



The church of St. John the Evangelist, the oldest building in the village of Tolpuddle, is of 12th century origin but believed to stand on the site of a much earlier church connected at that time to the Benedictine Monastery at Abbotsbury. From the 12th century a church was built of flint and rubble stone with ashlar (squared stone) dressings. The church was enlarged in the 13th and 14th centuries and again extensively altered and renovated in the mid-1800s.

1. FONT

Water is blessed and put into the font for baptism when someone, usually a baby, is made a member of the church. It has eight sides and is an **octagon**. The decoration is known as a quatrefoil (4 leaves Fr) design. The font is often found near the entrance to the church as people being baptised are at the start of their spiritual journey as members of the Christian church.



2. NAVE

The nave is the main body of the church with seating for the congregation/people. This part of the church has seen many alterations over hundreds of years so there are arches of different ages. The **three north arches** are 14th century and the **one** arch on the south wall was built about one hundred years earlier. This archway used to lead to a larger south transept. The roof rafters are **wood** and this roof is a good example of trussed rafters: a truss is a rigid beam that supports rafters.

3. PULPIT

There are **three** steps up into the pulpit. The **priest or preacher** stands to give guidance to the parishioners, and it is high so that **everyone can easily see and hear the priest/preacher**. The talk given is called the sermon.

4. CHANCEL

The benches or stalls are for the members of **the choir** and the desk/chair is for **the clergy**. The Minton floor tiles are decorated with symbols from the bible. The **Lamb** and The **Dove**. Jesus is known as The Lamb of God and a white dove is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. **St. John the Evangelist** is the patron saint of Tolpuddle Church and his name is embroidered on the long kneelers, that were made to mark the Millennium. He lived at the same time as Jesus, was the youngest of the twelve Apostles of Christ, and wrote his version of the Gospel, (his story of the life of Christ) and three Epistles (letters) and the book of Revelation. There is a **priest's door**, in the south wall of the chancel.

5. ALTAR

The cloth on the front of the altar is called a frontal, and different colours are used throughout the year to mark the seasons of the Church's year:

White	for Christmas, Easter, Trinity, patron saint's day.
Purple	for Advent (the 4 weeks before Christmas), Lent (the 40 days before Easter)
Red	for Pentecost also called Whitsun (the coming of the Holy Spirit)
Green	for all the other times

In the centre of the altar which is the focal point of a church where Holy Communion is celebrated, is a **Cross**, the emblem of the Christian Church, with the letters **IHC** engraved, meaning 'Jesus' in Greek.

6. EAST WINDOW

Jesus is the figure in the middle. This window was given in memory of D E M Nash, mother of the Vicar, George Nash, when the church was renovated in 1855.

7. THE COMMANDMENTS

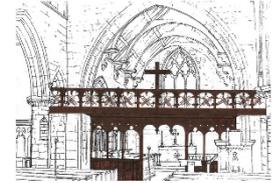
There are **TEN** Commandments as written in the Holy Bible and spoken by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. They are the most important orders from God to humankind.

8. HYMN BOARD

The numbers of the hymns chosen for each service **are displayed on this board**. The hymn board is dedicated to **Leslie Crocker**, a World War I casualty from Tolpuddle. He was killed in action at Albert in Flanders on Good Friday, 29th March 1918.

9. NORTH TRANSEPT

The **four** steps lead **nowhere**. Once they may have led to a Rood Loft, above a Rood Screen, topped with a cross (known as a Rood): a wooden structure separating the Nave from the Chancel. The blocked archway is known as a squint and was an opening pierced through the wall to allow a view of **the altar**. The little alcove with a small basin set in stone is known as a piscina and was used for **washing the sacred vessels, the cups for wine**. Usually, the piscina is placed very near the altar so it is possible that this was moved at some time.



10. NORTH WINDOW

George Lloyd Nash was the Vicar of Tolpuddle for **41 years**. He died in **1893** at the age of 66 years. He was the vicar at the time of the rebuilding of the church in 1855 and all the stained-glass windows in this church are from the 1855 restoration. This window, that tells the story of Lazarus, is dedicated to his memory. The beautiful stained-glass window in the chancel, behind the altar, is in memory of D E M Nash, mother of the vicar at that time. There are also dedicated windows to other members of the Nash family: William Henry Nash and Thomas Nash. Much of the private donations for the church rebuilding in 1855 were from the various members of the Nash family. Other windows are dedicated to members of the Oliver family and one to James Crane, a principal landowner.

11. CARVED EFFIGY

"PHILIPPO" – he is known as **Philip** The Priest. The writing is in **Latin and Greek**. He lived about **900 years ago**.

These are the lines around the edge: SI QUIS AMAT XPM
QUI SARCOPHAGUM VIDET ISTUM
DICAT PRESBITERO
REQUIEM DA CHRISTE PHILIPPO

"If any lover of Christ should see this tombstone, let him say, Grant rest, O Christ, to Philip the priest."

Nothing is known of the history of this priest, but it is interesting to see that for **XPM** in the first line, the Greek letters XP, meaning Christ in Greek, are used, whereas in the fourth line **Christe** is in its full Latin form. It is rare to find both Greek and Latin being used. The stone has been cemented together where it was broken about the middle. In 1911 the upper portion of this massive slab had lain buried in the turf to the south of the chancel for many years, while the lower half, which is better preserved, had been built into the north corner of the chancel.

12. TOWER

The four **church bells** are up in the tower. There are **four** ropes, one for each bell. The tower itself was built at two different stages. The lower part is 13th century and built of flint and ashlar, and the upper part, added around 200 years later is built of rubble. It is easier to see the different styles when you are outside the church.

13. TOLPUDDLE MARTYRS AND A MARTYR'S GRAVE

In 1834 **six agricultural labourers** from Tolpuddle **were sentenced to transportation for seven years**. Their names were: George Loveless, and his brother, James Loveless, James Hammett, Thomas Standfield and his son John Standfield and James Brine. In 1830 the labourer's wage was nine shillings a week but in the years after that it went down to eight shillings, then seven and in 1834 a further reduction to six shillings was threatened. Under the leadership of George Loveless, these men tried to work out how they could defend themselves against these reductions. They tried talking to their employers, using the Vicar of Tolpuddle as an intermediary. Promises were made but not kept. They turned to higher Trade Union authorities, but the local magistrates and their employers took fright, and the outcome was that the six men were arrested, imprisoned, brought before the Dorchester court in March 1834, and were sentenced to seven years' transportation to penal colonies. In fact, there was a public outcry, and they were eventually pardoned, and all returned to England but only James Hammett to Tolpuddle where he lived for the rest of his life. His grave can be found in the churchyard to the west of the church.

In 1934 the Trades Union Congress built 6 cottages, each named after one Martyr, and a hall, now a museum, in Tolpuddle in memory of the Martyrs. To the east of the churchyard, is a great tree, known as the Martyrs' Tree because the men are said to have gathered beneath it for some of their meetings.

14. THE PORCH

Six men from Tolpuddle died in the First World War, and **one man** in the Second World War. 2018 is **100 years**, a **Centenary**, after the end of World War I.