

## Church services

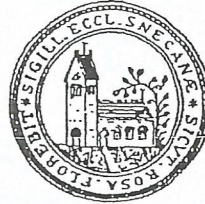
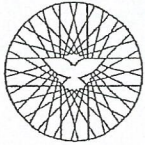
Two services are held in the Martini Church on Sundays. The morning service begins at 10 a.m. and the evening service at 7 p.m. The morning services are held in the nave and the evening services in the choir.

## Questions

For administrative questions, please contact the Church administrative office:

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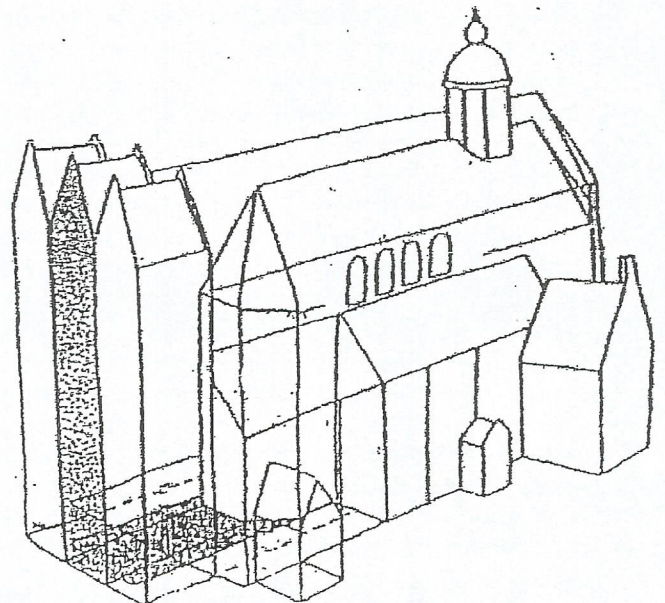
Protestantse Kerk



## The Great- or Martini Church in Sneek

The Great- or Martini Church is situated on a mound in the centre of Sneek. The church is dedicated to Martin, the first bishop of Tours. Already in the eleventh century there was a tuff church on this spot. After some extensions, the building of a new church was started in 1498. It became according to Frisian standards a spacious gothic basilica. With the rebuilding, the church did not become quite new: on the west side the three old Roman towers remained. About 1530, this church was more or less complete.

As a consequence of the Reformation this Catholic church fell into the hands of the Protestants. They adopted the church to their belief, which meant that the altars, figures and other catholic furnishings were removed. Only the pulpit and some pews remained. Also the organ was left unharmed, although its use during the services was forbidden. In the course of the seventeenth century, the empty space was furnished with textboards, paintings and other pieces of furniture.



In 1681 the central tower of the three towers collapsed and the remaining two were pulled down. The greater part of the church had to be rebuilt. She now became lower and shorter in structure and the towers were left out. This reconstruction was at the same time, the starting point for a new layout of the church. There came new and more spacious pews for the members of the Town Council, the Magistrate and other local Boards.

Ultimately there came a new organ: the construction of which was consigned to the German organbuilder Arp Schnitger in 1708. Finally, in 1771 the loss of the three towers was more or less provided for by the building of a dome with a carillon. With this the rebuilding and layout were broadly speaking completed.

During the Batavian Revolution in 1795 – the time of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity – the glass-stained window, the funeral pates and coats of arms on the pews perished, because they reminded too much of the class distinction of the days gone by. Especially the replacement of the stained glass by transparent glass windows in wooden frames changed the appearance of the church to a high extent.

In this design the interior remained unaltered to 1870. Then owing to the growing attendance of churchgoers, the total interior reconstruction of the church was deemed necessary. The old furniture was removed and there came a round pew-plan, with a large gallery. Only the pulpit, the organ and the pew for the Town Council survived. Under the wooden vault a plaster ceiling was placed and from then on, a wooden partition separated choir and nave.

About 1925, the church appeared to subside gravely. The foundation of the columns had to be replaced. The opportunity was seized to adapt the church to the demands of the time; not only was electric light installed but also the furniture was painted in fashionable dark-brown. In the seventies again a complete restoration appeared to be necessary. Roof and dome were first tackled (1980).

After that the organ (1988) and finally the construction was re-enforced and the interior restored in the original style (1992-1994) The wooden vault was reconstructed so that the unity between nave and choir was restored. Moreover, the furniture was painted in the colour of 1871.

## The Details

Although the Martini Church has known an eventful building history by among other things the collapse of the Roman towers in 1681 and by the conversion of the interior in 1870, yet a number of particulars from earlier times are worth mentioning.

### - The Exterior

The medieval church was built with big red bricks with here and there a few scattered tuffstones. Odd are the soap-stone layers on the north-side and the square-shaped patterns in the brickwork on the south side. In the window frames and buttresses natural stone was sparsely used for decoration. Especially in the choir the medieval origin of the church is an eye-catcher. Despite the lowering of the church in 1681, the choir still makes the impression of being elevated. On the south side, next to the church, are two buildings: the sacristy, later used as vestry and the timbered medieval belfry from 1489, in which two chiming bells hang, dating from 1466 and 1543.

The entrances to the church are formed by various porches. The oldest porch is situated on the east side, behind which an old gate is hidden dating from 1652 which is surrounded by the symbolism of mortality. The largest porch is situated on the north side, erected in 1793 in classical style and intended to be looking impressive to the side facing the Town Hall. Finally, at the south-side a simple wooden porch is situated, which was intended as a way-in for the poor and orphans. On the roof of the church is the beautiful dome, dating from 1771, taking the place of the former roof-turret.

### - The Interior

As is customary with medieval catholic churches, there exists a distinction between the nave and the choir. In the Martini Church these two are separated from each other by the organ dating from 1710. In the earlier times there must have been a choir-screen at that spot. In the interior of the nave something remarkable is the matter: when looking up one gets – on one side – still the impression of a long and tall church, where at the same time one's attention is drawn to the east side of the church. On the other side there is the square space marked by the walls and galleries. This is the place where the protestant design of the church was shaped with a strong focus on the central part of the church round the pulpit. Because of the round pew plan this effect is even strengthened. It evokes a certain tension without being disturbing.

Only on closer look, are the heterogeneous parts of the interior notable. This is dominated by the pew pan, dating from 1871. The pews are made of pine wood, but painted subtly in a light oak imitation. The older pieces in the interior are of real oak, just as the pulpit, dating from 1626, the Corporation pew from 1688, the organ from 1710 and the sixteenth century door leading to the vestry.

Furthermore mentioning must be made of the various paintings in the church. They are seventeenth- and eighteenth century paintings of the Sneker artists Petrus and Hanso Moll and Jan Buitenvelt. Finally attention must be paid to the glass-stained liberation window, made by Pieter Hofman from the Hague in 1949. The wooden vault was reconstructed in 1994, using a number of old parts, among which are the sixteenth century drawing-rafters.

The choir where originally the priest celebrated mass, was probably used as the space where the Holy Communion was taken in the period after 1580, but beside that especially as a place, where generally church meetings took place. Not only in 1986 did this place obtain a liturgical function, when

it was fitted out for among other things evening services. It was equipped with a rostrum and a new organ, built by the Van den Heuvel Brothers. The three large escutcheons which are situated on the gallery behind the main organ, belong to the Corporation pew on the west-side of the nave. The family arms of the members of the Corporation from the end of the seventeenth century, were cut away during the French occupation. The panelling in the choir was made in 1925 of the then-demolished eighteenth century vault, over the nave. The chandeliers which are also to be found in the nave, date from the twentieth century.

Finally attention must be drawn to the sacristy. This space, which has been used for Church Council meetings since 1580, can be entered through an ingeniously made early sixteenth century door. Surprisingly, one enters then a room in rococo style. The carving on the ceiling was made by Georg Hempel and dates from about 1760. The room was restored in 1924.