



# **THE NORTHERN LIGHTS CATHEDRAL ALTA CHURCH**

2013

a short presentation

**The Northern Lights Cathedral Alta Church** was consecrated on February 10. 2013 by Bishop Per Oskar Kjølås. Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mette-Marit was present at the consecration together with the Norwegian Minister of Church Affairs Rigmor Aasrud, Country Governor Gunnar Kjønne, the Mayor of Alta Laila Davidsen and a church full of worshippers. The Nordlys Children's Gospel Choir and Alta Motett Choir with reinforcements from music pupils at Alta Upper Secondary School participated in the ceremony by providing music. This was a lovely church service and a solemn occasion!

The building is constructed from concrete with external cladding of titanium sheets. The altar wall is treated with a blue glaze to accentuate the figure of Christ. The entire room is made from concrete with massive oak floors, chairs and moulding; the walls have 800 meters of vertical moulding strips with LED lighting behind them. This provides a warm and healthy atmosphere and light with good acoustics qualities. The architect behind the design was Kolbjørn Jenssen from Link Arkitektur in Stavanger. The church's design was developed in collaboration with Schmidt, Hammer and Lassen Architects in Århus, Denmark.

**The foundation stone** of the Northern Lights Cathedral Alta Church was laid on New Year's Eve 1999 by the mayor Eva Nielsen and Parish Priest Olav Øygard on the same day that Alta was legally declared a city (Nordlys-byen/Northern Light city). This foundation stone was removed some years after that, when the building was relocated on the pedestrian street's main axis. The foundation stone was relaid,



updated content, on August 18. 2012 by Head Parish Priest Olav Øygard and Monica Nielsen (the daughter of Eva Nielsen) along with

a new cornerstone, with updated content, which was laid by the current mayor, Laila Davidsen, and Bishop Per Oskar Kjølås. Both cornerstones are placed in the new foundation at the front of the church. The cornerstones contain bibles, psalm books, the Sami New Testament, the congregation newsletter and newspapers, official coin collection sets from 1999 and 2012, drawings and cost estimates, photos and other information.

The name *Northern Lights Cathedral Alta Church* was chosen by the Nord-Hålogaland Diocesan Council on April 11. 2012. The term *Northern Lights Cathedral* became the working title for the new church as early as 1999, when Alta reclassified itself as the Northern light city. It still took many years to have the term accepted and approved as the official name.

The Northern Lights Cathedral Alta is the parish church for a population of approx. 16 000 people.

## Location

The Northern Lights Cathedral - Alta Church is located right in downtown Alta at the end of a pedestrian street; a lovely addition to the city.

## The interior

The interior contains decorations by the artist Peter Brandes from Denmark. **The figure of Christ** is cast in bronze and placed on a bronze plinth; it is approximately 4.3 meters high, and with a foundation that weighs about 2 tons. *"Christ appears as crucified but also giving his blessing with embracing arms. His eyes turn toward God as he takes his last breath. Christ seems thankful for becoming the Chosen one for those who choose him. That is why he does not look toward the ground; triumphant and bringing salvation, he stands in front of us as the bearer of light and hope"*. The figure has patina that is darkest at the bottom and gets lighter toward the top of the sculpture, until the very top of the figure opens to the light of God and spreads this light to us.



**The baptismal font** is marble stucco with 32 different shades of blue with a basin of clear glass. The bottom of the basin has an inlaid Star of Bethlehem and a fish in gold. The edge of the basin is decorated with dove feathers, an image of the Holy Spirit, the spokesman for the Trinity.

Inside the "tower-room" is a 7,5 meter high gilded **Jacob's Ladder**. The "tower-room" also contains a light globe we can walk through and it is possible to sit and rest

in the silence, light a candle and say a prayer.

**The pulpit** is made of brass with marble stucco. There are symbols of the four evangelists carved on the front.





The outside of the tower wall toward the altar has **12 gold-plated reliefs**, one for each of the 12 disciples. The symbols have been deliberately simplified into nearly iconographic signs. **The altar** is made from fibre-reinforced concrete with a marble stucco surface. On the front the altar is decorated with a gold mosaic edge.

**The light tower** is designed by Per Buvik and made by a company from Alta, Jens Jensen AS. The lights come on during the church services, and the baptism light comes on during baptisms.

A large **Steinway concert grand piano** was donated as a gift by the Sparebankstiftelsen foundation.



**The Organ** has been made by Grönlund Orgelbyggeri and has 29 stops and approximately 1800 pipes. The organ is a donation from Alta Kraftlag. The organ was consecrated on April 13th, 2014.

There are **2 church bells** in the Northern Lights Cathedral. On bell is engraved with the Alta congregation's mission vision: "Close to God – close to people. WE WILL: BE GENEROUS – BE CARING – BRING HOPE". On the other bell we read: "The peace of God over hill and dale, let it thrive where we build and live". This is a psalm stanza for the North of Norwegian Christmas psalms by Trygve Hoff. The bell was cast by Olsen Nauen Klokkestøperi AS in Tønsberg and is a donation from Sparebank1 Nord-Norge.



**The church silver** was designed by Sunniva Juhls and was produced at Juhls Silver Gallery in Kautokeino. The set consists of a disc (paten) and plate, chalice and a smaller chalice for intinction, as well as 60 individual chalices. The church silver is made from silver (925S) with gold mosaic. The church silver was used during the 5-year anniversary celebration in 2018.

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