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The Upper church (*Oberkirche*) in Arnstadt – a brief historical outline

- Between 1246 and 1250 a monastery was founded by the Franciscans in Arnstadt and a first small, plain church without a tower was built by 1260 - later called *Barfüßerkirche* (Church of the Discalced Friars) in reference to the builders. By 1270 a first low monastery building was erected with a chapter house and probably a wooden cloister
- In a second construction phase up to 1300, the church building was expanded to its present size, but the construction work was not completed until the second half of the 14th century; from around 1300 construction of the stone monastery building with cloister and cloister courtyard, the monastery building was added in the second quarter of the 15th century
- In 1461 addition of the bell tower with a pointed roof which supports the north wall, which overhangs by 60 cm
- In 1498 decorated with ornate late Gothic wing altar
- In 1504 Martin Luther stays in the Franciscan monastery in Arnstadt
- In 1533 Reformation in Arnstadt
- In 1538 dissolution of the Franciscan monastery; one year later the church falls to the town and the monastery grounds to Count Günther XL
- From 1540 to 1561 Count's educational institution in the former monastery buildings
- Afterwards, initially intended as a widow's residence for Katharina, the wife of the Count, it was later the retirement home of Leo of Packmor, a colonel of the Count, until 1578
- Probably starting in the middle of the 16th century reconstruction of the church begins
- In 1571 first recorded Protestant service held in the church *Barfüßerkirche*; main parish church
- In 1581 there was a great town fire in Arnstadt; as a result Leo von Packmor made the monastery grounds available to the town, initially as a temporary replacement for the destroyed town school building; after his death in 1583 he released the grounds given to him for schools and churches and donated 6,000 Meißnian guilders to promote the school system and the establishment of a library among other things
- No later than the great town fire, the *Barfüßerkirche* becomes the main church and reconstruction continues, leading to among other things to the installation of the countess' widow's stall on the site of today's nobility stall
- In 1587 a new bell was cast by Melchior Mörinck (Erfurt)
- From 1588 onwards, first purchases of books with donation funds, until the beginning of the 17th century the library thanks to numerous donations developed well, which finally decreased as a result of the plague, high prices, financial collapse and the Thirty Years' War
- From 1579 to 1589 reconstruction work was carried out on the northern cloister and the monastery buildings in connection with its conversion to a school building for the Arnstadt town and country school, which resulted in the room structure that can still be seen today
- 1589 replacement of the pulpit from the time of the monastery with a new one on the basis of the legacies of Packmor and funds from citizens
- At the end of the 16th century, the renaissance furnishings of the church were completed, the two-storey picture galleries (probably between 1555 and 1570) and some epitaphs (Scheidewein 1580, Scheller 1581, Packmor 1583 and Kirchberger 1593) were installed, as well as the winged altar in 1594 to commemorate Günther XLI the Quarrelsome, created by the Dutch painter Frans Floris
- In 1609 extensive church renovation, extension of the church roof over the northern part of the cloisters
- Probably 1609 installation of the prince stall



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- In 1611 replacement of the organ from the monastery period with a new one by Ezechiel Groitzscher (Eisleben)
- Rich decoration of the church, by the artist Burchard Röhl from Arnstadt still visible today: 1624 pulpit still in Mannerist style; the pulpit from 1589 was moved to the church *Liebfrauenkirche* (Church of Our Lady); 1629 epitaph for the Gütlich family; 1639 baptismal font and 1641 high altar with 33 figures and 6 pictures as well as a crucifix in the early baroque style; the altar from 1498 also went to the church *Liebfrauenkirche*
- In 1641 first burial in the Schwarzburg family crypt (Countess Anna) newly built under the choir
- From 1641 to 1692 Heinrich Bach was organist at the churches *Barfüßerkirche* and *Liebfrauenkirche*
- In 1645 erection of the small countess' stall
- From the 2nd half of the 17th century, the countess widow's stall was converted to the nobility stall which was added to before the end of the 17th century
- In the years after 1653 installation of a third gallery above the picture galleries
- From 1671 onwards, Lyceum in the former monastery building
- In 1684 letter of endowment from Count Anton Günther II, guaranteeing the church library annual income for its maintenance and expansion - second heyday of the church library
- In 1715/1716 installation of 4-storey galleries on the north side and conversion on 4 storeys to the galleries on the south side
- In 1725 roof renovation and installation of the roof windows
- From 1728 to 1739 Johann Ernst Bach was organist at the church *Barfüßerkirche*
- In 1746 a new baroque cupola was added
- In 1755 rearrangement of the stalls and chairs in the choir and reconstruction of the west gallery in connection with the new organ built by Schmaltz (Arnstadt) in 1756
- From the 18th century onwards, introduction of the name *Oberkirche* (Upper church) instead of *Barfüßerkirche*
- From 1829 to 1864 grammar school and from 1865 to 1906 girls' secondary school in the former monastery buildings
- In 1900/1901 extensive renovation of the church with the removal of many stalls, erection of the tombstones, installation of the concrete floor, repainting
- In 1902 new organ using the old facade by the Sauer company (Frankfurt Oder)
- In 1911 restitution of the monastery buildings to the church parish
- In 1942 confiscation of the bell cast by Mörinck for war purposes, replaced by the bell named "*Klengel*" from the church *Liebfrauenkirche*
- In April 1945 severe damage to the church *Oberkirche* and parish hall as a result of the shelling of Arnstadt by the Americans
- After the necessary renovation, during which the upper two galleries on the south wall were also removed; further use of the church from 1947 onwards
- In 1977 the church was closed due to serious structural damage
- In 1987 first major repairs on the roof structure and re-covering of the roof in 1990
- In 2007 foundation of the *Oberkirche Arnstadt e. V.* association to support the opening, the renovation and cultural revival of the church *Oberkirche*
- From 2008 onwards, a complex renovation time period with a step-by-step strengthening of the stability of the building and its furnishings, art-historical studies, securing and restoration of works of art, interior decoration according to the last rework of the church around 1900, restoration of the library and restoration of the floor
- On 13.09.2020 reconsecration of the church *Oberkirche*

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