

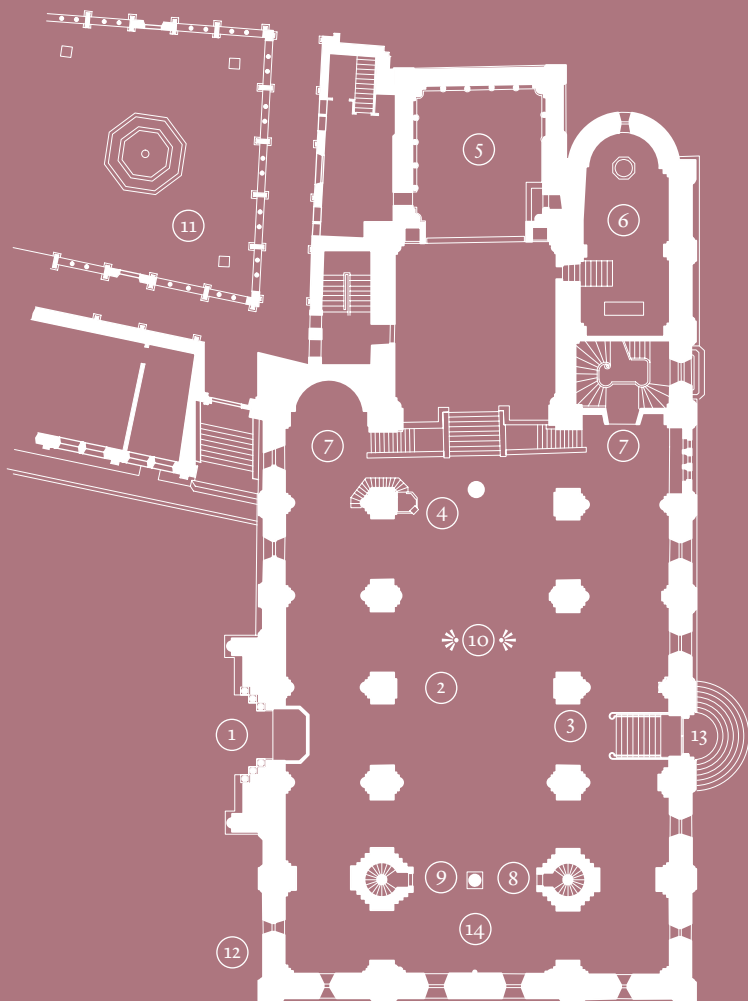


ALTSTADT  
KIRCHEN

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 (THE 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 a sword, 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. In his eyes, they distracted people from the Word of God. Zwingli preached in German and, with the canons, translated the Bible from the original languages 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**

(THE 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, of all places, Mary stands out so strongly in a protestant church whereas the infant Jesus almost disappears at the hem of her blue cloak. To her left and right, we see two of the Three Magi with precious gifts. Angels with floral offerings hover above them.

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

(THE ROOM OF SILENCE)

In the Chapel of the Twelve Apostles the tombs of Felix and Regula were venerated and their relics kept. Once, the Altar of the Twelve Apostles stood also there. This part of the chapel no longer exists however, as a staircase replaced it in the last century. Today, the Chapel of the Twelve Apostles 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 16<sup>th</sup> century 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 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. Huldrych Zwingli and his companions translated the texts from Hebrew, ancient Greek and Latin. 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 show so-called prefigurations – 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 cloister originally dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The complex was dismantled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and integrated into the Faculty of Theology. The place is an oasis of tranquillity and contemplation. Cultural-historical ornamental plants grow 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 are decorated with scurrile figures, animal scenes and grotesques in Romanesque style.

## 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 very well connected and exchanged over 12,000 letters throughout all of Europe.

## 13 THE SOUTH PORTAL (THE 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.

## 14 THE ORGAN

The organ is made by the Swiss company Metzler and was inaugurated in 1960. It has 67 stops on 4 manuals. The smallest of the over 4000 organ pipes is 5 centimeters long, the largest 10 meters. The organ sounds transparent and colorful. It also sets a visual accent. The interplay between masonry, case, bronze pipes and golden ornaments is unique.

## CHURCH INTERIOR WITH CRYPT | CLOISTER

March to October 10:00 am – 6:00 pm

November to February 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Sundays as of 12:30 pm

Special opening hours on [www.grossmuenster.ch/en](http://www.grossmuenster.ch/en)

## TOWER

March to October 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

November to February 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Sundays as of 12:30 pm

Special opening hours Tower and opening hours Bible Collection on:

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

## Admission Tower and Bible Collection

Adults: CHF 5.–

Included: one audio guide (German, English, French, Italian, Romansh) plus CHF 5.– discount on the admission to the Kunsthaus Zürich collection

Discounts and further information on [www.grossmuenster.ch/en](http://www.grossmuenster.ch/en)

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

## GUIDED TOURS

Public tours as well as tours for private groups and school classes.

Program and registration on <https://fuehrungen.reformiert-zuerich.ch>

## MORE INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

Reformierte Kirchgemeinde Zürich

Kirchenkreis eins, Altstadtkirchen

Bereich Besichtigung

Zwingliplatz 4, 8001 Zürich

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

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