

CHURCH DECORATIONS AND FURNISHINGS

The church vaults and walls were decorated by the paintings of the above-mentioned Ludvík Nejedlý in 1898. He painted the Transfiguration of the Lord on Tábor Hill on the nave vaults, while the chancel dome is painted with the Old Testament patriarchs, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and the apostle James.

The main altar from 1776 was the work of Jaroměř sculptor Martin Krupka, with Prague painter Ludvík Kohl adding the picture of St James to it in 1781, probably at the request of Břevnov-Broumov Abbot Stephan Rautenstrauch. The altar picture was restored in 1895 by Prague painter Antonín Růžička. In 1788, an abbey bench from the Church of St Margaret in the Břevnov monastery, produced in the early-18th century was placed in the church. Also decorating the church were pictures of Saint Benedict and John of Nepomuk by Bydžov painter Jan Čeněk.

The tin baptismal font, produced in 1547 in Hradec Králové, came from the Gothic church. The Benedictines also donated an early-Baroque copy of the statue of the Broumov Madonna, likely made at the start of the 17th century, to the church. The actual Broumov Madonna dates back to the 14th century.

The late-Baroque organ, pulpit, part of the main altar and other furnishings were destroyed by vandals in the 2nd half of the 20th century. The picture of Saint James the Great from the main altar and the abbey bench were transferred to Nový Bydžov's Church of St Lawrence. The town museum in Nový Bydžov received the baptismal font, the copy of the statue of the Broumov Madonna, the High Baroque pictures of St Peter and St Paul from the mid-18th century, a Baroque wardrobe for vestments from the sacristy and other objects. All that remains in the church today is the lower section of the late-Baroque main altar with a carving of the Sacrifice of Isaac and one of the bells not affected by requisition.

TOMBSTONES

The Metličany church served as a burial site for the nobility, owners of neighbouring villages, during the Middle Ages and in the early Modern period. The oldest known tombstone is said to date back to 1504, with the others dating to 1580–1616. The words on thirteen of the preserved tombstones are said to have been engraved by one of the Benedictine monks, and were published at the end of the 18th century by founder of Czech archaeology, Karel Josef Biener of Bienenberg, who arrived in the region as an engineer involved in the first (Josephinian) Land Survey. The massive sandstone tombstones were lost during the construction of today's church, being used as construction material. Stonemasons broke most of them into quarters and used them in the main cornice. Some of them were removed in 1995 along with the remainder of the entrance and are kept in the town museum in Nový Bydžov.

On the south wall of the sacristy the opulent Classical tombstone of Barbora Slavkovská of Šonov, born in Kleborn, wife of the steward of Sloupno estate, František Slavkovský, Knight of Šonov, who died on 10 January 1825, is preserved. A delicate relief in a shallow recess at an urn displays a mourning angel with an upside down torch. Also in the corners are circles containing the coat of arms of the Kleborn and Slavkovský of Šonov families. This tombstone was produced by Hořice sculptor Josef Richter. The Czech inscription, written in beautiful Humanist miniscule italics is easy to read, despite minor deviations from current practice in the script.

A number of late Empire-style tombstones used to be found in the graveyard, some of which were made by sculptor Václav Bydžovský.



ST JAMES GALLERY

In 2007, the Galerie u sv. Jakuba (St James Gallery) civic association offered its co-operation with Nový Bydžov council, showcasing a plan to use the church as an exhibition and concert hall. Since that time, three exhibitions a year, concerts and other cultural events regularly take place in the church – St James Gallery. The exhibition programme is conceived such that it includes an established artist from amongst leading figures in the Czech art scene – Michael Rittstein, Jiří Sozanský, Olbram Zoubek, Eva Kmentová, Josef Vyleřal and one talented artist from the upcoming young generation, or an exhibition from one of the studios of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. The gallery also focuses its attention on major regional artists – those who have exhibited here include, e.g., Bohdan Kopecký, Jiří Šindler, Jiří Ščerbakov and Jiří Vavřina. The programme is further enriched with topical exhibitions focused on Czech landscape painting, figure drawing, glass-work or sculpture (visitors have previously had the opportunity to view sculptures by J. V. Myslbek, Jan Štursa, Mary Duras, Jaroslav Horejc and Břetislav Benda). We are taken to the urban environment by the works of the Group 42 painters.

Each of the exhibitions showcases a different picture from these authors, which the gallery has managed to find in private collections, or which is showcased in collaboration with other galleries. An integral part of exhibitions, and social events in themselves, are the vernissages, always with an introduction by an expert and accompanied by great music.

The attractive Baroque church interior is the ideal place to hold concerts. Our two advent concerts are now a tradition. Another concert is held during the season, with a diverse range of artists performing – from concerts by masters of classical music to folk and jazz bands to rock stars.

Opening hours

april–september
saturday 13.00–17.00

Exhibitions can be visited by phone agreement at any time.

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GPS coordinates

N 50.2423786°, E 15.5088861°

More information at

<https://jakubgalerie.webnode.cz>

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V JOSEFOVĚ



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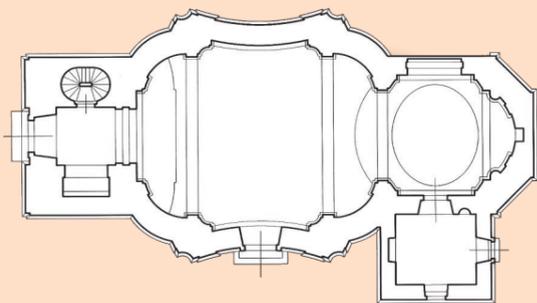


METLIČANY

CHURCH OF ST JAMES THE GREATER

On the hill at the eastern outskirts of Nový Bydžov stands the fascinating late-Baroque Church of St James. The church can be seen from all around, especially when viewed from the east. The church with its chancel on the northeast, and longitudinal nave and tower on the southwest side, sits in the central part of the graveyard surrounding the originally older church. Symmetrical sacristy and depositaries stood along the sides of the chancel, but only the eastern section has been preserved.

The walled church and graveyard also includes a small chaplain's residence on the north of the site, today deserted and extremely dilapidated. This very well built late-Baroque church is evidence of the high quality of construction in the 18th century, which also included careful setting of buildings into the landscape.



HISTORY OF METLIČANY

The hill to the east of Nový Bydžov over the left bank of the Cidlina visible from far and wide was undoubtedly a good place to settle from ancient times. As such, it is believed that a noble family's farmstead once stood here alongside a Romanesque church. Actual documentation is missing, however. There are mentions of Great and Small Metličany in 1311. At that time, these settlements were focused in two areas, one of which was likely the hill and the second probably to the east in the Králícký potok valley. This would explain the local name of Nad Metličany (Above Metličany) for the land between today's Metličany and Králícký potok. In 1362, Metličany was part of the Sloupno estate. The village was last mentioned in 1549, not being restored until the end of the 18th century. We have not as yet ascertained what caused the village to come to an end, nor when this happened. Metličany continued to be a part of the Sloupno estate, which was purchased by the Břevnov-Broumov Benedictine monks under Abbot Tomáš Sartorius in 1672 for its advantageous position mid-way on the route between Břevnov (Prague) and Broumov. In 1720, Metličany was described as a hamlet.

The village was restored during the Raab reforms in which state and church estates were divided amongst rent-paying tenants. The farmstead, mentioned in 1790 along with four houses, was divided amongst new settlers, and in 1843 there were 12 houses in Metličany, in which 97 residents lived. Yet

just three years earlier the land registry map had shown seven farmhouses and a chaplain's residence. All these buildings were located on the west side of the road to Králíky and Hořice. In 1843, it would appear that the houses at the bridge across the Cidlina which were part of Nový Bydžov were added to Metličany. Metličany remains part of the territory of Bydžov today, and it has never been listed separately. The 1910 census records 22 buildings here with 132 residents, while by 1991 there were 85 houses and 294 residents, and 100 houses with 252 residents in 2011.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The Metličany church is first mentioned in 1362. We do not know what this oldest church looked like. It may have been a Romanesque building, or it may have been a wooden church. During the second half of the 14th century, the church was rebuilt in brick, as evidenced by the entrance foot with indented profile and the cavettos protruding from the sloped areas. The entrance foot is today exhibited in the Nový Bydžov museum. New bells were acquired for the church in 1559 and 1565, which were hung in a wooden bell tower. The church was used as a burial ground for local nobility. The church was repaired in 1725.

Today's church was erected in 1768–1775 by František Kermer, Hradec Králové architect and builder. Construction of the new church was likely arranged by the rulers of the estate, in this case the Břevnov-Broumov Benedictine monks headed by Abbot Bedřich Grundmann. It would seem that the new church was built on top of the old church, which was demolished only during construction. A chaplaincy, or local parish, was established here, with a place of residence for the priest constructed next to the church including a small farm.

In 1781, a sacristy was built on the east side of the chancel, but five years later cracks were found in the wall and the church had to be repaired in 1789. While this was being done, the shields above the cornice were taken down and the vases on the sides of the tower were replaced with new Classical ornamental vases. The church was repainted in 1898 by Nový Bydžov painter Ludvík Nejedlý, who covered the vaults in figural scenes and divided up the walls using architectural painting.

Subsequent to 1948, the Náboženská matice Roman Catholic fund took over running of the site until 1971 when it was transferred to the Czechoslovak state, which gave it to the Nový Bydžov council assembly to look after. During this time, the road was relaid in 1951, now repositioned lower than it had been,



changing water conditions around the church resulting in moisture wicking into its walls and causing such severe stability problems that part of the nave's vaults collapsed. As a result of these problems, the church was closed in 1951 and then fell into disrepair.

Vandals caused serious damage to the interior furnishings – with some items being broken and some stolen. The eastern section of the graveyard's perimeter wall disappeared during the second half of the 20th century – probably when the pavement was built. The church was scheduled for demolition, but because it was a distinguishing feature in the landscape and important for the army's bearings, demolition never occurred. During the 1970s, the Nový Bydžov council prepared a project to protect the church by turning it into a funeral hall, when efforts at using the church as a museum proved unrealistic.

In 1971–1972, the church's foundations and vaults were structurally secured using reinforced concrete wall reinforcements, and renovation of the vaults and walls took place using pressure grouting. The roofing, windows and doors were replaced during extensive repairs between 1993 and 2000, and the church was re-plastered and re-floored. The extremely damaged paintings were not restored. Since 2008, the church has been used as a gallery for exhibitions.

CHURCH APPEARANCE AND ITS CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

The Gothic church dating back to the 2nd half of the 14th century was undoubtedly brick. It probably did not include a tower, and would have had a rectangular chancel turned to the east, or slightly towards the northeast where Jerusalem was considered to lie in the Middle Ages, and from where the sun rose. During the latest church repairs, the above mentioned entrance base was removed from the wall. Nearby the church was a wooden bell tower, with a graveyard spread around which was closed in the 19th century when a new cemetery was founded outside the village. The convex-concave layout of the church nave is a reflection of late-Baroque dynamism as applied in the works of Kermer's teacher, Kilian Ignaz Dientzenhofer. Some have speculated that Kermer used and amended one of Dientzenhofer's older designs. The church's layout with its sunken concave sides and convex extended faces is similar to Dientzenhofer's church in Vižňov. Its design is more central through shortening of the middle section of the nave.

The church exterior copies the interior layout. The exterior is divided up through fairly simple lesenes from a sandstone base, with the main cornice rising from them with a complex design. The corners of the nave are highlighted with a quarter-circle recess in the layout, with concave arched and supported volutes in the cornice. The convex bowed nave side walls hold large chasuble-shaped windows, while concave parts of the nave walls and the tower hold higher rectangular windows with semicircular arches. Kermer emphasised the significance of the church's main face with his popular design; two side pilasters with the entrance in the middle. Above the main cornice is a smaller triangular shield. At its foot, Kermer placed columns with vases. Above the shield the body of the tower rises with windows at bell level. The tower is covered by a late-Gothic dome with indented top replacing the traditional lamp. There is a ridge turret above the chancel topped by a dome. Over the simple side entrance a plaque is placed decorated with the coat of arms of the Břevnov-Broumov abbots with the initials PAB PW, which can likely be interpreted as the initials of Placid Beneš, Abbot between 1818 and 1844. The plaque was moved here from the parish building, which had been designated for demolition. The church's appearance is somewhat disrupted by the added sacristy with its low mono-pitched roof.

The church interior is clearly divided up into three sections: the original entrance under the tower, the church nave and

the chancel. The interior walls are divided up using pillars and Ionic pilasters with Kermer's typical low caps and high lintels. Also typical are the windows set high on the nave walls, and their framing with chambranes topped with voussours and volutes over the bottom. The nave has flat vaults, separated ribs and triangular wedges at the ends. The end of the church designed as five sides of an octagon opens into the nave with a high arch, with the choir structure extending into the nave on the opposite side with a full almost rectilinear face. The semi-circular arched entrance to the ground floor and 1st floor of the tower are behind the choir. On the sides of the tower's square design are a recessed chapel and a staircase to the choir. The rectangular section of the chancel is topped by a dome on pendentives. As such, the church interior comprises three separate unlinked areas. Kermer based this on Dientzenhofer's principles for forming an interior. The nave interior appears elegant and dynamic and is one of the most original and effective references to radical Baroque work by Czech architects since 1750. Kermer also succeeded in setting his building into the landscape, sizing it such that the church rises gracefully from the buildings on the hill.

FRANTIŠEK KERMER

Žatec native František Kermer (1710–1786) undertook his architectural training with Kilian Ignaz Dientzenhofer himself, and was his best pupil. His career is linked to East Bohemia and Hradec Králové, where he arrived in 1730. He designed and built almost twenty churches and other buildings in late-Baroque style. The oldest of these stands in České Meziříčí (1748–1752), while others can be found, for example, in Častolovice, Kostelec nad Orlicí and Nový Hradec Králové. Close to Metličany, he built churches in Žehuň (1752–1762) and Chomutice (1780–1783). Kermer was not afraid to change a church's orientation if this improved the neighbourhood's urban and aesthetic quality. In his work, he used the procedures of dynamic Baroque, although most of his buildings gave off a peaceful ambience. In his later period, he also used Classical designs (the church front in Chomutice). His son, František Antonín Kermer, also designed buildings.

