

## Project City Monestary Grote Kerk

The Grote Kerk Leeuwarden is the oldest monument in Leeuwarden's city centre. It was built in the Middle Ages as a monastery. The ancestors of the royal family are also buried here. And the world-famous Müller organ from 1721 attracts many visitors every year.

On Sundays, services are held by the Protestant congregation, which owns the building. During the rest of the week there are often concerts, weddings and events such as graduations and fairs. The church is also open throughout the summer season, and regularly hosts art exhibitions.

There are currently plans to repurpose the church into a City Monastery. A place that exudes peace, where you meet people around important life themes. It will also be a place where people can live in a community. The core values of this place are to slow down, reflect and inspire. Former groups of students Placemaking have been working on the development of the courtyard garden and extending the visiting time for visitors/passers-by to the church.



The next challenge we face is the layout of the nave of the church. Many activities take place in this section, from the Sunday services to weddings to concerts. The layout of the church has transformed over the centuries from a Catholic layout to a traditional Protestant layout. We challenge the students of Placemaking to think with us about how this place can be more in tune with the wants and needs of various stakeholders/visitors. Is the arrangement still of this time, is the furniture still of this time? How can we meet the needs of various target groups to make the length of stay as pleasant as possible, without compromising the core values? How does this fit into the development of the transformation into a city monastery? We are at the beginning of developing this project. We are curious what we can learn from the principles of Placemaking to turn the 'Great Church' in to a 'Great Place', where people like to come for reflection, wonder and encounter.

Jan-Jaap Stegeman  
Referent of the Grote Kerk  
student worker at Bries  
& initiator of Leeuwarden City Monastery