

WELCOME & HISTORY

Welcome to you all ! Thank you for taking a bit of your time to visit our modest village church. Despite its small size, you're going to see many religious and historical symbols.

In the pre-historical times, some people lived in Buron, Jaumelles, Peu Pierroux (north of Le Bois). The former Peu Pierroux tumulus shows clues dating from 2,000 years B.C. It seems Le Bois early village started during the 10th century. The first real mention of a chapel was in 1422. In 1719, Le Bois hosted about 1,400 inhabitants. The lifestyle was a mix between rurality and local fishing, with an all-along-the-life catholic footprint for everybody.

In 1712, the Saint-Pierre and Sainte-Françoise bell is blessed.

The chapel was really too small, so an extended church has been set up (and blessed) in 1726.

In 1768, a new bell ("Henriette") is melted and blessed.

In 1821, the La Rochelle bishopric decided to erase the former church ("badly designed, badly built") and launched the erection of a new church, following the neo-classic architectural trends. The first stone has been set in 1832; in 1834 the (this) church has been blessed.

In 1903, the bell ends up cracked. A new bell is melted and blessed : Marguerite-Marie.

Since 1927, Le Bois is officially named "Le Bois-Plage en Ré". Its inhabitants are named "Boitais".

In 1962, the nave stained glasses have been renewed and the graphics are from Van Guy, a glassmaker master in Tours.

In 2003, the town funded a heavy renewal : full roof, electrical circuits, lightning rod systems.

In 2009, the town rewarded a contract to Mr MESLIN, sculptor in Le Bois, in order to restore some statues.

In 2012, additional works have been done : the bell support and the wooden frame.

In 2021, re-installation of the Saint Joseph statue hidden during WW2

THE NAVE



The first blue stained glass deals with marine activities: a small boat, mussels, a lobster, a Saint-Jacques shell, maybe an oyster, a fish. The fish (ICHTUS in greek language) is the symbol of the first Christians. In old greek ICHTUS means **I**ésus **C**hristos **T**héou **U**ios **S**ôter, Jesus-Christ, our Saviour, Son of God. The boat also symbolizes the Holy Church taken into storms but never sinking.



The 2^d blue stained glass shows a sail, an anchor, a sea star, beams and crown : another symbol for Mary, Jesus mother. In Jewish language, Myriam, (Mary) means "star of the sea".



The first red stained glass displays a vine inside the Glory Cross. The vine roots feed themselves from a blue flow coming from a Saint-Jacques shell (right side), recalling the water flow from Jesus-Christ ribs pierced by the centurion's spear. The roots also dive in a pyx containing some red wine, symbolizing Jesus-Christ's blood.



The 2nd red stained glass shows a bunch of wheat, a cup full of bread, the Holy book with "I am the Holy bread, for your life". The Holy Communion is recalled on the right side.

These two stained glasses stand for major Christian sacraments : the Baptism (water) and the Holy Communion (wine, bread).



The chapel, right from the Choir, is dedicated to **Saint Barthélémy** (name of the church until 1663). Early Evangelist in Arabia; Armenia, Iran ; martyred (flayed) in Armenia during the 1st century A.D.



At the right corner of the Choir stands the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, the "Immaculate Conception" (her own words to Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, 1858).

On the right, a statue of **Saint-Thérèse of Lisieux** (doctor in Faith inside the Catholic world), and then a statue of Saint-John the Evangelist, Jesus beloved disciple.



At the opposite corner stands **Saint-Antoine of Padoue** (12th century), highly appreciated in Portugal because he spent most of his life in this country. This statue has been gifted by the parishioners in 1897.



On the 1st left pillar stands **Saint-Vincent** statue, master of the vinegrowers. Each last Sunday of September, a procession with the Saint is made through the town, and then a large mass occurs in this church (with hunting horns, brotherhood bands in their pageantry), before tasting the "new wine" issued from grapes cropped one year before.



On the left of the Choir, the **Saint Scapular** chapel. This chapel is dedicated to Our Lady of the Saint Scapular. Virgin Mary appeared in 1251 to Saint-Simon Stock in UK and gave him the mission to spread everywhere the devotion to the Scapular, which was told to avoid to go to Hell after death or was supposed to reduce the time spent in Purgatory. The statue is a polychromatic painted wood dated from the 18th century. It shows Mary nicely holding Jesus. The Scapular is the large golden coat. A Saint Scapular brotherhood existed in Le Bois until 1903. In the past, Mary's head had a crown with diamonds. Due to security constraints, it is now kept apart.



In the same area ; the statue of **the Sacred Heart of Jesus**, and a small statue of Mary, Virgin of Fatima.



The **Virgin of Fatima** has been installed in 2012, and celebrated in this church on 2017, May 13th, 100th birthday date of the first Virgin Mary apparitions in Fatima.

THE CHOIR

The stained glasses : dated from 1896, painting on glass, 3rd technique used in our small church.



Left hand side, back, the **Holy Trinity** : God (in red); Jesus (in blue, as human beings), the Holy Spirit (the dove).



Left hand side, front : **Saint Joseph** holding Jesus in his arms.



Right hand side, front : **Virgin Mary**, giving the Rosary to Saint Dominique through Jesus' hands and giving the Scapular to Saint-Simon Stock (England), leader of the Carmes order.

Beneath : statue of Saint Joseph holding Jesus in his arms. This statue is made of painted iron, molten between 1850 and 1920. Hidden during WW2 to avoid to be re-molten by Nazi armies. Re-discovered at the end of 2019, behind the bell tower stairs.



Right hand side, back : the 3 archangels. Up, Michael, God's warrior. Right, Gabriel, angel of merciness, pity and consolation. Left, Raphael, the angel of healing, travellers and pilgrims protection.



The large painting (dated from 1803) above the altar (19th century) presents God welcoming all the Saints, introduced by Saint Peter (bottom, center of the painting).

6 small paintings, around the Choir, present several saints : Saint-Peter, shepper, and guardian of the Heaven entrance (keys); Saint-Vincent de Paul, with music and galley prisoner attributes; Saint-Barthélémy, with helmet and torture devices; Sainte-Eustelle, virgin and martyr, disciple of Saint Eutrope; Saint-Eutrope, bishop and martyr, 1st evangelist in Saintonge (3rd or 4th century); Saint-Isidore, master of the farmers.

THE ENTRANCE & THE TRIBUNE



Above the entrance door, 3 simple stained glasses symbolize the fire of the Holy Spirit spreading all over the world and in all of us.

The tribune, built in 1864, includes 2 naïve paintings, dated from early 19th century. The left one presents the Saint Barthelemy martyrdom. The right one presents the donation of the Rosary to Saint-Dominique and Sainte-Catherine from Sienna (respectively founder and doctor of Dominican's order).

