



WELCOME TO
The church at Hulterstad

CHURCHES ON ÖLAND

If you live on an island, you must be able to sail. Living by the Southern Baltic Sea has brought extensive contacts with the nations to the South.

Already in the Viking Age, the change of religion became obvious on Öland, not least because Christian graves began to appear on the village burial sites. The first churches were built during the 11th century, using wood and stave technique. A few scattered stave church planks still remain. Monuments engraved with runes have withstood the ravages of time and are preserved in six churches.

During the 12th century, 34 stone churches were built here. Soon after that, seven chapels were added at fishing villages and trading places. The earliest churches had windows and porches facing both the North and the South. A few even had a tower at the West end, and if so there would also be a porch there. Around each church, a burial place was provided for the dead and a stone wall surrounded the holy place. These churchyards are still in use.

In the 13th century and the Middle Ages many churches were provided with secular top floors and to almost half of them, a tower was added at the East End as well. The church buildings served as places for worship as well as storage space and for overnight accommodation.

The role of the church during the Middle Ages shows how the church and the world went hand in hand. The following centuries saw only interior changes to most of Öland's churches. They were provided with arches and sometimes with new quires or porticos. Following the Reformation, new demands were made on church buildings. Preferably, the congregation should be seated, but the small medieval churches were short of space. Additions widened many churches, but towards the end of the 18th century, the thought of new buildings gained ground.

The churches on Öland have very few medieval artefacts. Numerous wars and the ravages by the Danes in 1677 left little behind. Today only one medieval church on Southern Öland is preserved intact. In another three, medieval rooms have survived. Seven churches have medieval towers.

Today's churches preserve ideals of style and function from the 18th and 19th century hall churches. The seated congregation listens to the service and sings together. Large windows make it easy to read from the Hymnal and the sermon spreads the Word throughout the entire building. Modern churches are gradually adapted to modern forms. Flexibility, participation and even technology make demands. On Southern Öland, one church has been adapted to modernity while preserving its medieval structure – the Church of Ventlinge.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE CHURCH OF HULTERSTAD

The church in the midst of the village, or at least at its Northern end, the Christian message has been proclaimed at Hulterstad for at least 1200 years. A wooden church was built in the late Viking age. Well-preserved timbers have been found in the structure of the present church building. At that time, Eastern Öland had frequent contacts with the Southern and Eastern trade routes towards Novgorod. Grave monuments with runes from around 1100 suggest a rich and flourishing area.

The construction of a stone church began early in the 12th century. A basilica with three aisles and semi-circle shaped east-facing apses was built with porticos towards the North and the South. The nave and the twin towers, shaped according to the Danish model, were added around 1170. The barrel-shaped lower part of the tower opened up through two arches towards the church interior. With its town-like interior, the church of Hulterstad was unique on Öland. The three apses in the quire suggest significant side altars. However, the twin towers were knocked down and the present tower was erected above the nave. This might indicate tensions between Swedish and Danish interests on Öland.

The current church was built in 1803. Everything except the tower was knocked down and a hall church was constructed. The Word should be at the centre, so altar pulpits were often provided at this time. The one at Hulterstad is still in use.



WELCOME TO THE CHURCH AT HULTERSTAD

One of the Oldest on Öland

At Hulterstad, a stately stone church was erected in the early 12th century to replace an older simple wooden church. This three-aisled church was later provided with twin towers at the West end.

The twin towers were knocked down in about the year 1200. Their foundations have been preserved in the ground at the West of the current tower. These remnants give an indication of the magnificence of the West end of the first stone church. They were replaced by the current tower. It has withstood warfare as well as the desire of various powers to erase it. A brick-built staircase in the tower leads to several vaulted rooms. The steps are triangular and built in a zig-zag, so you must put your foot on the wide part of the step to avoid stumbling.

A small barrel-shaped cell is preserved. It may have served as temporary accommodation. The staircase continues inside the western wall to the third floor.

The top floor of the tower is the bell-chamber, where the two church bells hang. The large bell was cast in the year 1631 by Jurgen Putensen and the small bell in the year 1780 by Johan Jacob Mårtensson. Before 1803 there was a separate bell-tower in the churchyard.

Today a lantern, added in 1803, completes the tower. The four clock-faces were a gift by the then vicar, Hugo Håkansson, who used his 50th birthday present from the parish to pay for them.

The tower is open to the public one day every summer as part of the World Heritage Week. Views across the Öland cultural landscape can be enjoyed.



The Tower and the Foundations

The building of the church we have today was begun in 1803 and it was dedicated in December of the same year. Extensive renovations were undertaken in 1951. Improvements to the paintings were made in the 1980s. Above the door at the South entrance there is a plaque with writings in gold: *“In the reign of King Gustav IV Adolf this church was rebuilt by a willing and united people through the offices of their Vicar, Johan Lindeström in the year 1803.”*

The Porch

The floor in the porch is considerably lower than in the church itself, because debris from the old church, which was knocked down in 1803, was used as floor filling. In the porch there are two large limestone plaques with the name of priests who have served this church. Parts of rune stones that were grave monuments from the early Middle Ages are also kept in the porch



The Church Interior

Above the steps are murals from the old church. A wrought-iron candle holder, where visitors may light a candle in memory of those who are no longer among us, can be found between the pillars at the entrance to the church. The large windows, the well-attuned colours of the furnishings and the lovely limestone floor give an impression of light. Two textile prints entitled Faith, Hope and Love, composed in 1998 by Gunilla Strandå from Triberga, adorn the building. Following the aisle towards the altar, there are two side exits with double doors to the North and the South. The South porch is opened on solemn occasions, such as baptisms, weddings or funerals and for the celebration of All Saints Day, when the clergy, the choir and the people end the memorial service in the churchyard, honouring our departed members.



The Pulpit

The present pulpit was made in 1803 by Mirror-Maker Anders Högström as a so-called altar pulpit according to contemporary customs.



The Bridal Crown

The church at Hulterstad has its own bridal crown from 1753. It was remade in 1845 and was frequently used in the past by the young brides of the parish. Today it usually rests in its copper covering.



Baptism

The most precious item in this church is the 12th century baptismal font made of sandstone. The cuppa (the bowl) is eroded by water and wind, since it was used for many years as a water-trough at the vicarage. Even though the foot was damaged, it was taken back into the church. The pewter bowl was made in 1799 by IP Fagerström of Kalmar. Every child who is baptised is given a candleholder of limestone as a gift from the parish.

At the wall by the font is a baptismal altar, covered by a frontal designed by the Kalmar artist Reine Navin and embroidered by Linnea Lindvall of Hulterstad.



The Votive Ship

The church ship, or the votive ship, has its place in the quire. It is a model of the barque "Beatrice" made by Skipper Martin Olsson at Pataholm. The ship was given by General Director Jonas Orring who spent the summers at Hulterstad.



The Organ

The church organ in the gallery dates from the 1860s. Today there is also a piano in the quire, which is frequently used when the ladies' choir or the children's choir perform under the leadership of the Cantor or when we have an evening with music, mingling and coffee.



The Surroundings

In the North part of the church yard, there is a memorial to the men of the Regal Ship Kronan. It was dedicated on 8th September 1984 by the Friend's Association Flottans män. This is a monument to the men who died 1st June 1676 when the Regal Ship was wrecked near the coast of Hulterstad.

The Mortuary

In 1753 a bone house was built in the church yard, and in 1918 it was rebuilt into a mortuary. In 1995 it was adorned by a tempera painting, entitled The Way of Life from Youth to Death, by the artist Rune Söderberg.



Hulterstad Stenåsa

Hulterstad church is one of two churches in the parish of Hulterstad – Stenåsa. Therefore we celebrate High Mass or a Service of Worship here every other Sunday. Once every summer we have an outdoor service at our old village hall at Hulterstad and once at the Harbour of Skärlov. Both occasions are appreciated and well attended. You are very welcome to join us for our services, and thus to be filled with joy and peace.

This church is one of 19 churches in the Joint Parish of Southern Öland. It is situated in the Parish of Hulterstad Stenåsa.

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