

The Confessio-Road

Through Protestant Augsburg

The “Confessio Augustana” consists of 28 articles which Philipp Melancthon (1497-1560), Martin Luther’s closest colleague, formulated and handed over to Emperor Charles V on June 25, 1530, at the Diet of Augsburg while Martin Luther (1483-1546) stayed at the Veste Coburg. The Confessio Augustana (also known as the “Augsburg Confession”) was first legally recognized by the empire in the Augsburg Religionsfrieden (religious peace) in 1555 after Emperor Charles V unsuccessfully attempted to reestablish church unity by force of arms.

The Augsburg Religionsfrieden, which reached an agreement on the equality of the confessions, was the first meaningful step in the direction of freedom of religion and conscience, but also one of the reasons for the Thirty Years’ War which hit the city hard. The parity of the confessions which was again achieved in 1648 in the Peace of Westphalia has been celebrated annually since 1650 in Augsburg on August 8. Since 1949 the “Augsburger Hohe Friedensfest” (Augsburg’s distinguished peace festival) is the only city holiday in Germany which is a symbol of institutionalized tolerance. Tri-annually since 1985 Augsburg has awarded a peace prize of 12,500 euros for accomplishments to promote similarities among the confessions.

Yet everything began in 1530, in Augsburg – with the Confessio Augustana, that changed the world. Today the Augsburg Confession is the worldwide doctrinal basis of 540 million Christians.



Augsburg and the Maximilianstrasse by night: Important impulses from this city went out into the world.

The “Confessio-Road” brings you close to the Confessio Augustana in a unique way. It brings you to places where the monk Martin Luther was active and to states of the Reformation, a movement which went from here out into the world.

Contents of the Confessio Augustana

What is written in the document?

The “Confessio Augustana” is a summary of that which Protestant Christians still teach today. Protestant pastors are bound by the confession at the time of their ordination. For hearers of that time period the theses were unbelievably revolutionary.

- The “Confessio Augustana” demands,
- that priests may marry if they so desire. A compulsory vow of celibacy is against the will of the creator (Article 23).
 - that according to the foundation Christ laid, members of the church should be offered both the bread and the wine of the Holy Communion (Article 22).
 - that worldly and clerical authority should always be separated; however, if a regiment teaches some injustice, whether worldly or clerical, the people should not obey it (Article 28).



In the Anna church: The portrait of Martin Luther painted by Lukas Cranach.

In Article 4 Luther’s most crucial concern is raised. Here is emphasized that mankind is redeemed through faith in the grace of God alone (justification by faith), not by good works and certainly not with purchased letters of indulgence. The unity of the church was broken by this doctrine. The “Mutual Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification” which was signed on October 31, 1999, in the St. Anna church in Augsburg contributed significantly in bringing the Catholic and Protestant Christians closer together.

Concerning the author of the Confessio-Road:

Gerhard Strauss was born in Augsburg in 1926. As a pastor he served a number of communities in Bavaria and led the preacher’s seminar in Bayreuth before becoming a member of the Bavarian Protestant-Lutheran Church Council in Munich for 16 years. Strauss retired in 1991 and returned to Augsburg. Here he composed various writings about the Reformation city. Dr. Strauss died in Augsburg in 2001.



Three alternate tours –

Subject to the visitor’s interests and physical condition

You may choose between or combine the following tours:

Tour 1 touches the most important locations within the Old Town, including the world-famous Fuggerei and the nearby historic Protestant Churches “Zu den Barfüssern” and St. Jacob.

Tour 2 is a circuit of the town quarter of St. Ulric and of the Protestant Cemetery, which for 450 years has been in uninterrupted existence (use streetcar line 2 or 3, if desired).

Tour 3 combines both Tour 1 and Tour 2.

You may commence your tour at any point. Additional information is available at the publication counters in each of the churches along the way.

Particularly worthy of your attention is the permanent exhibition at the “Lutherstiege” (Luther Staircase) in St. Anna Church.



Documents of the Reformation show the “Luther staircase” in the St. Anna church.

We hope that your tour of Augsburg’s history will prove to be an enjoyable experience.

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THE CITY OF REFORMATION

Augsburg – historic sites of the Reformation



A walking tour through Augsburg, City of Reformation

1 Church of St. Anna – The adjoining Carmelite monastery was the focal point of the Reformation in Augsburg. Luther stayed here in 1518, during his confrontation with Cardinal Cajetan. The West Choir contains the burial chapel of the Fugger Family. At the Christmas Service of 1525, the Holy Communion was first observed “according to both rites”. From 1634 to 1648, only open-air Protestant services were allowed and held in the inner courtyard. After 1730 center of Pietistic movement (Samuel Urlsperger). Organ Music an Saturdays at 11:30 a.m.



The monastery belonging to the St. Anna church was a starting point of the Reformation.

2 Maximilianstrasse 36/38 – In this town palace, newly constructed by merchant Jacob Fugger between 1512 and 1515, the disputation between Cajetan and Luther took place in 1518, from October 12 through 18. Luther maintained that his conscience was solely bound by the Word of God. Thus, the debates proved futile and resulted in the Church schism. In 1548, Tizian portrayed Emperor Charles V as victor over the Protestants.

The Fugger buildings: Here Luther and Cajetan negotiated.



3 Church of St. Ulric and Afra – Dedicated to St. Afra, early Christian martyr (about 300 A.D) and to St. Ulric, exemplary bishop and Prince of the Empire who, in 955, achieved a decisive victory over the Hungarian invaders. The former Chapter hall of the monastery is now the Protestant Church of St. Ulric. Oriented at right angle to the basilica, it exemplifies good ecumenical neighborhood.



Both Ulric's churches on the southern end of the Augsburg Maximilianstrasse.

4 Protestant Cemetery – Haunstetterstrasse (streetcar line 4), in use since 1534/1648. Tombs of Elias Holl (upper wall), of the Stetten and Schaezler Families, of Bertolt Brecht's parents (south-east corner), and others. It was here that, for six months in 1732, Samuel Urlsperger held open-air services to the “Exulanten” (exiles) from Salzburg, until, on June 14, they were admitted into the town.

At the Protestant cemetery: Augsburg's city architect Elias Holl was buried here too.

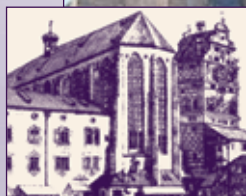


5 The old Gothic Town Hall – Until 1615 it occupied the site of today's town hall designed and constructed by Elias Holl. Here, on September 25, 1555, the “Augsburger Religionsfriede” (the Augsburg Contract of Religious Peace) was proclaimed. This was a first step toward the “Augsburger Parität”, an understanding which established religious quantitative parity between the religious groups and which, in the period between 1650 and 1803, marked the end of confrontations and led toward peaceful coexistence and creative competition.



The Augsburg Renaissance City Hall (next to it the Perlach Tower).

6 Barfüsser Church – In 1221, the first emissaries of Saint Francis settled in Augsburg, with the first church erected in 1243. The first Protestant service was held in 1524. Over several decades, this was the center of Augsburg Meistersinger (“Master Singers”, organized by the craftsmen's guilds). Since 1649 it has been a parish church. Bertolt Brecht was baptized and confirmed here. The cloister contains the Chapel of the Community of the Casteller Ring (“The Castell Circle”) of Schwanberg. Hourly prayers are offered at 7 a.m., 12.15 p.m., 6 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.. The adjacent tearoom welcomes tourists.



The east chancel, reconstructed after destruction in World War II, of the former mighty Barfüsser church.

7 Saint Jacob's Church – Founded in 1348, it is the former point of assembly for the faithful setting out on the Pilgrimage of St. Jacob's.



The gothic chancel of the Jakob's church.



8 At the Gallus Chapel – (“Down That Way”) – Near this spot, Luther surreptitiously left Augsburg by way of a small gate in the city wall which friends opened for him, after Cajetan had threatened to put him under arrest.



At the Gallus church visitors find a small slab which makes remembrance of the episode surrounding the “Da Hinab” (“Down That Way”) very likely a legend.

9 The Cathedral “Mariae Heimsuchung” – (“Visitation of the Holy Virgin”) – Constructed on the foundations of a Roman church edifice. Adjacent to the southerly façade, early Christian period excavations. The canons Oekolampad (1518) and Urbanus Rhegius (1520) became leading figures of the reformational movement not only in Augsburg, but far beyond. After the fruitless disputation with Cajetan, Luther's officially certified “Appeal regarding the ill-informed Pope and directed to the Pope who is in need of better information” was publicly exposed and affixed to the Cathedral portal. Between 1537 and 1547 the Cathedral Chapter sought refuge from the Reformation in Dillingen. During this period, Protestant services were held in the Cathedral (by Wolfgang Musculus and others). In 1559 the Jesuit Petrus Canisius was head of the Cathedral Chapter.

Protestant preaching took place from time to time in the Augsburg Dom (cathedral).



10 Peutingenstrasse 11 – Here, on October 9, 1518, Luther was the house guest of Conrad Peutinginger, the eminent and influential humanist and politician. In the courtyard, remnants of Peutinginger's collection of antique sculptured stone.



The residential building of the great humanist in the Peutingenstrasse near the Dom.

11 Fronhof (Interior Courtyard of the Bishop's Palace) – In the former Episcopal Palace of which only the tower remains intact, the “Confessio Augustana” (the “Augsburg Confession”) was proclaimed, in German language, on June 25, 1530 by the Chancellor of Saxony, Dr. Christian Beyer, in the presence of Emperor Charles V, the Princes of the Empire, and the members of the Imperial Diet, while the jubilant Protestant populace stood outside, listening in front of the open conference hall windows. Almost exactly twelve years prior to this, Albrecht Dürer portrayed Emperor Maximilian I at this location.



In an earlier building of the baroque Bishop's Palace at the Fronhof, the Augsburg Confession was read aloud in the year 1530.

12 The Protestant Church Heilig-Kreuz (Holy Cross) – The structure was razed in 1630 (Edict of Restitution – Counter-Reformation) and rebuilt in 1653, thanks to major contributions from Queen Christina of Sweden, daughter of King Gustavus Adolphus.

The Protestant church Heilig-Kreuz was rebuilt with donations from the Swedish queen and the Danish king.

