



## Welcome to the church of Garmerwolde

### Inside the church

For a good overview you are advised to stand at the crossing, your back towards the pulpit.

#### Past and present

The church building dates from the third quarter of the 13th century and is an early example of Roman-Gothic architecture in Groningen. The church was originally a Catholic one. When the protestants started using the church in 1594, nearly everything reminding of the Roman-Catholic service was removed.

The current building is what remains of the original cross-shaped layout: in 1859 the nave was demolished, leaving the choir and the transept. During the Second World War, the church underwent drastic restoration. Since 2003 the church has been under the care of the Old Groningen Churches Foundation (Dutch: *Stichting Oude Groninger Kerken*). It is managed by the Local Committee Garmerwolde, which ensures the church can remain in use and is regularly open to visitors. In 2013 and 2014 the foundation has had the vault paintings restored. In addition, the pews were renovated and painted, the floor and one tombstone were repaired and the walls were plastered.

The church is rented out for mournings and weddings, receptions, concerts and exhibitions. There's a monthly worship service by the Protestant Community of Garmerwolde and Thesinge. For more information about the church and about options for hiring the building, please visit [www.kerkgarmerwolde.nl](http://www.kerkgarmerwolde.nl) or [www.garmerwolde.net.nl](http://www.garmerwolde.net.nl).

#### Choir (in front of you)

In the north wall of the choir remnants from the Roman-Catholic period of the church can still be seen:

- Two identical niches, the rightmost one of which probably served as sacrament niche;
- The piscina (in the far back, behind the organ). This is a sand stone basin with a drain, exiting through the wall into a kind of gargoyle on the outside of the church. Above the piscina a small kettle with two spouts would hang, the rusty remains of its hook still visible today. Prior to the Holy Mass the pastor would wash his hands using water from one spout, to do so again with water from the other one after the Mass. The water would flow outside through the drain, giving rise to the Dutch saying '*Gods water over Gods akker laten stromen*', literally: To let God's water flow over God's land.

#### Organ

On the gallery there is the organ, built in the period 1894-1851 by a company famous in the North of the Netherlands, P. van Oeckelen from the town of Glimmen. It is an important organ, for its sound as well as its appearance. In 2014 the light green front was painted with an imitation mahogany effect. The instrument is likely to be restored in 2015.

#### Pulpit (1740)

The wood carving is in Louis XIV style. The abat-voix (from a later period) features an angel figure. The bunch of grapes at the bottom symbolizes the fertility of the Word.

#### Box pew (heerebank) (or family pew; literally: gentleman bench)

The box pew in the north transept features the coat of arms of Bernhard Julsingh and his wife Decia Heinsius. Bernhard Julsingh owned the two borgs Gelmersma and Tackenborgh in the vicinity of Garmerwolde, and was *primarius collator* (having a decisive role in the appointing of a minister) and deacon in Garmerwolde.

#### The paintings (Numbered in accordance with the paintings map)

The vault paintings are younger than the church itself. They were made in about 1520, likely by Joannis /Jan van Aken. He left his signature with the painting of the dying bed of Maria, in the little book held by the kneeling figure: *Joannis me fecit*. After the Reformation the paintings were covered with a layer of plaster, to be uncovered again during the restoration of 1942/1943. However, the uncovering proved detrimental for their quality. In 2013/2014 they were restored and conserved once more.

#### On the walls

On the east walls of the transept there are tapestry imitations as a background to the altars that used to be in the niches. The altars themselves disappeared after the Reformation.

#### On the vaulted ceilings (turn the page):

On the **vault ceiling above the crossing**, where the lectures were held, the four evangelists are depicted:

- Mark and the lion (13), and Matthew and the angel (14), on the South side
- Luke and the ox (15), and John and the eagle (16), on the North side

**north transept: paintings centering on Maria:**

- The birth announcement (south side, 3a and 3b)
- The birth of Jesus (west side, 4a and 4b)
- The worshipping by the three wise men (north side, 5a and 5b)
- The dying bed and the assumption into heaven of Mary (east side, 6a and 6b)

**south transept: see paintings of Christ:**

- Christ in Gethsemane (north side, 25 a and b)
- Christ before Pontius Pilate (east side, 26 a and b)
- The crucifixion (south side, 27 a and b)
- The resurrection (west side, 28 a and b)

## Gravestones

The church houses many hard stone gravestones with sculptured edge decorations and coats of arms of the lords and ladies of the borgs Tackendorgh and Gelmersmaborg . On the west side of the entrance the gravestone of pastor Harmannus Sebastiani can be found. He died in 1672, aged 95, after having been pastor for 60 years and having survived six wives:

*"Wat is werelds vals bedrijf,  
Ick bracht 't aen 6 wijf,  
en meende het waer gewonnen.  
Nu ben ick out en stijf,  
hieronder legt mijn lijf,  
als van de dootd verslonne."*

*"Oh what cruelty is this,  
I had six wives,  
and thought I'd finally made it,  
Now I am old and stiff,  
Here my body lies,  
It seems as if death ate it."*

## The outside

The outside of the church is also well worth a look. The outer walls are decorated with niches, variations in brick bonds and brick decorations. The brickwork contains as much as 34 variations. The corners of the church building have been reinforced with stone abutments. The original walls are 1.10 and 1.20 meters thick, as can still be observed at the main entrance, among other places.

Pay special attention to the outer choir wall facing the road: it features niches with decorated pointed arches all the way down to the ground, and an imitation gallery with small pillars of valuable Bremen sandstone.

### Gargoyle

Just around the corner, on the north side of the choir end, a gargoyle shaped as a cat's head can be found (which is a 20<sup>th</sup> century replica). The water from the water basin (piscina) on the inside would run out at this spot.

### Tower

The free-standing clock tower, with saddle roof and ridge turret, dates from the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century. At a height of 19.45 meters it is 2.95 meters taller than the church building. The tower is home to a tolling bell from 1604 and a clockwork from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The clockwork is probably still the original, except that in older days it would not have had a pendulum, but a balance instead. During the last decade of the previous century the clockwork has been restored and electrified. The weights that drive the clock are now lifted electrically. In 2012 the local committee purchased a 'pendulum catcher', which is calibrated to the atomic clock in Germany. Because of this the clock now (usually) gives the correct time.

### Wall remains

The wall remains on the graveyard, to the west of the church, show us what the original floor plan once was. We can also see clearly the closing wall that replaced the nave when that was demolished.

*Dear visitor,*

*Would you be so kind as to put this guide back on the table?  
Did you enjoy our beautiful church? Please leave a comment in our  
guestbook! A voluntary financial contribution is highly appreciated.*

*Perhaps until a future visit,  
The local committee of Garmerwolde*