

Ålesund Church

The first church in Ålesund was consecrated in 1855. This church was destroyed in the town fire of 1904 in which most of Ålesund burned down. The present church was drawn by the architect Sverre Knudsen, a Norwegian from Biri in Southern Norway. It is in the Roman style, completed in 1909 and can seat 600.

The lamps in the choir and the font which is carved in Italian Carrara marble were also designed by the architect.

The lime wood (or linden tree) altarpiece with its 'frame of pine depicts Jesus praying in Gethsemane in the center, surrounded by his disciples on one side and Judas the betrayer on the other side. This was carved by the sculptor Nicolai Mejdell, for the church's consecration in 1909.

The main idea for the decorations in the church is to depict a sermon of the most central aspects of the Christian faith.

Enevold Thømt painted the frescoes in the choir between 1918 and 1928.

The rear wall is dominated by a stained-glass window showing Jesus on the cross. Above the cross is the symbol of the trinity and the word Jahve. (God's name in the old testament.)

To the left we find man being expelled from Paradise with the words for the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life.

In contrast we have a heavenly paradise on the right. We see a couple being welcomed and the tree of life with twelve kinds of fruit. The left wall of the choir is an image of the birth of our savior Jesus Christe.

The right wall shows the Ascension, and the artist has included Jesus' mother Mary among the people present.

On the vault of the choir is the dove- the symbol of the Holy Spirit. The arch of the choir frames it all with its symbolic pictures and ornaments. The images on the left and right side complement one another. The symbols are, from the bottom left side- right side Baptism--The communion. Prayer Thanks. Battle ---Victory, The symbol of St. Mark (the lion) --the symbol of St. Luke (the ox) ---Death Life. The symbol of St. Matthew (man) ---The symbol of St.

John (the eagle.) At the top of the arch is the monogram of Christ.

The stained glass windows in the nave were also made by Enevold Thømt. They were fitted in 1946. The images in the windows to the south refer to the principal trade of Ålesund, fishing. The windows on the north wall represent the Good Samaritan, the wedding of the son of the king, and the good and the bad bridesmaids.

The stained glass windows on the gable behind the organ were a gift from the German emperor Wilhelm II for the consecration of the church in 1909. The emperor was an admirer of the nature and fjord around Ålesund and gave considerable assistance in the rebuilding of the town after the fire in 1904. The windows show The German eagle, St. Olav called Holy Olav (the Norwegian Viking king who tried to Christianize Norway,) and the emblem of Ålesund.

The crucifix to the right of the pulpit was carved by the sculptor Ambrosia Tønnessen in 1937 and given to the church in memory of her father, Sea captain Abraham Tønnessen.

The ship "Thalatta" is a gift from Captain Alfred Viken and his wife. The ship hanging in the church is common for the churches of Norway mostly on the coast where fishing is the main occupation.

The painting of Christ in the front hall is by the artist Oddvar Straume, who has also designed the stained glass pictures in all the doors in the side chapel. These windows were made and mounted by glazier Ellingsen of Ålesund. The fresco in the side chapel is by Jonas Peson.

The organ was new in 1945, built by Jørgensen organ factory. It was a gift from consul A Holm and his wife Gunvor. Rieger Organ builders from Austria have just rebuilt the organ in 2009. It now has 96 voices, and close to 8000 pipes.