

## Ev. luth. Church in Saraiki

It is not known exactly when the foundation-stone of the church was laid, but it is sure that it has been at the end of the 16th century. This we know from the inscription in the two churchbells.

### Churchbells:

1. – In the year 1594 ANNO Matias
2. – In the year 1602

### Church:

At the beginning of the Great Northern War (in the years 1700/1701) the church was destroyed. But at the end of the 18th century the lord of the castle in Grobina Peter George Offenberg gave the order to renew the church in Saraiki „to honour God for the good of his people in Saraiki“. The church was renewed and consecrated on the 17th of October 1798.

The church is built from field stones, without a tower (for 200 people). The church is one of the mural churches that were built in the period from the end of the 16th century until the end of the 18th century. There are two different types of wallchurches:

- ❖ Archaic churches without tower (like in Ilmāja, Ziemeupe and in Saraiki);
- ❖ More prevalent are wall churches with the for Kurzeme characteristic tower which is built at the end of the parish room (Durbe, Grobina, Apriki, Saka, Vergale, Cirava a.o.)

The church in Saraiki was renovated in the year 1888. In 1904 it was enlarged with a vestry. Therefore a Latvian parish woman gave money, the manor the materials.

### Altarpainting

The author is not known. It was a gift from the baroness of Ilgi (not far from Grobina) in May 1904.

### Bench

The local carpenter Fricis Jonass made the benches in a traditional latvian style, about 1937.

### Pastors

- ❖ In 1647 the adjunct of the minister in Grobina Richter got the order to preach every month on the fourth Sunday in Saraiki.
- ❖ The dean of the Grobina district Gerhard Rembing (1633 - 1695), served as a pastor in the parish of Grobina from 1685 until 1691.
- ❖ **J.M. Launics** – pastor in Grobina – Saraiki
- ❖ His son – **J. M. Frederik Launics** (1733 - 1832) was pastor and from 1823 also dean of the Grobina district.
- ❖ The pastor of North-Durbe **Janis Kristaps Baumbahs** was also the dean of the Grobina district; he died in 1861.
- ❖ 1903 – 1923 **Eduards Vikenbergs** (Wieckberg, 1866 - 1937)
- ❖ 1923 – 1929 **Janis Kundzinsh** (1891 - 1967)

- ❖ 1931 -1941 **Kristaps Valters** (1904 - 1985), started already to work as a vicar on Thanksgiving 1929; after his ordination on the 7th of 1931 he was official pastor. He stopped to work on the 14th of May in 1941. There are some statistic dates from the year 1938: 6000 parish members, baptized 76, confirmed 55, spoused 43, buried 50, receivers of the Holy Communion 1457 (24%).
- ❖ 1941 – 1944 **Roberts Abolinsh** (born in 1918)
- ❖ In the 1950s pastor **Aumalis**
- ❖ In the 1960s and 70s pastor **Dekshenieks**
- ❖ In the 1980s pastor **Ilmars Krievinsh**
- ❖ In the 1990s pastor **Ozolins**.
- ❖ And from May 2002 started to serve pastor **Martin Urdze** (born 1960). He was born in Germany in a latvian family. He arrived in Latvia in 1995. He's working also in Liepaja at the ev. luth. „Congregation of the Cross" and in the Deaconic centre.

### Choir

There were church choirs in the time from 1920 – 1940, led by the teacher Grinblats, later Veilands.

### Fence

There is a fence from field stones, similar as in Ziemeupe.

### "Barley pub"

Besides the church is a house called „Upites”. In old times this has been the „Barley pub”. In Latvia formerly when a church was build there was also a guesthouse. When the „Barley pub” was built is unknown. In the 1920s the pub was bought by the farmer Toms Ozols.

### War and postwar years

From the end of 1944 until the capitulation in 1945 the German forces had a depot in the church. The altarpainting was kept in the attic at **Toms Ozols** house beside the church). In the German time nothing was robbed or damaged, also the benches were left. But when the Soviet army came, the church was almost destroyed. The organ of the church was ravaged. The chandelier was given to a museum from where the parish got it back later. It was planned to install a club, than a storehouse, but finally it was decided that the building is not big enough for such needs. There were people who fought for their church and who preserved it. We can mention **Endols, Veilands, Bibis, Buncis, Lembots, Drullis, Buivids and M. Lacis** and now it is done by the **Vigulis family**.

Now we wish that the church can continue to exist for the next generations.

Even in the Soviet times when religion was denied this church has been preserved and it was not demolished as in other places in

Latvia where the church has to be built again. There were times when the party secretary listened what the pastor said in his sermon and watched how the services were held.

In October 1998 the church had its 200 year anniversary since the renewal of the church. Archbishop Vanags participated at the service and the church got as a present songbooks.

### Activities

- ❖ The **services** are held once a month, every third Sunday at 11 o'clock.
- ❖ „**Talks about Bible and Life**” - once a month at the first Sunday at 10 o'clock.
- ❖ There is also **confirmation teaching** every year.

### Contact:

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