

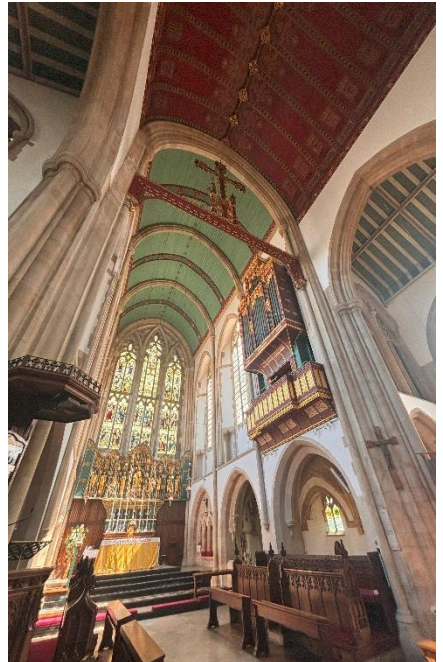
A BRIEF HISTORY AND GUIDE TO THE GLORIES OF ST. GERMAN'S CHURCH

Welcome to the Church of St German of Auxerre in Adamsdown, Cardiff, where for the last 140 years, God has been glorified in splendid worship and devoted service. This magnificent building, amidst the back streets of a Cardiff suburb, has beautiful art and architecture, but is also renowned as a centre of Anglo-Catholicism.



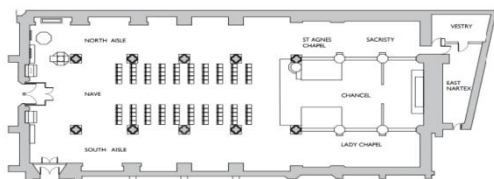
(Collect from the Feast of St German of Auxerre)

*Grant Lord, that as we remember
the blessed German,
who in our land both confirmed the faith
and strengthened monastic life,
we may through his intercession and example
attain to the glory of Christ,
the first-born from the dead:
Who lives and reigns with you
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever. Amen*



History

St German's Church opened in 1884 and owes its origins to two factors, one secular and one religious: a population explosion, and the Oxford movement. The opening of the Bute Docks in Cardiff and the coming of the railway led to a vast influx of people; between 1872 and 1884, the population of Roath increased from 8,000 to 40,000, and new churches were desperately needed. What those churches would be like was in large part determined by the influence of the movement that began in Oxford in the 1840's, to recover the catholic character of the Anglican church and restore the emphasis on sacramental worship. Churches with 3-decker pulpits, galleries and tiny altar tables were to be a thing of the past! When Father Frederick W Puller, the new Vicar of Roath, trained in Oxford, arrived in 1872, he found a parish church seating 300 and a small chapel in a converted barn, woefully inadequate for the growing numbers of people. Christian education was also a priority of the movement and had now to compete with the newly formed school boards following the 1870 Education Act. By 1874, Puller had engaged the architect George F Bodley to build Metal Street Schools for boys and girls, the infants taught in the old chapel next door. Now, of course, a new place of worship was needed in this area of Adamsdown, and by September 1874 an iron building had been erected and dedicated to St German.



Who was St German?



St. German was a 5th century Bishop of Auxerre in Gaul, now France, perhaps an unusual choice for the dedication of a church in Wales, but the story goes that he visited Britain to preach against a growing heresy called Pelagianism, which taught that man could attain salvation by leading a morally upright life without the assisting grace of God. This had to be stamped out, and

German, a forceful preacher, was the man to do it. He also helped British soldiers repel invaders by urging them to shout 'Alleluia' three times; the enemy fled in panic.

Late in life, he performed healing miracles, including raising his faithful donkey from death! In an old church history book, Father Puller found reference to German passing through Roath on his way to Wales (did he realise he'd arrived?). He would have travelled along the old Via Maritima, now the Newport Road, and so Father Puller felt that with the new church about to be built just behind it, German - champion of Catholic truth - would be a fitting patron saint.

When Bodley and his partner Thomas Garner built town churches, they aimed to make them harmonise with, rather than dominate their surroundings. The church is built of local Sheldon stone, with Bath stone dressings and a Welsh slate roof. Distinctive features are the

dignified proportions, the flying buttresses (the only ones in Cardiff) which support the sanctuary roof, the slate-covered flèche (slender spire) with its sanctus bell, and the six-light east window with its rich flowing tracery.

Close to the west entrance is a Calvary in wrought iron, the work of sculptor Frank Roper, the stone Calvary having been destroyed in WW2.



*Original stone Calvary
outside the old Church Hall*

When thinking of the history of St German's Church, we must not forget the magnificent William Hill organ, which is acknowledged as one of the best in Wales. The organ was a gift from the Reverend Francis Nugee, the Assistant Priest at the time and cost £1,000 and was used for the first time on St German's Day, on 1 October 1885. It was originally blown by hand, but in 1900, an electric driven fan blower was added. The church's organ case was designed by Bodley, a specialist in interior

painting, and its original colours were beautifully restored in 2002. The Latin inscription is the first line of the Magnificat



*'My soul doth
magnify the Lord'*



*The sanctuary lamps were
electrified in the late
1990's from a bequest
given by the family of
Irene Lee.*

Behind the altar is the church's most striking feature, the magnificent Reredos. It cost £1,700, raised by the parish in the hard times of the 1920's and commemorates its much loved first Vicar, Father Robert Ives (1884).



Again the work of Cecil Hare, its central panel has canopied niches, with doors either side which are closed during the solemn season of Passiontide. In medieval style, richly decorated and gilded, it is made from Kauri pine by Thompson of Peterborough. The crowned figure of Christ's blessing, and below, angels hold the nails of his crucifixion. On the left are his forerunners: Isaiah the prophet of his coming, David his ancestor, John the Baptist who prepared the way, and his mother the Blessed Virgin Mary. On the right are those who carried forward his message: John the Evangelist, Paul the apostle to the Gentiles, the patrons of Wales and of his church, David and German. A fine work of art, it fully complements the beauty of Bodley's church.

The East Window



Above the reredos soars the great East Window: three lancets formed of double tracery in stone, in Bodley's favourite style of Decorated Gothic. The glass, again by Burlison & Grylls, has sumptuous colours and fine figure drawing.

High in the centre is Christ crucified, surrounded by symbols and instruments of the Passion. Note the Roman eagle, whipping post & scourges and thirty pieces of silver on the left; and on the right, the hammer & pincers, nails and dice.

In the centre light below is the Annunciation by the Angel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin Mary .

In the side lights, from the top, are: the four Archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel; the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; the four Latin Doctors of the Church, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine and Gregory the Great.

The six figures in the bottom row are:- St German, St Stephen, the first Christian martyr, Sts Peter and Paul, St Margaret, patron of the mother church of Roath, and St David. The window is full of fascinating detail and requires careful study; a pair of binoculars is a great help!

Font and the Statue of the boy Jesus.



Immediately to your left as you enter the Church, is the octagonal stone font designed by Bodley in 1898 and made by Rattee & Kett of Cambridge. In front of it is a statue of the boy Jesus holding a bird. An apocryphal gospel (one not in the Bible) tells of his bringing to life a clay bird. Against the west wall is the old font cover, by Cecil Hare; an impressive oak structure with ogee-shaped

top and gilded angel, now used as an aumbrey, for storing sacred oils. When used as a font cover, the baby's baptism was hidden from sight!

The Lady Chapel

At the entrance to the Lady Chapel stands the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, carved in Austrian pine, her face serene as she inclines her head towards the Holy Child. The chapel itself is a very special part of the church, where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the Tabernacle on the altar.

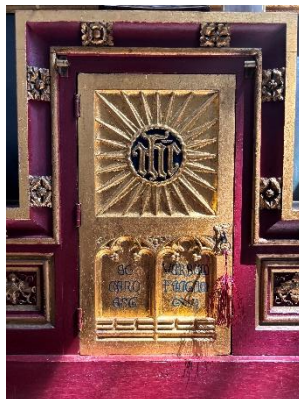
Mass has been celebrated here since October 1884.

Enter through the wrought iron screen, erected in 1920 as a memorial to the late churchwarden George David, into a beautiful stone vaulted chapel. Notice the unusual, gilded candlesticks, with the figures of Mary, Joseph and Jesus, very similar to those found in Auxerre Cathedral. On the

front of the silver tabernacle is a symbolic representation of Christ in the form of the 'Pelican in her Piety'. In legend, the pelican is said to pluck her own breast and



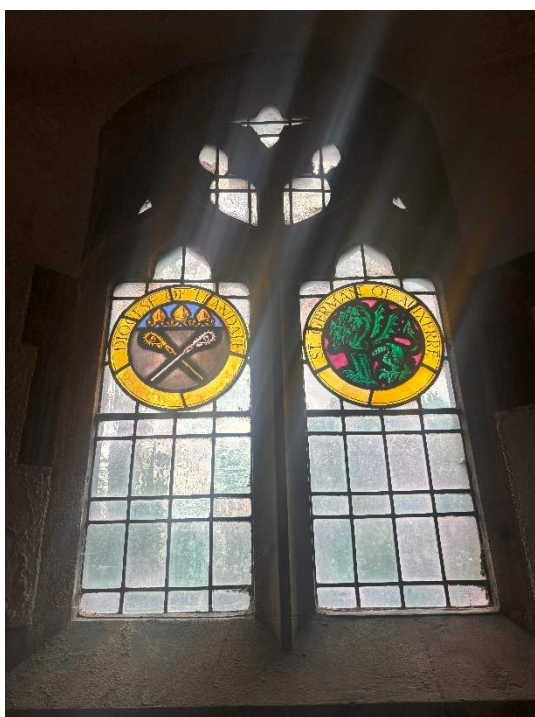
draw blood with which to feed her chicks. The Christian, likewise, is fed at the altar with the blood of Christ.





On the south wall is a most expressive plaque of the Virgin and Child said to have been brought back to St German's from a WW1 battlefield in France.

The three windows have roundels of modern glass, designed by Hugh Easton in 1953, and given in memory of Jessie Hammett, a mistress at Cardiff High School. They show fishes (Trinity), lilies (BVM), Diocesan arms and badges.



Outside the West Door



Immediately outside the door is the beautifully carved statue of St German with his trusty donkey, reputedly resurrected by him from the dead! The statue was presented by Edward Digby Holloway who died in 1917.

St German's Banner of 1887.

As you enter the church and to your left, you will find the original St German's Church Banner of 1887 found at the back of cupboard where it had remained undetected until 2017. A grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund enabled the Banner to be mounted in a special case that will preserve it for posterity. You will see that the Banner shows the shrapnel damage caused when the bombs dropped. A stark reminder of WWII.



To the left of the Banner there is a Tablet in place as a record of our thankfulness to Almighty God for preserving our church during the 1939 - 45 war.

On Monday March 3rd 1941 a number of bombs were dropped in the Parish and at 9:00pm, one was dropped on the Parish Hall completely destroying it and killing Sister Teresa and Ivy Sully, as well as wrecking the Church Institute. The blast from this bomb destroyed all the windows of the Nave and smashed the South and West doors of the church. Much damage was done to the roof by incendiary bombs during the raid. On May 18th 1943 at 2:30am, incendiary bombs burnt off the roof of the day schools in Metal St.



After the war ended in 1945, plans were underway to replace the Church Hall and after considerable fund-raising efforts, the current hall was completed in 1957 and remains a thriving and vibrant part of both St German's and the community of Adamsdown and beyond.

St German's Church formally opened on the 1st of October 1884 (St German's Day) and eight services were held to celebrate, the first being at 4.45am!



**First Vicar of St German's
Father Robert James Ives**

**Current Vicar of
St. German's
Father Jarel
Robinson-Brown**

