You have crossed the threshold of a holy place, of a church, of a house of God on earth. The place which welcomes you is neither a mere monument to admire, nor a museum to visit, rather a sacred site where people come to meditate, where believers come together to pray, where Christians celebrate the Eucharist. To be in communion with the creators of this building, with the artists who decorated this beautiful edifice, with the people who come here in search of peace, who are looking to rekindle hope, to find God, with the people who flock here to lose themselves in works of artistic beauty to celebrate the spirit of mankind, to rejoice in front of the wonders of God, you are asked to visit this Cathedral with respect and in silence.

Opening hours of the cathedral
Mo-Sa: 7.30 am until 7 pm
Su: 9 am until 9.30 pm
Public holidays: 9 am until 7 pm

Opening hours for tourists
Mo-Fr: 9.30 am until 6 pm
Sa: 9 am until 5 pm
Su: 1 pm until 5 pm

Opening hours of the Cathedral’s tower
From 1 March to 30 November:
Mo-Sa: 10 am until 6 pm
Su and public holidays: 12 pm until 5 pm
Last entrance 30 minutes before closing time.

Organ Concert
Each Wednesday of July and August between 12.15 pm and 13.15 pm: concert on historical organs followed by a presentation of the instruments. Free admission, (collection).

The Cathedral of St Nicholas rises above the centre of the medieval city on a rocky spur 50 metres above the River Sarine.

The construction of the present Cathedral started in 1283, when the building was first used as a church. It is built on the site of a sacred house of Romanesque style dating before the foundation of the town in 1157. It was first mentioned in 1430, the west tower was completed in 1490. The church began as a parish church and in 1512 it was elevated to the rank of collegiate church with a provost (with mitre and crozier) dean, chanter and twelve canons. In 1495, it became the Cathedral of the diocese of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg. The building has been the property of the state of Fribourg since 1803 and has served as a crossroads for people from across the world. It is also a important centre of Fribourg life. Religious services are assured by The Roman Catholic Church.

The Cathedral of St Nicholas is a meeting point for European people and cultures. Three eras of western civilisation are represented here. From Gothic art the Cathedral has taken the edifice of the building itself, the stalls, the choir gate, the baptism fonts, the pulpit, the cross, ‘The Burial of Christ’ and two sculptured portals. From the Baroque era it has taken the chasub and the choir arch with the key stones adorned with images of people, and a coat of arms of patrician families of Fribourg, the new decoration on the aisle archways, the organ of Sebald Manderscheidt and the decoration of the six chapels between the buttresses. From modern art: the organ of Aloys Mooser (1828-1834), the stained-glass windows of Józef Mehoffer (1886-1936), the stained-glass window of Alfred Manessier (1976-1988), the altar, ambon, the easter candlestick and the Episcopal seat of Georges Schneider (1981-1986).

The Cathedral of St Nicholas has 13 bells

IN THE WESTERN TOWER
«St Marie» 1505, 220 cm • «St Catherine», 1506, 175 cm • «St Barbe», 1367, 146 cm • «of hours», 1416, 131 cm • «of Prime»1437, 112 cm • «of Gambach» 1562, 96 cm • «of sacristie» 1569, 67 cm • «St Nicholas», 2nd half of 14th century, 65 cm • «of the dead» 1733, 57 cm • «of choristers» 1567, 29 cm • «of watch» 1554, 29 cm.

IN THE BELL TOWER OF THE CHOIR
«of the mass» 1737, 41 cm • «of the deing» 1656, 31.5 cm
1) Tower, 74 metres, end of 14th century-1450, 1st floor. Treasure and rose chamber, approximately 1415, with stained-glass window «Magdalen» by Alfred Manessier, 1988; stairs with 365 steps; platform with 13 turrets.


4) Principal nave with 5 bays; arch; triforium; high windows; fascicled pillars with capitals, end of 13th century - 1420.

5) South and north walls of the principal nave: paintings «The 12 Apostles» and «The 4 Doctors of the Church», half-length portraits, and «The 18 Prophets» full-length portraits, and «The 12 Doctors of the Church», half-length portraits, and «The 18 Prophets» full-length portraits, by Claude Frechet and his collaborators.


7) Balustrade of the great gallery: paintings «King David with the Harp» and «14 Attributes of music and 10 Angel Musicians», by Franz-Niklaus Kessler, 1628-1631; the grand organ by Aloys Mooser, 1624-1634.


9) Side south aisle with four chapels between the buttresses, 1749-1759, 1660-1663, 1515-1521; southern entrance in the fourth bay with the statue «Epiphany of the Saviour», 1330-1340; west wall: painting «The Descent from the Cross», by Francois Reiff, around 1645; memorial of the visit by Pope Jean-Paul II (13-6-1984), 1997.

10) Chapel of St Seguiner, 1430-1457; altar of St Laurent in molasse, statue around 1433; group of 13 statues in molasse «The Burial of Christ», 1433; stained-glass window «Good Friday Night» and «Easter Morning» by Alfred Manessier 1934-1976; arch: paintings «Eight Angels with Musical Instruments» and «Four Angels with Instruments of the Passion» middle of 15th century; paintings «Christ Fallen under his Cross» by Hans Fries, between 1502 and 1510; «Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows», 1544; «St Laurent» by Johannes Koller, 1590; «St Catherine of Alexandria» by Johannes Koller, 1592; «St Veronique Cleaning the Face of Jesus» middle of 13th century.


12) South entrance: to the left, statue «St Nicholas of Myre» by Hans Geiler, around 1520; in the middle, stained-glass window «St Pierre and St Laurent» said to be by Carigran, around 1530 (installed in 1873); to the right: statue St Nicholas of Flue, beginning of 16th Century.


15) Baptism fonts by Hermann and Glycan Atereri, 1408-1409, wooden cover with two statuettes «The Baptism of Jesus by Jean-Baptiste» by Jean-Jacques Reyff, 1886.

16) Altar of the Sacred Heart in stucco, canvas painting by Paul Deschwanden, 1873; sculpture in bronze «Christ crowned with Thorns» by Cleesinger, 1858; stained-glass window «The Blessed Sacrament» by Józef Mehoffer, 1898-1901.


18) Altar of St Nicholas, ambon, Easter candlestick, Episcopal seat in bronze, by Georges Schneider, 1881-1888.

19) Choir gate, by Ulrich Wagner, 1464-1466; coat of Arms of the Bishop of Luzanne, Geneva and Fribourg in bronze, by Georges Schneider, 1886; on roofbeam: 3 statues «Christ on the Cross surrounded by Mary his Mother and the Apostle St Jean» around 1430.

20) Reticulated choir arch, with, in the central row, 5 keystones showing characters: «The Virgin and Child», «St Nicholas of Myre», «St Catherine of Alexandria», «St Barbe», «St Charles Borromeo», the arms of the City of Fribourg and the coats of arms of the 32 Magistrates holding office by Pierre and Joseph Winter, 1630-1631.

21) Stalls with 50 seats in oak, by Antoine and Claude de Peney, 1462-1464.

22) Choir organ by Sebald Manderscheidt, 1655-1657; chest and rostrum, from the atelier of Jean-François Reiff, 1643-1657.


24) North wall: paintings, «Christ, the Vanquisher of Death» and «Christ appearing to Paul» by Nicholas de Heuy, 1585.


28) Pulpit decorated with 6 statues with stairway, from the atelier of Hans Feller le Jeune, 1513-1516; pulpit sounding board in wood with a statue symbolising faith by Franz-Niklaus Kessler, 1828.


30) North entrance: to the right: memorial of St Pierre Casius († 1597), by Domenico Martinetti, 1779-1780; portrait by Gottfried Locher, 1779; in the centre: stained-glass window «The Crucifix» said to be by Carigran, towards 1530 (installed in 1873); to the left: memorial of St Pierre Schneuwly († 1597), by Domenico Martinetti, 1779-1780, portrait by Gottfried Locher, 1779.


33) Confessional, by Joseph Wicki, 1759-1760; statue «St Barbe», by Martin Gramp, beginning of 16th century.