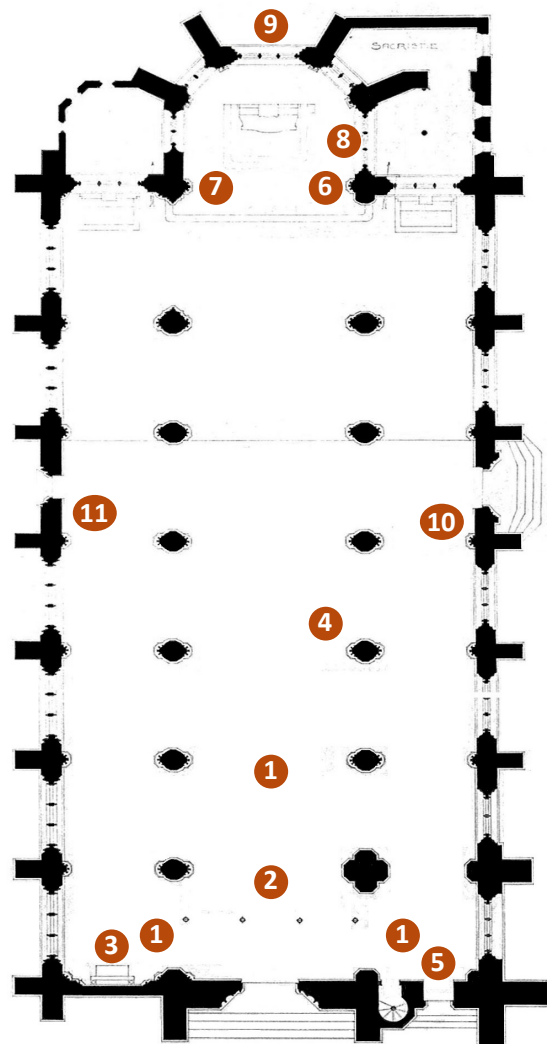


Church plan



- 1 Rib vault keystone
- 2 Gallery
- 3 Baptismal font
- 4 Pulpit
- 5 The Baptism of Christ by Joseph VIVIEN
- 6 Statue of saint Crépin

- 7 Statue of saint Martin
- 8 Saint Martin's reliquary
- 9 Stained-glass windows by Jacques LE CHEVALLIER
- 10 Stained-glass windows by Michel GIGON
- 11 Stained-glass windows by Gilles ROUSVOAL

- 1984, right side aisle bays by Michel GIGON (10). Going from the entrance door to the altar of the Virgin Mary, the artist invites us to imagine the following themes : the Creation, Jesus the Saviour, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the joy of the Chosen, Pentecost, the Eternal Wedding and finally Mary's Glory.
- 2002, left side aisle bays by Gilles ROUSVOAL (11). The stained-glass windows by the baptismal font evoke the water of baptism and then, in succession going towards the front, saints Crépin and Crépinién, saint Mary-Magdalene (the present-day music school just nearby is on the site of the old Magdalene chapel), saint Cénéric and saint Martin.

And what about the 21st century ?

Our church has been falling into disrepair for many years. But it's much loved both by worshippers attending regular Sunday masses and tourists endeared by its hidden beauties. 2020 saw the founding of the **Saint-Crépin Association for the restoration, conservation and promotion of Château-Thierry's church.**

In 2025 (Holy Year in the Catholic Church) we shall celebrate our church's fifth centenary.

Every year, the parish of Saint-Crépin les Vignes celebrates the feast days of saint Crépin (October 25th) and saint Cénéric, the patron saint of Château-Thierry (May 7th).

If you enjoyed your visit and wish to contribute to the restoration of our church, we would welcome any donation which can be addressed at :



Paroisse Saint-Crépin les Vignes
1 rue de la Madeleine
02400 Château-Thierry
03 23 83 25 77 - www.saintcrepinlesvignes.fr



(9) Jacques LE CHEVALLIER



(10) Michel GIGON



(11) Gilles ROUSVOAL



Saint-Crépin
Château-Thierry
visitor guide

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(we can produce a receipt for tax relief if required)

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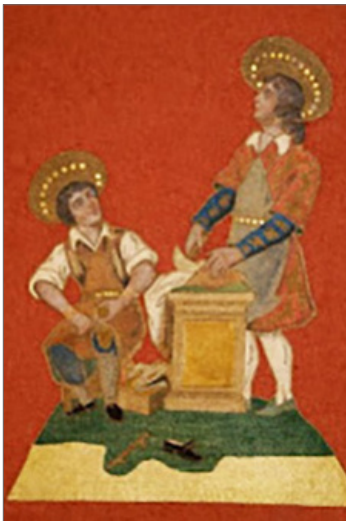
Church origins

Welcome to our church,

St. Crépin's is today the only remaining church in Château-Thierry. Prior to the 1789 revolution, our town had two other parishes with their own churches : Saint-Martin's (further to the west) and Notre-Dame within the castle enclosure.

It is dedicated to saint Crépin (Crispin), one of the first Christian evangelisers in our region, who was martyred in Soissons with his brother Crépilien (Crispinian) in the 4th century.

The church can be traced back to the 12th century, where the original building stood in what was then a trading district outside the confines of the



Saint Crépin and saint Crépilien

medieval city, earning it the long-used former name of 'Saint Crépin-hors-les-murs' (literally 'outside the walls').

After its complete destruction during the Hundred Years War, the present church was reconstructed on the same site over a period stretching from 1487 to the 1520s. The architectural style – notably with the absence of capitals at the top of the nave columns as well as rib vault keystones in the form of antique medallions (1) – is characteristic of that period of transition from Gothic art to Renaissance.

Our church has very few datable elements, but we do know that its organ dates from 1538 based on records of the Beauvais cathedral church Canons having sent their organist on a mission «*to inspect the new organs of Château-Thierry*».

St. Crépin church suffered considerable turmoil over its five centuries, including its conversion into a hay barn at the French Revolution and the loss of its spire (originally above the nave) during a gale in 1794.



Church tower gargoyles

Architecture and ornamentation

Each period since the 16th century had its say in church's interior architecture and ornamentation.

The panelled balustrade of the gallery at the rear – for a long time the seat of the organ – constitutes what we might call 'our church's masterpiece' (2).

The panels are ornamented with 19 statuettes depicting Christ and 18 feminine figures bearing symbols, among which we can identify the three theological virtues: faith (cross), hope (anchor) and charity (purse), the four cardinal values : strength (broken column), prudence (mirror and serpent), justice (sword and scales) and temperance (clock), along with sybils – female pagan seers from the ancient world who foretold the coming of Christ – including the Delphic sybil (crown of thorns), the Cumaean sybil (book) and the Samian sybil (manger).

To the right of the gallery stands the current baptismal font (3). **The fabulist and poet Jean de LA FONTAINE, a native of Château-Thierry, was baptised in this church on July 8th 1621.**

The main front portal (listed as National Heritage monument) dates from the **17th century**, a century earlier than the imposing pulpit (4).

The large painting above the entrance door depicts the baptism of Christ and is the work of Joseph VIVIEN (1657-1734), a student of Charles LE BRUN (5).

Many restorations were made in the **19th century**, including two neo-Gothic altars dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the Sacred Heart, respectively at the ends of the right and left side aisles. In the chancel are statues of the four Evangelists, saint Crépin (6) and saint Martin (7) surrounding the high altar where the Holy Sacrament is kept. The chancel also houses two recently restored reliquaries, the one on the right containing relics of saint Crépin (8).

In the **20th century**, our church was spared from bombardments in the First World War, but its roof was severely damaged, as was the organ, and its ancient glazings were destroyed. They were replaced with contemporary stained-glass windows at three separate periods :

- 1958-1960, chancel area by Jacques LE CHEVALIER who also produced many stained-glass windows for Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral (9).



(1) Rib vault keystone



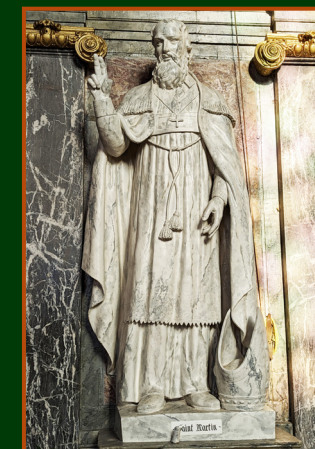
(2) Gallery balustrade panelling with the Samian sybil on the left



(5) The Baptism of Christ by Joseph VIVIEN



(6) Saint Crépin



(7) Saint Martin



(8) Saint Crépin's reliquary