Welcome to

Mariestad Cathedral

Svenska kyrkan

MARIESTADS FÖRSAMLING

The cathedral was built by Duke Karl (who later became King Karl IX) on a hilltop next to where the river Tidan discharges in lake Vänern. The foundation stone was laid in April 1593. One month before this it was decided at Uppsala möte (the Council of Uppsala) that Sweden should be a Lutheran country.

The late Gothic church with its pointed arches, rib vaults and buttresses is a conspicious sight both from land and the lake. From the very beginning the church was intended to serve as a cathedral. The site and the style of architecture were chosen accordingly. During this period, religious life in Sweden was changing as the Reformation had started in the 1520's. The cathedral can also be seen as a symbol of the Reformation. The Lutheran faith had little support among ordinary people, and Duke Karl and the Government authorities acted very deliberately when, in 1581, they founded a new diocese that was to be governed by a superintendent. It consisted of Värmland and the county districts of Vadsbo and Valle. With that, Vadsbo and Valle were separated from the diocese of Skara, which was Roman Catholic. Some years later the new town Mariestad became the capital of the new diocese. Mariestad and the new diocese became the centre of the Evangelical faith and Lutheran theology. From 1647, Mariestad was no longer a diocesan capital.

Do come in!
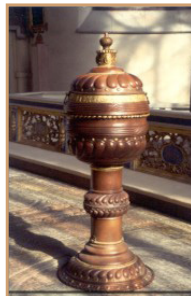
The baptismal font was made in 1646 and was bequeathed to the church by Bronte Knutson (his aristocratic name was Cronsköld). Most probably he himself had been baptised in it. It is one of the few objects that survived the fire in 1693.

St. Luke, the evangelist, with the oxen at his feet.

The pulpit and the altar, in the Caroline Baroque style, were made by the sculptor and artist, master craftsman Börje Löfman, in 1701. He was a resident of Mariestad and had been trained at the castle at Läckö, owned by Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie.

The sculptures are full of symbols. On the pulpit are Jesus and his twelve disciples, all with gilt hair and gilt clothes.

At the bottom of the altarpiece are the four evangelists and above them the four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude. At the top is a picture of the Virgin Mary and child, symbolising love.

The altarpiece was painted by the portrait painter Johan Aureller the Younger from Medelplana on Kinnekulle.

The pulpit is decorated with the apostles and their attributes.
From the left:
Jacob with the staff
Peter with the key
Jesus Christ with "the whole world in his hand".

In the chancel are several beautiful grave-slabs from the time when people were buried beneath the church. This practise ended during the 18th century.

"In truth, in very truth I tell you, a grain of wheat remains a solitary grain unless it falls into the ground and dies; but if it dies, it bears a rich harvest." (St. John 12:24)

*The confirmands' art group at
the confirmation service*

The church is nearly 400 years old and people still come here to worship. Many people come for the quietness or just to have a look around. Every Tuesday evening in summer there is a music programme "Musik i sommarkvällen". Our most popular services are the confirmation services in spring when the church is full of people and expectations, the services devoted to special topics and the Christmas concert when even this huge church is too small. We want the church to be in use every day, then it is easier to keep it in good repair.

A congregation is people who worship together. We are inspired by the stories about Sackaios, the woman at Sykar's well and the baptism of the Ethiopian to:

♦ make the most of the different characters of our churches

♦ offer different forms of worship, thus helping more people meet Christ

♦ frequently use the language of music, dance and the visual arts

♦ open up the symbolic language of our churches

♦ develop and encourage the worshippers' active participation in the services.

*We hold hands and dance through
the church!*

Light-meditation

www.svenskakyrkan.se/mariestad