



**BRUDER KLAUS**

## Guide to the Church of Sachseln



### **The History of the Church**

After Brother Klaus' beatification in 1649 a bigger church was built in Sachseln from 1672-1684. The black limestone comes from Stöckalp, which lies on the way to Melchsee-Frutt. Incorporated in the style of the Swiss early-barock period are also elements of the Italian Renaissance.

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1684, after a building period of 12 years, the Parish and Pilgrimage church of Sachseln was inaugurated by Bishop Georg Sigismund of Constance. The church was extensively renovated from 1974–1976.

The detached tower, dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, is the oldest part of the church. It was made higher in 1672 and then a second time in 1742, when a bulbous barock dome was erected.

The Grave Chapel, built on to the tower, has changed its form many times before achieving the present shape.

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## Spend time in meditation

**1 The Sepulchre of the Holy Brother Klaus** is here in the main altar of the church. In 1934 his relics were placed in the silver-covered figure composed by Meinrad Burch and later integrated in the Celebration Altar made by Alois Spichtig in 1976.

**2 Brother Klaus' hermit habit** has been revered in the church since 1610, and had to be restored in 1975. Another habit is to be seen in the Jesuit Church in Lucerne.

**The Bronze Relief «Dorothee and Brother Klaus»** was made by the local artist Alois Spichtig. It was dedicated to Pope Johannes Paul II when he visited the church in 1984.

**3 Picture of Meditation** – creation of the simple wheel picture. The plaque was painted 1475/80 and presented to Brother Klaus.

The inner circle (God and the communion of saints) and the outer circle (portraying the world and its people) are brought together by six rays – three running outwards and three inwards.

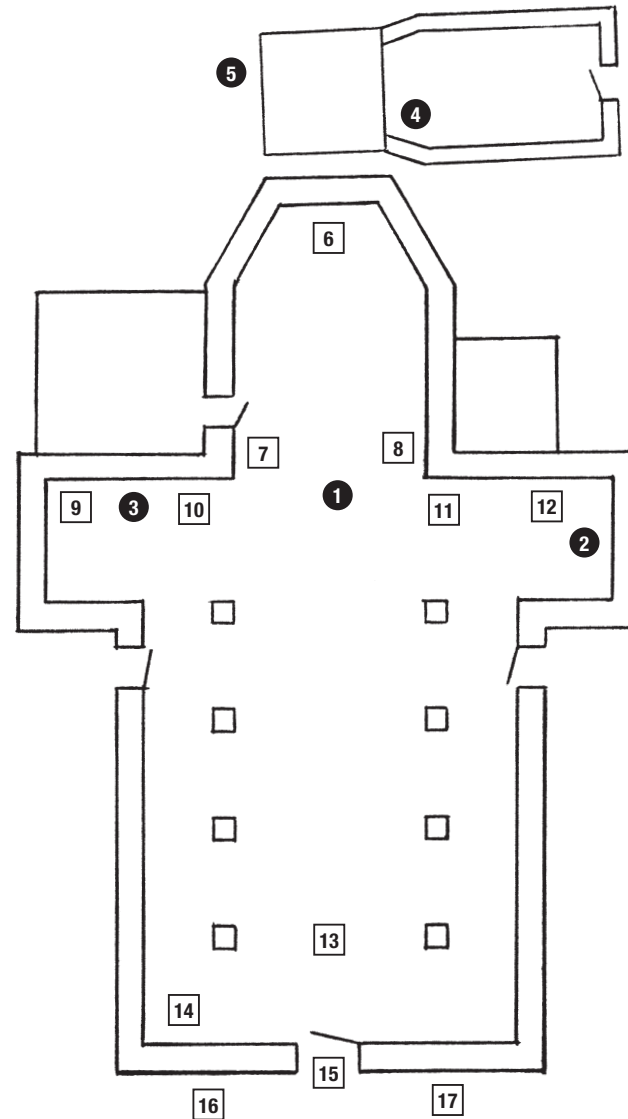
Three medallions (triangle down-over) show the Trinity of God: the Father as creator (top left), the Son as Redeemer (top right) and the Holy Ghost at the Annunciation (bottom middle). The other three medallions (triangle up-over) show God's love: birth (left), the Eucharist (right) and capture (top). In the four corners the symbols of the Evangelists.

**4 The Chapel with the Tomb** was the original resting-place of Brother Klaus, and his earthly grave was then in the side-aisle of the old church. Faded sculptures on the original tombstone can still be seen today. Over this is the precious stone-sculpture of the tomb, constructed in 1518. In 1679 the relics were taken into the new church. The empty grave was remodelled into a chapel. The present altar is the tumba, which stood in the new church from 1679 to 1934. The Gothic Cross on the east wall dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century and is the cross from the old church.

**5 Dorothee Wyss, the wife of Brother Klaus**

It was only after her agreement that Niklaus von Flüe was allowed to begin his life as Brother Klaus. The statue by Rolf Brem was endowed in 1991 by the Catholic Farmers' Wives of Switzerland.

## The Parish and Pilgrimage Church



## Further points of interest

**The high altar, the side altars** (and the pulpit) were made, 1776–1779, in Rococo style by Josef Pfister from Lucerne out of stucco-marble.

**6 The main painting** over the high altar shows Mary's entrance into heaven, painted by Paul von Deschwanden and Georg Kaiser in 1881. Above this is «The Holy Trinity» by Josef Anton Heymann.

On the left and right are **statues of the patron saints** of the church: Theodul and Mauritius; then further up the saints Sebastian and Rochus.

### Paintings over the vestry doors:

**7** On the left: Karl Borromäus, by Paul von Deschwanden in 1860.

**8** On the right: Brother Klaus, by an unknown painter out of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### Side altars:

**9** Painting: Mary as patron of the Fraternity of the Rosary<sup>1</sup>; statues saints Barbara and Katharina.

**10** Painting: Sacrificing of Mary (1775)<sup>2</sup>; statues saints Joseph and John the Baptist.

**11** Painting: Taking down the cross (1776)<sup>2</sup>; statues saints Benedikt and Dominik.

**12** Painting: Jesus on the cross<sup>1</sup>; statues saints Peter and John the Evangelist. (The artists: <sup>1</sup> Josef Anton Heymann, <sup>2</sup> Johann Melchior Wyrsh)

**13** The **coat of arms** on the front of the organ recalls the first high altar of 1687, donated by the Swiss Benedict Monasteries.

**14** The **pillared canopy** over the baptismal font was over the old sepulchral altar under the choir stalls from 1732 to 1934.

**15** The very decorative **Barock Portal** leads into the church.

The mosaics under the entrance, from 1941, were made after the paintings of Anton Stockmann:

**16** **Mary's legendary appearance** to Brother Klaus in the Ranft Valley.

**17** **Brother Klaus at the Treaty of Stans**, a traditional but also legendary portrayal.