



The Orthodox parish church of Bruges was built in 1995 under the patronage of Saint Constantine and Saint Helene.

Up until 2007 the Orthodox community congregated in a small room on the ground floor of the old hospice, but at the end of that year it was installed in the old chapel of Saint-Josse. According to the archives, this chapel was built in 1449 and the facades were restored in 2005-2006. In 2007-2008 the Orthodox community itself completed its interior decoration, while respecting and conserving the original works of art of the chapel of Saint-Josse.

A characteristic of Orthodox rite is the iconostasis, the screen that separates the Holy of Holies from the nave. This magnificent work was made in Greece from lime wood. An artist, coming especially from Moscow, spent a year in Bruges painting the frescoes. The icons were painted in Bruges. It is interesting to note that some of the stalls were made by the students of VTI of Diksmude. A final noteworthy element is the central circular lights which play an important role in the liturgy.

The Orthodox community church of Bruges welcomes all Orthodox Christians of the region: Greeks, Syrians, Russians, Serbians, Romanians, Georgians, Poles, and Belgians.

Info

Opening hours

From the 1st Sunday of June till 15 August:
Friday-Saturday-Sunday: 10 am-1 pm and 3 pm-6 pm

It is not permitted to visit this building during religious services.

Religious offices

- Saturday: vespers 6 pm
- Sunday: matins 9 am • Liturgy 10 am
- others services: www.orthodoxie-brugge.org



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The Open Churches foundation is an independent organization that is dedicated to the revaluation of religious heritage. The organisation coordinates a network of open and hospitable churches in Europe.

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HH. Konstantijn en Helena

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*a church is a landmark in the landscape
a common inheritance for the inhabitants
a space open for everybody ...*



The apse of the sanctuary

On the apse wall at the back of the chancel is a large fresco of the Virgin of the Sign, the symbol of the church. She is the link between heaven and earth. On this fresco the Mother of God has both arms raised in an attitude of prayer and the baby Jesus is shown in a medallion.



Lamp or "polyeleos"

in the centre of the church is the large hanging lamp known as the "polyeleos". At certain times during the liturgy it is completely

lit up, sometimes only partly lit and sometimes not at all. This lamp is of solid copper and weighs 160 kilos. There are sixteen icons fixed around it. On entering the church, one sees the icon of Christ in the centre with the Mother of God on his left and Saint John the Baptist on his right. The twelve apostles are also represented. Mattias, the thirteenth apostle, replaces Judas.

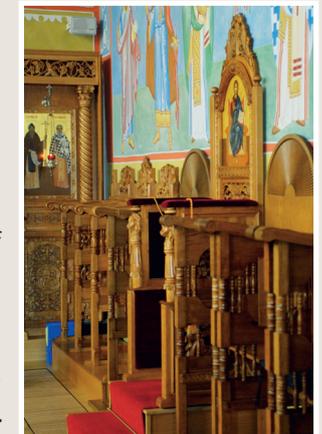
The iconostasis or icon screen

On entering an orthodox building the visitor finds himself in front of its most characteristic element: the iconostasis or icon screen, which separates the holy of holies from the nave of the church. The iconostasis symbolises the separation of the heavenly from the earthly world. When its central partition is open, these two worlds are united. This iconostasis of lime wood comes from a workshop in Thessaloniki in Greece.



The stalls

In the chapel stands the wooden stalls among which the Episcopal throne and on the opposite site the Antithrone, destined for a religious visitor of honour. Some of the stalls were made by the students of the VTI of Diksmude (oak stalls modelled after a 19th century stall from the cloister of Simonos Petra on Mount Athos). The others were made in Thessaloniki (Greece).



Icon of saints Constantine and Helen

In the orthodox community an icon is revered as a holy object and is essential to the worship. On the left is the icon of the saints Constantine and Helen, the patron saints of this church. As these saints date from before the great Eastern Schism, they are worshipped by all Christians. On the one hand, they remind us of the Precious Cross and on the other, of Constantinople, the great capital of Orthodoxy and the seat of the Ecumenical patriarch.



The frescoes

The Russian artist Yaroslav Dobrynine from the Moscow school worked for a whole year to complete the paintings according to this characteristically rich iconography. On the left, is the fresco of the Whitsun festival when the twelve apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit which came down on them like tongues of fire.

