

Information Leaflet

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, SIGTUNA



St. Mary's Church is the oldest building in use in Sigtuna. Within it lies memories and treasures from more than seven hundred years of the history of Sigtuna and its people. It links the medieval city of monks and tradesmen with present-day Sigtuna and its worldwide connections.

About 1230 Dominican monks began to build what is now the chancel of St. Mary's and a monastery to the south of the church. August 15, 1247/48, the day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is usually regarded as the day of its consecration. By the middle of the 1250s the nave was also completed. This was the first time in Sweden that they used the technique of moulding and firing brick - instead of using stone. The chancel is partly Romanesque, while the nave is Gothic - Mälardal Gothic.

In the late thirteenth century King Magnus Ladulås paid for the roofing of the church and its covering with copper. The walls, pillars and roof of the church still look similar to what they did more than seven hundred years ago.

At the time of the Reformation in 1530 King Gustav Vasa ordered the monastery to be pulled down, and St. Mary's to become the parish church for Sigtuna. As a result the other churches in town slowly fell into ruin.

The most recent restoration was done in stages between 1966 and 1971, and has turned the medieval church into a building that meets contemporary needs.

The Choir

- A Behind the altar** the oldest figures of the great reredos are from the fourteenth century. They were added, and the reredos was given its present width in the middle of the fifteenth century. Starting from the left we see St. James the Apostle, Ursula, St. Peter the Apostle, the Annunciation with St. Mary and the Archangel Gabriel, St. Mary being crowned as Queen of Heaven by the Lord Christ, St. Mary's meeting with St. Elizabeth, St. John the Apostle, Paul the Apostle, and St. John the Baptist. The reredos was made in Sweden.
- B The Mural painting** on the left-hand wall is a memorial for two archbishops. It is from the fourteenth century.
- C The large gravestone** and coat of arms on the wall are memorials to Christer Gabriëlsson Oxenstierna and his wife Beata Carlsdotter. They are from the early seventeenth century.
- D The font** is more ancient than St. Mary's Church and probably came from one of the churches that are now in ruins. The snake coiling round the foot of the font is a symbol of evil from which baptism sets us free.
- E The sculptures.** On the south wall - to the right - we see the figure of St. Dominic, the founder of the order of Dominican monks. It was carved approximately 1420.
- F** On the other wall to the north is a statue of Christ in suffering - probably carved around the same time.
- G The pulpit** from 1647 shows Jesus as Saviour of the World, surrounded by the four evangelists and St. Paul the Apostle.
- H The triumph crucifix** hanging from the roof is Swedish work. The figure of Christ is from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.

The North Aisle

- J The mural painting** from the fifteenth century shows a crucifixion scene. From the left we see St. Dominic, Christ Crucified with St. John to the left and St. Mary to the right, an unknown saint and St. Francis.

- K** **The altar** reredos is made in Sweden – possibly in Sigtuna itself in the fifteenth century. On the left-hand door we see St. Erik, St. Barbara with the tower, and St. Peter. In the middle is St. Mary Magdalene, a crucifixion scene with St. Mary on the left and St. John on the right with St. Olof of Sweden. On the right-hand door is St. Paul the Apostle, St. Catherine of Alexandria and St. James the Apostle.
- L** **The glass window** is the work of Sven Bertil Svensson and was brought to our church in 1983. On the upperpart of the window are figures that symbolize the Holy Trinity. The large figure of St. Mary in the centre shows her as she is described in the Book of Revelation. She is standing on the crescent moon, surrounded by a gloria. As a frame round the figure we see scenes from the life of St. Mary (the Annunciation, St. Mary with Elizabeth, the birth of Jesus, the Wise Men, the presentation of Jesus in the Temple, the flight into Egypt, twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple, the wedding in Cana, the death of St. Mary).

The South Aisle

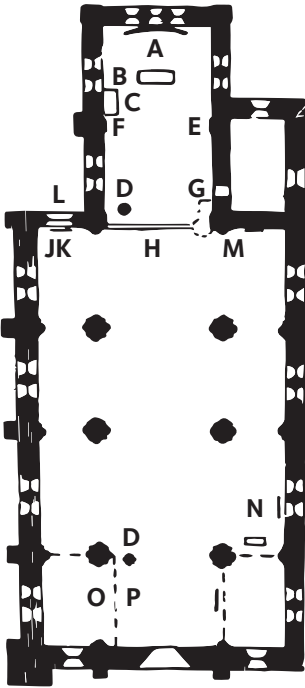
- M** **The choir organ** is the work of Åkerman and Lund. Behind the organ is a large tombstone, the Rickeby Stone from the 1300s.
- N** On the south wall there are memorials and in a display case there are medieval **wood sculptures**.

The west end of the church

(near the entrance)

- O** **The facade of the Organ**, comes from an eighteenth century organ but the present organ was built in Grönlunds of Gammelstad in 2000.
- P** **On the ceiling** above the organ there is a fifteenth century painting called The Throne of Grace. It shows God the Father enthroned on a rainbow. In his hands he holds Jesus on the Cross. Above the head of Jesus we see the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove.

St. Mary's Church, Sigtuna



- A **Altar reredos**, fourteenth-fifteenth century
- B **Arched tomb**, fourteenth century mural painting
- C **Christer Gabrielson Oxenstiema's tombstone** 1592
- D **Baptism font**, early middle ages
- E **St. Dominic**, from the 1420s
- F **Christ in suffering**, fifteenth century
- G **Pulpit**, 1647
- H **Triumph Crucifix**, about 1500
- J **Mural Painting**, fourteenth century
- K **Altar reredos**, fifteenth century
- L **St. Mary window**, 1983
- M **Choir organ**
- N **Medieval wood sculptures**
- O **The Organ**
- P **Ceiling painting**, fifteenth century

A Prayer

Jesus, you are the same yesterday, today and for ever. Thank you for all those people who before our time have received you in prayer, in word and in sacrament. Thank you for all who in this place have been servants of your Gospel. Come near us now and show us your will for the present day, and bring us at the end to the joy of your heaven. Amen.