

A walk around St Asaph Cathedral

Built to the Glory of God, St Asaph Cathedral is a remarkable testimony to the craftsmen who worked on it and the people who have prayed and worshipped God in this sacred place throughout the centuries. Like many churches and cathedrals, St Asaph Cathedral is built in the shape of a cross. With a length of only 182 feet (55 metres) it is our smallest ancient cathedral, smaller than many major parish churches. The present building dates from 1285.

Please refer to the map on the back of the leaflet.

The Nave¹: The nave is the largest part of the cathedral where the congregation sits for the main services. Beginning by the Great West Door look down the nave towards the High Altar, notice the arches and pillars. Look up and see the curious mediaeval stone carvings and the clerestory windows (small windows above), dating from 1403.

Roof²: This is much later than the rest of the building. It was restored and decorated in 1968, for the Investiture of Prince Charles as Prince of Wales.

As you begin your walk around the Cathedral please take time to pause, to ponder and to enjoy the sense of peace that exists within this holy place. From the Glass Porch turn to the right and continue anti-clockwise around the Cathedral.

Font³: Traditionally placed by the entrance of a church or cathedral, the font is used for baptism of new Christians. The stone font was desecrated during the Civil War and was taken to the river and used as a watering trough by Cromwell's soldiers. Following the war it was returned to the Cathedral and is now much restored. Notice the carving around the font; one side has been restored and one side left in its original state.

Monuments: Nothing is known about the monumental slab with a greyhound chasing a hare⁴, but a similar monument exists in Valle Crucis Abbey near Llangollen. The effigy on the next monument represents Anian II⁵, Bishop of St Asaph, who rebuilt the Cathedral after its destruction by the soldiers of King Edward I. Nearby is a wall plaque in memory of H M Stanley⁶, the great explorer of Africa who was a native of Denbighshire and finder of Dr Livingstone.

Lectern⁷: The lectern is used to hold the Bible which is read during services. It is made from brass; the eagle standing on a globe depicts the word of God spread over the whole world.

South Transept⁸: The Misereor 'Tree of Life' Hanging is by Jacques Chery. The striking sculpture *The Naked Christ* by Michelle Coxon, portrays Christ's suffering and the suffering of mankind. The 16th C 'Spanish Madonna'⁹, set into a niche in the arch leading to the crossing, is carved from ivory. Tradition has it that it was washed up from the Spanish Armada as they fled the English ships. The 'Spanish Madonna' was donated to the Cathedral by the Gladstone family of Hawarden. The south transept is also used for displays and hospitality.

Presbytery: Where the Cathedral Clergy (Dean and Chapter) sit. This area was much restored by Gilbert Scott in 1869-75. The reason this is a cathedral and not a church is because of one chair, the Bishop's Throne or Cathedra¹⁰, found on the south side of the Presbytery. The finely carved Canons' stalls date from 1482. Notice the face of a man, possibly the Master Carver William Frankelyn, above the stall of David ap Howel.

Reredos¹¹: The 19th Century carving, made of Derbyshire alabaster, behind the High Altar depicts the road to Calvary.

Stained Glass: The east window above the Reredos dates from 1864 and shows pictures of the life and teaching of Christ. Turning to your left there is a window in memory of the poet Felicia Hemans (who wrote "The boy stood on the burning deck").

The Organ¹²: The Cathedral has a rich musical tradition. The organ has four manuals and dates from the 1830s. It has been much restored and rebuilt, most recently in 1997.

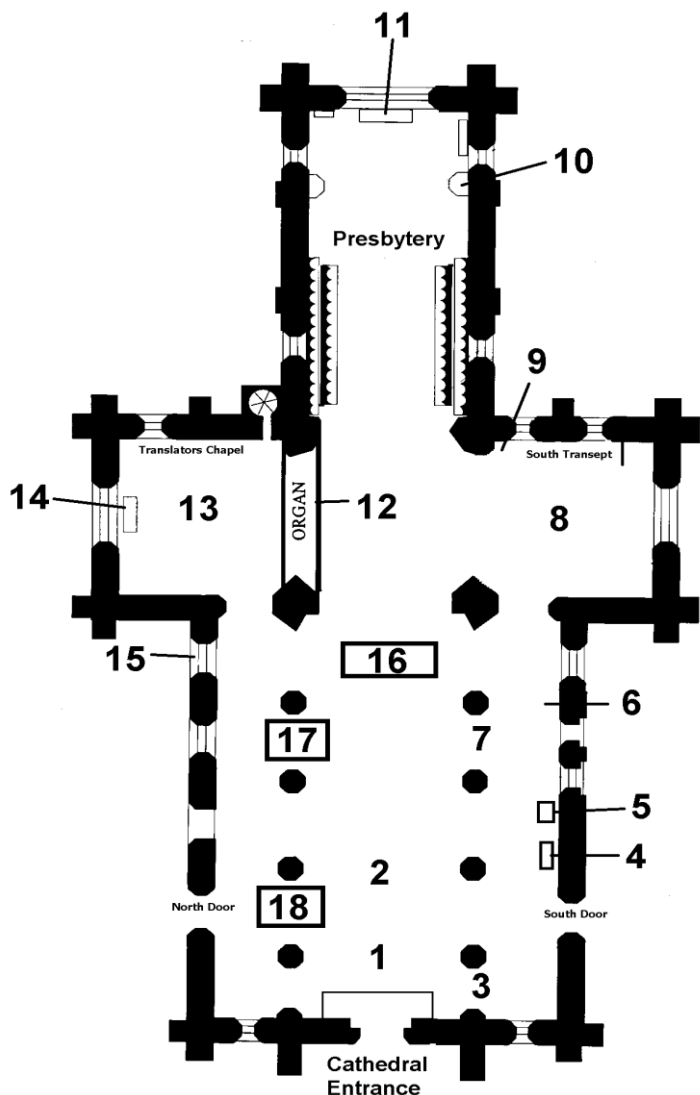
Translators' Chapel ¹³: The greatest treasure in the Cathedral is an original William Morgan bible published in 1588. William Morgan's translation of the bible is credited with keeping the Welsh language alive for future generations. Along with the memorial outside the front of the Cathedral, this chapel commemorates the men responsible for the translation of the Scriptures into Welsh in the 16th and 17th Centuries. Behind the altar is a triptych ¹⁴ by John Smout, commissioned to mark the Millenium. It depicts the opening words from St. John's Gospel in Welsh and English. Look for the faces of William Morgan and St Kentigern in the triptych. The Translators' Chapel is set aside for quiet prayer and contemplation, you may like to pause for a while and light a candle.

Asaph and Kentigern Window ¹⁵: The window depicts the patron saints of the Cathedral, Asaph and Kentigern, and shows the legend of the Fish and the Ring attributed to Kentigern, and Asaph carrying burning coals to warm Kentigern. Notice the tiny monk in the lower right-hand corner of the window denoting the maker of the window Whitefriars Foundry.

Nave Altar ¹⁶: This is used for most services because it is close to the people. The altar and the communion rails are the work of Robert Ingham of Cwm. Look down the nave to the west window above the glass porch where you entered the Cathedral. This 20th Century window is a memorial to Alfred George Edwards, the first Archbishop of Wales.

Pulpit ¹⁷: The Preacher delivers the sermon from here. The five faces on the pulpit depict Jesus and the four Gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Which face do you think is Jesus?

Iron Chest ¹⁸: This was the work of a noted smith, Robert Davies of Croes Foel, near Wrexham and dates from 1738. Originally used to store the Cathedral Plate, it was later adapted and used for visitors' offerings and payment for purchases from the shop.



For over 1400 years, men and women have prayed and praised God in this place. We too pray for all people: May you know God's peace as you continue your journey. Amen

We hope you enjoyed your visit. If you would like to make a donation towards the upkeep of this beautiful building please place your offering in the donation box by the Visitors Book. If you are a UK tax payer, please complete one of the yellow "Gift Aid" envelopes.

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