

# Zurich



## Places

### Wasserkirche (Water Church)

According to legend, the current site of the Water Church is the place where the city's saints Felix and Regula were beheaded. As the story goes, after their execution, the siblings carried their heads to the place where the Grossmünster now stands. They were buried there, and the Grossmünster was built there later. The Wasserkirche, Grossmünster, and Fraumünster – three churches in which relics of the saints are revered – formed the “procession axis” which was followed by a great number of pilgrims. The relics disappeared during the Reformation.

An initial small church was built there around the year 1000, and was rebuilt in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Today's Water Church, in its Gothic style, was consecrated in 1487. The church was located on an island until a landfill in 1838 where today's Limmatquai is. Following the Reformation, the church served as a warehouse. The *Helmhaus* was added at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The 1885 Zwingli Monument can be found on the eastern side of the church. The Bible that Zwingli is holding reminds us that it is basis of the Reformation, while the sword is meant to show that Zwingli also pursued the reordering of society.

## **Grossmünster (“Great Minster”)**

The Grossmünster was both a collegiate and a parish church in Zwingli’s times, and it was there that he began his exegesis of the Gospel of Matthew. Zwingli introduced the *Prophezei*, in which students and scholars translated, interpreted, and preached the Bible to the people in the Grossmünster’s choir. This would grow into a school of theology and, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the University of Zurich, whose Seminar for Theology is now located there. The Grossmünster was also the site of the first complete translation of the Bible into German – the *Froschauer Bible* of 1531.

Today’s Grossmünster, a true city landmark, was built between 1100 and 1250. It was reconstructed many times over, but it was not until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century that it received its neo-Gothic domes. The last major visible change was put in place between 2005 and 2009, when the nave windows were recrafted by Sigmar Polke. The doors designed by Otto Münch are another main attraction, with biblical stories on the north façade and scenes from Reformation history on the south side (see Station 4). The choir windows, designed by Augusto Giacometti, depict the Christmas story.

Visitors can walk to the top of the South Tower (Karl’s Tower), which offers an excellent view of Zurich. A replica of a sitting figure of Charlemagne can be seen outside (the original can be found in the crypt), who is said to have rediscovered the graves of St. Felix and Regula and to have ordered the building of the church and of the Felix and Regula Priory. Up until the Reformation, 24 canons (community of clerics who did not belong to an order) lived in the Priory. It was demolished in 1849 and replaced by a neo-Romanesque building.

## **Helferei and Haus zur Sul**

Ulrich Zwingli first lived at the Haus zur Sul (Kirchgasse 22 at Neustadtgasse), but then moved into today’s Helferei Cultural Center as his official residence, in which he lived with his wife Anna Reinhard and his four children. Their marriage in 1524 was one of the first “pastor weddings” and paved the way to the end of mandatory celibacy for priests. When the Grossmünster academy was dissolved in 1832, the house became the residence of the deacon, or “helper”, thus the name Helferei. The neo-Gothic chapel was added in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Zwingli Portal and Bullinger Statue at the Grossmünster**

Created in 1939, the bronze portal by sculptor Otto Münch depicts 16 scenes from the life of Zwingli. On the bottom left, one can see scenes from his youth and the 1515 Battle of Marignano. Zwingli provided refuge on Ufenau Island to the knight Ulrich von Hutten, who was persecuted by the German Empire. The square on the right, second row from the top, depicts his death in the Battle of Kappel. His successor Heinrich Bullinger and reformers from other Swiss towns are also depicted. A statue of Heinrich Bullinger can also be seen by the North Portal.

## **Froschaugasse**

Froschaugasse, part of the route between the Grossmünster and Predigerkirche, derives its name from the printer Christoph Froschauer, who printed many of Zwingli’s writings. He also published many other writings, and Bible editions, translations, and commentaries in particular. Froschauer gained renown, however, in the sausage-eating incident of March 1522, when he and his apprentices broke the church rule against eating meat during Lent. The Froschauer Fountain between Zähringer- and Predigerplatz commemorates the printer.

## **Predigerkirche**

The Dominicans, also known as the Order of Preachers (*Prediger*) built a monastery and a towerless church there in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Following a fire, a Gothic choir was added as well. The monastery was turned into an almshouse during the Reformation, where the poor received food every day. Money no longer needed to adorn churches was now used for those in need. The choir served as a library in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today the Predigerkirche is a place of hospitality. Every day, there is midday prayer and opportunities for conversation. It serves as a place for quiet contemplation in the middle of the city.

## **Schipfe**

It was in Schipfe that, on January 5, 1527, Felix Manz was the first Anabaptist to be condemned and drowned in the Limmat River. He was charged with “insurrection against the Christian authorities, destruction of the Christian community, and a false oath.” Five other known executions of Anabaptists would follow by 1532. The worldwide Anabaptist and Mennonite movement views Zurich as one of its most important places of origin. A plaque to commemorate these events was unveiled there in June 2004, with the church and the Zurich government asking for forgiveness for the persecution of Anabaptists.

## **St. Peter**

St. Peter is Zurich’s oldest parish church, with its origins possibly stretching back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Today’s early Baroque nave was built in 1705 as the first church building after the Reformation. From 1523 to 1542, Leo Jud was the church’s pastor, a friend of Zwingli and co-translator of the Zurich Bibel. The first iconoclastic actions against altar ornaments and imagery took place there in September 1523, after Jud preached against “idol worship”. The tower clock is famous as the largest church tower clock in Europe with four clock faces of 8.64 meters in diameter each.

## **Fraumünster (“Women’s Minster”)**

A church and a convent for women have stood there since the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The church had two towers from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In accordance with the old laws, the Fraumünster abbess was the ruler of Zurich, although only in theory beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The last abbess, Katharina von Zimmern, handed over the abbey, church, and property over to the Zurich Council during the Reformation in 1524. The choir’s glass windows, created by Marc Chagall beginning in 1967, have a particular radiance.

## **Rathaus (Town Hall)**

The Reformation was a political process in Zurich. Important decisions were made in the Zurich Town Hall. The building there today replaced the old one in the same place in 1698. A disputation took place there in January 1523, in which Zwingli had to justify his doctrine. In a second disputation, in autumn 1523, participants discussed the reverence of images, the mass, and its abolition. The Canton Council continues to meet every Monday in the Rathaus, and the Zurich City Council on Wednesdays. Church parliaments also use the building as a meeting place.

## **History**

According to legend, the origins of Christianity in Zurich stretch back to the city’s saints Felix and Regula. They are reported to have been beheaded under Diocletian around the year 300 during the

last persecution of Christians, because they refused to persecute Christians themselves as members of the Theban Legion. Zurich would have around 7000 inhabitants during the Reformation, 1200 years later. The people were burdened with the demands for payment made by monasteries and churches. Relics were revered, and there were lavish altars, insignia, and mass vestments.

The town government nominated Ulrich Zwingli of Toggenburg to be a priest at the Grossmünster for the local parishioners and pilgrims in 1519. Zwingli advocated in Zurich against the mercenary system, as well as against the veneration of saints, the sale of indulgences, and the mass. From the beginning, he did not follow the church lectionary, but interpreted the Gospel of Matthew from the beginning onward. He would soon find people of the same mind among theologians, burghers, and the government, people who would support the Reformation. The monasteries were shut and were used for other purposes.

Wars soon followed with the Catholic interior of Switzerland. While Zurich won the First Kappel War, it was taken by surprise in the Second Kappel War. A hastily assembled group of Zurich men was then completely routed by their well-equipped opponents. The casualties included Zwingli himself, who was then succeeded by Heinrich Bullinger. Zurich then remained a purely Reformation city for centuries. It was only over the past 100 years that Catholic churches have reemerged due to migration.

Zurich is the birthplace of the Anabaptist movement. People who had originally followed Zwingli began to demand more radical reforms, rejected the baptism of children, and refused to swear oaths. Some wanted to form small congregations of true believers, others sympathized with rebellious peasants. The Council feared a revolution and threatened to impose increasingly severe punishments. On January 5, 1527, Felix Manz was the first Anabaptist to be drowned in the Limmat River, and five further executions are known to have been carried out in Zurich by 1532. The global Anabaptist movement views Zurich as its place of origin.

## **Ulrich Zwingli**

Zwingli was born in Wildhaus in Toggenburg on January 1, 1484. Zwingli completed his theological and humanistic education in Basel. The Council of Zurich then appointed him to be a “people’s priest” at the Zurich Grossmünster, where he began his tenure in 1519, on his 35<sup>th</sup> birthday. Through his exegesis of the Bible, Zwingli was able to criticize problems in the church and religion of his time, as well as the lucrative career of mercenaries. He had provided pastoral care at the 1515 Battle of Marignano and had come to know the suffering of the mercenaries. Zwingli still believed at the time in the ability of the Catholic Church to reform.

During Lent 1522, the book printer Froschauer and his apprentices were charged with having eaten sausages for dinner. Zwingli defended the “culprits” with sermons, one of which was published as *Von Erkiesen und Freiheit der Speisen* (“Regarding the Choice and Freedom of Foods”). In January 1523, the city council organized a disputation on Zwingli’s teachings and permitted him to continue. A year later, the council rescinded the Lent laws in their entirety. In 1524, Zwingli married Anna Reinhart, which constituted his actual break with the Catholic Church.

Zwingli’s sermons, writings, and personal influence resulted in the Zurich City Council removing images of the saints and church treasures in the following years. Organ music and song were also abolished from worship services for a number of years. The altar for the Sacrifice of the Mass was also replaced by a simple table. The Lord’s Supper was now to be seen as a celebration of thanks and commemoration. It was indeed the Lord’s Supper that divided Zwingli from Luther. Luther believed in the actual presence of Christ in the bread and wine while Zwingli only believed in a symbolic one.

Together with Philip I, Landgrave of Hesse, Zwingli had great plans for a Reformed axis to liberate all of Europe from Catholicism. The particularly powerful Bern became Reformed in 1528 upon Zwingli's intervention, and Switzerland appeared to have found peace after the First Kappel War. Zurich was, however, taken by surprise and ill-prepared for the Second Kappel War in 1531, and was roundly defeated. Zwingli himself was killed on the battlefield. His death would catapult the Reformation into a deep crisis in Zurich and well beyond.

## Heinrich Bullinger

After Zwingli died at Kappel, Heinrich Bullinger of Bremgarten became his successor at only 28 years of age. He would then serve in the role of Antistes, as the head of the Zurich Church was known, until his death in 1575. In 1529, Bullinger married Anna Adlischwyler, one of the last nuns from the Oetenbach Convent in Zurich. They remained happily married and had eleven children. The family lived in the Antistitium, across from the Grossmünster. Refugees and people in need often found their refuge there. In 1565, Anna and three of their daughters died of the plague.

With his numerous theological writings, Bullinger firmed up the Zurich Reformation and disseminated it across Europe. For many Reformed Christians throughout Europe, Bullinger was the teacher and pastor of the Reformation. His correspondence includes around 12,000 letters that are preserved today, which were exchanged with princes and queens but also with fully ordinary people. In 1549, he came to an agreement with John Calvin on the Lord's Supper in the *Consensus Tigurinus*. Bullinger's Second Helvetic Confession was held in esteem or even adopted by many churches the world over.

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