into sight.
Above the Neckar, old and proud,
It seems to rise above the crowd.
The Old Bridge, the lanes, the stone,
A Christmas setting all its own.
Perhaps we'll pause for coffee and
cake,
Or find a souvenir for friendship's
sake.
And somewhere among those winding
streets,
We'll discover yet more holiday treats.

Friday, December 4



And then Strasbourg—Christmas supreme!

A city straight from a holiday dream.
Half-timbered houses, cobbled lanes,
Lanterns glowing after rains.

The Cathedral rises, pink and grand,
A Gothic marvel beautifully planned.
Its ancient clock, its windows bright—
All seem more magical at night.

The market spreads from square to square,
With twinkling lights and festive flair.
We'll hunt for stars and ornaments fine,
Alsatian crafts and gifts divine;

And what shall we eat? Oh, where to begin?
With *tarte flambée*—let the feast begin!
A warm *bredele*, perhaps a *kougelhopf*,
And something sweet that makes us stop.
With yummy hot chocolate in mittened hands.

Sunday, December 6 – disembark, Basel

Here's to Christmas on the Rhine, its towns
and its lights,
To cathedral towers and magical sights,
To castles and markets, to art and to food,
To new friendships that promise to brighten
our mood.

Let the Christmas bells ring,
The Rhine winds echo the carols we will
sing.....
See you soon in Dusseldorf
For all the delights this trip is guaranteed to
bring.



“Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts:

**the book of their deeds,
the book of their words,
and the book of their art.**

**Not one of these books can be understood unless
we read the two others; but of the three,
the only quite trustworthy one is the last.”**

Sir John Ruskin

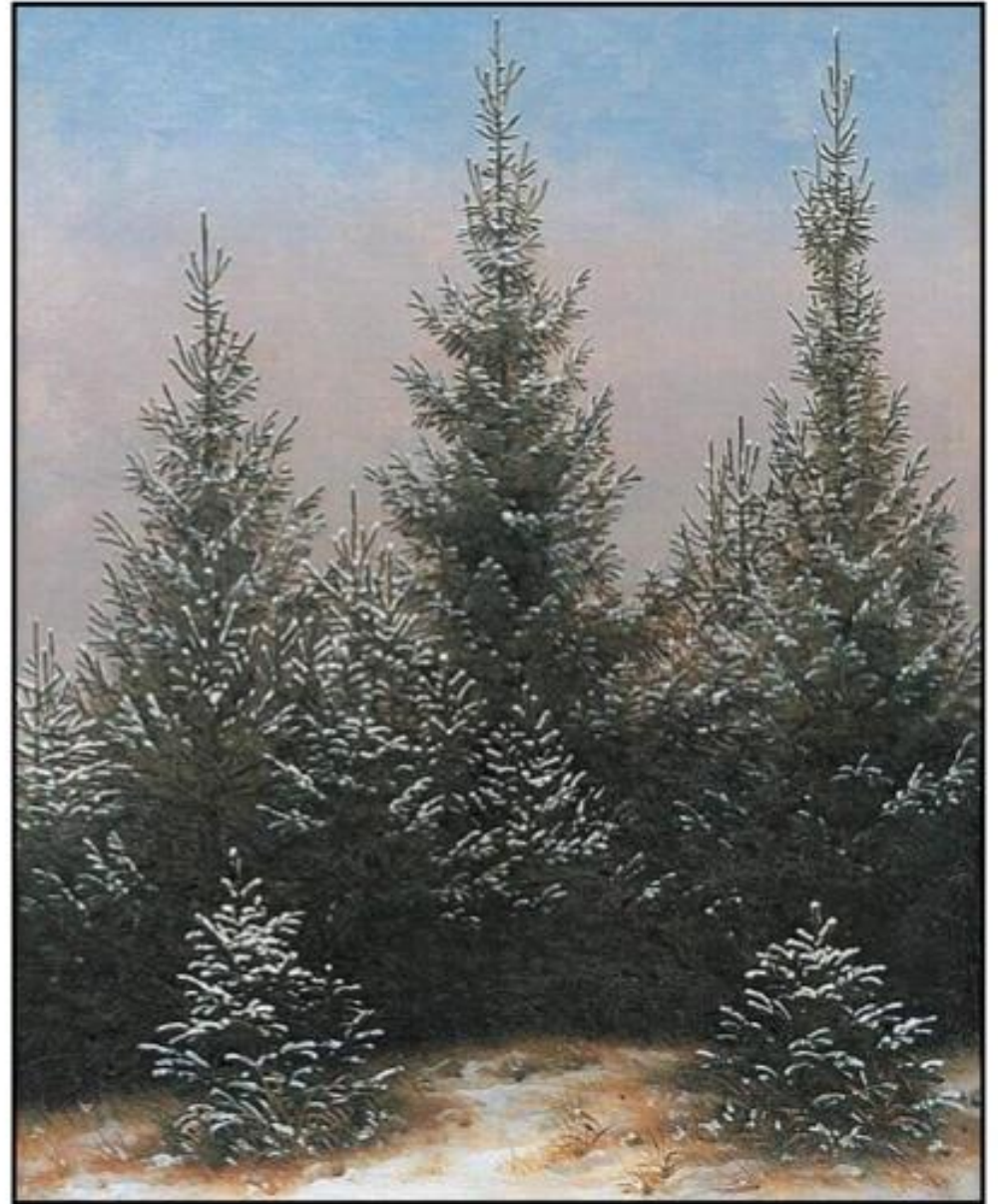
While on the Rhine - the two lectures will focus on Germany’s “deeds, words, and art” that have written their autobiography...



The full English lyrics for “O Tannenbaum” vary slightly by version, but a common set is:

“O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
Your branches green delight us!
They’re green when summer days are
bright,
They’re green when winter snow is
white.

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
Your branches green delight us!”.



Painting by Caspar David Friedrich circa 1828

*Beloved students, loyal laborers are ye
that have wrought valiantly, and
achieved great guerdons in the
vineyard of our Lord; but a mighty
victory is yet to be won, a greater
freedom for the race; and Christian
success is under arms, - with armor on,
not laid down.*

*Let us rejoice, however, that the clarion
call of peace will at length be heard
above the din of battle, and come more
sweetly to our ear than sound of
vintage bells to villagers on the Rhine.*

(Miscellaneous Writings, page 120,
Mary Baker Eddy)



Dresden Choir

The background of the slide is a soft-focus image of Christmas decorations. It features strings of warm white lights, red and gold ornaments, and green pine branches, creating a cozy holiday atmosphere.

And now... we begin the countdown.

The stories, traditions, music, art,
Christmas markets, and Rhine Valley
landscapes we've discussed today will soon
be ours to experience.

See you in Düsseldorf!

