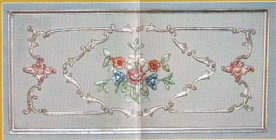




St. Johannis



During the Thirty Years' War, a large part of the population was decimated due to violence, hunger and disease. In the decades following 1648, the reigning princes are concerned to restore law and order. Church art and architecture of the later baroque period now reflect permanence. A spirit of change is in the air. The main theme is no longer death and decay, but rather the open heaven in colourful splendour and Christ's victory over death. The baroque churches of the Margrave period breathe order and harmony.

This also applies to St. John's Parish Church. In 1731 plans are drawn up for a baroque church integrating the Gothic choir and tower of the former church. The ground plan provides for a 'golden ratio' of 5:3 in length and breadth which is soon adopted everywhere in the Margrave region. On entering the church, one's first

impression is of its symmetry. Striking, too, the gallery balustrades adorned with flower ornaments. Each seems to match the one opposite—until one looks more closely: symmetrical, but not identical. Flowers no longer suggest the fleeting nature of humankind, as in early baroque art, but rather the delicate beauty of God's creation.

The church ceiling signalling heaven has been matched with the shades of pink and light blue in the floral decoration of the galleries and enhanced by symmetrical ornamentation. One is reminded of a late baroque garden. In the centre of the triangular symbol of the holy Trinity, encircled by four cherubs and a ring of clouds and golden radiance, the eye of God looks down kindly on the congregation below.



Don't miss out on the Gothic choir behind the 'pulpit-altar' with frescoes dating back to the 15th century—the only medieval frescoes in the city of Bayreuth.

We usually associate stately baroque churches with Roman Catholic regions. People are often surprised to discover a Protestant style of baroque church architecture, more subdued in ornamentation, which developed in the Margrave region in Germany in the mid-18th century. The Margrave Church of St John, situated between the Horticultural Show and the Hermitage in Bayreuth, is a fine example.

Symmetry, harmony in baroque church architecture is an expression of divine order and beauty. Thus the magnificent structure above the altar—with the four evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John aligned with one another on the left and right—is in perfect symmetry: baptismal angel, altar and pulpit all in a line. In Lutheran worship the preaching of the Gospel ('Good News') and the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion are literally central. This centre line leads upwards and culminates in the figure of the one central to Christian faith: the risen victor, Jesus Christ.

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