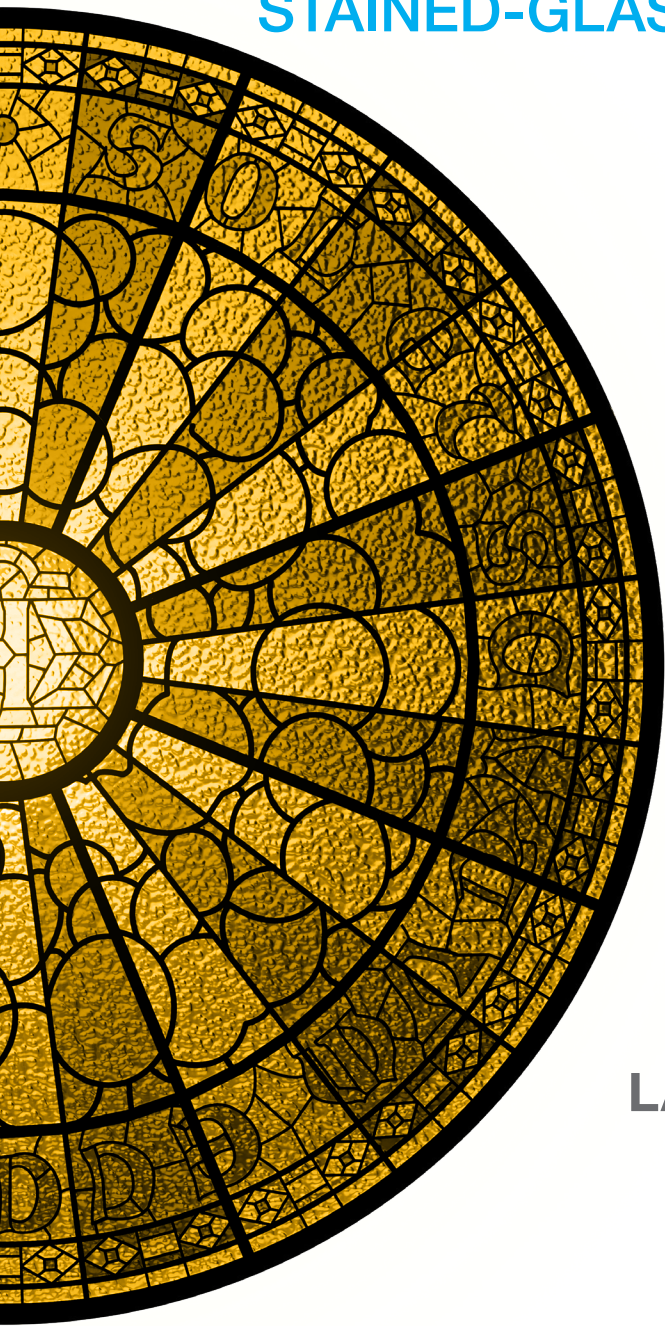
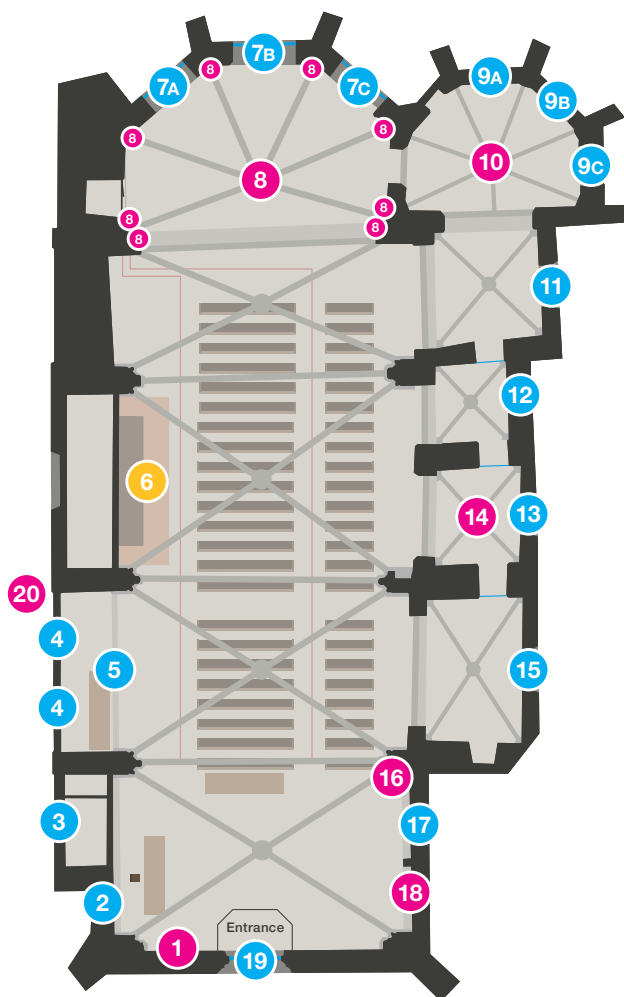


ORNAMENTS
STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS
ORGAN



TEMPLE DE
LA MADELEINE
GENEVA



Welcome one and all to the Temple de la Madeleine!

The current dimensions of the temple indicate there have been few changes since the 15th century. Today, the stained-glass windows and other church ornaments enhance its distinctive character.

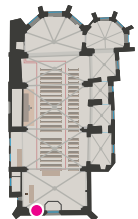
We suggest visitors start on the left and continue their tour clockwise round the church.



1. High relief – Walter Soder

“The Dove and the Apostles”

This sculpture was created as part of “Calvin 2009”, a commemoration for the 500th anniversary of the birth of Jean Calvin. It was bequeathed by the artist to the parish of the Swiss-German reformed church and was officially inaugurated on 25 April 2010. It is a call to reflection: is it the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descending on the apostles or believers? is it the dove of Peace...? Interpretation depends on the perception of the viewer.

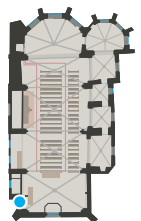




2. Mary Magdalene's window

Alice Dabbous Flückiger

This window, the most recent, is a reminder of Mary Magdalene who gave her name to the church. She is renowned through being mentioned in the Gospels, yet little is really known about her. Two intertwined Ms form the shape of a heart. In the centre of the window, surrounded by colours of the rainbow.





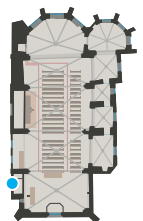
3. High window – Alexandre Mairet

Peter and Jesus on the Sea of Galilee

Cf Mark 6,45-52; Matthew 14,22-33; John 6,16-21

The boat of the disciples drifts on the open sea, the coast and the mountains faintly visible in the distance. Jesus walks on the water to join his friends. Peter flings himself out of the boat but overcome with anguish, he begins to founder. Jesus reaches out his hand to save him.

The presence of the Kingdom of Heaven is felt in the tapered rays – akin to those representing the spiritual aspect in the windows in the choir – surrounding the characters in the scene.

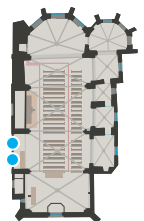




4. Twin stained-glass windows – Alexandre Mairêt

Old and New Testaments

The medallions in the centre of the two windows illustrate the material elements which nourish the spiritual life of the Christian faith. The Bible is at the heart of both windows, the Old Testament on the left and the New Testament on the right. The dove from Noah's ark and the seven-branched candelabrum are illustrated on the left window, and on the right, the bread and the chalice of blessing used in the sacrament of the Eucharist.



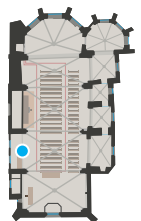


5. High window – Alexandre Mairet

Jesus with Martha and Mary

Cf Luke 10,38-42; John 11,1 and 12,1-3.

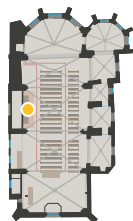
Jesus reaches out to the two women at his sides. On the right, Martha turns slightly away from him holding a jar in her left hand. Mary is seated on his other side, leaning against the table with her hands on her heart, listening with rapt attention. Behind Mary, could that be Lazarus discreetly observing the scene? In the background, the front door opens onto the village and the sky above.

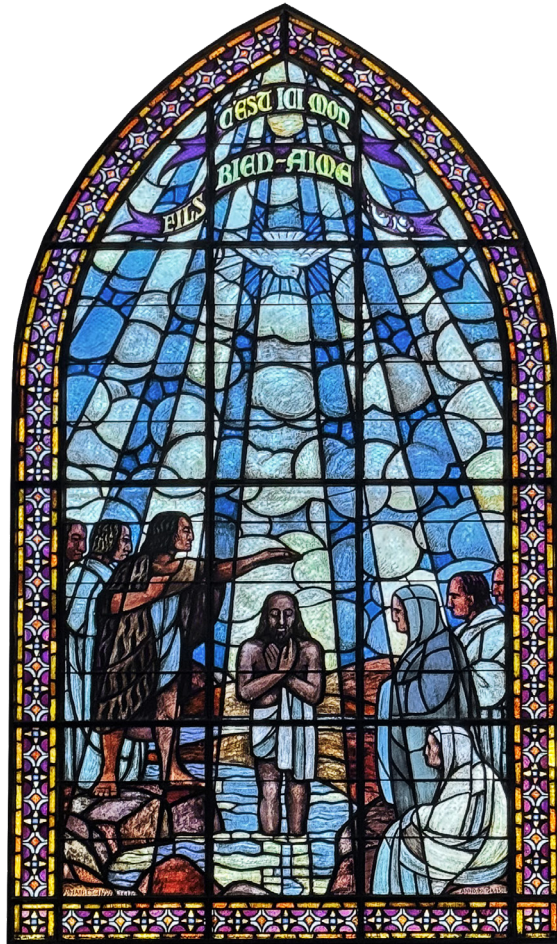




6. The organ

Pierre Segond, organist at the cathedral of Saint-Pierre of Geneva, created and oversaw the realisation of his project by the organ builders Armagni and Mingot in Lausanne. The case was designed by Jean-François Mingot and created by the artisan cabinetmaker Huwyler, in Bex. It has two keyboards and 23 stops which include 20 real stops. It was inaugurated on December 6, 1970.



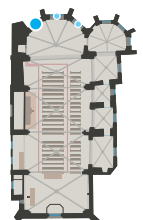


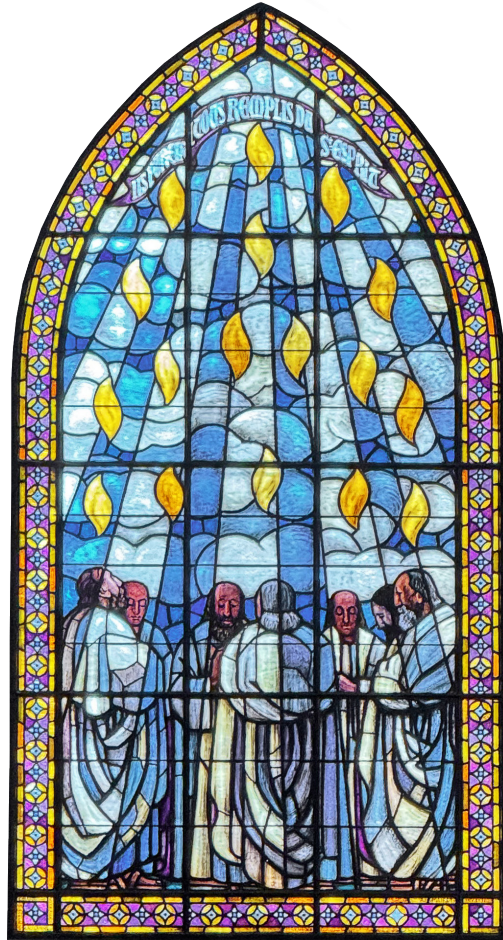
7A. Stained-glass windows in the choir – Alexandre Maitret

Baptism of Jesus

Cf Mark 1,9-11; Matthew 3,13-17; Luke 3,21-22, John 1,29-34

The sky is falling to the ground, the numerous rays give a physical form to the spiritual meaning. The Trinitarian aspect in the Gospel narrative is depicted in the central beam: from the ogival arch the voice of the Father resounds “This is my beloved son”; a dove represents the Holy Spirit; Jesus stands in the river. On the left, John the Baptist stands on a rock surrounded by disciples, extending his hand in a gesture of blessing.

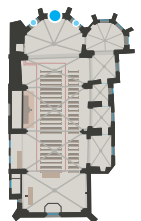


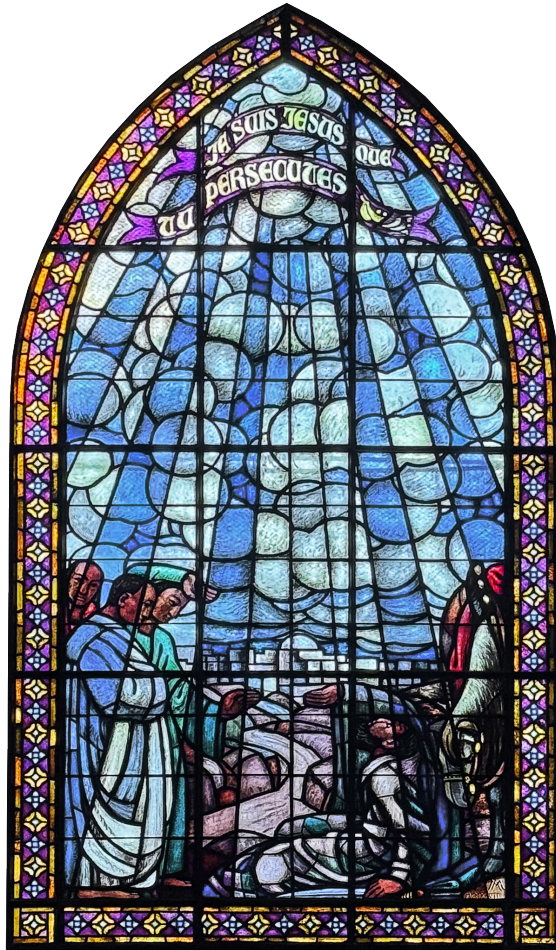


7B. Stained-glass windows in the choir – Alexandre Maitre Pentecost

Cf Acts 2,1-13

The words “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit” appear in the ogive. The circle formed by the apostles is a sign of their spiritual unity. From the vast open sky above them, the Holy Spirit descends upon the Church in tongues of fire. The enormity and inherent force of the moment are skillfully represented by the artist.



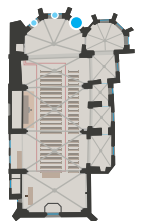


7C. Stained-glass windows in the choir – Alexandre Maitre

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus

Cf Acts 9,1-19

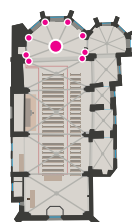
The future apostle Paul appears in the foreground on the right. A blinding celestial vision “I am Jesus whom you persecute” has thrown him from his horse. Saul makes a shielding gesture, while from the other side of the road, one of his companions reaches out to him. In the background, the road winds towards the city of Damascus where the group is bound. Again, the vast sky opens up above.





8. Keystone de Rolle coat of arms

The de Rolle family were benefactors behind the rebuilding of the temple after the fire in 1430. Their coat of arms in its original form bears a golden wheel on a blue field enhanced by a four-peaked silver mountain. Two variants – 6 and 8 spoked wheels on triple mounts – are featured on pillars and around the keystone of the choir.





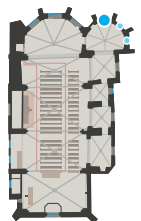
9. FIRST CYCLE – J. VENTURELLI

This cycle is composed of three windows in the apse (9A–9B–9C)

9A. Side window – José Venturelli

The plight of the oppressed

The vivid red used by the artist represents the violence in our world, symbolised by a bounding dog, the soldier's ordeal in the centre of the scene, and the terror of the common people pictured in three distinct groups. Their defensive gestures are powerless in the face of repression. In the foreground, two hands are open in a gesture of supplication.

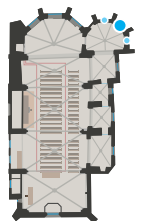




9B. Side window – José Venturelli

Salvation for humanity

The illustration in the foreground of the central window shows the lifeless, tortured body of Jesus, a victim who sacrificed his life to bring life after death and hope to humanity. A long chain of people stretches out behind him. Their disappearance was enforced to silence their struggle for a better world. Depicted above them in vivid shades of blue are a tree, a dove and a solar disc – universal symbols that represent Life, Peace, God.



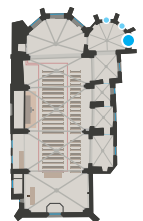


9C. Side window – José Venturelli

“I was thirsty and you gave me drink”

Cf Matthew 25, 35

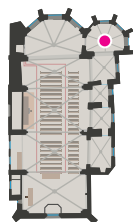
The persistent reality of Evil is portrayed at the top of the window: against a background of menacing fire, armed horsemen hound the masses who seek to defend themselves with their bare hands. Below, bathed in green light, an incarnation of Good: the stoned are rescued, the thirsty receive something to drink. The visual techniques used here reinforce these acts of solidarity.





10. Keystone

The keystone bears the monogram of Christ “IHS” in large Gothic script, these being the first three letters in the name Jesus in Ancient Greek: ΙΗΣΟΥΣ. In the Middle Ages, the Church introduced the Latin interpretation: Iesus Hominum Salvator, meaning “Jesus, Saviour of Mankind”.





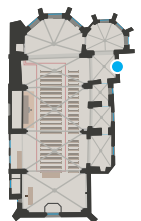
SECOND CYCLE – J. VENTURELLI

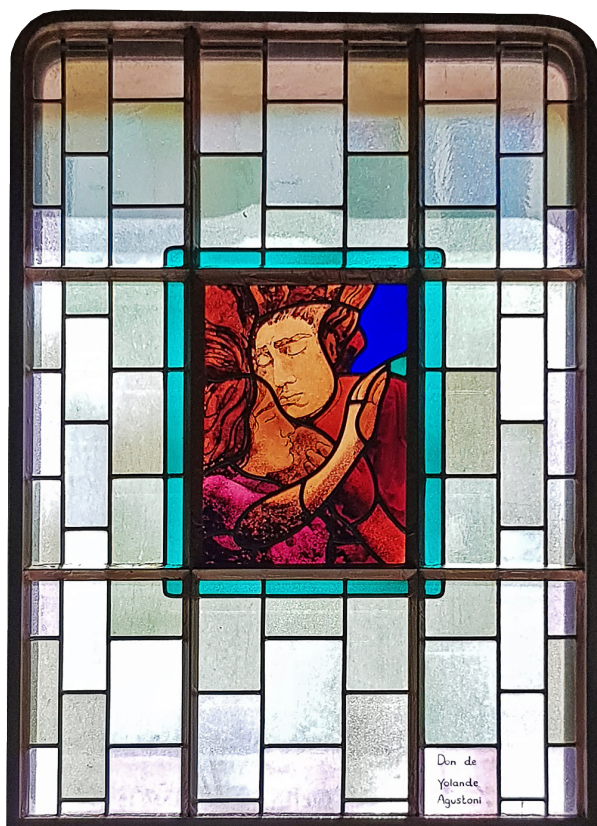
Three stained-glass windows (11-13-15), installed after the death of the artist, make up this cycle.

11. Side window – José Venturelli

The freed prisoner

A prisoner is seen from behind, wrists bound behind his back. Women are loosening the thick chains. Around him, the crowd rejoices over his release. A stately tree seems to extend from his body. The prisoner's strength enabled him to resist his tormentors, just as the force of the tree enables it to bear fruit. Yet, at the bottom of the window on the right, the distressed face of a mother holding her child to her breast arrests the gaze of the viewer.





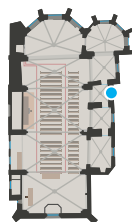
12. Side window – José Venturelli

Pareja (Couple)

Cf Mark 10,8; Matthew 19,6

Created in 1986, this small window symbolises how God's love can bring people from all walks of life together. After the death of the artist, in 1991 it was bequeathed to the temple. Although the window is almost devoid of detail due to its size, the eye of the viewer is drawn in by the bold strokes used by the artist to radiate both strength and tenderness.

"So they are no longer two, but one flesh."



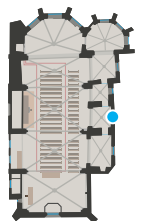


13. Side window – José Venturelli

“Seek and you will find!”

Cf Matthew 7,7; Luke 11,9

A group of figures with arms raised challenge the viewer with their piercing, questioning gaze. Their answer lies in the gesture of the man in the foreground who holds a white stone marked with a cross between this left thumb and index finger. Viewers are invited to engage in a quest, symbolized by the two crouching figures on the right who hope to find beautiful stones in a stream, and to set out in the pursuit of positive realities: the joyful fraternity of men and women who strive for justice, the return of the exiled to their homeland, a celebratory feast laid out on a table under the tree of life.

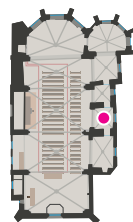




14. Keystone

Ivy and bat

Since ancient times, bats have been seen both as auspicious signs and omens of evil. The sacred ivy plant symbolises immortality. Christianity adopted these symbols for decorative purposes in religious buildings and on funerary monuments.

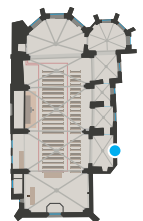




15. Side window – José Venturelli

Death and Resurrection

A man lies prostrate on the ground among the roots of a towering tree with a colossal trunk and luxuriant foliage. The blue-tinge of his body implies that he is dead. His blood flows into the sap of the tree giving it strength so it may prosper and bear fruit. Similarly, the vital force of the tree is passed on to the people gathered together to rejoice in their salvation. Arms raised, they hasten towards a new dawn.

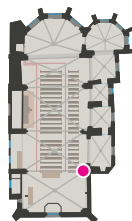




16. Mural

Vestiges of ancient wall paintings

These polychrome relics were discovered during the restoration of the temple which took place in the 1960^s. They are visible on two sides of the pillar separating the chapel from the walled bay at the entrance to the nave. On the side facing the nave, a monk accompanied by an angel bows down before Mary, mother of Jesus. On the side facing the walled bay (see picture) is a portrayal of the Annunciation.

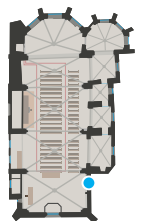




17. High window – Alexandre Maitret

Jesus and the children

In the centre of the window, Jesus reaches his arms out to the children gathered round him, a manifestation of his compassion for the young. Their parents stand on either side of the scene which gives onto a vast open landscape in the background. The clear, bold lines used by the artist to outline the heads of the parents, Jesus, and the older children form an almost perfect W. In conjunction with the mood of the landscape, they create a Hodlerian-like atmosphere.

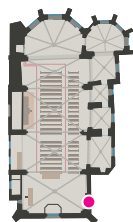


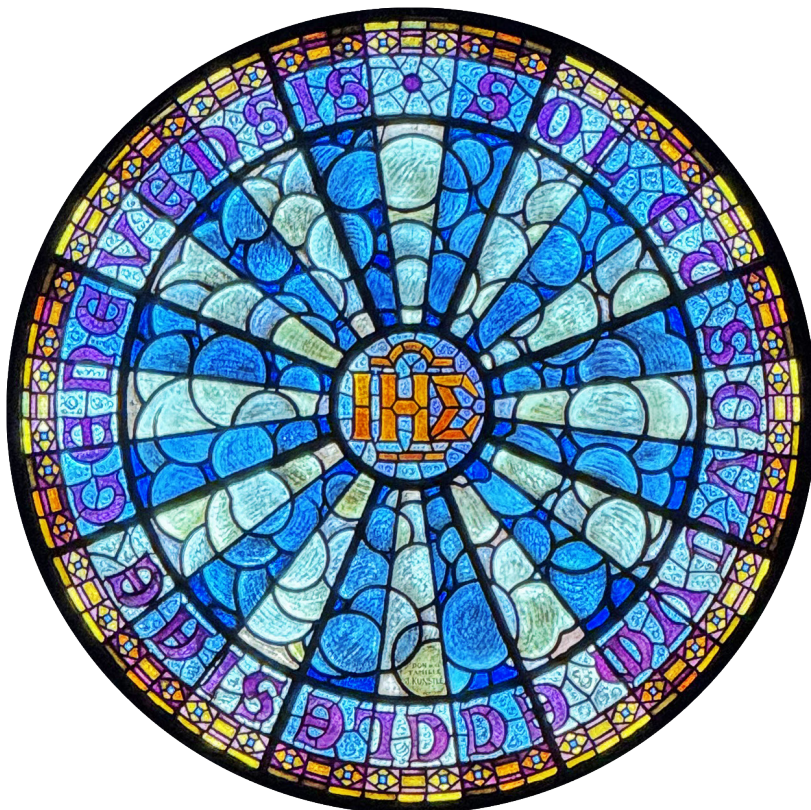


18. Sculpture

Destri (or Destruz) family coat of arms

Bearing the effigy of a horse, the coat of arms is a tribute to the Destri (or Destruz) family, donors of the so-called 'chapel of the Mule' which was demolished in the 19th century in order to widen the nearby rue Toutes-Ames.

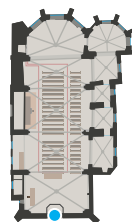




19. High window – Alexandre Mairet

Rosace

The colours of the stained glass on the front façade of the church mirror the light hues of the undulating sky in the windows in the choir. The inscription IHS (Cf. No. 10) appears in the centre. The outer circle of the rosette bears the motto of the 16th-century Church of the Reformation: “SOL ET SCUTUM ECCLESIAE GENEVENSIS” (sun and shield of the Church of Geneva).



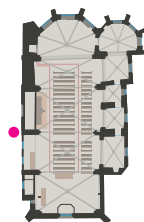


20. Archaeological site

Beneath the temple of the Madeleine lies a major archaeological site administered by the Canton of Geneva. Visits can be arranged through the Cantonal Service of Archeology:

sca@etat.ge.ch

Phone: +41 (0)22 327 94 40



Artistes

Alexandre Mairet (1880–1947)

A Swiss painter, engraver, xylographer, and illustrator associated with the libertarian movement, he was a professor of history of art at the Geneva School of Fine Arts (1919–1946) and the Workers' University of Geneva (1928–1941), and chaired several art associations and the National Institute of Geneva. In 1926, he won the contest for the decoration of the temple of the Madeleine. The stained-glass windows he designed were created by the Chiara studio in Lausanne.

José Venturelli (1924–1988)

A Chilean painter, he sought refuge in Geneva after fleeing the dictatorship in his country in 1974. He was extremely active in the struggle for peace and against fascism. His work reflects his concern for the living conditions of the people, social injustice and the plight of the oppressed. The stained-glass windows he created for the church of the Madeleine were crafted, like Alexandre Mairet's, by the Chiara studio in Lausanne.

Alice Dabbous Flückiger (1933–2025)

Born in Zurich, she moved to Geneva and began work there in 1956. With a background in the textile industry, in 1978 she began the restoration and decoration of several harpsichords. From 1985 onwards, she exhibited collages and paintings, and designed and created several stained-glass windows for churches in Geneva. This particular window was crafted at the Eltschinger studio in Villars-sur-Glâne.

Walter Soder (1939–2020)

A Genevan high school teacher, he was a member of the parish of the Madeleine and the Palette Carougeoise, an association of painters and sculptors in the Geneva region. His works have been exhibited on several occasions in Geneva and elsewhere in Switzerland.

Sources:

«Eglise de la Madeleine», Charles Bonnet, Lionel Breitmeyer, Jean-Etienne Genequand, Alain Wyler – Copyright Association pour la Promotion de l'Art Sacré à Genève (APAS) 1992.

«Eglise de la Madeleine Genève – Les sept vitraux de José Venturelli», Alain Wyler, Editions du Tricorne, 1997 et Fondation Ouverture, 2023.

«Une clef de voûte de l'église de la Madeleine à Genève: la chauve-souris et le lierre», Waldemar Deonna – Extrait de la Revue suisse d'art et d'archéologie, vol. 13 (1952), 1^{er} cahier.

«Armorial genevois», Eugène-Louis Dumont, Editions ATAR 1961.



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