



### Baptismal Font and Pulpit

Baptismal font and pulpit were designed by Konstantin Starck. The font depicts Jesus Christ baptizing the children. Beside the base there is a plaque honouring the donors. Besides a number of Bad Nauheim families, many confirmation classes have collected donations for the font, as at the time of the church's consecration, it had not yet been paid for.



At the request of its donor, Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hesse, the pulpit bears the biblical quotation "O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the word of Jehovah" (Jeremia 22, 29).

The five decorated panels depict:

- Alpha and Omega, each stylized as a cross
- An image of Jesus
- A Celtic cross at the centre
- An angel holding a sickle and sheaf as symbol of death and judgement

Alpha and Omega together symbolize the beginning and the end. The floral ornaments of the pulpit are a cross-reference to the altar room: The wild rose, part of Martin Luther's coat of arms, can also be found on the altar's cross. The baptismal font takes up the pulpit's image of the vine and refers to the words of Jesus Christ: "I am the vine; you are the branches" (John 15, 5a).

At the pulpit's base can be found the words: "Donated by His Royal Highness the Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hesse, 1905." Almost at floor level to the right of the pulpit, the foundation stone of 26 May 1904 is fixed.



In the vestibule of the south-eastern entrance, numerous coats of arms of old Nauheim families are displayed.

### Baptistry

The 12th Century baptismal font beneath the south gallery comes from Nauheim's oldest village church, the Johanniskirche. It served as baptismal and mother church for the entire northern Wetterau until 1740.



The window beneath the south gallery was created by Helmut Wagner and unveiled on Commemorative Sunday in 1952. It is dedicated to those killed in action during both World Wars. It depicts "the cross in the glory of the rising sun serving as the symbol of eternal life, among the seven heavenly lights of revelation, where there will no longer be suffering nor death and where the Lord will wipe away all the tears from our eyes." (Rev. Knodt).

The two black panels left and right of the west portal bear the names of 137 men and of only one woman killed in action during the First World War. They were unveiled on Commemorative Sunday in 1930.

### The Organ

The large Organ was originally conceived and built as a German-Romantic organ in 1906 by Walcker of Ludwigsburg (Op. 1143). Using over 1.000 original pipes, it was reconstructed in 1965 (Op. 4508) and extended in 1999. The first organ console with an automatic roll player is still in the archives of the Deutsche Museum.

In the grand organ, the upper keyboard and the swell, multi-faceted tonal colours are facilitated by the 51 registers with approximately 4,000 pipes as well as the 5 registers in the choir organ on the western gallery.

In 2011, the echo organ, which had been removed in 1965, was reconstructed in the dome with its 5 registers and about 400 pipes. Now "spherical tones" may descend from heaven



again – a very special experience! Worldwide, just a few romantic echo organs have survived.

Unfortunately the organ is only partially functional and has to be rebuilt ([www.orgel-dankeskirche.de](http://www.orgel-dankeskirche.de)).

### The Galleries



Flanking the organ, two stained glass windows testify to the power of music and add to the organ's importance. In the left one, David plays the harp for Saul and, in the right one, the Heavenly Hosts sing the jubilant Christmas hymn "Praise to the Lord above and peace on Earth".

Opposite the organ on the south gallery, the large fountain-window forms a counterbalance: Christ at Lake Bethesda, symbolically referring to Bad Nauheim's mineral springs and to the Dankeskirche, which is dedicated to them.



Opposite the choir beams the western rosette. Based on a drawing by Johannes Starck, a brother of the creator of the baptismal font and the pulpit, it presents the countenance of the dying Christ with the transcription: "When I am to part from you, do not part from me."



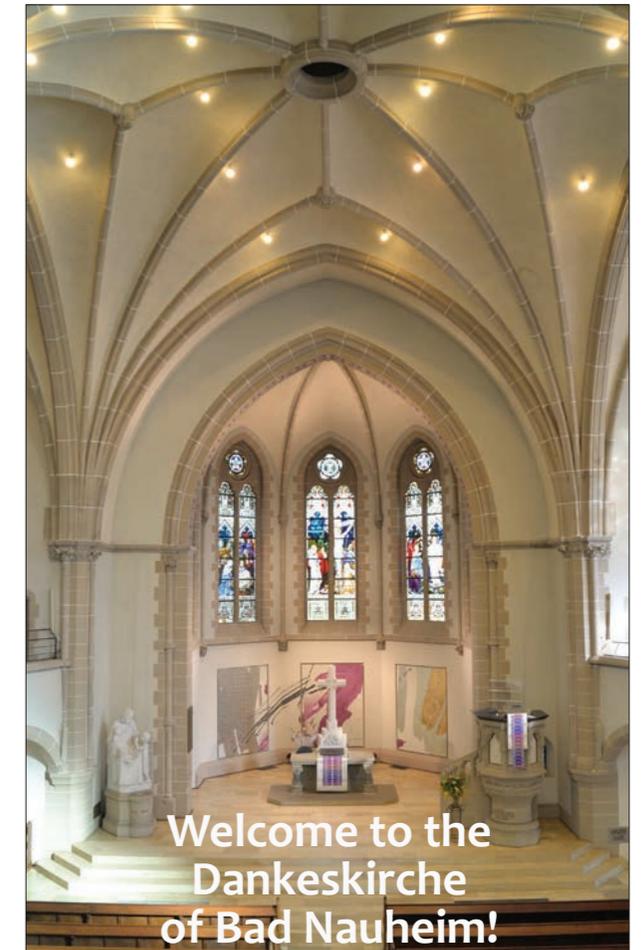
Beneath the western rosette watches the bust of Johann Sebastian Bach over the choir gallery. This masterpiece by the Hessian sculptor Daniel Greiner († 1943) was a gift from Rev. Karl A. Knodt († 1960), when he was Provost of Upper Hesse.

### Mobile Art

As the interior of the Dankeskirche is due for a general restructuring, some artworks, like the tapestries from 1931, are presently not exhibited. For more information, please refer to our homepage.



## Evangelische Kirchengemeinde Bad Nauheim



Welcome to the Dankeskirche of Bad Nauheim!

To help maintaining the Dankeskirche, your donation into the angel on the card table is appreciated.

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## History of Construction and Architecture of the Dankeskirche

The 70m high Dankeskirche steeple is a true landmark of Bad Nauheim.

On 21 June 1906, the church was consecrated in the presence of Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hesse (1868-1937) after only two years of building it. This took place during the tenure of Rev. Otto Wissig, who is commemorated by a plaque on the left hand chancel pillar.

The new church had become necessary since the Wilhelmskirche (built in 1740/42) had become too small for the striving town's growing population and the increasing number of health spa visitors.

Locating the site on the first convalescent and bathing facility of 1835 achieved a close connection to the history of the spa.

With the commissioning of the bathing facilities, today's Sprudelhof next to the Grand Fountain and the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Fountain, the original Kursaal had become redundant. After 13 years, the association in charge of church maintenance had raised sufficient funds to begin with its construction in this central place, so that it would be "accessible to the sick".

The chief architect was Ludwig Hofmann (1862-1933), who chose forms of the early Gothic style typical of the Elisabethkirche in Marburg. Some of the styles derive from examples found more locally. In that way, he ensured a distinct local Upper Hessian character, establishing an example of true regional art.

Right up to its highest point, the deep grey, almost black lava rock from Upper Hesse lends the exterior of the church a monolithic and almost defiant appearance, at all times and in all seasons.

The floor plan is in the shape of a Latin cross. At the northern transept, the mighty tower rests on open arcades. With its galleries, the interior follows closely the model of the Protestant single-nave sermon church. It offers around 800 seats, of which about 450 are at ground level.



## The Bells

The bells which were acquired at the time the church was built were, in the First World War, left untouched for their great artistic value. In the Second World War, however, they were confiscated in 1942 and were never returned.

Thanks to generous donations, new bells could be acquired in 1955. With an overall weight of 10 tons, they are among the biggest and most beautiful bells in Hesse. Cast by the bell foundry Rincker Brothers of Sinn, Hesse, they resemble in size and tone the previous bells of 1905/06, which were also procured from the Rinckers.

In addition, they match those of the neighbouring Roman Catholic Church of St. Boniface of 1961, so that they can be rung together harmoniously (e.g. every Saturday at 6 p.m.).

Their inscriptions read:

- B: Give praise to the Lord, O my soul (Ps. 103, The biblical verse of the Dankeskirche's consecration)
- C: Be still, and know that I am God (Ps. 46,10)
- D: Listen! The LORD is calling to the city (Micha 6,9)
- F: Watch and pray (Matth. 26,41)



You can make the bells chime by visiting our homepage [www.ev-kirche-bn.de](http://www.ev-kirche-bn.de). The website is linked to the Hessische Rundfunk archive via the menu entry "Dankeskirche" - "Glocken".

## The clock

In the steeple, below the bells, the clock is still running in its original state of 1906.

The displayed time is transferred to the spire's three dials by means of rods. The massive weight hangs beneath the steeple and has to be wound up every week.



The steeple, the clock and the echo organ can be viewed during the annual parish festival.



## Tour of the Dankeskirche

We start at the vestibule behind the western portal.

At the lateral wall, there are two gravestones from Bad Nauheim's oldest cemetery. The left one from 1767 is dedicated to the saline treasurer Georg Melchior Langsdorff, the one to the right to Rev. Conrad Künßler, who arrived in Bad Nauheim in 1712 and died here in 1735.

The small shining rosette with the angel and the inscription "Peace be with you" above the main portal decorates this otherwise rather plain room.

It was created by the glass painters Benz and Rast of Darmstadt who also made the stained-glass double windows in the lower nave, the sacristy and the sexton's room next to the choir.



This glazing commemorates donors, persons involved in the church's construction and other people of importance in the parish.

The seal of the Ev.-Lutheran parish (1693 – 1818) can be found there as well.

## The Interior

In 1969, the church's interior underwent general renovation. The starting point was the stone, which gives shape and tone to the pillars, vaults, cornices and window walls and determines their colour.

Marked by white and grey tones, the interior is now more homogeneous. It now presents itself quieter and brighter than in its original state. Altar, pulpit and baptismal font now appear more clearly as dominant, artistically created elements of church service.

## The Choir

The choir's three stained glass windows depict Christ's birth, crucifixion and resurrection.

The flanking smaller windows on both sides should, on account of the beauty of their ornamentation, not be overlooked. At their bottom, the names of their donors are inscribed.



The centrally placed altar is crowned by a cross fashioned from French limestone, silhouetting it against the darker table.



Created by Tobias Kammerer in 2006, the murals deal with the themes of the windows in a minimalist fashion. Silver represents Christmas (Star of Bethlehem), purple crucifixion and death and gold stands for resurrection. The black strokes of a linear character can be understood as Jesus Christ's lifeline.

It is an ascending line.

The murals correspond with each other: Death can be found in the Christmas

mural (Murder of children to Bethlehem) or in the resurrection (Christ's scars). And they stand in contrast to the soothing, rather static windows above, in which Christ's death is shown as a triumph. The lavishly applied purple speaks of suffering and does not embellish it.

The lower part of the choir is thereby turned into a "room of the present". The brilliance of the murals radiates onto the congregation and immerses them into a special light, e.g. when they are gathered around the altar when receiving the sacrament.

Beneath the windows are four small pedestal stones with early Christian motifs: The brooding dove threatened by the snake, the pelican, the Lamb of God, and the eagle climbing towards the sun. Two bird's nests in the left and right corners of the choir call to mind birds brooding unperturbed while the church's construction work went on. They are the works of sculptor Ludwig Gievers of Darmstadt, who was responsible for many other artistic elements in the church, like the altar and the capitals.

