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Opening hours and further information under tholey.de/sehenswertes/benediktinerabtei



DIRECTIONS

Römerallee 5
66636 Tholey

You will find **parking spaces** near the abbey in Sporstraße and bus parking spaces in the Wellwert parking lot at the Jewish cemetery between Theley and Tholey.

THOLEY AND SURROUNDINGS

The municipality of Tholey is one of the tourist highlights of the region in the district of St. Wendel and in the Saar-Hunsrück Nature Park. Around the all towering Schaumberg, the nine districts of the community are embedded in a beautiful landscape. They form a magnificent backdrop for the diverse offers for culture lovers and those interested in active leisure activities.

VISITS

The tourist information will gladly provide you with all you need to know about your visit to the abbey church and the municipality of Tholey. Browse through the monastery store and start your visit from there with a walk through the monastery garden.



BENEDICTINE ABBEY OF ST. MAURITIUS THOLEY

The oldest monastic foundation on German soil

PUBLISHER

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THE ABBEY CHURCH AT A GLANCE

Construction period: between 1260 and the end of the 13th century

Construction method: Transeptless, three-nave church in Gothic style with 6 bays, three 5/8 polygonal endings in the east and a massive 31 m high west tower with Baroque dome from the 18th century.

Interior dimensions of the church: 47 m length, 20 m width, 16 m height



WELL WORTH SEEING

Abbey church with stained glass windows by Gerhard Richter and Mahbuba Maqsoodi, organ, choir stalls, baroque monastery garden with tea house



THE HISTORY

The Frankish nobleman and deacon of the Cathedral of Verdun, Adalgisel Grimo, determined on 30 December 634 in his will, among other things, that his property in the village of Tholey, together with the „*loca sanctorum*“ he had established there, should fall to the Diocese of Verdun. At the request of Adalgisel Grimo, the Bishop of Trier, who also consecrated the Tholey church, sent clerics to Tholey.

Today, the Latin document of Adalgisel Grimo is considered the oldest preserved document of the Rhineland. It is no longer preserved in the original of the year 634, but in a slightly damaged but credible copy of the 10th century on parchment and is now kept at the Koblenz Main State Archives.

THE ABBEY CHURCH

The Benedictine Abbey of St. Mauritius Tholey is the oldest monastic foundation on German soil. In the 3rd century AD, a Roman luxury villa was built on the site of the present abbey. On its remains, the Frankish deacon Adalgisel Grimo built a church complex at the beginning of the 7th century, which he gave to the Bishop of Verdun in 634.

Around 750 the church is expanded to include a rectangular chancel. It is probably around this time that Benedictine monastic life first began in Tholey. In 1260 the construction of the now known early Gothic abbey church began. The portal, the mighty west tower and some clerestory windows were taken over from the Romanesque building. Before 1300 the building is completed and serves as an abbey and pilgrimage church.

In 1487, Tholey Abbey joined the Bursfeld Congregation and experienced a period of prosperity, which came to an end in 1794 when it was pillaged and plundered by French Revolutionary troops. The abbey was dissolved, and in 1798 the church and abbey buildings were auctioned. In 1806, a citizen of Tholey purchased the remaining buildings and donated them to the community as a parish church and a dwelling for the pastor. On 8 December 1949, the abbey was re-established by Pope Pius XII and was repopulated by monks from the Abbey of St. Matthias in Trier under the direction of Abbot Dr. Petrus Borne during Easter Week 1950.

The abbey church has been a joint parish and abbey church since the repopulation, and has been owned by the abbey since 2018, so it is not a diocesan church. 12 monks continue to live there today following the rules of St. Benedict.

THE FASCINATION

Anyone who visits Tholey Abbey will be fascinated by the architecture of the early Gothic abbey church, the simple life of the Benedictine monks and the magnificent monastery complex with its newly designed monastery garden, a multitude of fruit trees and the apiary.



THE MONASTERY GARDEN

In 2009, the renovation of the monastery complex and its surroundings was started. This included the redesign of the monastery garden and the restoration of the tea house that dates back to 1715. Following the baroque model, borders were planted with boxwood, lavender and roses. The garden's centerpiece is a fountain with statues of the Virgin Mary surrounded by the four evangelists.

THE CHURCH WINDOWS

The windows from the 1960s had been designed by the Tholey monk Bonifazius Robert Köck. In view of the dilapidated condition of the existing church windows, the convent decided to launch an international competition. They chose the Munich artist Dr. Mahbuba Maqsoodi, who designed a total of 30 windows based on biblical passages from the Old and New Testaments.

Three windows in the chancel of the abbey church have been designed by the world-famous artist Gerhard Richter. Each of the 1.95 by 9.30 meter high windows shows five motifs that are mirrored and repeated. They are playful colorful patterns with a lot of room for imagination. Richter developed the patterns based on an abstract image through repeated dividing and mirroring. The motifs are taken from his artist book „Patterns“.

Since the fall of 2017, the early Gothic abbey church has undergone extensive renovations. In September 2020, a decade of changes for the Benedictines came to an end.



GUIDED TOURS

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