

De Grote of Onze Lieve Vrouwekerk te Tholen

The Grand or Our Lady Church in Tholen.



De Grote of Onze Lieve Vrouwekerk te Tholen, gesigneerd door de maker.

Nothing is known about the origin of the Grand Church. It is certain that there has been a church in the 13th or 14th century, it was situated on the same place as the aisle in the present day church. This first church was demolished in about 1360.

In about 1404, they probably started to build the present day church. It is possible that the architectural design of the church was from the well known architect Evert Spoorwater from Brussels. This architect was involved in the building of nearly all the churches in the Brabant Gothic style.

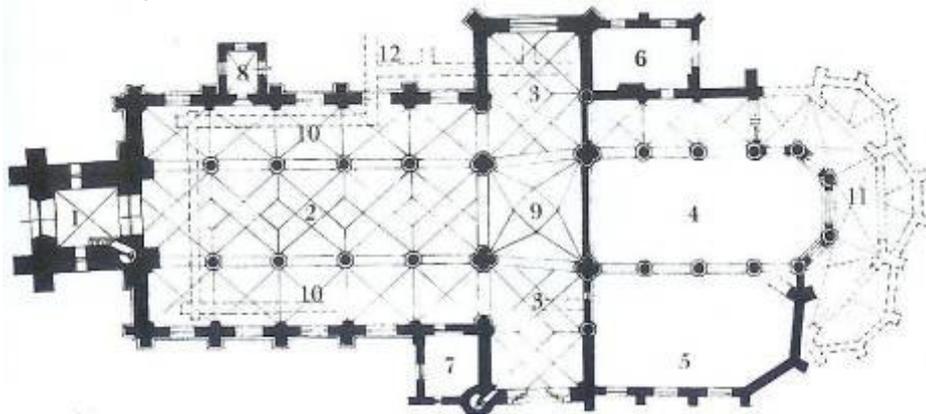
Some dimensions.

Height of the tower 49 metres. True square of 8.50 metres.

Cross- basilica 67 metres long. Width of aisle 18 metres, height 24 metres.

In the tower there are three bells of which the biggest weighs 959 kilos.

Map of the church.



1. Tower
2. Aisle
3. Transept
4. Choir
5. South choir
6. Consistory
7. Library
8. North entrance
9. Celebration
10. Side-aisles
11. Chapels
12. Foundations of the church from 1360



On this picture you can see the choir facing Eastwards.

On the left a column which has been painted with madder paint. On this column you'll also find remains of old paintings.

At the North side of the choir is the consistory. It was added to the church as a separate part.

On the stone cross-beam, above the entrance, you can read: "Consistorium, Pax Intranibus, Ao 1638."

(Peace for those who enter).

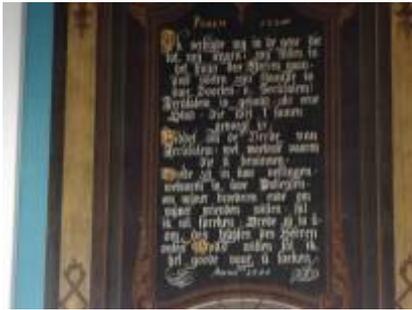


Also in the choir, you can see a panel on which The Ten Commandments have been painted.

According to tradition, this panel washed ashore after the ruination of the city of Reimerswaal. Archive research however made clear that the painter Ingel Jooszn. Mol painted the panel for the Grand Church in 1581.

On the other side of the panel there are some articles of the faith.

De Grote of Onze Lieve Vrouwekerk te Tholen



The enormous wall panel from 1755, which is constructed against the wall between the transept and the choir, has probably functioned as a wall between the two parts of the church in the years after the Reformation

The text of Psalm 122 has been painted on the wall panel.

The results of iconoclasm, during the Reformation, can be seen at the illustrations of cut off heads on the sarcophagus on your right.



Coming from the Choir into the main church, the first thing on your right is the pulpit made in 1648 by Adam Hartman, just like the baptistery-screen, which encloses the space around the pulpit, was also made by the same person in the same year.

During the restoration of the church the mortal remains of 21 mummified persons were found in the tomb of the van Vrijberghe Magistrate family from Tholen. As the result of good climatic conditions of the tomb, those mummies weren't decayed. They made photographs of 14 of the mummies.



In the church are more than a hundred tomb-stones of which the oldest dates from 1421. They are absolutely worth seeing.

Only a few tomb-stones escaped from cutting of their escutcheons during the French Revolution.

In the same period, also the mourning-plates with the family arms of the notable people were removed from the church, you can see one on your right, it's the mourning-plate of Mr. Johan van Grypskercke.



The tomb-stone from 1590 on your left is placed against the lower part-wall of the side aisle of the main church. It's one of the few that were saved.

On the corners, you'll find symbolic pictures of the four Evangelists.



The monumental organ at the West side of the church and the tower wall was built by Gebr. Van Dam in 1832.

The organ was originally built for the Galileëchurch in Leeuwarden. Because of the demolishing of that church, the organ was sold to the Reformed congregation of Doesburg. It was never built up there because of the outbreak of the Second World War.

At the beginning of the fifties, the Reformed congregation of Tholen bought the organ and the rebuilding of it was finished in 1955.

The organ counts 29 stops, it was restored in the years 1992-1993 by the restorer S.F. Blank and it is an appreciated instrument among the many well known Dutch organ-players.