

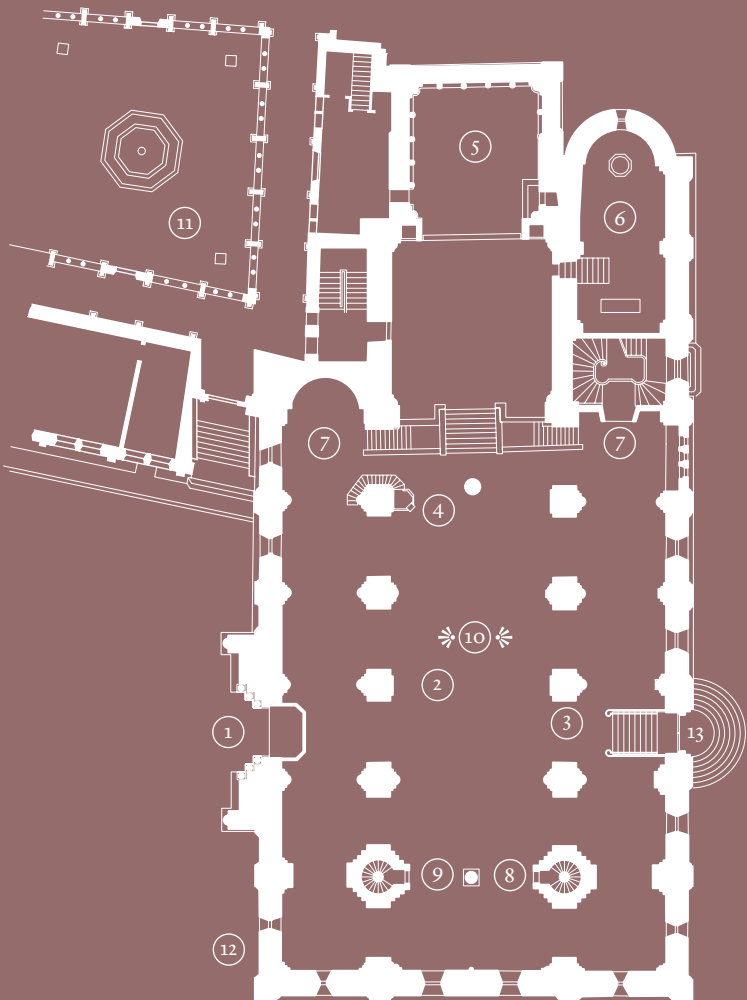


ALTSTADT  
KIRCHEN

WELCOME TO THE

# Grossmünster Zurich

reformierte  
kirche zürich



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# WELCOME TO THE **Grossmünster** **Zurich**

Thank you for taking the time to visit the Grossmünster. Zurich's main church was the starting point of the German-Swiss Reformation under Huldrych Zwingli and Heinrich Bullinger. Construction commenced around 1100 and was almost fully completed around 1220. Theology and culture of that time shaped the outer appearance of the cathedral to the present day, built in Romanesque style. Notice the rhythm of its architectural structure, the robust pillars from which the arches seem to have sprung as if from a trunk, the wide spanning triumphal arch that separates the nave from the chancel – and enjoy the special atmosphere!

## 1 THE MAIN PORTAL (BIBLE DOOR)

The main portal is richly decorated with Romanesque figures. On the capital of the left half-column, flanked by two lions, one can recognise King David with a stringed instrument. The motives on the heavy bronze door were created by the artist Otto Münch (1885–1965). They form a kind of theological programme through biblical stories.

- In the two top rows: the Ten Commandments.
- In the three middle rows: the confession of faith in the Triune God.
- In the second bottom row: the 'Our Father' prayer.
- In the bottom row: the mothers from the genealogical tree of Jesus.



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## 2 THE 'FELIX AND REGULA' RELIEF

The Romanesque capital links two legends associated with the foundation of the Grossmünster. On the right, it depicts the city's patron saints Felix and Regula. They are said to have experienced martyrdom at the site of today's Wasserkirche. After their execution, according to the legend, they picked up their decapitated heads and walked up to the square where the cathedral now stands, demanding to be buried there. On the left we see the emperor Charlemagne (Charles the Great) on his horse; he is said to have hunted a stag from Cologne to Zurich. His horse, so the legend goes, had fallen to its knees above the graves of Felix and Regula: that is where Charlemagne founded the Grossmünster.

### **3 THE 'GUIDO' RELIEF**

The figures on the capital – six men involved in a battle – remain a mystery. Is this a historical scene, a mythological battle, an appeal for peace? Carved on the sword of the fighter on the left, the name '+GUIDO+' gave the relief its name. And just as that with Felix and Regula, this one too goes back to the period between 1130 and 1180.

### **4 THE PULPIT AND THE BAPTISMAL FONT**

The fact that the interior of the Grossmünster cathedral is rather empty, plain and sober can be traced back to the reformer Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531). Soon after taking office as a lay priest, in 1519, he had altars, pictures and religious statuary removed because in his eyes, they distracted people from the Word of God. Zwingli preached in German and, with the canons, translated the Bible into it. In the church services of the Reformation period, the pulpit (1853) and the baptismal font (1598) assumed the central liturgical roles.

### **5 THE GIACOMETTI WINDOWS**

**(CHRISTMAS WINDOWS)**

Realised in 1933 by the Swiss artist Augusto Giacometti (1877–1947), the three choir-loft windows tell the Christmas story in a blaze of colour. It may seem surprising that Mary stands out so strongly in a protestant church whereas the infant Jesus almost disappears at the hem of her blue cloak. Next to her, we see two of the Three Magi with precious gifts whilst angels with floral offerings hover above them.

### **6 THE CHAPEL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES**

**(ROOM OF SILENCE)**

The Chapel of the Twelve Apostles was the liturgical centre of the Grossmünster. Once, the Altar of the Twelve Apostles stood, and the tombs of Felix and Regula were venerated here. This part of the chapel no longer exists however, as a staircase replaced it in the last century. Today it is a room of silence and prayer.



## 7 THE CRYPT

The crypt is the oldest part of the Grossmünster. Strongly faded mural paintings from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries depict the martyrdom of the city's patron saints Felix and Regula. They are attributed to Hans Leu the Elder. The original of the seated Charlemagne's figure from the south tower is also deposited here. Take a closer look at the column capital: a hare can be seen there too.

## 8 THE TOWER ('KARLSTURM')

Through a narrow staircase, 187 steep steps will take you to the top of the Tower. On the way up, you will come across the 'Totentanz Cycle' (Dance of Death) created by the Zurich-born street art pioneer Harald Naegeli (\*1939). At a height of 50 metres, you'll be able to enjoy the view over the city and the lake, in fine weather even as far as the Glarus Alps. For safety reasons, the gates to the four terraces are closed to the public.



## 9 THE BIBLE COLLECTION WITH THE FROSCHAUER BIBLE

Through the narrow bell tower, one reaches the gallery to the Grossmünster's Bible Collection. Its centrepiece is the hand-coloured Froschauer Bible – worldwide one of only three surviving copies of the first complete edition of the Bible published in German. In the chancel of the cathedral, Huldrych Zwingli and his companions translated the texts from the ancient Greek and Latin originals. It was set and printed by Zwingli's friend, the printer Christoph Froschauer and published in 1531 – three years before Luther's Bible appeared in Germany.

## 10 THE POLKE WINDOWS

Towards the end of 2009, Sigmar Polke (1941–2010) completed his cycle of twelve stained glass windows, setting new standards for harmony between art and church.

### THE AGATE WINDOWS

The seven windows in the western wing of the church consist of slices of agate, some of which are partially coloured (see picture on the right). They depict a 'coagulation' of prehistoric days and earth's history within the stones.

### THE FIGURATIVE WINDOWS

For his five windows in the eastern wing, Polke was inspired by motifs from medieval gospel books as well as by illuminations dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, thus from the period during which the Grossmünster was built, redesigning them on a computer. The artist then chose to

transpose some in traditional, some in experimental stained-glass processes.

The motifs refer to Augusto Giacometti's Christmas windows in the choir. They also show prefigurations, hence figures of the Old Testament who, according to the Christian reading, point ahead to the coming of Jesus. The figurative windows bear the titles 'Son of Man', 'Elijah's Ascension', 'King David', 'The Sacrifice of Isaac' and 'The Scapegoat'.





## 11 THE CLOISTER

The 12<sup>th</sup>-century cloister is an oasis of tranquillity and contemplation, with cultural-historical ornamental plants growing in its centre. The choice and layout of the plants were inspired by the naturalist and universal scholar Konrad Gessner (1516–1565) who came to his final resting place here. The columns and arches of the aisles are decorated with scurrile figures, animal scenes and grotesques in Romanesque style, the meaning of which has never been fully clarified. Today's complex has been rebuilt and houses the Faculty of Theology.

## 12 THE BULLINGER MONUMENT

To the right of the main portal, a monument commemorates the reformer Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575). He was the successor of Huldrych Zwingli as head of the Zurich Church after the latter's early death and succeeded in consolidating the Reformation doctrines in Zurich. Bullinger was exceptionally well connected and exchanged over 12,000 letters throughout all of Europe.

## 13 THE SOUTH PORTAL (ZWINGLI DOOR)

On this bronze door, Otto Münch shows 24 Reformation scenes and other images of the history of the Grossmünster. Try to pick out the 'Kappeler milk soup' and music-playing Zwingli! The north and south portals of the cathedral were part of a processional axis that connected the Grossmünster, the Wasserkirche and the Fraumünster with each other. That's because relics of Felix and Regula were also kept in the Fraumünster, on the other side of the Limmat.

MORE ABOUT THE  
GROSSMÜNSTER:



## CHURCH INTERIOR WITH CRYPT | CLOISTER

Except during church services and events open all year long,  
free of charge, as follows:

March to October 10:00 am – 6:00 pm | Sundays as of 12:30 am

November to February 10:00 am – 5:00 pm | Sundays as of 12:30 am

For special opening hours, please consult our website [www.grossmuenster.ch](http://www.grossmuenster.ch)

## TOWER | BIBLE COLLECTION

March to October 10:00 am – 5:30 pm | 12:00 am – 5:00 pm

November to February 10:00 am – 4:30 pm | 12:00 am – 4:00 pm

Sundays: as of 12:30 am

Tuesdays: The Bible Collection is closed. The Tower is closed to  
groups and school classes.

### Tickets

Adults: CHF/€ 5.–

Children from 6 – 16 years, students and people who attained  
pension age: CHF/€ 2.–

Included: an audio guide (German, English, French, Italian, Romansh)  
plus a reduced entrance (CHF/€ 11.– instead of CHF/€ 16.–) to the  
Permanent Collection of the 'Kunsthaus Zürich'.

Groups as of 10: CHF/€ 3.– per person

Schools: CHF/€ 1.– per child and CHF/€ 2.– per accompanying person.

Registration at: [fuehrungen.kk.eins@reformiert-zuerich.ch](mailto:fuehrungen.kk.eins@reformiert-zuerich.ch)

## GUIDED TOURS

We offer regular public guided tours (in German), as well as private tours for  
groups and schools (in English and French upon request). Programme and  
registration at: [fuehrungen.reformiert-zuerich.ch/en](http://fuehrungen.reformiert-zuerich.ch/en)

## MORE INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

Reformierte Kirchgemeinde Zürich

Kirchenkreis eins, Altstadtkirchen

Besichtigung und Führungen

Kämbelgasse 2, 8001 Zürich

[www.grossmuenster.ch/en](http://www.grossmuenster.ch/en)

[fuehrungen.kk.eins@reformiert-zuerich.ch](mailto:fuehrungen.kk.eins@reformiert-zuerich.ch)

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