



Details of the calendar disk and of the main clockwork. We regret that there is no public access to the inside of the clock.

St. Mary's Church is the main church of the City of Rostock. It constitutes a prime example of the North German brick gothic style. Construction commenced in the early 13th century.

You have never seen anything like this before!

St. Mary's church in Rostock is home to the oldest astronomical clock from medieval times which keeps working with all original parts to this day. It dates from 1472 – Columbus had not yet discovered America! – and displays not just time but also date, lunar phase, and much more.

At the time of its construction it was fairly revolutionary: The cycles of sun, moon and stars had always been considered as the paradigm of perfect regularity, but the invention of mechanical clockwork in the 14th century demonstrated that manmade technical devices can keep time even more precisely. The clock in Rostock is a witness of that period. It is the only clock of this type which has been handed down to us both fully authentic and fully operational.

150 years later it had already become so dear to the people of Rostock that they actually enlarged it while all around them the Thirty Year's war raged. A major interruption of operation then occurred in 1842 when during repair work on the vaulted ceiling, debris fell on and into the clock and damaged it; it took over 40 years to secure the funds for a thorough repair. Later, during WW 2, as a precaution the clock was immured for its protection.

Other than during such times of trouble, the clockworks have been wound every day, and its wheels have been greased, for nearly five and one half centuries and counting! Where else do you have a machine built to last such that after more than half a millennium it still performs with precision?

Today we stand before a vivid testimony from a distant and almost forgotten past. This clock is a medieval technological marvel, and at the same time a notable piece of art.

When the year 2017 winds down, the present calendar disk – the fourth since 1472 – expires; the replacement already stands by in the church. It will serve the time span from 2018 to 2150. Once it has been fitted, the clock can continue its service for more generations to come.

The years 2017, 2018, and 2019 mark the anniversaries of 500 years of Protestant Reformation, 800 years of the City of Rostock, and 600 years of Rostock University, respectively. This concurrence will put the Astronomical Clock of 1472 into a bright spotlight for both citizens and visitors of the Hanseatic City of Rostock.

INFORMATION FOR YOUR VISIT

St. Mary's at Rostock

The church is located centrally downtown.

www.marienkirche-rostock.de

Opening hours

October to April:

Mon - Sat 10 am – 4 pm,

Sun/holidays 11:15 am - 12:15 pm.

May to September:

Mon - Sat 10 am – 6 pm

Sun/holidays 11:15 am – 5 pm.

Admission

There is no fee, but you are kindly requested to donate 1,50 EUR/person. Every year there are expenditures of several 100.000 EUR towards maintenance and operation of the church; your donation supports the parish in this effort.

More Information

www.astronomischeuhr.de

Your opinion

We would enjoy hearing from you after your visit. Please share your impressions with us!

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The Astronomical Clock of 1472 in Rostock

*A witness from a distant past –
and it keeps going*

