

St Christopher in Schagen

Anyone who comes to visit Schagen can see two towers from a distance: the most decorated one from the Reformed Church on the Market Square and the sober spire tower of the Roman Catholic St. Christopher.

The latter was built in 1881 according to the designs of the architect Alfred Tepe in Neo-Gothic style. The 12 pillars (10 and 2 supporting pillars near the sanctuary) symbolize the 12 apostles. The consecration was in 1883 by the then bishop of Haarlem, Mgr Bottemanne. Churches in the same style and by the same architect can be found in among others Harlingen and Workum (Friesland).

The name Christopher comes from a legend and means "carrier of Christ", a name that contains both an honorable but at the same time a difficult task for every Christian.

A few measurements and details:

For the foundation 630 piles of 9 meters were used.

Length of the church:	51.50 m
Width of the church:	20.25 m
Height of the church:	61.00 m
Width/depth of the tower:	7.00 m
Walls side aisles:	9.00 m
Walls nave:	21.80 m
Cap height nave:	24.50 m

We enter the church

The church was renovated in 1998.

On the left hand side in the portal you can find an old wall stone (1735) with the effigy of St Christopher. Preceding down the aisle you can see the church banners on both sides. They are displayed there out of respect for the past of the church's parish. Some are already very old and belonged to unions or guilds. Against the balustrade of the organ gallery: the banner of the days when Schagen was still a Hanse-town. The banner at the bottom of the church on the left belongs to the burial society of St Louis and dates back to 1885. The church also has an old three-black-velvet chasubles and a silver crucifix to be used during the funeral rituals, both with the initials S.L.

Opposite the entrance you can find the profusely adorned high altar, designed by Fr W. Mengelber. In 1901 it was given to the church by the architect and builder Vlaming. Above the altar the statue of the Good Shepard. At the left the Christmas scene, at the right the Holy Family. On the tabernacle the Lamb of God and the Book sealed with seven seals. To the left of the tabernacle the apostle Peter, to the right Paul. In the lower part of the high altar there are three biblical scenes, left: Abel's offer (Genesis 4), middle: Melchisedech and Abraham (Genesis 14) and to the right Abraham's offer (Genesis 22).

On both sides of the chancel there is a sanctuary lamp, burning in the presence of the Eucharistic bread.

In the left wall there is a small receptacle, in which the Chrism is kept and on the right and left side chapel an alcove where sacred water is returned to the earth.

On the left, on the sanctuary there is a splendid baroque pulpit, made in Antwerp in 1738, picturing St Mark with the lion, St Matthew, John and the eagle and St Lucas and the ox.

On the three big, round panels: St Boniface with the evangelist's holy book pierced by the sword, the Good Shepherd and St Willibrord, the founder of many churches. Beside the pulpit steps St John the Baptist. In the pulpit you can see the symbols of the Old Testament: the stone tablets and the rod, and those of the New Testament: the Cross, the Chalice and the Host. On top of the pulpit the Sun of Justice.

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To the right of the altar we find the effigy of St Christopher, which was originally part of the pulpit. In front of it the big stone altar from 1965. In front of that altar there is an old octagonal (eight-sided) font with copper from 1862 with the inscription: "Go and teach all people, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."

In the lateral chapel on the right an effigy of St Mary, representing Mary as Immaculate (immaculate conception), under her feet the snake, a half moon and two winged angel heads.

The effigy was made in Rome and given to the church by a citizen of Schagen, captain of a merchant ship.

On the right in the transept opposite the organ: a Pieta representing Mary, Mother of sorrows with her deceased son on her lap. Behind his hand an openwork crown of thorns.

The Nicholson-organ (1878)

The organ has a special place in this church. Originally the organ comes from St Mary Magdalene church in Worcester, central England (see the special brochure) and it is the church's pride since 1981. The English romantic sound character is unique in Holland and therefore many an organ-recital is broadcast from this church. Two CDs with solo-recordings played on this organ are available in this church.

Stations of the Cross

The Station of the Cross was given to the parish by the parishioners in 1883. The 14 stations were painted on wooden panels by the art painter M.C. Schenk from Amsterdam based on drawings by Fr. W. Mengelberg from Utrecht.

Organ side from front to back.

Stained glass windows:

All these windows were designed by Mengelberg firm from Utrecht.

H. Cunera (7th century)

She accompanied St Ursula and her maidens to Rome. All of them except Cunera were slaughtered by the Huns. King Radboud saved her life, but his wife, being jealous, had her strangled with a cloth by servants in a horse-stable.

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H. Oda (end 7th century)

Oda was a blind girl who was cured by St Lambertus. She lived in Weert and Venlo and was buried in St Oedenrode.

O-L-Vrouw ter Nood (our dear Lady in distress)

In our diocese, Heiloo is the place where people go on pilgrimage to the chapel of Mary, the Blessed Virgin since 1750.

St Willibrord (658-739)

Apostle of the Netherlands. Born in Northumbria, died in Echternach. Shortly after the victory of Mayor of the palace Pepijn on Radboud, King of the Frisians, Willibrord went with 11 comrades to Friesland. Because of the opposition from Radboud he moved the southern parts of the country, among others to Brabant and Antwerp. In 695 he was consecrated bishop.

H. Adelbert

Dutch saint who died in 741 and companion to H. Willibrord. He preached Gospel in Kennemerland (near Haarlem) and was buried in Egmond.

At the rear of the church coming forwards.

Christopher with the coat of arms of the town of Schagen.

Wall cabinet

Here you see a beautiful leaded window with the image of Elisabeth of Thüringen, also known as Elisabeth of Hungary. The church received this gift in the nineties.

St Leonard of Veghel

One of the martyrs of Gorcum who was hung together with his 18 companions by the "Sea Beggars" in Den Briel in 1572; sacred in 1868.

H. Bonifatius (675-754)

Apostle of Germany and Friesland. He worked under Willibrord for three years, founded many churches and monasteries and was killed by heathens in Dokkum (754*). Later he was buried in Fulda (Germany). He is often portrayed with an evangelist's holy book with a sword through it (please also note the pulpit in this church).

* (In the window it says 755, This is probably a mistake made by the stained-glass artist. It has to be 754)

The Amsterdam Miracle.

On March 16, 345, the citizen of Amsterdam, IJsbrand Dommer who lived on the Kalverstraat, partook of the communion as he was ill. Shortly afterwards he had to vomit and the matter was put into the fire by one of his inmates. The next day the consecrated wafer was seen over the fire. Around this "Amsterdam Miracle" originated the pilgrimage which is now known as the "Stille Omgang", which is kept every year in the month of March.

St Gertrude of Nivelles (Belgium)

Born in 626 as the daughter of Pepin of Landen and died in 659. Abbess of the monastery founded by her mother in Nivelles. She is portrayed with a staff with mice running up it. She carries a cup in her hand. This reminds us of "St Geertenminne", to be emptied before going on a journey. St Gertrude was well known for her love to fellow-creatures and sound knowledge of the Bible.

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St Lidwina of Schiedam

Born in 1380 as the only daughter in a family of nine. At the age of 15 she broke a rib while skating and this was the start of a period of deep suffering which lasted for 38 years and which she endured with heroism. She is portrayed with a cross in her hand and roses in her hair.

Statues

Next to the main doors: Oak statue (1862) of St John the Baptist originally from the former roman-catholic church in Kolhorn.

The chapel of the Virgin Mary

This chapel used to be a baptistery and its windows show some New Testament scenes: The young man of Nain, the marriage of Cana, Christ's death on the cross, the Last Supper, the glorification of the Holy Lamb, the Resurrection, Peter sinking in the water, Peter's release from prison. The effigy of Mary was made in Kevelaer in the eighties. The fencing of the chapel is a wrought-iron gate from 1883.

Clock tower

Previously there were three clocks, these were robbed by the Nazis during the war 1940-1945. Thanks to a trick from a skipper we were able to regain the clocks. During the restoration of the tower in 2002 three clocks from Haarlem joined the other clocks and one has returned to Midland on the isle of Terschelling. You can find the clapper at the back of the church as a memento to the giver.

The present clocks are:

Peter	tone A	507 kg
Mary or Liudger clock	tone B	320 kg
Paul	tone C	295 kg
Mary	tone D	213 kg
Christopher	tone F	1250 kg

At last: Perhaps you can find a moment of inner peace and silence in this church and time for a prayer. We wish you a nice stay in Schagen and a good journey.

The church is still being renovated. Should you consider a donation, the number of our bank account is: 1461.02.959 or (from abroad):

IBAN NL93 RABO 0146 1029 59 - BIC: RABONL2U

in the name of:

Restauratiefonds Christoforuskerk

Gedempte Gracht 64,

1741 GD SCHAGEN NL.

For more information: www.rkkerkschagen.nl