

## The Organ Loft

Originally the organ was an instrument used by secular rulers; it was introduced into church services at the coronation of Charlemagne and became a symbol of the Lord of the Church.

In spite of the critical attitude towards organ music of many people, including Martin Luther, the organ has been the instrument generally used to accompany congregational singing since the 17th century. Today it is assisted by trumpets and guitars and recorded music.

## The Tower

The tower of St. Simeonis rises about 200 feet over Minden above the organ loft. Five bells call out to the people of Minden reminding them of the stories of God's love for them and inviting them to services and times of prayer.

Four bells were made in the 20th century; two were donated by the Cathedral congregation. All five ring for the Roman Catholic congregation of St. Mauritius which lies directly beside St. Simeonis. The inscription around the highest bell comes from the prayer of Jesus: *That they all may be one.*

## The Simeonis Window

When you leave the Choir, you see to the right a stained glass window with another motif from the Gospel of Luke. It comes from the Christmas story in chapter 2.

40 days after the birth of their child, Joseph and Mary take two doves to the temple as a thank-offering. At the entrance they meet two aged people, Simeon and Anna. Simeon had received God's promise that he would not die until he had seen the one who could bring healing and salvation to the world. He recognises the child Jesus as this Saviour and takes him in his arms.

Even today we end the day in the Compline with Simeon's prayer of thanksgiving:

*Lord, now you may let your servant go in peace ...*

## Simeon of Trier (died 1st June 1035)

The church was named after a saint who had the name of the Biblical Simeon.

Simeon was born in Syrakus, a town influenced by the Greeks. He went to school in Constantinople, became a leader of pilgrimages to Jerusalem and later entered the present-day Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai.

From Antioch he reached Trier in Germany via Rome and Rouen. He accompanied the Bishop of Trier, Bishop Poppo, on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. On his return he asked to be walled up as a hermit in the Porta Nigra in Trier.

The founder of St. Simeon's Church, Dean Ico, brought the practice of venerating Saint Simeon with him from his birthplace Trier to Minden.

## The Open Church of St. Simeonis



The Open Church of St. Simeonis is a part of the initiative in the Evangelical Church of Westphalia to open up churches regularly.

It is open on weekdays from 10 o'clock. A pastor is present from 4 o'clock until the closing devotions at 6 o'clock. It is a place of quiet and private prayer.

As the church no longer has its own parish, its upkeep and even its survival as a church is at great risk. Therefore you will find an offering box at the exit.

We are very grateful for any contribution to help ensure the further existence of St. Simeon's Church. We should also be very pleased to receive donations through the bank:

KK Minden, account number 40 000 648  
Sparkasse Minden-Lübbecke (BLZ 490 501 01)

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# A SHORT GUIDE TO THE CHURCH



offene kirche  
ST. SIMEONIS

WELCOME to the Open Church of St. Simeonis in Minden!

We ask you to take time to breathe in the atmosphere of the building. Sit for a while in one of the pews in the choir and have a good look at the stained glass windows.

The windows to the right and left of the altar depict persons turning away from some people and towards others.

## The lost sons

The stained glass window on the left hand side shows the story of the lost sons. It can be found in chapter 15 of the Gospel according to Luke.

The younger of two sons turned away from his father in order to live out his own life. When he has wasted all his money, everyone turns away from him. He can do nothing but take care of pigs and envy them their food.

He returns home to his father. He falls down in front of him, with the pigkeeper's crook in his hand. He wants to be accepted into the family again.

The father takes his hand and helps him to stand up. He reinstates him as his son.

The elder brother looks out arrogantly over the heads of the other two. In his opinion this demonstration of the father's love is unjust.

## The Good Samaritan

The window on the right tells the story of the Good Samaritan. It is also found in the Gospel according to Luke, in chapter 10.

In the foreground is a man lying on the ground who was the victim of everyday violence. Robbers attacked him and left him half dead.

In the background are two respected men going after their own business. They saw the wounded man and did not interfere. They continue on their way without showing any sympathy for him.

It is a foreigner from Samaria who has a close look at the wounded man and interrupts his journey. Full of sympathy, he turns to the victim and helps him up. He tends his wounds and will go on to ensure that he gets better.

## Crucifixion and Resurrection

The painting on the altarpiece in the middle of the choir depicts the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Luke describes this in his Gospel in chapters 23 and 24.

The crucifixion represents the climax of mankind's turning away from God. They kill the person who personifies the love of God. This turning away from God, this separation from him, is expressed in the German word for sin, *Sünde (separation): Christus ist umb unser Sünde willen dahin gegeben. (Christ is given up for our sin.)*

Yet although mankind turns away from God, God does not turn away from them. In the top picture, the raising from the dead of the crucified Lord shows God's constant loving care.

The frightened guards, who are supposed to keep the body in the tomb, turn away; Christ, surrounded by an aura of light, rises up to new life with the flag of triumph: *und umb unser gerechtigkeit willen auferwecket (and raised to life to justify us.*

## The One God as the Trinity

The One God faces us as an indivisible Trinity which is depicted in the middle window high up over the altar:

At the very top is the hand of blessing of the Father and Creator; to the left is the Son in the form of the sacrificial lamb, whose blood is trickling into the chalice and who at the same time is carrying the triumphal flag. To the right is the dove representing the Spirit of God, who flew over the waters at the creation and who inspires people until today.

## St. Simeonis Church

We know the pictures in the choir of people turning away from God. Our daily life is characterized by people who cut themselves off from others, who are arrogant, who quarrel with others and practise mortal violence. All this has an influence on us.

Therefore it is all the more important not to overlook the other pictures: Pictures of caring, of affection and love; stories where people are helped to their feet and healed.

St. Simeon's Church has been in Minden since 1214 as a public memorial and continues to remind us of these stories and pictures.

For many citizens of the town it was and is a place with biblical pictures of trust and hope.

Today it is still a place of remembrance and prayer. We pray here to the triune God, who looks in compassion on the humiliated and suffering.

## The Altar

St. Simeon's Church preaches God's Word through its stained glass windows and paintings. Christ is present where people hear this Word and where the Bread of Life is distributed.

The meal that Jesus Christ inaugurated, Holy Communion, is celebrated at the altar in the east, the direction of sunrise and resurrection. Through the bread and wine he invites everyone to turn to him and to celebrate fellowship with him and with each other.

## The Bronze Font

God's love for mankind is valid for **everyone** in the world. This is made clear in the command Jesus Christ gave to baptize people. It can be seen on the movable font lid: *Go then to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

The Spirit of God, who comes to human-beings during baptism, is seen hovering over the top in the form of a dove.

For us humans, baptism means a moment of decision for our whole lives. Either we accept God's love in faith or we turn away from him: *The one who believes and is baptized will be saved. The one who does not believe will be condemned.* This is written around the edge of the font.

It is decorated with the symbols of the four evangelists who tell us about Jesus Christ in their gospels: Luke with the ox, Mark with the lion, John with the eagle and Matthew with the angel.

## The Pulpit

The pulpit is the place in the church where the biblical pictures and stories can come alive. The sermon, a public address, was preached from this raised lectern, interpreting the meaning of the old Bible texts for the present day.

Since the pews have been moved forward from the nave to the choir, the pulpit is now behind the congregation. This gives us the chance to preach from the front on a level with the congregation.