

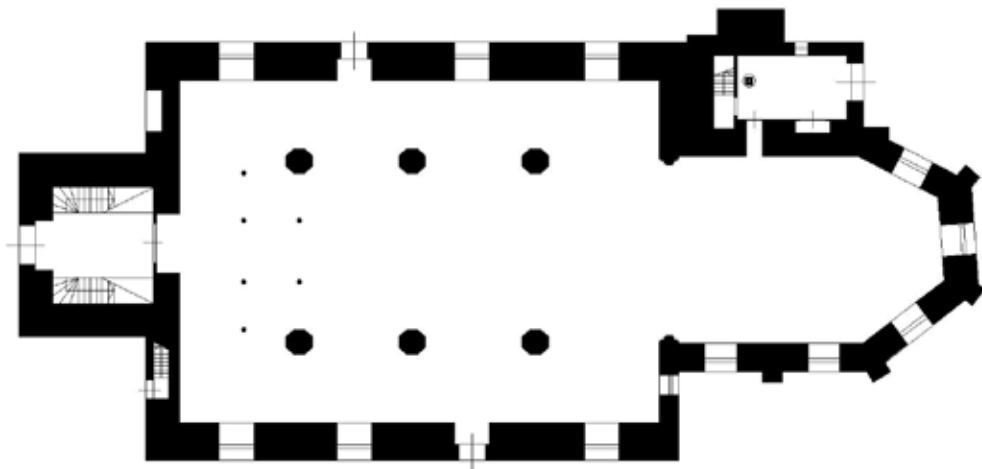


Valmiera St Simon's Church



Johann Christoph Brotze. Valmiera. 1799

Valmiera residents and visitors who pass by St Simon's Church every day probably perceive it as a single architectural monument, without delving into the historical origins or stylistic affiliations of the building's individual fragments or the works of art it contains. For the members of St Simon's, it is, of course, first and foremost a place of worship. The church on the steep bank of the River Gauja was built in the 13th century, just like the castle of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword and its successor, the Livonian Order, of which only fragments of the outer walls and cellars have survived. Although the church has suffered several wars and fires and no longer rises over the city as majestically as it did in the Middle Ages, in Johann Christoph Brotze's acute drawings of the turn of the 18th/19th century or in his photographs of the turn of the 19th/20th century, it is the most important witness to the history of a city whose historic centre was almost completely destroyed at the end of World War II, one of the most important monuments of Latvian medieval sacred architecture. It is also a reminder of the 14th-16th centuries, when Valmiera was a member of the Hanseatic League of Cities and St Simon's Church hosted Livonian Landtags.



Church plan



St Simon's Church and the market square. Early 20th century

Key facts in the history of the congregation

For the first centuries, Valmiera St Simon's Church was used by the Catholic congregation, there are no records about the priests. There are also fragmentary facts from the 15th and 16th centuries. In the 80s of the 16th century, the Jesuit Antonio Possevino stayed in Valmiera and together with Peter Canisius decided to publish a catechism in Latvian. One of the most important historical events is the defiant sermon by the Protestant Sylvester Tegetmeyer at St Simon's Church in 1525, during the Livonian Landtag, which encouraged the spread of Lutheranism. A stone commemorating him is located on the ground floor of the bell tower.

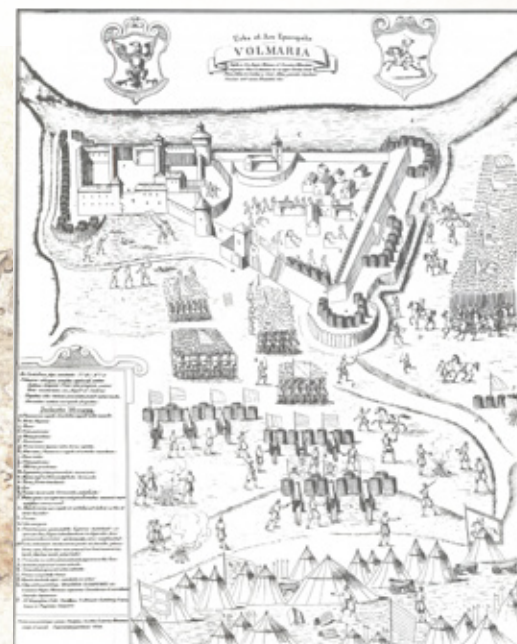


Luther reform preacher Sylvester Tegetmeyer
1525 Sermon memorial stone

In 1554, the freedom of the Lutheran faith in Livonia was proclaimed in Valmiera, limiting the bitter conflicts between Catholics and adherents of the new faith. During the Counter-Reformation, St Simon's Church was a Catholic Parish. In 1883, the large parish, which together with Valmiera included Valmiermuiža, Kaugurmuiža, Mūrmuiža, Kokmuiža, Mujāni and Dūķeri manors, was divided into Valmiera-Valmiermuiža and Valmiera-Veide congregations. In 1964, the Soviet authorities forced the St Simon's Lutheran Church to move to the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Valmiera. The parish only legally regained St Simon's Church in 1996, although they had already returned to it in 1988.

Construction history and damage

Valmiera was part of the Latgalian Tālava, which converted from Orthodoxy to Catholicism in the 13th century. St Simon's Church was probably not the first church in Valmiera, but before it there was already a wooden church outside the city walls. The information about the beginning of the construction of St Simon's Church is quite reliable. In the Livonian Chronicle of Hermann of Wartberg, Archbishop Johann I of Riga and Livonian Order Master Willekin of Nindorf "found and endow churches in Valmiera, Burtņieki and Trikāta". Their reign coincides only slightly – 1283-1284, so it is acknowledged that the stone churches began to be built at this time. The name of the church is thought to be related to its consecration on the day of Simjūda (Sīmanis and Jūda) – 28 October. Later on that day, the traditional Valmiera Fair, which is still held today in the second week of October, began to take place in the market square next to the church. Although some researchers believe that St Simon's was originally built as a basilica, a more plausible version is that it was originally a hall church, which was converted into a basilica by raising the central area. In 1602, Giacomo Lauro recorded a drawing of a church in Rome by an eyewitness of a city besieged by Polish troops. The drawing is reproduced in an engraving and is considered to be the oldest depiction of the church.



Giacomo Lauro. Siege of Wolmar (Valmiera)
in 1601. Engraving. 1602

Architectural historian Yuri Vasilyev mentions four key stages in the construction history of St Simon's Church. The first phase – the end of the 13th century – is evidenced by Romanesque features in the original entrance portal on the west wall of the chancel and the choir or altar part with polygonal apse. In the second phase (probably in the middle or late 14th century), a bell tower was built, as well as hall-like congregation rooms, which at that time may have had wooden roofs, external walls and a sacristy. In the third phase (at the turn of the 14th/15th century), St Simon's Church was transformed into a basilica and a cross vault was added to the congregation hall, while in the 1740s the bell tower received its Baroque finishing. There are incomplete and contradictory reports about how badly the church suffered in the wars of the 16th and 17th centuries. At the beginning of the Livonian War in August 1560, Valmiera was not captured by the troops of Tsar Ivan of Muscovy led by Pyotr Shuisk, but the shelling of the besieged town, in which St Simon's Church probably also suffered, is evidenced by two stone bullets embedded in the buttress of the northern facade.



Altar part

The Russian troops led by Prince Bogdan Belsky were more successful, capturing Valmiera and then ruthlessly destroying it in 1577. There is no definite information about whether St Simon's Church suffered during the Polish-Swedish war in the early 17th century. A visitation in 1613 showed that the church was in a critical condition: the soaked vaults threatened to collapse and the window panes were broken. After nearly 20 years, the church was found to be in fairly good condition. In 1644, the coppersmith Japets made the gilded cockerel and ball for the tower of St Simon's Church, for which he received 6 thalers and 10 groats. The earliest detailed depiction of the church is preserved in two drawings by the surveyor Johann Abram Ulrich in 1691, which show that only the side walls were plastered, while the spire of the bell tower was more slender.



Johann Abram Ulrich. View of Valmiera Church from the north. 1691



Side vault



Livonian war bullets

They are complemented by the audit report of 1688 by Major General Gustav von Mengden, Landgrave of Vidzeme, which states that the building, built a long time ago, has strong walls and is fully equipped with the necessary equipment. Only several windows had broken panes and broken frames. At that time, stone tiles only covered the floor in the middle area, while the side areas were covered with sand. In 1695-1696, master mason Gotthard Vogel undertook to build an "underground cellar for corpses" for 50 German thalers and to "repair and install everything damaged in the walls and window openings of the church building".

St Simon's Church suffered the worst on 4 September 1702, when the Russian Tsar Peter I's troops burnt down the town. Even the church bell was lost in the fire, but only the walls remained. Already in 1703, the church began to be restored. The Riga carpenter Heinrich Fromm undertook to renovate the church premises and the roof of the altar and to put a temporary roof on the tower for 80 German thalers. In the same year, three and a half thousand tiles were brought from Koknese to cover one side of the roof, and a Latvian mason, Pēteris Vanags, was contracted to repair the walls and cover the roof. However, reconstruction work was slow during the war, and the unfinished work was interrupted by a fire in the building in 1720.

More serious work, such as restoring the roof and plastering the walls, only started after the end of the Great Northern War. Although the new vaults were built in 1729, the overall work was not completed. Ten years later, a commission headed by Captain Folkersahm, the head of the church, had to admit that the building needed major repairs.

Major restoration work was completed in 1739, when a sphere and a cockerel, made by the Riga coppersmith Gottfried Geijer, were installed in the tower, which (like several other Vidzeme church towers in the 17th and 18th centuries) combined features of the Gothic and Baroque styles. Since then, the church's volumes and building forms have remained essentially unchanged.

The older Gothic form of the window openings in the central bay of St Simon's congregation room was altered in the 1823 construction work led by Theodor Meyer of Westphalia; probably even the side-light windows were then reduced, and the pointed arches were replaced by a segmental lintel. In 1851, a second floor was added to the sacristy, connecting it directly to the pulpit.

Extensive work was carried out in 1908 in preparation for the 625th anniversary of the start of construction (as evidenced by the year above the door on the south facade). As a result of the renovations carried out at the expense of the owner of Kokmuiža, Theodor Heinrich von Schröder, the interior of the church was given a splendid eclectic colouring, which on the occasion of the anniversary prompted it to be written that "the maid of honour is dressed for this day of her honour in a very fine suit, finer perhaps than in all her long existence". The church tower was damaged by Soviet shelling in 1919. Surprisingly, St Simon's hardly suffered from the war activities in September 1944. In the niche of the north side-aisle is a memorial plaque to Viktor Anderson, a soldier of the Viljandi Regiment, who was killed in action with the Red Army on 26 May 1919.



Interior view of the church with 1908 paintwork. 1969

Restoration

In 1963, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Latvian SSR decided to turn St Simon's Church into a museum. The church was confiscated from the congregation and some of its equipment destroyed. Between 1969 and 1972, the church underwent one of the most extensive restoration works of the Soviet era, when a concert and exhibition hall was installed, designed by architect Leonhards Liepa. St Simon's Church was connected to central heating, its roof and interior were repaired (they had lost their eclectic early 20th-century paintwork), the tower sphere and cockerel, stained glass windows, organ and chandeliers were restored, and the tower gallery, which had been covered over almost 200 years ago, was opened to provide a viewing platform. Work continued in the 1980s, when a branch of the Valmiera Museum of Local History was operating in the church (restoring the organ's lower lights and pulpit paintings, revealing their previously invisible details and original colouring). When St Simon's Parish regained the church a quarter of a century later, the facades, organ and several 18th-century epitaphs were restored, and the altarpiece was cleansed of overpaintings by the artist Teodors Ūders. With the support of various foundations and sponsors, as well as the funds of the congregation, much

has been done to preserve St Simon's Church in the 21st century. In 2006, the renovation of the congregation room and the facade of the altar was completed. In 2014-2015, the bell tower was renovated by replacing the damaged wooden structures and covering the roof with copper sheeting. In 2015, the tower's cockerel was restored and gilded.

In 2019, the bells and clock were restored, the bell room was opened, the stairs to the church tower were built, and in 2020, the altarpiece, the pulpit paintings and the hourglass were restored.



Clock mechanism

Architecture

Valmiera St Simon's Church is a three-volume basilica, the choir part of which, according to tradition, is closed on the eastern side by a polygonal apse, while at its western end is a massive, square bell tower. The congregation room, whose north wall is slightly longer than the south wall, is one of the largest compared to other medieval churches in Vidzeme.

Several details – niches at the entrance to the parish room (where a beam could have been inserted to reinforce the outer door), the bricked-up door in the tower between the third and fourth floors (which gave access to the room above the side vault), and the remains of a smoke trap on the fourth floor of the tower – indicate the use of St Simon's for defensive purposes. The medieval thick walls of the church were made of rubble and brick, and later plastered, except for the brick tower. The oldest parts of the building, the choir's outer walls, are supported by slender buttresses and have narrow Romanesque windows with semi-arched lintels. The only ornaments on the restrained facade are a series of pointed-arch niches above the altar windows, a band of similarly shaped arches under the eaves of the middle range, niches around the tower windows and entrance portal, and black brick diamonds on the second floor of the tower.

The smaller bricks used in the upper part of the tower are evidence of repairs after one of the fire sins. The current height of the tower (with the cockerel) is 47.60 m. If the proposal made in 1813 to rebuild the damaged spire of the tower had been implemented, it would have been about 5 m shorter.

Surroundings of the church

Next to St Simon's Church, as usual in medieval towns, there was a market square for many centuries, and around the church there was a cemetery (where burials stopped in 1773). In 1719, a wooden fence was built around the cemetery, which was later replaced by a stone fence. In 1972, archaeological excavations near the northern wall revealed burials up to eight layers thick, which the archaeologist Māris Atgāzis believed may indicate a desire to be in a place where water of sacred value flows from the roof of the church.

Magdalene Elisabeth von Hallart, tenant of Valmiermuiža, supporter of the Brethren and benefactor of the peasants, is buried in the chapel, near the altar, above which several linden trees were planted. Near the main entrance is a monument to Pastor Jānis Neilands (1988) by sculptor Andris Vārpa.



Monument to Pastor Jānis Neilands by sculptor Andris Vārpa. 1988

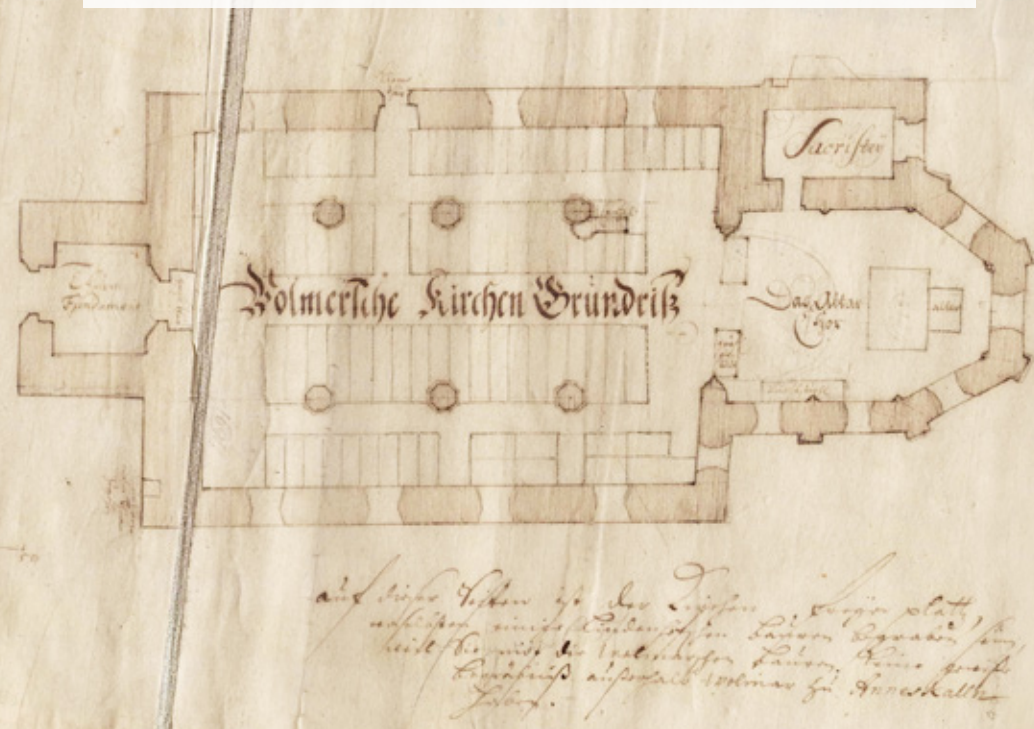


Interior

Most of the interior decoration of St Simon's Church was destroyed by fire in 1702, as was the church furnishings. Both the altar and the chancel are covered by cruciform vaults, differing only from the radial vault in the choir apse. The ribs of the altar vaults are more finely moulded than in the congregation room. Its south wall has three niches, probably used for storing oils in Catholic times. The congregation space is separated from the altar by a heavy triumphal arch, similar to early Gothic lancet arch, which divides the side aisles from the middle aisle. These arches are supported by low octagonal pillars, one of the oldest structural elements of the church. The bases of the pillars are carved from sandstone, but their different heights suggest that the floor was lowered towards the altar to allow those seated at the back a better view of what was happening. The interiors, influenced by both Romanesque and Gothic styles, have a monumentally ascetic feel.

Church furnishings

The items of St Simon's Church furnishings that were destroyed in the fire of 1702 are preserved both in Ulrich's plan of the building drawn in 1691 and in Mengden's inventory of the church in 1688. The plan shows that the pulpit, made of spun planks and decorated with carvings, was attached to the first pillar of the north side aisle, while the altar part contained both a pew and a chair of confession by the former owners of Valmiera, the Swedish Counts of Oxenstierna. The inventory of equipment from the period provides more details. It states that the altar table is made of stones, the centre of the wooden retable is decorated with painted and gilded figures carved in wood, and the side hinges are painted; in the choir area and in front of the congregation room there are flags and epitaphs of the nobles buried in the church, in front of the pulpit there is the painted and gilded coat of arms of Count Oxenstierna; the church had several brass chandeliers, and the sacristy was heated by a built-in fireplace; above the triumphal arch ('back above the church') is a beam with an 'image of the Passion of Christ' attached to it (presumably a large wooden crucifix). Most of the equipment in St Simon's Church dates from the 18th century.



Johann Abram Ulrich Church plan. 1691

Altar

The altar retable, with the exception of the original Corinthian capitals of the pilasters and columns, is a replica of the Baroque altar from the 1830s (1991).



At first, there was a niche in the middle, where a crucifix donated by the town clerk Mikhail Kaiser in 1748 was placed.

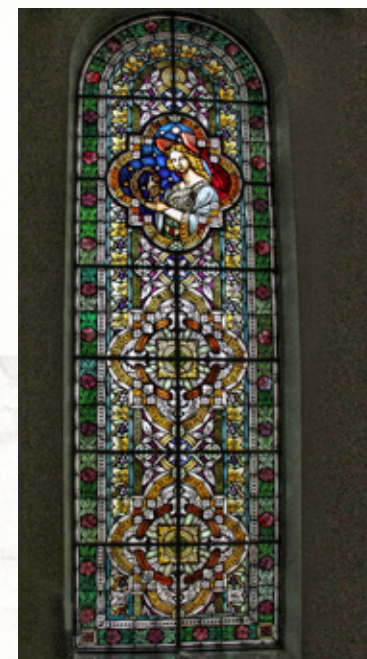
It was replaced less than a hundred years later, in 1842, by the romantically dramatised painting *The Temptation of Christ* by Carl Christian Vogel von Vogelstein, professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Dresden and Saxon court painter, which depicts a rarely used scene from the Gospel of Matthew – how Satan challenged Jesus Christ three times without success. The altarpiece in St Simon's Church is a larger and more dramatic version of a painting given to the church in Wildenfels in 1817 by the artist's family, which encapsulates the call of the artists of the Brotherhood of St Luke for him to convert to Catholicism. The altarpiece was donated by the Loevensterns, to whom the artist worked as a home teacher in Valmiermuiža at the beginning of the 19th century. The Loevensterns also donated a 19th-century copy of Michelangelo Caravaggio's painting *The Entombment of Christ* (c.1602) (the original is in the Vatican Museums), probably brought back from a trip.

Stained glass

The four windows of the altarpiece have magnificently ornamented stained-glass windows in the historicist style: three of them were made at the end of the 19th century in the stained-glass workshop of Ernst Friedrich Tode in Riga, and they were installed in St Simon's Church in 1908. The fourth (in the north-east window of the altarpiece) is a copy of a stained-glass window in which the original wine chalice, in the hands of an angel who suffered in the Second World War, has been replaced by a stringed musical instrument.



A copy of Michelangelo Caravaggio's painting "The Entombment of Christ". 19th century



Ernst Tode's workshop. Stained glass. Late 19th century

Pulpit

The rather simple pulpit, which rests on an octagonal column, was made in 1739 by the Cēsis woodworker Schröder for 60 state thalers. In 1851, it was moved under the triumphal arch to create a simpler canopy. The baroque diamond-shaped panels of the pulpit were painted by an unknown artist (probably at the same time it was made), depicting the images of Jesus Christ and the Evangelists, popular in 17th/18th century Lutheran churches, accompanied by their traditional symbols, as well as three scenes related to the birth of Christ. On the edge of the pulpit is an 18th-century hourglass donated by the Pastor Martin Gottlieb Agapetus Loder.



Pulpit. 1739

Paintings on the lower organ bay

The lantern was rebuilt in 1778 using materials donated by Boltho von Hohenbach, a tenant of Mūrmuiža. The peasants of Kokmuiža made columns crowned with Corinthian capitals to strengthen the precarious balcony. The panels (the twelve apostles and their symbolic attributes) were probably painted in 1780, when the organ by Contius was installed, or a little later. One of the theories about the author of these paintings is related to Andreas Ludwig from Berlin.



Portraits of the Apostles. The 80s of the 18th century

Organ

The organ of St Simon's Church is the third instrument in this church. Already in 1688 the inventory lists a positive item – a small organ in the singers' lantern. In 1780, a late Baroque organ with thirty-two registers, two manuals and one pedal, made by Heinrich Andreas Contius of Halle, a well-known organ-building family in southern Germany, was installed in the church. A memorial plaque to Baron Johann Heinrich von Mengden, owner of Kaugurmuiža, who donated almost half of the 1,000 dalers needed to buy the organ. In 1886, a new organ was installed in the upper lantern, made by organ builder Friedrich Ladegast of Weissefels (Germany), donated by the owner of Kokmuiža, Theodor Heinrich von Schröder, in memory of his father Johann Friedrich Schröder.

In the second half of the 19th century, four organs built by Ladegast were installed in Vidzeme in Burtņieki, Cēsaine, Matīši and Valmiera. Only the instruments from Matīši and Valmiera have survived. The organ of St Simon's Church, with its thirty-three registers, three manuals, one pedal and neo-Gothic prospectus, is a characteristic example of Romantic organ building and is considered one of the finest in Latvia.



Organ loft and prospect

Chandeliers and candlesticks

All church lighting fixtures listed at the end of the 17th century have disappeared (including those not destroyed by the fire of 1702). Currently St Simon's Church houses a significant number of 18th-20th century chandeliers, wall and altar candlesticks. The oldest is the crown lamp, which was donated in 1767 by the mayor and merchant Johann Michael Schulz.



Lustre. 1767

Bells and clock

On the fourth floor of the tower, there is a clock mechanism and two bells made in 1855 by Riga master Felske. The oldest was cast by Gerhard Meyer in 1754, and the most recent one by Johann Christian Schwenn in 1902.



Bells. Gerhard Meyer 1754, and Johann Christian Schwenn 1902

Epitaphs and monuments

Next to the pulpit, on the altar seat, is an epitaph (1730), which may commemorate the completion of the extensive renovation of St Simon's Church; it depicts a pelican, the embodiment of Christian selflessness, in a naive form (the form of a swan). The south side aisle partly preserves a Baroque epitaph from the first half of the 18th century, dedicated to the noble widow Margaret, which was uncovered during restoration works.

The altarpiece on the outer wall includes a baroque 18th-century sandstone monument to Ludwig Nikolaus von Hallart, a companion of Tsar Peter I of Russia, general and tenant of Valmiermuiža, which was originally located outside the building, the bronze and marble epitaph of Johann Friedrich von Schröder, owner of Kokmuiža Castle and Burtneki Manor, Russian envoy to Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg, made in Rome in 1887 by Karl Foss, which embodies the classical ideal. In the south aisle and in the altar area, the walls are adorned with epitaphs created by parishioners in the 19th century.



Karl Foss. Johann Karl Schröder epitaph. 1887



Epitaph. 1730



Wall epitaph.
First half of the 18th century



Ludwig Nikolaus von Hallart tomb
monument First half of the 18th
century

Burials in church

In the Middle Ages, burials took place not only in the cemetery around St Simon's Church, but also in the church. During the 19th and 20th century renovation works in both the choir area and the congregation room, mostly ruined chapels were repeatedly found. In 1657, the Russian military commander Matvey Sheremeteyev was buried in the church. In 1832, when the previously intact de la Barre family chapel was opened, several copper and wooden coffins of various sizes and a small copper box containing the remains of Major General Wilhelm de la Barre, the owner of Ērģeme Manor, were found in the altar.

Tombstone

Several medieval tombstones and fragments have been preserved in St Simon's Church. The most artistically significant is the tombstone (1517) by Peter Thiel (presumably the Valmiera town lord), in the middle of which the iconographically rare, now barely visible composition the figures of the apostles Peter and Paul – is depicted with graphic lines.

The corners of this tombstone, like those of a slightly older tombstone (1496), perhaps belonging to the family of Wolter von Plettenberg, the last Grand Master of the Livonian Order, depict the symbols of the Evangelists. They are located in the north side aisle.



Peter Thiel tombstone. 1517

Inventory

Most of the liturgical vessels made in Riga, Valmiera and St Petersburg in the 17th-19th centuries, whose forms and decorations were influenced by the art styles of the time (from late Gothic to Neo-Rococo), as well as many items of St Simon's church furnishings, were donated to the congregation by its members – owners of the surrounding estates and wealthy townspeople. These include a wine chalice (2nd half of the 19th century) by Riga master Jochim Meinecke, a set of Valmiera silversmiths – Philip Johann Bazankur from 1760, donated by the Valmiera Latvian congregation, a 1754 restored 17th century oblate box by Johann Christoph Wolff, and a 1770 pewter baptismal chalice. The wooden crucifix on the altar table was donated in 1875 by Karl Ludwig Robert Marschner, a pharmacist.

Pastors

During its long history, St Simon's has been served by dozens of pastors. The activities of some went beyond the city congregation. Christian Gotthold Neuhausen, pastor of St Simon's Parish from 1713 to 1734, together with Magdalena Elisabeth von Hallart, promoted the activities of the brethren congregations in Vidzeme and wrote the Latvian catechism "The Way to Prosperity". Martin Gottlieb Agapetus Loder, who served the congregation from 1776 to 1806, was interested in the history of Valmiera and the Latvian language. His records preserved the names of the peasants who died in the Kauguri riots of 1802. The most well-known representative of the Baltic-German family in Valmiera, the General Superintendent of Vidzeme, Ferdinand Karl Maximilian Anton Walter (pastor of St Simon's Parish from 1833 to 1856), supported the establishment of a teachers' seminar led by Jānis Cimze in Valmiera in 1839. Jānis Neilands - the first Latvian national pastor of St Simon's Church (1883-1915), was also a writer, whose best-known work is the lyrics of the song "Teici, teici, valodiņa". Kārlis Beldavs, pastor of the Valmiermuiža congregation from 1917 to 1935, is the author of several Christian spiritual works, and for a short time was Minister of Education of the Republic of Latvia.

Latest additions

In the northern courtyard of St Simon's Church in Valmiera, there is a peculiar collection of memorial signs. There are memorial plaques to members of the Valmiera-Valmiermuiža and Valmiera-Veide congregations who died in the First World War and in the Latvian liberation struggle, as well as a work "God, Your Land is Burning!" painted by Harijs Jankavs in Germany shortly after the end of the Second World War, and memorial plaques to the first Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia, Kārlis Ulmanis, who started his public activity in Valmiera at the beginning of the 20th century (stonemason Gundabs Putniņš), and diplomat Vilis Māsēns (sculptor Andris Vārpa). In the south aisle, there is a stone intercessory candle table (2001) and a painting "Healing the Sick" (2002) by Katrīna Taivāne, designed by architect Ainārs Markvarts.



Intercessory candle table and
Katrīna Taivāne painting
"Healing the Sick"



Memorial corner



Drawing by Christoph Kunz after a conception by Vilhelm Tuss.
Valmiera. 1829/1830

In the 20th century, the fate of St Simon's Church, which was hardly affected by wars and fires, was more determined by the existing political power. The II Congress of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers, organised by the Bolsheviks in December 1917, was a striking manifestation of this influence. Valmiera's St Simon's Church is one of Latvia's greatest monuments of medieval architecture, with Romanesque and Gothic features in its building forms and a wide range of furnishings and liturgical objects influenced by the changing artistic tastes of the ages and the possibilities of donors. Closely connected with the most important events of Valmiera's history, St Simon's Church has become the most important symbol of this Vidzeme city, whose territory has expanded considerably over the past seven hundred years, while its population has multiplied several times. The founding of Valmiera, in the absence of more precise historical facts, is usually associated with the beginning of the construction of St Simon's Church.

Projects implemented in Valmiera St Simon's Church

◆ ERDF Action 3.4.3.3. "Support for private owners of cultural monuments in the conservation of cultural monuments and the effective use of their socio-economic potential". Project "Renovation of the tower of St Simon's Church". (2014-2015)

The project involved replacing the roof of the tower by removing the galvanised tin and applying copper material. The columns of the tower gallery were restored, the damaged wooden structures of the tower were replaced and treated with a timber fire-proofing layer. The church clock was also restored.

◆ Project of the Rietumu Banka Charitable Foundation "Latvian Sacred Heritage" "Restoration of the Cockerel and Sphere of St Simon's Church in Valmiera". (2015)

The project included the gilding of the church cockerel and sphere. On 20 September 2015, the restored cockerel and sphere were installed in the church tower. The sphere contains a message for future generations. The previous message is available at Valmiera Museum.

◆ ERDF activity SAM 5.5.1. project "Culture, history, architecture in Gauja and time zones". Project "Renovation of the interior of the tower of St Simon's Church in Valmiera". (2018-2019)

The project included the complete reconstruction of the stairs to the tower and the removal of the glass block wall, making the premises more comfortable and accessible to visitors. During the restoration of the tower, the church bells and clock were also restored, ensuring that the church bells can be heard at certain times. The Tower's exhibition hall features an interactive exhibition that makes visiting the tower even more interesting. The project included a complete renovation of the tower's electrical wiring, fire alarms and video surveillance.

◆ In 2020, with the support of the National Heritage Office and the municipality, a project was carried out to rebuild the church's electrical wiring and renew the electrical installation in the sacristy and the rooms below it. The Soviet-era ceiling in the hallway under the sacristy was dismantled, a new ventilation system was built, and heating, water and sewage pipes were relined.

VALMIERA ST SIMON'S CHURCH AND CONGREGATION

2 Bruninieku Street, Valmiera

+371 64200333

CHURCH OPENING HOURS

Tuesday	11:00 – 18:00
Wednesday	11:00 – 18:00
Thursday	11:00 – 18:00
Friday	11:00 – 18:00
Saturday	11:00 – 17:00
Sunday	10:00 – 13:00

SERVICES

- On Sundays at 11:00, Divine Service with Lord's Supper.
- Thursdays at 18:00 Weekday Divine Service with Lord's Supper.

ST SIMON'S CONGREGATION OF VALMIERA HAS SEVERAL BRANCHES:

- Course in Confirmation for adults;
- Choirs – liturgical choir "Avots", congregational mixed choir and men's ensemble;
- Elder women meet for commonwealth every month "Solstice" for worshipping God and enjoying being together;
- Sunday School or Jesus School;
- Youth sector.

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WORKING TIME

Tuesday and Wednesday 9:00 – 17:00

Thursday 14:00 – 17:00



Johann Christoph Brotze. View of Valmiera. 1797

Updated and revised edition

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Photographers Aleksejs Kozīņecs, Leopolds Kļaviņš, Imants Lancmanis
and Jānis Kalnačs

Photos were edited by Šalkonis Ozoliņš

Artist – layout designer Dace Kiršpile

Materials used: Latvian National Archives, State Historical Archives, Academic
Library of the University of Latvia, Rundāle Palace Museum, Valmiera Museum and
Valmiera Regional Tourism Board

ISBN 978-9934-23-589-4

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Publisher Valmiera Municipality and
Valmiera St Simon's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2022