

## SCHEDULE OF THE HOPPING PROCESSION:

**Whitsun Monday** 8 p.m. Ceremonial mass with festive sermon | **Whitsun Tuesday** 8 a.m. Pontifical mass, 9.15 a.m. Welcome sermon by the Archbishop of Luxembourg in the abbey courtyard, 9.30 a.m. Start of the Hopping Procession  
**Route of the procession:** Abbey courtyard, rue du Pont, rue de la Sûre, rue de la Montagne, place du Marché, rue de la Gare, rue des Merciers, Basilica. It ends at about 1.30 p.m. with a prayer service. //



// Hopping Procession of Echternach

## CHURCH SERVICES AND CHOIR:

**Parish Office Echternach** | 12, Porte St Willibrord  
 L-6486 Echternach | Tel.: (+352) 72 01 49  
 iechternach@cathol.lu | [www.willibrord.lu](http://www.willibrord.lu) //

## USEFUL INFORMATION:

**Tourist Office Echternach** | 9-10, Parvis de la Basilique  
 L-6486 Echternach | Tel.: (+352) 72 02 30  
 info@echternach-tourist.lu | [www.visitechternach.lu](http://www.visitechternach.lu) //

**Church services:** On Sunday (9 a.m. mass/10.30 a.m. festive mass). The basilica is open for visitors after 12 a.m. Sale of the detailed basilica booklet in the basilica and the Documentation Center. //

## Opening hours of the documentation center:

Easter - 1st November: Monday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. & 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. | July - 15 September: Monday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. | January - December: Sunday 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. //

## GUIDED TOURS:

### Regional Tourism Office of the Mullerthal Region – Luxembourg's Little Switzerland

B.P. 152 | L-6402 Echternach | Tel.: (+352) 72 04 57-1  
 guidedtours@mullerthal.lu | [www.mullerthal.lu](http://www.mullerthal.lu) //

## IMPRESSUM (EDITION 2022)

**Willibrordus-Bauverein** | **Photos:** P. Barone, U. Fielitz, T. Osborne | [kacom.lu](http://kacom.lu), ORT MPSL | **Blueprint:** HLG Ingenieure-Consultants sàrl | **Design:** [kacom.lu](http://kacom.lu)



// Handle of the entrance door to the Documentation Center

The staircase on the left takes you back into the basilica.

**15** In 2010 the Hopping Procession of Echternach was included in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. In the Documentation Center, a movie, photos and texts provide manifold information about the Hopping Procession. The handle of the entrance door, showing two hands holding a triangular scarf, calls to mind the scarves held by the hoppers during the procession. Five hoppers form a row.

The Hopping Procession may be a vestige of an old pagan ritual absorbed into Christian tradition. Old documents state that, since the 11<sup>th</sup> century, parishes under the abbey's authority were required to take part in tithe processions after Pentecost Sunday. The Hopping Procession was first mentioned in writing in 1497: In a dire emergency, the people from Waxweiler vowed to hop in Echternach. The original melody goes back to a simple folk song, which was rearranged by the local composer Max Menager at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



// Painting by Lucien Simon



// Christ-torso

**16** The large painting depicting the procession was painted by Lucien Simon, on behalf of the Luxembourg Government, for the 1937 International Exhibition in Paris.

**17** In the nearby corridor there is a small Lapidarium: a collection of sculptures, tombstones, epitaphs from the time of the abbey.

**18** The torso of Christ crucified is a remnant of a 19<sup>th</sup> century mission crucifix, which was destroyed when the basilica was blown up in December 1944.

**19** The middle painting of the triptych was painted by Anton Stevens in 1604/05. In front of the four-towered abbey church, a group of hoppers with musicians are on their way to St. Willibrord's shrine. So far, this is the oldest pictorial representation of the Hopping Procession.



// Lapidarium

**20** The window created by Théodore Hanssen shows the glorification of St. Willibrord. Middle bottom: A scene from the Hopping Procession: the clergy, singers of the litany, musicians and hoppers. Two important dates in the history of Echternach are mentioned: In 1794 French soldiers plundered the Benedictine abbey, and in 1944 the west towers were blown up during the Battle of the Bulge.

After leaving the church, take a look at the west front.



// St. Willibrord blessing the pilgrims



// Rose window and Klais organ

**21** The coat of arms on the front consists of three parts: On top: The papal insignia of a basilica (the parasol and the keys of St. Peter) refer to the honorary title "Papal Basilica Minor". On the left: The double-headed eagle (intelligence and alertness) of the former imperial abbey. Its body is formed by a blessing hand, pointing at the motto "Sub Manu Solius Dei" (Under God's hand alone). On the right: The coat of arms of the city of Echternach.

Three differently coloured sandstones (green-gray, yellow and red) from the Mullerthal Region were used to rebuild the basilica after the Second World War.



// Glorification of St. Willibrord

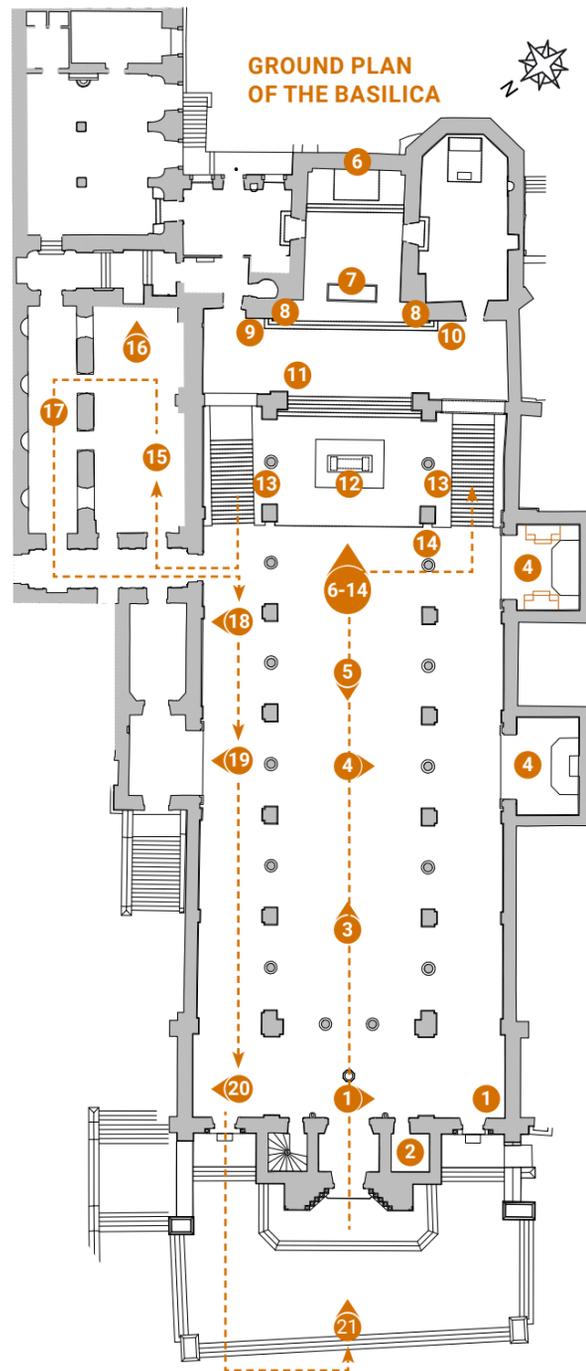


// Coat of arms on the west front



## BASILICA SAINT WILLIBROD ECHTERNACH





/// Choir before 1938



/// Madonna and Child



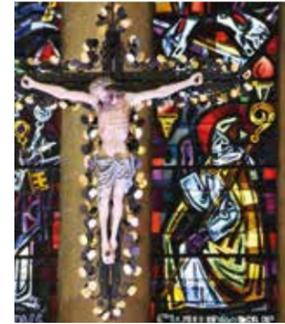
/// Unique architecture of the central nave



/// Cover of the Codex Aureus Epternacensis



/// Majestas Domini



/// Hanging cross above the altar

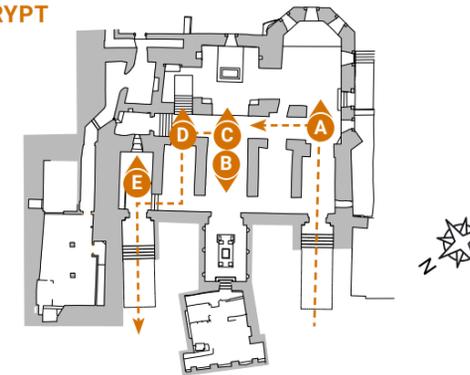


/// Ambo with Irish wickerwork



/// Shrine of St. Willibrord

GROUND PLAN OF THE CRYPT



### HISTORY OF THE BASILICA

Around 700, Willibrord had a plain, aisleless church built. Because of the rapidly growing number of pilgrims, this Merovingian church was replaced by a larger, Carolingian church with a crypt, about 100 years later. After a devastating fire in 1016, a Romanesque church was built. It had more or less the same dimensions as today's basilica. In the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Romanesque building was transformed into a Gothic one.

Looted and confiscated by French soldiers in 1794, the abbey church was sold at an auction as French national property in 1797. The businessman Jean-Henri Dondelinger acquired the building and set up an earthenware factory in the basilica. To preserve the church, the citizens of Echternach founded the Willibrordus Bauverein in 1862. This association took care of the partial reconstruction and the restoration of the church in Neo-Gothic style. It was consecrated in 1868.

Blown up during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944, it was reconstructed at public expense, partly in Romanesque style to give the building its original aspect. The Gothic vaults survived in the side aisles. The present church, the 5<sup>th</sup> church built on this site, was consecrated in 1953. It houses the shrine of St. Willibrord, the founder of the abbey and the town of Echternach.

### ST. WILLIBRORD

Willibrord was born in Northumbria (England) in 658. After his education in the monastery of Ripon, he emigrated

to Rath Melsigi in Ireland, where he was ordained priest. In 690, he left "the Island of the Saints" with 11 companions to preach the gospel on the continent. In 695 Pope Sergius ordained him 1<sup>st</sup> Archbishop of Utrecht.

Thanks to a donation in 698 by the abbess Irmina from Trier/Oeren, he could found an abbey in Echternach. After a fulfilled life as a missionary, Willibrord wished to be buried in his own abbey in Echternach. He died in 739.

### TOUR

**1** The first window designed by Théodore Hanssen depicts Willibrord's birth and childhood. Lower middle: the dream of his pregnant mother. Above: Willibrord is entrusted by his parents to the monastery of Ripon to be educated. Left: Willibrord's clerical tonsure. Right: His father Wilgils as a hermit.

**2** To the right of the entrance: The Chapel of Relics. The most valuable item is a piece of cloth from St. Willibrord's vestments.

**3** The central nave is separated from the side aisles by an alternation of pillars and columns, which are connected by a double arch system. The characteristic feature of this architecture is the inclusion of two smaller arches in a large arch. This form of architecture is traditionally called the "Echternach system" because the basilica is one of the last witnesses of this particularity. The stained-glass windows in the side aisles tell the story of St. Willibrord's life.

**4** The two side chapels were added in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

**5** The organ was built by Klais from Bonn in 1952. It boasts more than 6.000 pipes. The rose window from Emile and Joseph Probst above the organ shows the astronomic signs of the zodiac.

**6** The east window created by Jacques Le Chevallier shows Willibrord in a praying attitude in front of the Holy Trinity. Side windows: St. Peter and St. Paul (both patron saints of the first abbey church), and the symbols of the four gospel writers: Luke (bull), Matthew (divine man), Mark (lion) and John (eagle).

**7** The relief sculpture on the high altar (1952) depicts the symbols of the four gospel writers (by Luxembourgish sculptor Auguste Trémont).

The hanging cross above the altar combines a late Gothic corpus (Northern France ca 1500) and a modern iron cross. In 2022 German artist Johannes Nagel used traditional forging techniques to represent Christ on the tree of life.

**8** Two oak-wood statues represent St. Benedict (left) and St. Willibrord. Benedict is shown in a monk's robe with a staff, a book of hours and bread. Willibrord wears his pontificals, with a toddler and a wine barrel at his feet.

**9** The "tintinnabulum" (liturgical bell, left) and the **10** yellow-red striped "canopaeum" (parasol) are the symbols of a papal "basilica minor".

**11** In the transept: The "ambo" is a copy of a Merovingian lectern with Irish wickerwork. The original is exhibited at the Musée National d'Histoire et d'Art in Luxembourg City.

**12** The confessio altar is an altar decorated with an open wave motif, which, through a light shaft, connects the altar with St. Willibrord's shrine.

**13** The choir stalls, made of oak, were created by Théophile Klem in 1912. See the impressive carvings.

On Whitsun Tuesday, the pilgrims use the staircase on the right to hop down into the barrel-vaulted tunnel crypt, which was part of the Carolingian church built around 800. Then they file past St. Willibrord's shrine.

**14** Madonna and Child, late Gothic sculpture made of lime wood, partially original polychromy, from the south of Germany, made around 1470, and donated to the Basilica in 2018. The moon face refers to Revelation 12:1: "a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet", and the grape is to be considered as a symbol of the Eucharist.



/// Chapel of Our Lady of Fatima

**A** The chapel opposite the stairs: The statue of Our Lady of Fatima is a donation to the basilica by the Portuguese community.

**B** The Merovingian sarcophagus with the remains of St. Willibrord is placed in the neo-Gothic funerary monument made of white Carrara marble by Guiseppe Novi from Genoa in 1906.

**C** On the vault of the chancel, opposite the shrine, there are remains of frescoes from the 11<sup>th</sup> century. They represent scenes from the life of Virgin Mary: The Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity and the Announcement to the Shepherds.

**D** Next to the chancel: The so-called St. Willibrord's spring. It is reminiscent of the baptismal activity of the saint.

**E** In a niche, there are two closed Merovingian stone coffins. It is not known whose bones they contain.