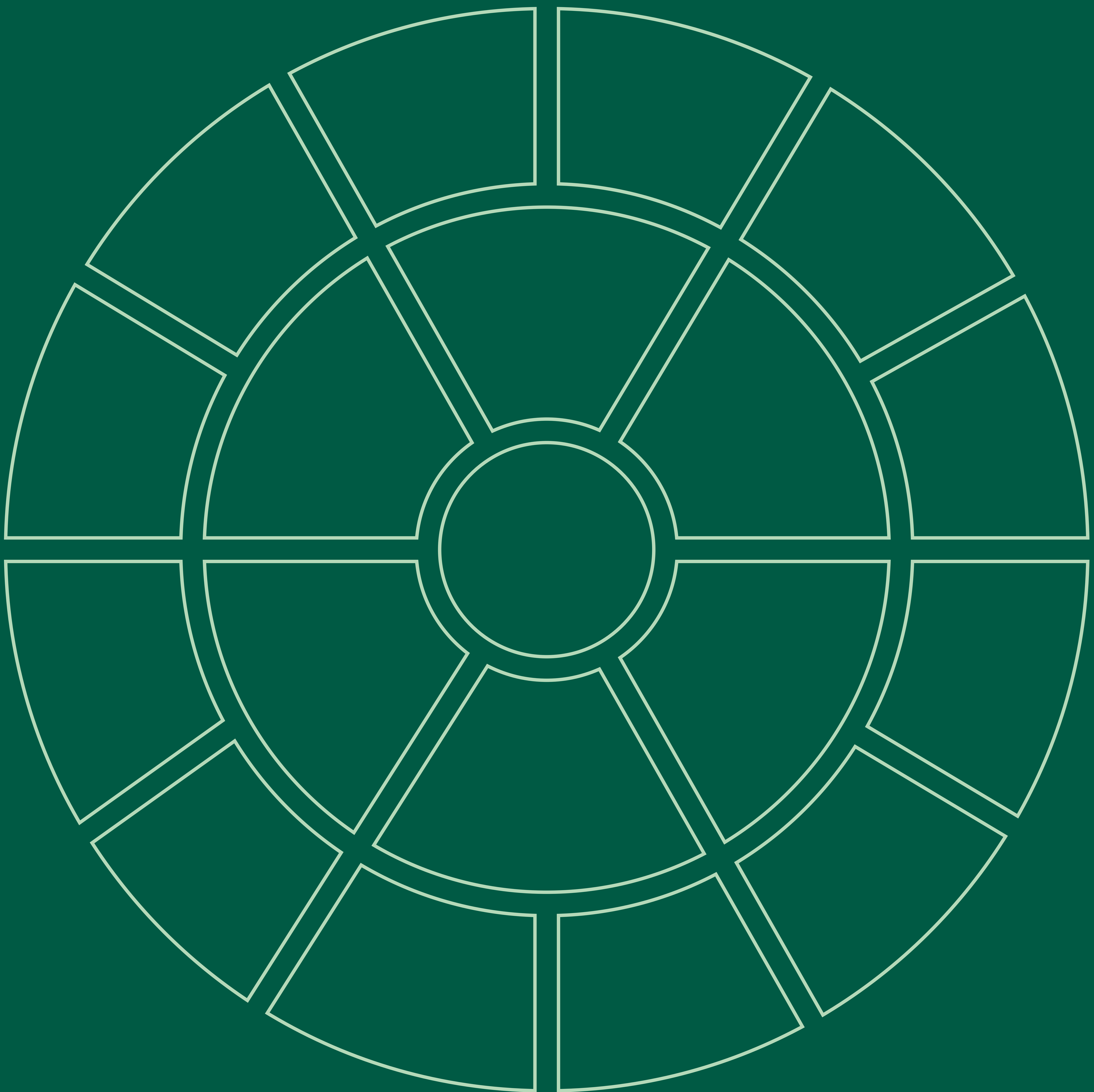


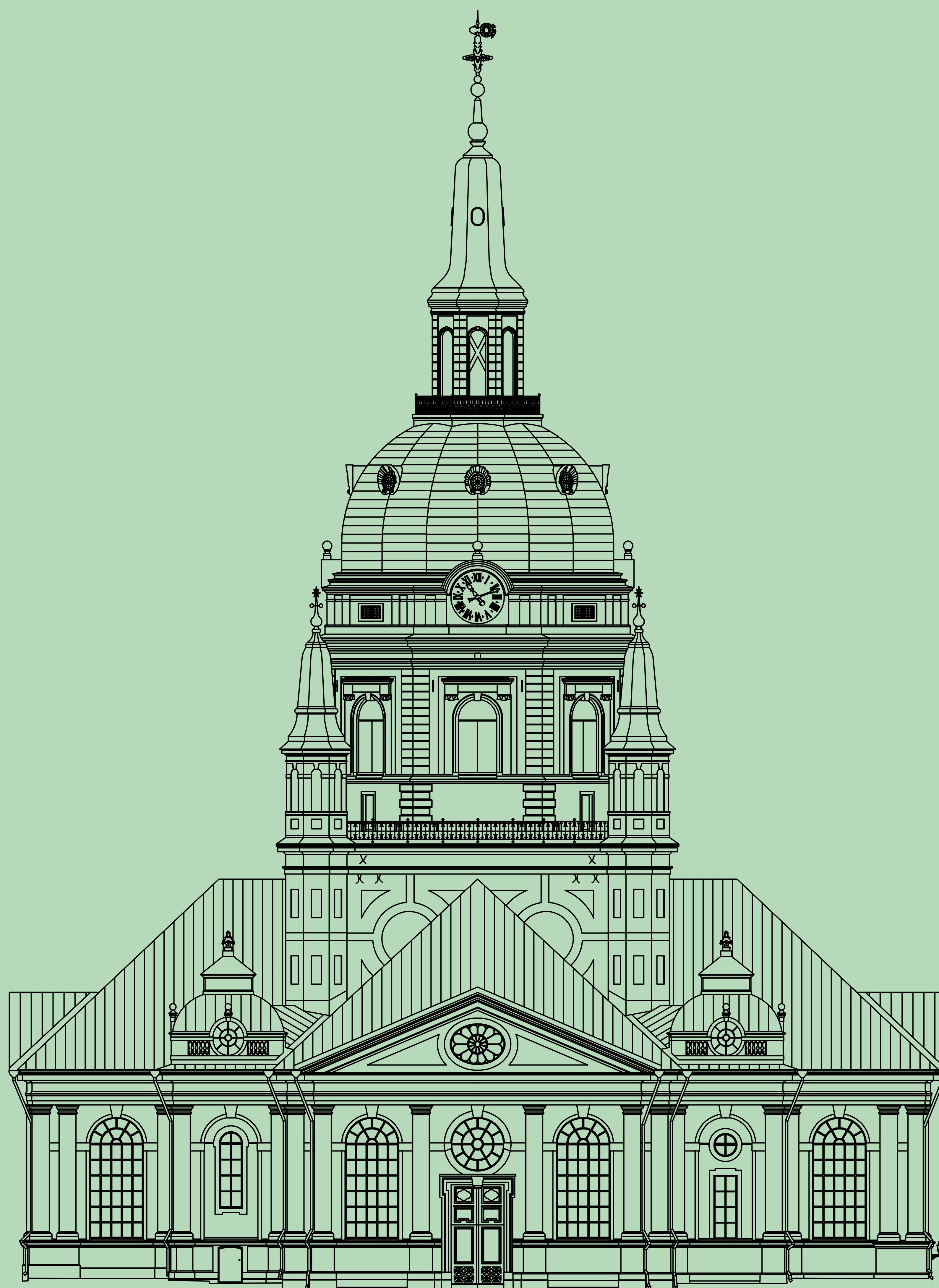
# Guide to *Katarina church*



English



## Welcome

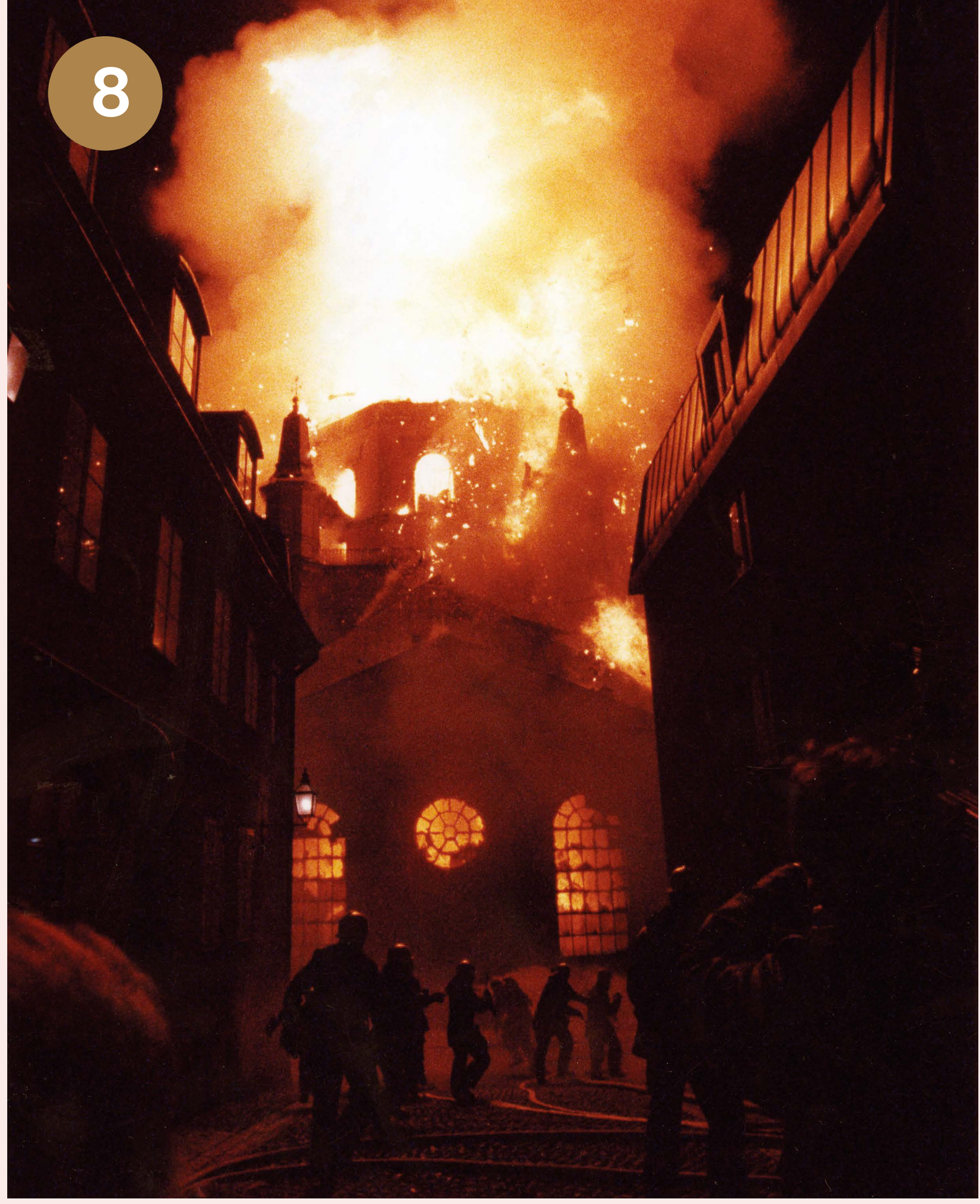


**Katarina Church is one of Sweden's great baroque churches and the country's first cruciform dome church. Please feel free to make your time in Katarina Church your own!**

In the 17th century, the church on Pelarbacken was designed as a navigation point for sea routes towards Stockholm. Ever since then, Katarina Church has been an obvious part of Södermalm's silhouette. Katarina Church has experienced two fires – which makes this place a living example of how spiritual yearning can build something new out of the ashes.

Several times a week, the church interior is filled with people and music. In between these times, this is one of the few remaining places on Södermalm where it still is possible to experience complete solitude.





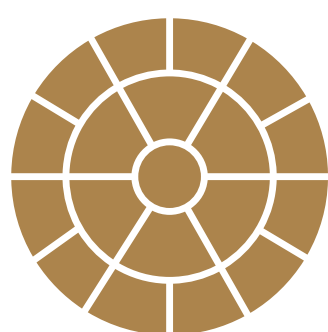
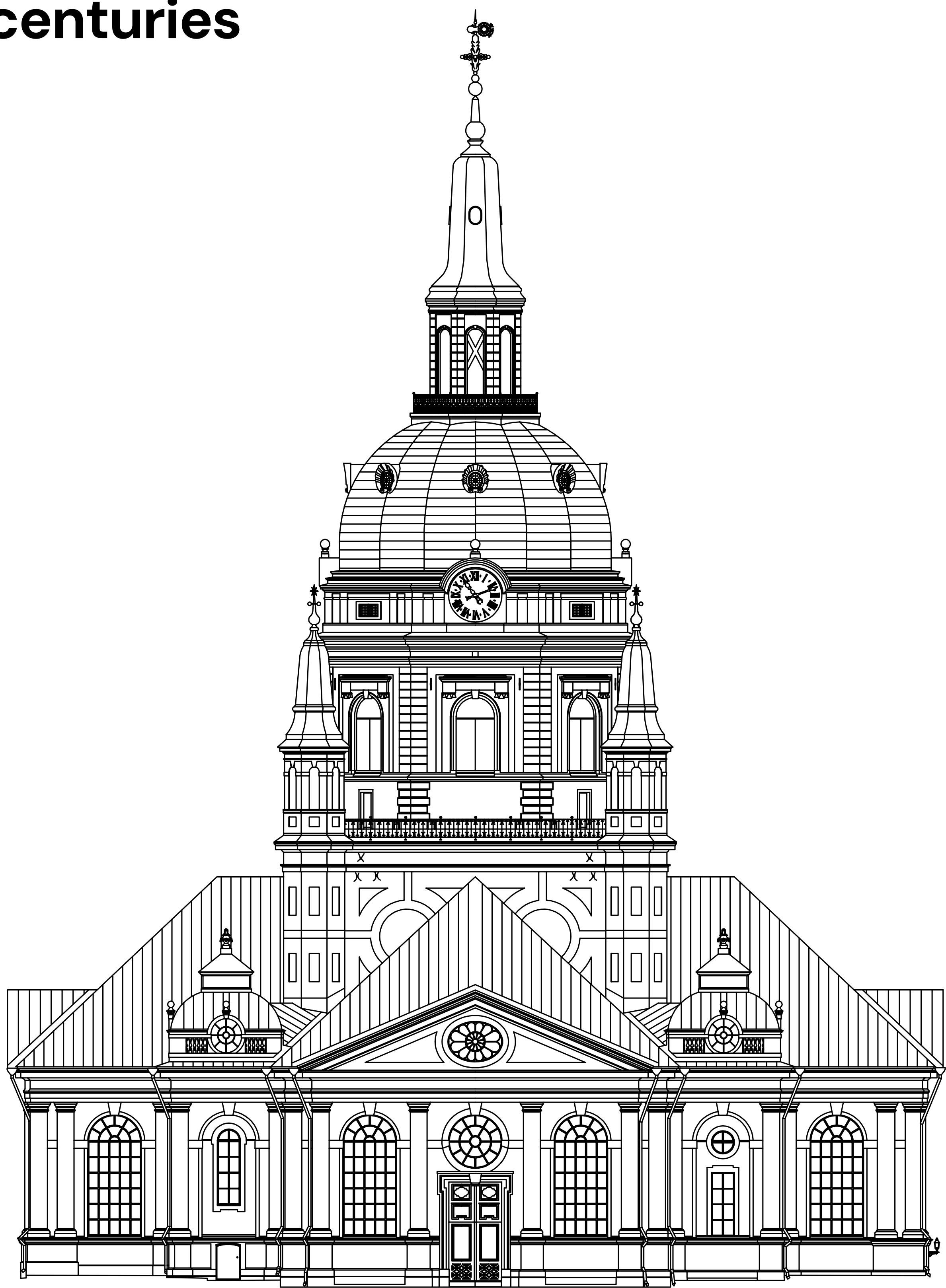
## From The Archive

1. Katarina Church in Suecia antiqua et hodierna (roughly translated, Sweden past and present). Image of copper engraving by Adam Perelle based on Erik Dahlbergh's original.
2. View of Södermalm towards Katarina Church, probably from the end of the 19th century.
3. City life on Södermannagatan at the end of the 19th century.
4. The South Cemetery gateway, probably from the end of the 19th century.
5. Confirmation service in Katarina Church, probably from the 1920s.
6. Funeral entourage at Katarina cemetery.
7. Church coffee – a timeless tradition.
8. Katarina Church in flames. The tower falls, 03.25 am on 17 May 1990.
9. King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia together with Stig Johnsson (parish priest from 1984–1991) in the ruins after the fire.
10. Katarina Church seen from the Old Town.
11. The Katarina Choir's Advent concerts are among Stockholm's most popular.
12. Katarina Mass is one of the most well attended services in the Church of Sweden.

### Photographs

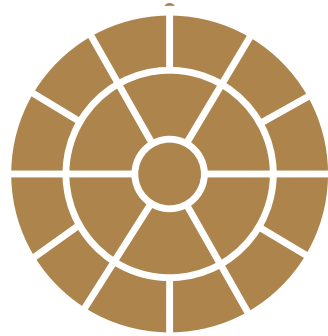
1. The National Library of Sweden
- 2–4, 10. The pictures belong to the City Museum of Stockholm. Photographers: Kasper Salin's collection and Mattias Ek (10)
- 5–7. Katarina Parish's picture archive
9. Lars Pehrson/SvD/Scanpix
11. Henric Claesson
12. Mikael Silkeberg





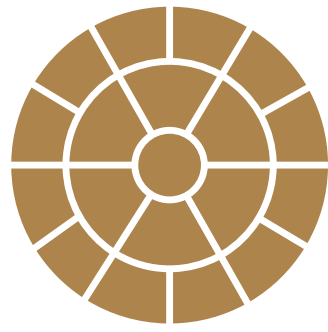
1330s

The Chapel of the Holy Cross was built on Pelarbacken, which is one of Södermalm's high points. The chapel was the initial forerunner of Katarina Church and was a small "open-air chapel" where travellers could perform their devotions.



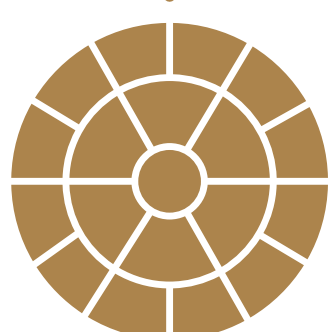
1520

During the Stockholm Bloodbath, Christian II of Denmark had about 90 of the country's leading members of the aristocracy were executed on Stortorget in the Old Town. Together with the exhumed and mutilated body of Sten Sture the Younger, they were cremated and buried in the southwestern part of Katarina's current cemetery. To honour the opponent of the union, Johan III had the Sture Chapel erected on the same site in 1588.



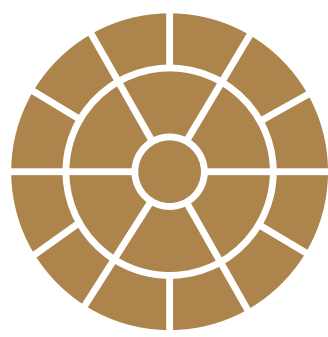
1591

Södermalm Parish was formed and became the first parish in Södermalm. Due to the powerful population growth, the parish was divided in 1654. Södermalm Parish then changed its name to Saint Mary Magdalene Parish while the eastern parts of Södermalm formed Katarina Parish after Karl X Gustav's deceased mother, Katarina of Sweden, Gustav Vasa's granddaughter.



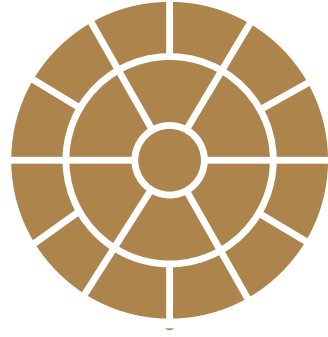
1656

Construction of Katarina Church began. Chief architect Jean de la Vallée created a central church in the form of a Greek cross and popularised the idea of the first central church of Lutheran–Evangelical worship. He was influenced by evangelical churches in Holland as well as by the French (the tower part) and Italian (the cruciform plan with its centre dome) late Renaissance architecture, and wanted to place altars and pulpits in the centre of the church. But when the interior was to be implemented more than three decades later, the parishioners protested and the church instead acquired a high altar in German Renaissance style in the eastern cruciform plan.



1670s

A disgraceful decade in the history of the church and the country. The representatives of Katarina Parish were involved in the deaths of 14 people during the witch hunt on Södermalm. Interrogations with some of those accused of being witches on Södermalm were held in Katarina Church. The trials were based on children's fanciful testimonies. Legally, these trials were made possible by the Old Testament laws that had been introduced at the beginning of the century, laws that Charles IX introduced in 1608, when he ratified and had Christopher's Country Law reprinted.



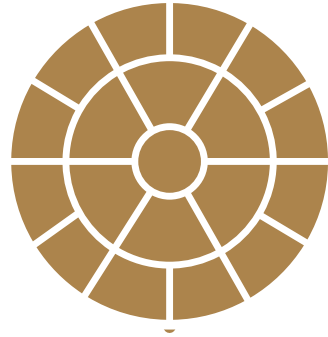
1723

Katarina Church was destroyed by a fire that also destroyed large parts of the neighbourhood surrounding the church. The following year, the church was reconsecrated after temporary reconstruction. In 1734, the new tower was completed and by the middle of the 18th century, a pulpit, altar with altarpiece, organ stand and organ façade were added. The exterior of the church was restored in 1784 and the red façade was replaced with yellow plaster.



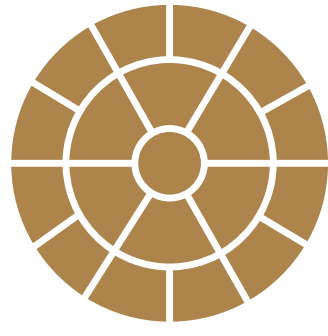
1990

On the night of 17 May, a fire broke out again in Katarina Church. An electrical fault was assumed to have started the fire. As the walls and transept domes were intact, 17th century technology was used for restoration. Fire residue and walls were analysed, old photographs were used as well as survey drawings made in the 1930s. To connect the timbers, which the parish itself bought from Mellanskog in Hälsingland, hand-forged nails and oak dowels were used. Between the mortar and wood, birch twigs were used as a moisture barrier. The large central vault, which had collapsed, was rebuilt with specially made bricks of the same format as the late 17th-century bricks.



1995

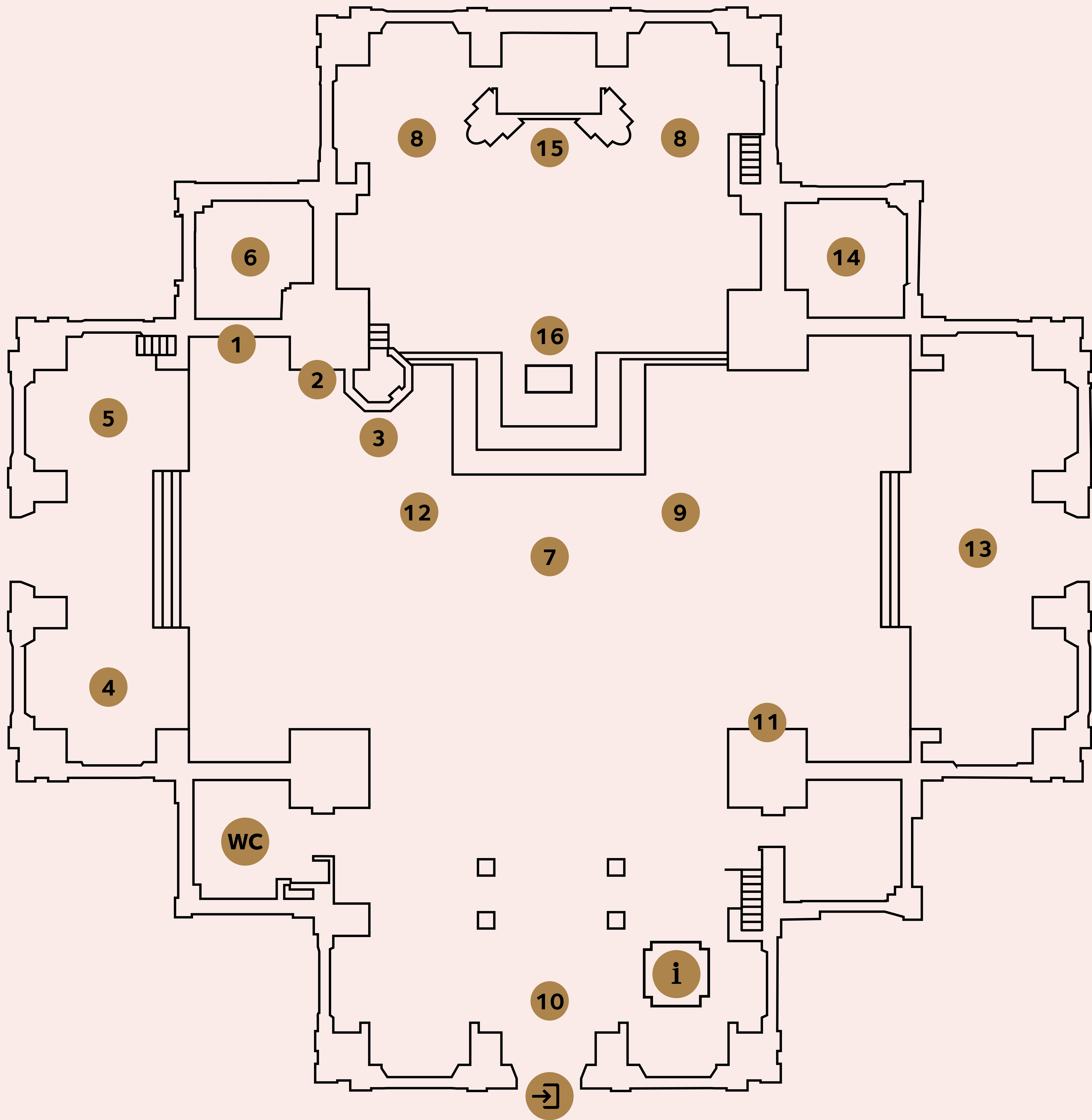
On 21 May, Katarina Church was reconsecrated by Bishop Henrik Svenungsson in the presence of King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia.



Present day

The exterior of the church today looks as it did from 1784 until 1905, when the black clock faces were replaced with translucent white ones. Inside, the church is a coming together of the old and the new, with the old primarily represented by reconstructions of the organ façade and the triumphal portal of the high altar. After the fire in 1990, Katarina Church finally acquired a central altar, although not in accordance with Jean de la Vallée's original plan.





Masterful craftsmanship

The construction of Katarina Church after the fire in 1990 is a prime example of the craft of building using many traditional building techniques and materials.

The roof trusses were sawn from 150-year-old spruces from Hälsingland. Two hectares of forest were required.

The limestone floor inside the church comes from Öland.

120,000 bricks from Bältarbo brickyard near Hedemora in Dalarna.

52,000 hand-forged nails.

3,200 dowels (wooden "nails").

5,000 square metres of copper roofing.

The large clock weighs 4.3 tons and is tuned to G sharp. 80% copper and 20% tin. Made by Olsson's bell foundry in Ystad.

- 1

Among the church silver is a fully gilded goblet which was a gift from Petronella Lillienhoff in 1694 and an internally gilded wine jug which was donated by Johan Collin in 1754. In the foreground is a gift from King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia, a candlestick with detail in bronze and with the inscription: "In memory of the reconsecration of Katarina Church May 21, 1995. Carl XVI Gustav Silvia "(It says Gustaf with a v even though the name is spelled with an f.)
- 2

Crucifix from 1450, the church's oldest treasure. Inscription: "Jesus my love has been crucified." Probably from the Sture Chapel.
- 3

Wooden pulpit mottled like Swedish green marble. Manufactured after the fire in 1990. Designed by the architect Ove Hidemark.
- 4

Place of devotion with the textile wall hanging I detta tecken (In this sign) from 1990 by the artist Gerd Allert.
- 5

On the east side of the northern transept, the original floor from the 1660s remains.
- 6

Meetings and some interrogations of women accused took place here during the witch trials of 1675 and 1676. It is unknown if this happened in the sacristy or in the room above. Not open to visit.
- 7

The brass chandelier in the crossing was manufactured by Meyerska Styckgjuteriet in 1734 and weighs about 800 kg. It was restored after the fire in 1990. In the ceiling, directly above, is the work by sculptor Petter Norberg from 1737 entitled Flygande ängel (Flying angel), a cherub in gilded wood that indicates the time with its index finger.
- 8

Psalm number boards from the 18th century.
- 9

Baptismal font from 1912 in marble with a silver bowl. Inscription: "Let the children come to me and do not forsake them."
- 10

The organ in the French-symphonic style has 62 parts and was made in Dordrecht by the Dutch organ builder Van den Heuvel. The façade is a copy of Jean Eric Rehn's organ façade from 1763.
- 11

On the inner walls of the church are several epitaphs (memorial plaques), including one for the church's original architect Jean de la Vallée on the southwest wall.
- 12

The establishment of the church was partly financed by burial places sold inside the church.
- 13

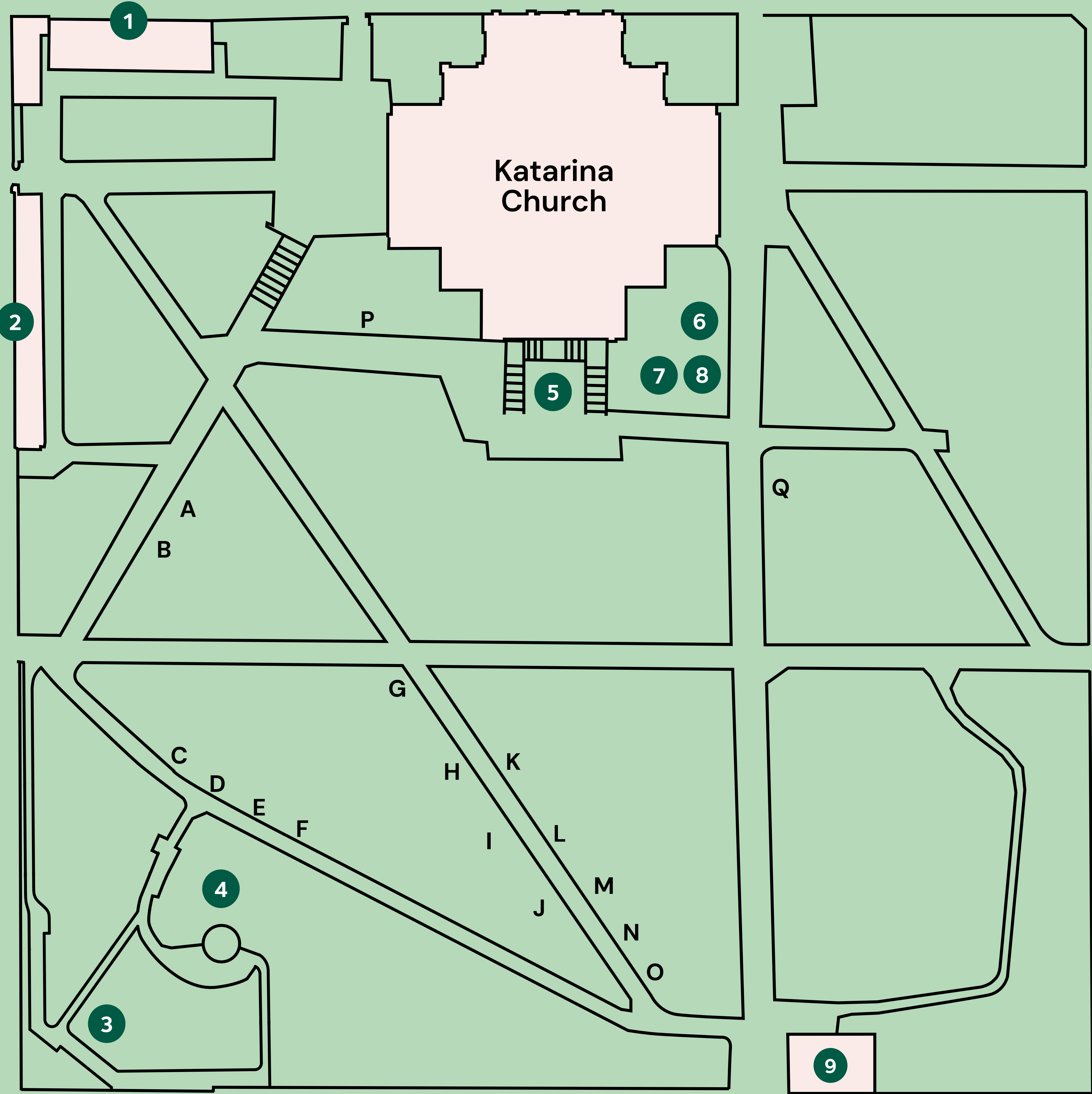
The south transept is used today for, among other things, art exhibitions.
- 14

The Lillienhoffska chapel. Used today as a devotional room. Not open to visit.
- 15

In the high altar's triumphal portal is the sculptor Liss Eriksson's work Närvaro genom frånvaro (Presence through absence). Master carpenter Claes Tarras made the Antonius cross in spruce. The crown of thorns was made by Gunnar Hillgren and the canvas by textile artist Kajsa Melanton.
- 16

Central altar in brass with table top of black Belgian granite. Designed by the architect Ove Hidemark.





The final resting place

Katarina Cemetery contains the graves and memorial stones for quite a few famous Swedes. Feel free to visit the graves. Remember that the cemetery is a place of peace and serenity.

- A. **Per Ahlmark** Politician 1939–2018

B. **Gustaf Sjökvist** Conductor 1943–2015

C. **Tomas Tranströmer** Poet 1931–2015

D. **Lars Gustafsson** Author 1936–2016

E. **Sara Danius** Professor 1962–2019

F. **Per Olov Enquist** Author 1934–2020

G. **Gösta Ekman** (the younger) Actor 1939–2018

H. **Lars Wivallius** Poet 1605–1669

I. **Cornelis Vreeswijk** Troubadour 1937–1987
- J. **Anna Lindh** Politician 1957–2003

K. **Putte Wickman** Musician 1924–2006

L. **Kim Anderzon** Actress 1943–2014

M. **Mikael Nyqvist** Actor 1960–2017

N. **Sven–David Sandström** Composer 1942–2019

O. **Stefan Nilsson** Composer 1955–2023

P. **Ove Hidemark** Castle architect 1931–2015

Q. **Christian Falk** Musician 1962–2014

- 1 The school house.** The original school building was built in 1656 and initially housed St. Catharina Church School. Renovation work took place in 1753 and 1822–1824. Today there are offices and homes here.

**2 Crypt** In the cemetery there are ten burial crypts along Katarina Västra Kyrkogata that different families bought to give family members a shared burial site. The oldest, Sperlingska crypt, was built in 1711.

**3 Ash burial site.** In December 2018, an ash burial site was built with space for about 960 new burial sites.

**4 Memory grove.** On display here is the artwork Hymn by Bertil Berggren Askenström from 1991.

**5 The old big bell** that crashed to the floor during the fire in 1990 is now installed below Charles XII's staircase.

**6 Finnish memorial stone.** The Finnish memorial stone testifies to many people buried here with roots in Sweden's former eastern part of Sweden who lived on Södermalm during the 17th and 18th centuries. The Finnish parish was formed in 1577 but lacked its own church for a long time. At the beginning of the 17th century, the parish was allowed to use the Sture Chapel for its services, and it was therefore natural that
- for a long time the parishioners were buried in Katarina's cemetery.

**7 The Sture monument.** The memorial to Sten Sture the Younger was erected in 1904.

**8 Memorial stone** for Gustav Adolphe Couchi (1747–1822). He was named Gustav Badin at the Swedish Royal Court. He was born as a slave on the island of St. Croix in the West Indies. In 1761 the Danish Royal court gave him to the Swedish Queen Lovisa Ulrika whom he served as a Royal footman. He was known as a creative person who appreciated education and culture. The memorial stone was unveiled on October 9, 2023, by Crown Princess Victoria on the anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the Swedish colony of Saint Barthélemy in 1847.

**9 Benhuset.** Mortuary and room for remains from 1712. Vestiges from its time as a mortuary remain in the altar and the floor hatch down to the brick vaulted cellar for coffins. The room was reopened as a public place on St. Francis Day 2014 with Niklas Rådström's play De Onda (The evil ones) and is today a cultural meeting place.



**Karl XII's staircase** is a double staircase at the south façade of the church. According to legend, the king rode the 30 steps up and the 30 steps down on the other side on his horse when the stairs were opened in 1715. The verses of farrier Benjamin Roth are engraved in the railing of the stairs:

1. When Carl XII wore the crown.

2. This staircase had been built.

3. The house of the Lord it adorns.

4. In the way you see here before your eyes.

V. When someone sets foot here.

VI. He purposely looks deep into himself.

VII. That God should receive his soul for the church.

VIII. For then to the church may well he go.

VIII. When your hand touches the lattice.

X. So join Jacob's ladder.
- XV. Here the stairs both up and down.

XVI. And imagine that the God of Jacob sees it.

17. And when you descend the hill.

18. On which this dwelling of God stands.

19. Then let your prayers, your faith and hope.

20. To the mountains of heaven ascend.

21. Pray in conclusion that this Temple may.

22. In ours and later times stand.

23. That here and around our entire North.

24. Must never lack the Word of the Lord.



Pay us a visit

### **Katarina Church**

*Address: Högbergsgatan 13*

### **Allhelgonakyrkan (All Saint's Church)**

Welcome to Katarina Parish's second church. Allhelgonakyrkan is a beautiful wooden church on Helgalunden.

*Address: Helgalunden, metro stop:  
Skanstull*

### **Benhuset (Ossuary)**

A meeting place for art, theatre, devotion, music and reflection near the last resting place of the dead.

*Address: Next to Katarina  
cemetery's southern entrance towards  
Södermannagatan*

### **Katarina Kök & Café**

Welcome to our café in the town hall where you can partake of lunch, soup or coffee.

*Address: Högbergsgatan 15A*

### **Opening times**

At [svenskakyrkan.se/katarina](https://svenskakyrkan.se/katarina) you will find opening times for Katarina Church, Allhelgonakyrkan, Benhuset and Katarina Kök & Café.

**[svenskakyrkan.se/katarina](https://svenskakyrkan.se/katarina)**

[facebook.com/katarinaforsamling](https://facebook.com/katarinaforsamling)

[youtube.com/katarinaforsamling](https://youtube.com/katarinaforsamling)

### **Katarina Parish**

Högbergsgatan 15A, 08-743 68 00,  
[katarina.forsamling@svenskakyrkan.se](mailto:katarina.forsamling@svenskakyrkan.se)



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