

Places of interest in Bernau

Bernau is also worth a visit

With this newsletter, we continue our short series of articles on places of interest in Bernau and the surrounding area. This time, we have chosen an impressive building in the town centre, just a few minutes' walk from the venue for BEPHILA 2026.

Part 2 – St. Mary's Church



The imposing structure of St. Mary's Church has dominated Bernau's townscape for more than 500 years. An inscription in the vault above the pulpit refers to 1519 as the year in which construction was completed. Work had begun in the 14th century, using the foundations of a late Romanesque, later Gothic basilica.

The brick hall church is 54 metres long and 30 metres wide. An original tower made of field stones was demolished in 1839 and replaced in 1846 by the 57-metre-high brick tower that still stands today.

The four-nave church houses an interior rich in historical artefacts. The most valuable work of art is a late Gothic winged altar, created around 1520. The high altar, probably from the school of Lucas Cranach the Elder, with 39 carved figures and 68 panels, shows scenes from the life of Mary on feast days, episodes from the life of Christ on Sundays and legends of saints on weekdays. Measuring eight metres high and five metres wide, the winged altar in Bernau's St. Mary's Church is the largest carved altar in the Mark Brandenburg.





Hochaltar

The choir stalls dating from the 16th and 17th centuries have also been almost completely preserved, with the magnificent mayor's chair from the end of the 16th century being particularly noteworthy. Also worth noting are various valuable carved figures and reliefs, as well as a beautiful Madonna under a canopy from around 1520.

The organ built in 1572/73 by Hamburg organ builder Hans Scherer the Elder was replaced in 1863/64 by a new organ built by the Wilhelm Sauer company from Frankfurt (Oder). Parts of the Scherer organ's façade, which Frederick William IV greatly admired, have been preserved and can be seen in the north aisle. The Sauer organ, which has been rebuilt and modernised several times over the last 150 years, is now frequently used in concerts, to which the church leadership regularly invites guests.



Kanzel



Gedenktafel

An event in German-Swedish history that is commemorated in the form of a plaque in Bernau's St. Mary's Church should not go unmentioned. This was installed in 1884 in the presence of the Prussian Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia (Friedrich III) and his wife, and commemorates the fact that on 17 December 1632, the mortal remains of King Gustav II Adolf, who fell in the Battle of Lützen 'for the Protestant faith', were laid out in the church. At the behest of Elector Georg Wilhelm of Brandenburg, the congregation gathered in the church for a funeral sermon.

Information about the church's opening hours is provided on a notice next to the west portal of St. Mary's.

Further information can be found on the Bernau town website

<https://www.bernau.de>