

Short Tour Through our Church

Dear Visitor!

A very warm welcome to the old church in the village of Brunshaupten - now called Kuehlungsborn-East. The original church on this site - a small rectangular building with narrow windows and a low wooden roof comprising today's main nave - was built circa 1220. Around 1380 a high gothic chancel and a vault were added and the church was dedicated to St John.

Let's begin our brief tour at the church entrance. The **wooden bell tower** is the newest section of the church. Although we do not know the precise date it was erected, it has been in existence since 1500. (The year 1495 is engraved on a small bronze bell found in the tower).

The two large bells, made of steel, were introduced to the bell tower in 1958, replacing copper bells that had been destroyed in WWII. In 1990/1991 the bell tower itself was refurbished. Extensive work on the church's interior took place in 2011/2012. That period saw re-painting of the walls and pews, installation of a high quality light and sound system and renovation of the entrance to the tower basement. The introduction of the low ceiling and wooden panels in the walls enlarged the tower basement and rendered it a suitable venue for small exhibitions.

Entering the church from the east side affords you an excellent view of **the crucifixion scene** high above the chancel. This is the oldest wooden artwork in our church. Carved, we believe, in the second half of the 15th century, it was comprehensively restored in 2011/2012 by Georg von Knorre. Knorre revealed gothic elements in the Jesus figure. At the end of the wooden beams, note the symbols of the Evangelists: Matthew being the angel, Mark the lion, Luke the bull and John the eagle. Beneath the cross mourn Mary and Jesus' favourite disciple John.

Turning now to the right, you will see a medieval **statue of the Virgin Mary** which we proudly refer to as '*The Madonna of Kuehlungsborn*'. This beautiful statue is evidence that, until the reformation in Mecklenburg in 1549, this church had remained Roman Catholic.

Before proceeding into the chancel, look to the left. A few feet above you floats an **angel** which once hung in the middle of the chancel and could be wound down using a mechanism above the vault. In the 19th century, these types of playful baroque device becoming less popular, the angel was removed and lay for more than 100 years on the upper floor of the bell tower.

In 1986, after substantial restoration, the angel was returned to the central area of the church and is still there today. Jorg Schroeder from Rostock restored the angel's original magnificence and on 11th October 2009, the angel was blessed in a special service. Ever since, he holds holy water in a special bowl used at every baptism and, via a concealed electric motor, he is lowered down from the vault.

The five **statues in the chancel** are of John the Baptist, King David (with a harp), Peter (with the key), Paul (with a sword) and Moses (with the tablets of the Law). They formed part of a baroque and partly gold-plated altar dating from 1707. These statues too owe their restoration to Georg von Knorre.

In 1965 **the communion table** was fitted with a new upright section created by the artist Brigitte Grossman-Lauterbach from Dresden. At the centre of the altar stood the cross symbolised as *arbor vitae*. Its left and right-hand sides illustrate, with their dried and lush green leaves respectively, scenes and stories from the Old and New Testaments. In 2007 the altar screen and then in 2011 the

altar itself, were removed. They were replaced by a modern altar, lectern and cross - the work of Neubrandenburg artist Gerd Frick. Made from wood and acrylic glass, these items blend in harmoniously with the old church.

In 1698 the master joiner Adam Hartig from Rostock erected the **pulpit**. He and an apprentice worked on it for twelve weeks. Being a local craftsman, he wrote Jesus's words "*Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it*") in the local dialect, using 'hueren' instead of 'hoeren'. (*Selig sind die, die Gottes Wort hueren und bewahren*).

In the middle of the pulpit, you see Jesus depicted as saviour of the world (*Salvator mundi*). Beside him are the four Evangelists. The pulpit rests on the figure of Jesus' beloved disciple John as a young man - the saint to whom the church is also dedicated.

Legend tells us John was martyred by death in boiling oil. Taking a cup of poison, he is said to have blessed it and the poison escaped in the form of a snake. Also in this scene John is pictured as a young man dressed in a green tunic and red coat.

Now take a look at the **gothic windows** in the chancel, especially the remarkable small glass paintings. They mostly belong to the church's baroque interior and derive from the period subsequent to the Thirty Years War in Europe of 1618-1648. After the war, the largely destroyed church was rebuilt and refurbished. Forty-two of the miniature glass paintings from that refurbishment have survived. Those who footed the cost of the paintings have had themselves immortalised in these paintings as sailors, fishermen and peasants. If you examine them closely, you will discern family names such as Wendt, Westphal and Prueter - surnames still common today.

Facing east, you will see the gallery with the **organ**. Prior to the first (baroque) organ's installation in 1710, the church had only a Positive organ. In 1843/1844 a local organ builder from Rostock called Rasche built a new instrument. Today's organ dates from 1963 and is the work of the well-known East German organ manufacturer Eule from Bautzen. The instrument boasts eleven different components including two manuals plus pedals. In 2011/2012 the organ was refurbished by 'Mecklenburger Orgelbau' and Mr Wolfgang Nussbuecker from Plau am See and re-located from the West to the South gallery beneath the middle vault with a view to improving the timbre of the instrument's sound.

To listen to our wonderful organ, you are warmly invited to our Sunday service (every Sunday at 10am) and to our summer concerts. Please look at the notices at the church exit.

Ensure you enjoy the old stone walls and the late gothic extensions at the south and west sides of the church. Do enjoy too the tranquillity of the old churchyard in the shadow of the trees.

As you leave the church, we would be very grateful for a small donation. Such gifts help us maintain this wonderful house of God. Heartfelt thanks....

We wish you a relaxing stay at Kuehlungsborn.