

Leaflet

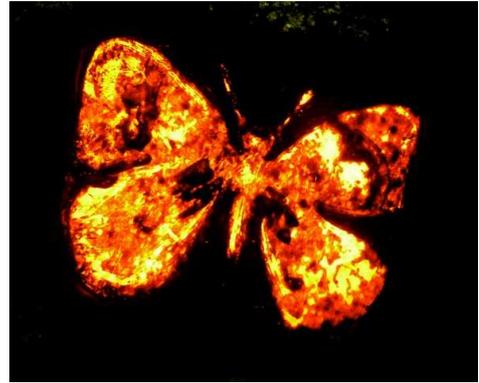
Church of St. Johann



Why do you visit a church?

Are you looking for peace and contemplation, a moment of reflection and respite from the hustle and bustle of everyday life? A little time to come to yourself and God?

Are you curious: what does the inside of this house of worship look like, whose mighty spire links the Davos landscape with the sky in so many paintings by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner? What are my feelings upon contemplating Augusto Giacometti's stained glass windows beaming their secret out at me from the gothic choir area in the brilliant late morning sunshine?



We are happy that you are taking the time to visit the reformed Church of St. Johann. Apart from being a private place, a house of worship is always a public space, too. Whoever dwells in the Church of St. Johann for a service, a concert or contemplation senses that this church is witness to a vibrant present as well as an eloquent past. Its walls, partly reaching back 700 years, tell us exciting stories and have a strong spiritual appeal.

1289 Twelve families from the Valais came to our area. They cooperated to build the Church of St. Johann, which they consecrated to John the Baptist. The little turret to the east of the main tower recalls these beginnings.

1481 The tower through which you have entered the church was completed, reaching almost 72 meters in height.

Around **1500** The Roman apse was replaced by the choir in the late-Gothic style. The small house of ordinance to the left in the choir also hails from this pre-reformation period.

1588 Lightning hit the top of the spire and the entire wood shingle roofing as well as the woodwork went up in flames. The spire had to be replaced. Due to extreme weather conditions and the lack of diagonal braces the seven-floor supporting structure began to twist almost 45 degrees.

1909 The nave was broadened north and south to provide room for 800 people! The two spires dating back to 1289 and 1481 respectively were not to be changed in the process. To this end, the walls and the roof had to be pulled down completely. The south and the north gallery were built. The reinserted pulpit was slightly elevated. Some fragments of the frescoes on the walls have survived and are stored in the museum of local history in Davos and in the archive of the Swiss National Museum in Zurich.

The nave received a wooden beam roof decorated by Christian Schmid. The hand-wrought iron chandelier also hails back to the year 1909, just like the ornaments in contemporary local style.



It was also at that time that a new organ with 22 registers was bought and placed on the northern gallery. The previous instruments – dating from 1719 and 1888 – had been situated in the choir area. Today's 'Metzler' organ on the western gallery was acquired in 1961. With its 30 registers it is the largest in Davos. It was renovated by the Gollcompany in 2011 and is

regularly used during service and also for concerts.

1928 The Church of St.Johann was graced with the marvelous stained-glass windows by Augusto Giacometti from the Bregaglia, possibly the most famous stained-glass artist in the Grisons. They depict the future paradise. The upper tracery shows the baptism of Jesus, his birth and resurrection, the middle window shows the crowned Mary on the left and, on the right, Jesus symbolically offering the crown of life to the viewer. Strikingly, all other human figures look very much alike and are clothed in plain garments, as in Paradise, all humans will be equal. Giacometti has also invested Paradise with all the beauty we rejoice here on earth – flowers and animals (butterflies, duck, stork); except for the hare (left window) all the animals can fly. This corresponds to the belief that the soul leaves the body of the deceased just like the butterfly emerges from its cocoon. The middle window is dominated by the primary colour red, both side windows feature the secondary colours green and purple.

With the window to the right in the choir, Giacometti reilluminates all the colours in the other windows. He takes leave of representational art and has created the first abstract stained-glass church window in Switzerland.

2003 The mighty steeple was renovated. Along with this, the spire was newly covered with local larch-wood shingles. In addition, tie rods made of steel were built in so as to stabilize the timber structure.

2008 + 2009 Comprehensive exterior and interior renovation work - including a professional restoration of the 'paradise windows' - was carried out.

Should you like to learn more, e.g. about the origins of our twisted tower, the bells, the clock, the graveyard, our guidebook by Klaus Bergamin will take you on a voyage of discovery through history and landscape.

I hope I have been able to spark your interest and that you will return for a church service, a concert, for a moment of rest, of contemplating the choir windows, of quiet prayer. You will find more suggestions on the information rack.

Margret Disch, Sacristan



Blessing

May God bless the flowers along your path of life
Their colour may give you joy
Their fragrance may comfort you
Their permanence may give you peace
May God send you many flowers
so that your trust may grow
so that you may persist in hope
so that your love may flourish
May God give your life the strength
to bloom
to give love
to share joy, to awaken hope.
The blessing of the living God
be with you!