

# Every object tells a story

**There are many clues to how religious services were celebrated here. Some of these traditions still continue.**

## *What is the High Altar?*

The priest leads the main part of the service of the Mass (the Eucharist) here. The colour of the altar hangings reflects the church calendar.

White or gold is for special occasions, like Christmas and Easter. Black is for funerals and Good Friday. Red is used on feast days of the Holy Spirit and of martyrs. Purple is for Advent and Lent. Green, meaning life and growth, is used for all other occasions.

*What colour is it today?*



Easter Sepulchre

## *What's that hole?*

Look for the opening in the wall to the left of the High Altar. This rare surviving feature is called the Easter Sepulchre. It is at least 500 years old and was used in Easter services.

A cross was placed here on Good Friday, representing the burial of Christ in his tomb. It was brought out again in triumph on Easter Sunday to celebrate the Resurrection, when Christ rose from his tomb. A cross is still part of the Good Friday service.



High Altar in use



# A special chair?

**This oak chair offered hidden support for the weary. Beneath the tip-up seat is a ledge where they could lean. It's called a misericord.**

Clerks stood to sing daily services. The misericord let them rest, without fully sitting down, during the long services. Carvings are often hidden under the misericords, sometimes with humorous subjects not normally seen in a church.

*Did you know...* misericord comes from the Latin word misericordia. It means pity or compassion.



Oak stall

## *What's the bird?*

The carving is a pelican and her chicks. This was a symbol of Christ and the Eucharist, when Christians take wine and bread to reenact the Last Supper.

Mother pelicans peck at their breasts for grooming. In the 1400s and 1500s, people thought they were feeding chicks with their own blood. The symbolic link was made between this and the wine which represents Christ's blood.

*Did you know?* The initials I.M.G and coat of arms are for Father Gillyott. He was a priest here from 1469 to 1475. His coat of arms is also in the Chancel ceiling, which he either ordered or paid for.



Close up of the carvings

