



OULU CATHEDRAL

KIRKKOKATU 3 | OULU | FINLAND



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The Oulu Cathedral is an essential part of the Oulu cityscape. The tall shape of the Cathedral stands out clearly in the overall view of the city.

The Cathedral was built in 1777 and it was named after King Gustavus III's spouse Sofia Magdalena. It was designed by building engineer Daniel Hagman from Sundsvall, Sweden who also led the cathedral's construction operations. The finished Cathedral, with its pitched roof and stonework walls, was a great subject of pride for the city of Oulu which had just earned the status of a city with a State provincial governor.

A fire which broke out in the night of May 23, 1822 destroyed most of the city of Oulu, including the wooden structures of the Cathedral. The stone walls, however, remained unharmed and most of the artefacts were fortunately saved.

The Cathedral was soon rebuilt. The new drafts for the Cathedral were designed by architect Carl Ludvig Engel, who was the director of the superintendent's office (the National Board of public building) and the designer of the Helsinki monumental centre at that time. Mr. Engel was assisted in his task by architect Anton Wilhelm Arppe. The original stonework walls still formed the foundation of the Cathedral, but the rebuilding introduced a new central dome, new roof structures and a new steeple. The rebuilding of the Cathedral was finished in 1832 while the steeple was finished in 1845. Among his other work, Mr. Engel has also designed the cathedrals of Helsinki and Lapua.

The latest fundamental interior renovation of the Cathedral was done in 1996-1997 according to designs made by the architectural office Arkkitehti-toimisto Laatio Oy. During those renovations, a crypt was also built in the Cathedral's cellar.

The Cathedral represents neo-classical style: its direct lines, light surfaces, marblings and gildings create a festive and stately atmosphere. The Cathedral currently seats one thousand people.

The collection of articles and art in the Cathedral represent a variety of centuries. Among others, there are communion cups and two tombstones from the 17th century and the oldest chasubles, chandeliers and candlesticks are from the 18th century. The newest art layer was painted in the interior renovation in the late 1990s.

The Cathedral received its cathedral status in 1900 when Oulu received its bishopric. Since then, Oulu Cathedral has been the centre of ecclesiastical life in Northern Finland. Among others, all priests and deaconesses are consecrated there.

1.

The main organs of the Cathedral were built in 1938 by Kangasala's Urkutehdas (organ builders). These so-called Romantic organs have 62 registers. The current organ facade, however, was built for the organs finished already in 1841 whose designer was Mr. Gustaf Andersson from Stockholm, Sweden. The choir organs with 18 registers built by Veikko Virtanen's Urkurakentamo (organ shop) is from 1983. The

Cathedral's harpsichord was bought in 1999 and it was built by Mr. Stig Lundmark from Sweden.

2.

The altarpiece of the Cathedral's chancel portraying Holy transfiguration was painted by the artist and court painter R. W. Ekman in Paris, France in 1859. The piece was bought with funds collected by the parishioners in memory of the peace made after the Crimean war. The previous altar piece portraying Christ on the cross was painted by Mr. Henrik Wacklin and is now on the wall of the side-cross.

3.

The glass-paintings on the chancel wall, portraying Christ on the cross and The Resurrection were purchased from Germany in 1898. The glass-paintings on the windows of the side-crosses were designed by G. Forsström in 1932, on the 100th anniversary of the renovation designed by Mr. Engel, and they were donated by parishioners. On the Cathedral's 200th anniversary in 1977, the glass-paintings by Mr. Lauri Ahlgrén, Mr. Onni Oja and Mr. Bruno Tuukkanen were revealed. The paintings portray The Holy Trinity, Jesus as a teacher and Christ's passage of suffering and they are located on the windows of the side-crosses. The votive ship, donated by the Museum Association of Northern Ostrobothnia, is also from the same year.

4.

The paintings at the ends of the side-crosses and those painted diagonal to

each other on the central dome were painted by decorative artist Antti Salmenlinna and artist Paavo Leinonen in 1932. The interior renovations of the cathedral were then designed by architect Oiva Kallio.

5.

The painting above the vestry door is a portrait of the Swedish historian, Mr. Johannes Messenius. It was most likely painted in 1611 by Mr. Cornelius Arendtz, and it is the oldest preserved painted portrait in Finland. On the right from the portrait there is Mr. Carl Peter Elfström's painting from 1808 portraying the 12-year-old Jesus in a temple.

6.

The painting at the end of the chancel is entitled 'Elämänsä' (Life span) and it was painted by the artist Veikko Törmänen. The separating wall in the main entrance is Mr. Reijo Hukkanen's work of art entitled 'Valo-ovi' (Light entrance) and it is put together of glass and metal parts. Both works of art are from 1997. The missionary chandelier near the main entrance is entitled 'Palava pensas' (The burning bush) and it was designed by the sculptress Riitta Helevä. Ms. Helevä has also designed the altar crucifix in 2001. Mr. Hannu Väisänen's work of art in the crypt is entitled 'Se mikä uudistaa' (That which renews) and it was created in 1999.

7.

The Cathedral's latest collection of church textiles was designed by the textile designer Airi Snellman-Hänninen.