

## Dear visitors – welcome to the Church of St. Mary!

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The Church of St. Mary is a catholic **church without a steeple** which is **shaped like a dodecagon**. It had been consecrated on May 5, 1963. Even from the outside you can see that the Virgin Mary is the patron saint of this church: she is shown in a mosaic decorating the outside wall and on the roof you will find a crown, which refers to the coronation of the Virgin.

Entering the church you instantly look towards the **sanctuary** – which was the aim of the architect, Karl-Heinz Bargholz. **The altar, the tabernacle, the relief behind the altar** as well as the ambo, the flambeaux, the paschal candle, the portable crucifix and the eternal light were designed in the same artistic style by Josef Baron from Unna in 1980. Already in 1977 he had created **14 almost quadratic** bronze reliefs depicting the Stations of the Cross. You will find them all along the interior walls.

Since 2000, the **baptismal font** with its intricately detailed cover has been situated in the sanctuary – according to the contemporary idea of the catholic liturgy. It is a precious work piece of professor Zeitner, a German goldsmith.

The **central piece of art of the sanctuary** is the relief made of gold bronze depicting the Annunciation. This theme refers to the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8.

The floor plan of the **altar**, which is built of stone, is shaped like a cross. The vine stock you see is a symbol for Jesus Christ as a source of life. The tabernacle doors refer to the curtains of the temple described in the Old Testament.

The beautifully coloured **new windows** of the Church of St. Mary were created in 1995 by the artist Gabi Weiss from Stuttgart. She wrote: “My intention was to refer to the life and the personality of the Virgin Mary. ... Above the two sanctuary windows with the wide yellow areas, you can see the Crown of Mary, a jagged line shown all along the transom glazing.” Here you can find the connection with the golden crown on the roof – both referring to the Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven. The two sanctuary windows are traversed by a ‘blue ribbon’, which you will find in all of the windows. In the Christian symbolism, the colour blue is the colour of Mary. The ribbon is a symbol for her life and her story. The differently coloured details, stripes and light and dark shadings express the hardships and triumphs of her life.

The **organ** of our church was built in 1974 by the organ building company Hermann Hillebrand (Altwarmbüchen). It has two manuals and 26 sounding organ stops and is an instrument with a smooth sound that is even suitable for organ concerts. In the year 2000, which was the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the parish, it was restored and expanded.

Also in that year, the **side chapel** (Mary’s Chapel) was newly designed. Until that time it had been conceived as a baptismal chapel and for the worship of a statue of Mary – the “**Madonna from Gandersheim**”. Today it has a central sanctuary under a new glass dome.

The statue of Mary is a carved and colourfully painted Madonna with the infant Jesus from the 15<sup>th</sup> century which has a very chequered history: until the Reformation it was located in a church at Bad Gandersheim. During this time it fell prey to some iconoclasts and was smashed in 34 pieces. Fortunately, these pieces were collected and hidden. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century a member of the Linneborn family discovered them in the attic of an old farmhouse. After the statue had been restored it was inherited by the eldest sons and passed through the family lineage until dean Linneborn from Uelzen, the last heir, donated the Madonna in 1963 to the newly built Church of St. Mary.