

# *Guide to Our Church*



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# **Prayer**

***Enjoying the silence, Oh Lord  
How quiet, how peaceful it is here.***

***Not a soul in sight making demands on me  
In this church I have to answer to nobody.***

***Here I can breathe freely. Here I can be myself.***

***This is why I enjoy coming here.***

***This is why I feel at home here.***

***Oh Lord, if being with You is like being here, so quiet and peaceful  
If You can let me be the way I am  
If You leave me room to breathe  
Not forcing me to give any answers  
Than I might feel at home with You.***

***Then I will enjoy coming to You.***

***Amen***

# A Brief Guide to Our Church

*Dear Visitors,*

*We are pleased that you have found your way to our St. Katharinen-Kirche, i.e. our Saint Katherine's Church. May be you just want to look around a little or rest for a bit or may be you want to say a prayer or light a candle...*

*Among the books on display you will find a detailed pamphlet with a wealth of information about this church - too much, may be, for just a short visit. This is why we would like to provide you with this shorter version for your tour.*

In 2000, our church celebrated its 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Located on a hill in the center of town, its first documented mention dates back to the year 1250. Its most striking feature is the steeple, which appears to be rather compact in relation to the nave. The word is that after its completion, there was some dispute with the master builder from Lübeck, since the steeple allegedly had turned out to be lower than ordered.

*(picture on the right)*



Outside on the right hand Southern wall, you find the funerary chapel of the *Qualen* family. In 1934, it was converted into the vestry as part of a refurbishment.

*(picture on the left)*

The *Wohlenberg-Binge* family's funerary chapel is also located on the Northern side of the church. Built in recognition of a donation the amount of which remains unknown, it was completed in 1694. Today, it houses the heating system of the church.

*(picture on the right)*



The funerary chapel of the *Levetzow family* is located on the Northern side as well. In 1740, *Kay von Levetzow* donated a new pulpit and in return the Church granted him the right to build a funerary chapel for the exclusive use of his family.

(picture on the right)



Double-Sarkophag in the chapel, a second one in the crypt during restauration works, approx. 1933



In the steeple entrance hall above the door to the nave, you can admire the large triumphal cross with a late Gothic crucifix, crafted around 1500. The four end discs display the symbols of the Evangelists: *John* on top, *Mark* on the right, *Luke* at the bottom and *Matthew* on the left. The pointed arch indicates that once there must have been an open passage from the tower to the nave.

(picture on the right)



On the right hand wall, there is a wood carving of Saint Katherine's Church. At one point, it had been removed from the entrance to the town and thrown away. Somebody had rescued it and then used it as decoration in their basement party room. However, the son of the person who had found it, returned it to the church in 2008 on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his confirmation.

(picture on the left)



In the entrance hall of the steeple, mounted on a plinth, you see our bell *Paulus*. It was cast in 1670, but unfortunately developed a crack in 1966. Its counterpart *Petrus*, cast in 1622, is still in service in the bell tower.  
*(picture on the left)*

Belfry with bells in the church spire  
*(picture on the right)*



Turret clock with clockwork which is wined up once a week with a hand crank. You may hear the ticking if it is quiet in the steeple hall. The hands on the dial show a small difference of two minutes due to the wearing of the old gear wheels. New ones are unfortunately not available.  
*(pictures left and below)*



It was only in the thirties that the vaulted ceiling of the nave was reconstructed in the way it is now. It had collapsed at around 1640 and at the time it had been rebuilt with a beamed ceiling.

Next to the vaulted arch construction of the nave, which is almost 36 meters long and 10 meters wide, the attention of the visitor is drawn to two windows: They date back to the time when the church was built and have been opened up again. Both are original gothic traceried windows. The one on the left is hidden by the *Petersdorf crypt*, the *von Levetzow* funerary chapel. The one on the right is still hidden, too, but it gets some light through a little window from the *Qualen* funerary.

Two memorial plaques honoring those who died in the *First Schleswig War* from 1848 to 1850 and the *German-French War* 1870-71 can be seen on the left hand wall.

(pictures on the right, inside and outside)



A bit further down, you can admire a small wood carving. It used to be the finial of the pews for the nobility with the code of arms of the *Ahlefeld* family, mentioning the year 1673.

(picture on the left)

The wooden Regency-style pulpit was donated at around 1740/60 by privy councillor *Dietrich von Levetzow auf Petersdorf*. In return, he was granted the right to build a funerary chapel on the Northern side of the church. On the pulpit ceiling you see a statue of the Saviour.

(picture on the right)



The late Gothic oak altar - crafted originally at about 1420/30 by a Lübeck workshop - was restored only recently. The carvings show the central Christian subject of the crucifixion. *Mary* and *John* are right next to the cross with *Jesus Christ*, while the apostles *Peter* and *Paul*, the name givers of the altar, are slightly removed, separated by a decorative column.

The five glass windows of the choir were designed in 1933/34 by the Flensburg artist *Ina Hoßfeld* and then produced by a company from Stuttgart.

Inlaid into the left wall of the chancel you can see a large lime stone epitaph. It shows *Sievert Ratlow*, Lord of the Manor Lensahn and his wife *Hedwig*. Kneeling down, they pray under the crucifix with their daughter.

*(picture on the right)*



The baptismal font shaped like a cup is crafted in the general style of limestone fonts. It is one of the oldest items of the church, dating back to 1240/50 - the years in which the church was completed.

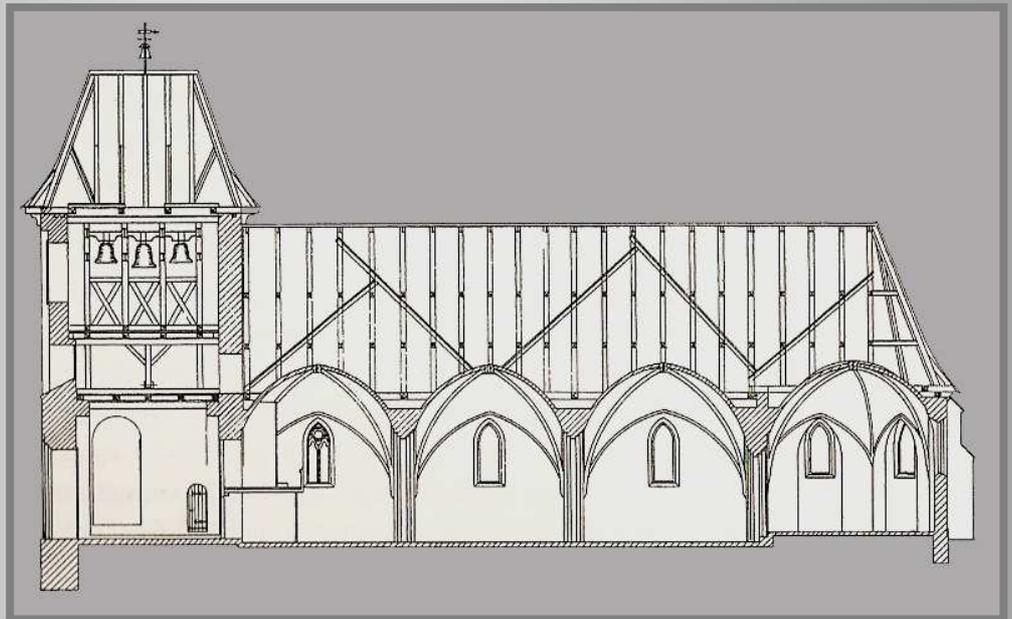
*(picture on the left)*

The new organ was inaugurated on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010. *Eule*, a Bautzen-based company, de-signed and built the instrument, which took them two years. A typical feature of this organ is a little owl folding out of the side of the organ when a certain sound is played - and as you can well imagine, children in particular just love it. *(pictures below)*

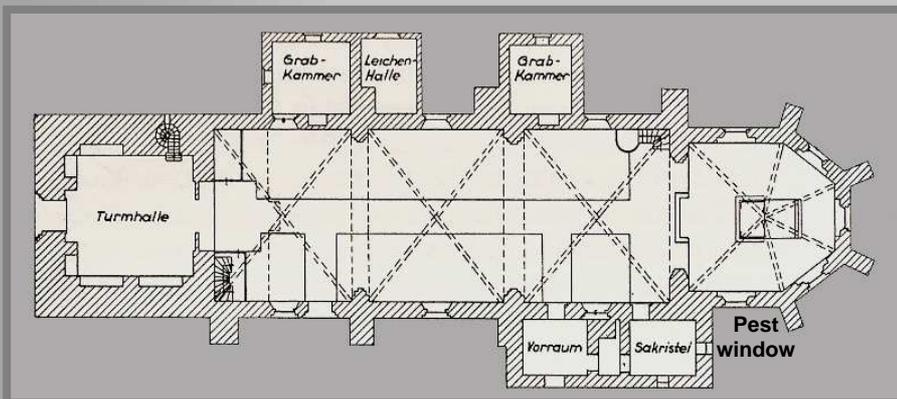




Situated southerly outside near the altar is th so-called pest window. Formerly it enables by pest infected people to take part in the service without entering the church thus being a danger for the others. The information panel beside shows more details.  
*(picture on the left)*



**Lateral view**



**Floor plan**

## Chronicle

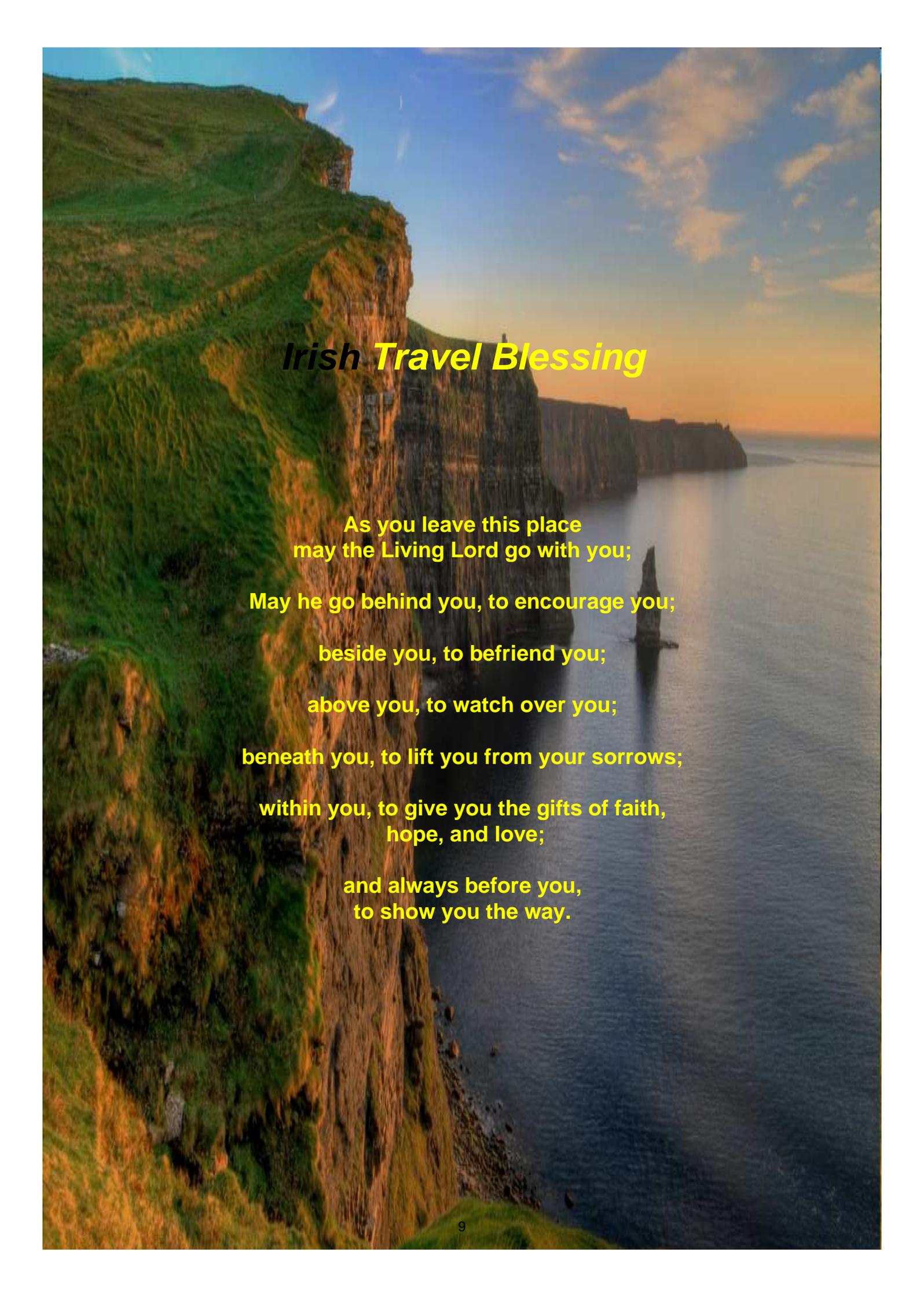
- About 1200** The late Romanesque/early Gothic limestone font might be the oldest item in the church.
- Around 1245** The sovereign of *Schauenburg* started building the church. Most probably, the early Gothic brick structure was originally designed as a rather flat rectangular hall any without buttresses, vaulting, choir and church steeple. The old entrance with the original stones with green glazing is located on the Southern side, facing the church square. Thanks to the care and attention bestowed by many generations the church is the oldest building of the town.
- Around 1250/59** First written mention of the church in official documents. Thus, in 2000 it celebrated its 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- Around 1300** A vault is installed - probably in the style of the extension of the monastery church of *Cismar*. Two traceried windows on the Northwestern and Southeastern sides are still left from those times.
- Around 1300** A *polygon choir* is built, consisting of five sides of an octagon, probably again following the example of the *Cismar* monastery church.
- Around 1430** *Peter-Paul-Altar* with tryptichon, probably from a Lübeck workshop. Also from that time: carved figurines in the center shrine, *Jesus* on the cross, next to him *Mary* and *John*, further to the side *Peter* on the left, *Paul* on the right. During festive periods, the altar used to change its appearance: the side wings, that were usually closed, would then be opened. Today, the *Lensahn* congregation has a different tradition: During advent and passiontide, the wings are closed, so that the outer sides with the paintings depicting the apostles *Peter (with the key)* and *Paul (with the sword)* can be seen. On Christmas eve and during the Easter Night service, the wings are opened again showing the insides with all their glowing glory.
- 1464** Only now the steeple is added, built by a Lübeck master bricklayer *Ludeke Vromen* and his workshop, commissioned by *Mathias von Ratlow* from *Lensahn* and *Bernd von Qualen* from *Koselau*. There was some dispute about the remuneration: the master bricklayer was accused of not having built the top portion of the steeple at the specified height. The steeple with its height of 23 meters and its massive brick walls appears quite "stocky" next to the nave of the church extending over a length of 36 meters. Since today the church is situated at 36 meters above sea level, this accounts for the distinctive and characteristic side view of the church.

## Chronicle

- 1497** The original name “*St. Catharina*” appears for the first time in the letter of appointment of vicar *Nikolaus Brasch*. Most probably, the church is named after *Saint Katherine of Alexandria*, who was killed in the year 307 because of her religion.
- Around 1500 (?)**Triumphal cross in the steeple hall with late Gothic crucifix and the symbols of the four evangelists in the end discs (*John* on top, *Mark* on the right, *Luke* at the bottom, *Matthew* on the left). Workshop from Lübeck?
- Reformation** Until the reformation, the parish of *Lensahn* belonged to the catholic diocese of Lübeck. Since 1650, the owners of the estate of *Lensahn* exercise the church patronage. The earliest protestant pastor known by name is *Pastor Johann Fabricius*, administering the office from 1600 until 1632.
- 1622** The oldest bell of the church, *Petrus*, can still be heard today, ringing in the steeple. Another one, cast in 1670 by *M. N. Gage* from Lutteringen, donated by the Prince-bishop of Lübeck, *August Friedrich* in Eutin, unfortunately developed a crack after 300 years in service and can now be admired in the tower hall.
- 1638** Organ - does not exist anymore.
- 1640** The vaulting of the choir collapses because of the abutments being too weak. For about 300 years, it is replaced by a plain wooden ceiling.
- 1641** The original tempera paintings on the inner and outer sides of the wings of the altar and the base of the center part are painted over with oil paints at the time when “*Volckmarus Trautzen of Lensahn was pastor*” as it says on the back of the altar shrine. The “new” passiontide scenes depicted on it are the ones that you still see today.
- Around 1740** *Dietrich von Levetzow* of Petersdorf donates the French Regency tulip-shaped wooden pulpit in return for the permission to build a funerary chapel on the Northern Side of the Church. You can still find the double sarcochagus of the *von Levetzow spouses*. It is connected to the chapel of rest which was added later.
- The church clock is installed in the steeple, in 1776 a second clock face is added. When you keep very quiet, you can here the ticking of the clockwork - a symbol of our lifetime ticking away.
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- 1907-1909** The painter *Wilhelm Jensen* from *Garding* (he also created the half length portraits of the twelve apostles around Jesus on the base of the altar) and the wood carver *Wilhelm Hansen* from *Kiel* restore oil paintings and carvings of the altar.
- 1933/34** Comprehensive conservation and restoration: the choir vault, which had collapsed in 1640, is restored, the traceried windows, which had been closed with brickwork, are opened up again, the side galleries and the old pews are removed, the pulpit is shifted from its center position to its present place. The steeple hall is refurnished as chapel of rest and venue for christenings and marriage ceremonies using the wooden beams of the belfry. Electric heating is installed. The Flensburg artist *Ina Hoßfeld* designs the five glass windows of the sanctuary and the two small ones of the vestry - Thank God! - not paying heed to the wish of the then parish council to have *Adolf Hitler* and *Paul von Hindenburg* depicted in them.

## Chronicle

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- The western portal of the steeple is now used as main entrance, while the steeple served as storage area for some time.
- 1957** Two additional bells (*c'-sharp* and *e'-major*), cast by *Rickinger* in Sinn (Dillkreis), are inaugurated.
- 1964/65** Second major conservation and restoration: The damaged vault above the pulpit (in the Eastern bay) and the foundation are renovated.
- A new bell is added to the chimes replacing the cracked bell (*a'-major*) of 1640.
- 1969** A new organ in a different position (it is moved from center position to the side of the gallery) built largely using the old pipes, replaces the beautiful pipe organ from 1862.
- 1984/85** Conservation and restoration of the altar by the *Landesamt für Denkmalpflege* in Kiel. The high altar is moved from the altar table onto a plinth closer to the Eastern side of the nave. Holy Communion can now be administered with a view of the congregation. The platform and barriers in front of the altar are removed, the congregation receives the Holy Communion positioned in a semicircle around the altar.
- Restoration experts from Lübeck lay open the remaining parts of the original painting of the triumphal cross from the steeple hall.
- 2000** In October 2000, *Eule*, a company from Bautzen (Saxony) builds a new organ, using traditional materials (oakwood). The organ has 1184 pipes, 25 of which are visible, 22 organ stops (21 in place and one technical preparation) and two manual works
- The old electric heating is replaced with a gas-fired hot water heating system. The audio system is upgraded to be used for playing music.
- 2007** After more than 20 years, the nave is painted white again.
- A votive candle holder is placed in the nave below the hymn display.
- 2012** In December 2012 the new pews are inaugurated. As part of the refurbishment, the formerly open wood floor is closed and some parts are carpeted. The mixing console for the audio system is moved from the gallery downstairs into the back part of the nave, the system is upgraded and readied for projection with a beamer.



## ***Irish Travel Blessing***

**As you leave this place  
may the Living Lord go with you;**

**May he go behind you, to encourage you;**

**beside you, to befriend you;**

**above you, to watch over you;**

**beneath you, to lift you from your sorrows;**

**within you, to give you the gifts of faith,  
hope, and love;**

**and always before you,  
to show you the way.**