

## History of the Parish

The first record of a priest in Laasphe dates back to 1219. A church in Laasphe was first mentioned in a document from 1230. The first evidence of Laasphe as a town was documented in 1277.

Johannes Bonemilch, born in Laasphe, ordained, when suffragan Bishop of Erfurt, Martin Luther priest in 1505. In 1507 Bonemilch of Laasphe donated a small chapel to the city of Erfurt. Known as the "Laasphe Kapelle" it is still there today.

Shortly after 1534 the Reformation was introduced by the Counts of Wittgenstein. Soon after 1580 Count Ludwig the Elder turned to the denomination based on the doctrines of Calvin. The so-called Heidelberg Catechism was introduced and is still in use today. All pictures and ornaments in the church were painted over and the altars were removed.

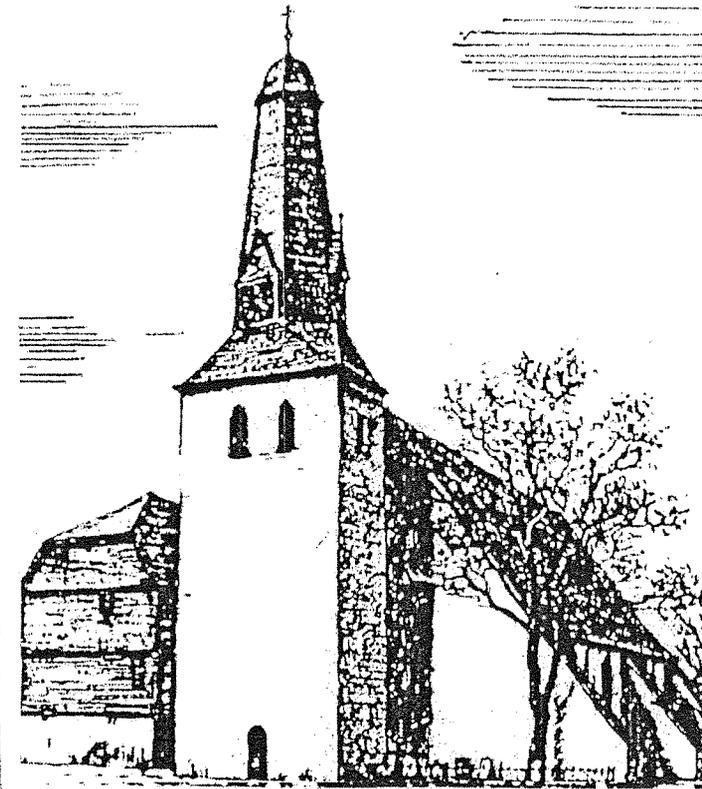
Since 1824 the parish of Laasphe, with its Reformed Confession, has been member of the Protestant Church of Westphalia. The Counts of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Hohenstein still have the Patronage of the parish.

Today about 4,500 people belong to the parish which comprises two districts. Services are not only held in Bad Laasphe almost every Sunday, but also in Niederlaasphe and Puderbach once in a fortnight and in Laaspherhütte once a month. The church in Niederlaasphe is a modern building and was consecrated in 1969, whereas the small church in Puderbach is one of the oldest in the area of Wittgenstein and goes back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

## Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God,  
we thank you that you have brought us  
safely  
to the beginning of this day.  
Keep us from falling into sin  
or running into danger,  
order us in all our doings  
and guide us to do always  
what is righteous in your sight;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

*Welcome !*

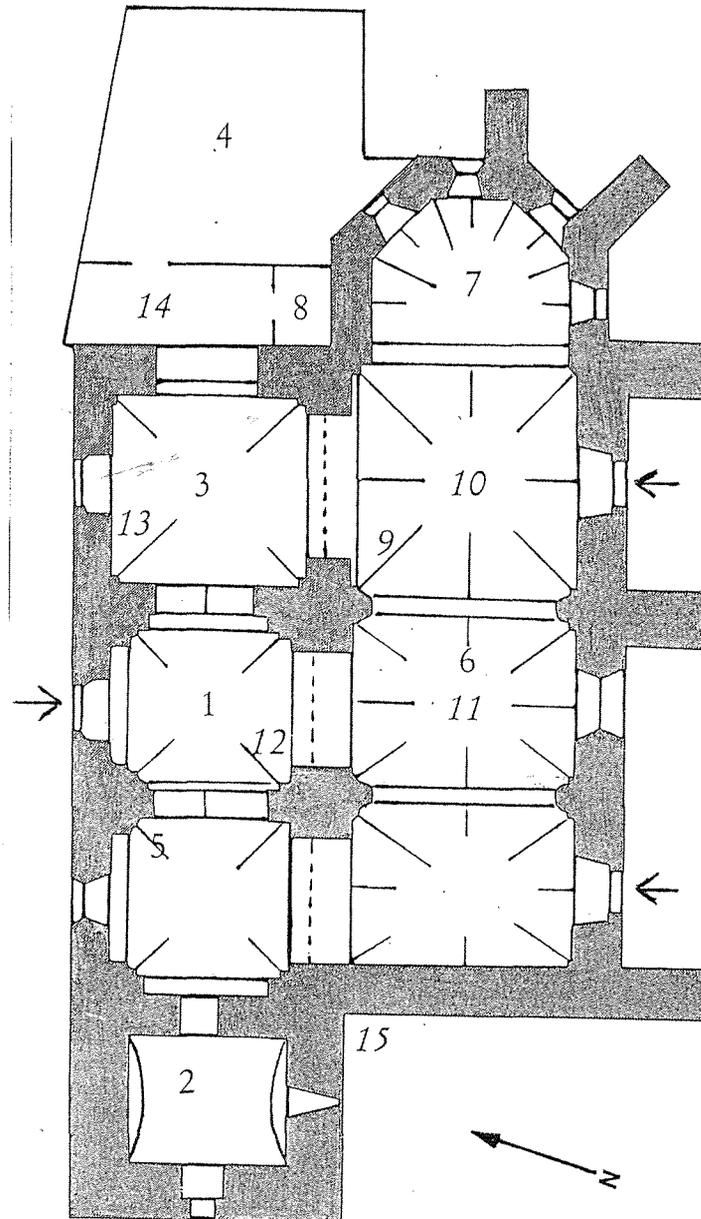


**Evangelische Stadtkirche**

**Bad Laasphe**

## History of the Building

- 1 Oldest aisle
- 2 Tower (containing 3 bells)
- 3 Original chancel and sanctuary
- 4 So-called church school
- 5 Walled up original entrance
- 6 Main nave
- 7 Present-day chancel and communion table
- 8 Princes' Gallery
- 9 Epitaph of Count Johannes I of Sayn-Wittgenstein (1412)
- 10 On the ceiling: pelican stucco (1704)
- 11 On the ceiling: bunch of grapes
- 12 Epitaph of Count Wilhelm the Elder († 1570) and his wife Johannette († 1563)
- 13 Cast iron plaque showing coats of arms
- 14 Patch of stone floor in a herring-bone pattern
- 15 Iron tomb crosses, moved there from a former cemetery outside the old town



The church was built in the 13th century: the northern aisle (1) and the tower of the same width (2) in the first half of the century. The tower contains three bells dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, 1450 and 1718. The original entrance (5) was walled up. The galleries, built later, affect the spatial impression of the aisle.

The main nave (6) and the chancel (7) were built later, but probably still in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, shaped in a five-sided semi-circle. Original Pre-Reformation paintings are covered by several layers of paint.

Beneath the chancel there was a crypt where the Counts of Wittgenstein and their families were buried until 1650. In 1667 a new burial chamber was built for the nobility behind the original chancel (3). It was used until 1815. The so-called church school (4) was built above it. In 1838 the old crypt was walled up and in 1948 the coffins were transferred from the burial place in the church to the graveyard at Wittgenstein castle.

The so-called Princes' Gallery (8) on the north side of the chancel originally spanned the chancel as can be seen on photograph of 1894.

Outside there are two 19<sup>th</sup> century iron tomb crosses (15), moved there from a former cemetery outside the old town.

### Special items of interest inside the church include:

Epitaphs of the Counts of Wittgenstein (9, 12)  
 Cast iron plaque showing coats of arms (13)  
 Stuccoes on the ceiling: a pelican from 1704 (10) and a bunch of grapes (11)  
 Patch of stone floor in a herring-bone pattern (14)  
 Communion table in the chancel (17<sup>th</sup> century)  
 Organ on the rear gallery (1967)