


Svenska kyrkan 

SÖDRA ÖLAND



WELCOME TO

The Church at Resmo

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 AT RESMO

The church at Resmo is one of the oldest churches in Sweden, built about the year 1100. There are many ancient features that testify to significant contacts with countries around the Southern Baltic Sea and Denmark. The rune stones speak of the family who had the contacts which made the building of this church possible.

The church has a nave, a quire and an apse constructed by thin shifts of limestone. The masonry technique is old-fashioned and for a long time the walls were without plaster. Finer details were made of sandstone and lime tufa.

Lime tufa must have been imported from Denmark. The lower part of the West tower was built at the same time as the nave. Three porticos to the West, the South and the North all led into the church. They were all fitted with strong oak beams in order to relieve the masonry above. The nave had four windows high up on every side. They have been divided into two air vents with round arches and wooden transom work. A small round East window leads the viewer to look towards the kingdom of heaven.

The quire and the apse have early medieval murals. Murals from the late Middle Ages and the 17th century can still be discerned on the walls of the nave.

At the beginning of the 13th century, a tower was erected in the East, and the West tower was completed. The lower metre of the East tower is still intact. In spite of centuries of repairs and alterations, primarily to enlarge the windows, the sense of mystery in the early medieval church is still preserved.



WELCOME TO THE CHURCH AT RESMO

The site of Resmo Church has been significant to the people of the area for longer than anyone can remember. At the time of the birth of Jesus and the beginning of our calendar, the dead were already buried here. The road passing the church on the East side is one of the most ancient roads in Sweden.

Sometime towards the end of the Viking age, the chief Sveinu, lived at Resmo, and we consider him the master builder of this church. He had probably encountered the Christian faith during his travels and converted to Christianity himself. He then brought his Christian faith back home to Resmo and had the church built. He probably also brought back a builder and craftsmen from Denmark, because the church at Resmo is constructed in a manner that was unknown in Sweden at this time, but which can be found in several places in Denmark and Northern Germany.

The early 12th century saw the church at Resmo completed, more or less as we see it today. The tower was not quite finished and the sacristy had not yet been built, but the walls were there with their small windows high up, which we can still see. The larger windows were made much later (in 1785). In the 13th century the West tower was completed and yet another tower was built at the East end, making the church a so-called packsaddle church. The Eastern tower was knocked down in 1826.

Welcome inside

The first room you enter is the porch, the ground floor of the tower. Here you can see some medieval gravestones and the old church chest, which in 1706 was called “the new chest.” Its three locks are a reminder of the need for collaboration: in order to open the chest, both the priest and the two church wardens had to be present, each with their own key.

Today the church’s assets are managed in a different way, but good collaboration between the priest and the church wardens remain as important as ever.



The church interior

As you enter the church, the height and the space is striking, even though the floor has been raised more than half a metre and the ceiling was not there from the beginning, leaving the church open right up to the roof ridge. It must have been a breath-taking experience for medieval Resmo-dwellers to enter their enormous church, only dimly lit by the sparse light that came through the small high windows. Candles were lit on the high altar in the choir and murals in bright colours adorned the walls. Today the interior is not as powerfully coloured. The murals, which have been whitewashed, have mild colours and can be difficult to see in many places.



The Harvest Altar

To the left of the entrance stands the harvest altar, donated to the church in 2006 by the artist's family as an expression of our thanksgiving for all God's bountiful gifts. It encourages us to be good and responsible stewards of all creation.



The Candle Bearer

To the left is the candle bearer, made and donated by a skilful stone mason from the village. You are welcome to light a candle and think of someone you want to pray for especially.

The pulpit (from 1799) now stands in the place of a medieval altar dedicated to the Virgin Mary. On the opposite side, where the baptismal font now has its place, was yet another altar. The dove above the font reminds us of the promise of the Lord in Baptism: "I am with you every day until the end of time."

Here Heaven and Earth Meet

A triumphal crucifix hangs in the transept between the nave and the quire: the victorious Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. When the church was built, the nave was seen as a symbol for the world in which we live our lives together with our fellow human beings as well as with the saints, pictured in the paintings on the walls. On the North wall we can still discern Jesus arrested and brought before the Court of Pilate, reminding us that Jesus shares all the injustices and excessive violence that beset people in this world. som kan drabba oss.

The High Altar

Entering the quire, under the crucifix, we symbolically enter heaven, and we are reminded that the way there has been opened to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus. The solid altar dominates the quire. The altar shelf, which is the same age as the church itself, was replaced in 1799 with the shelf that belongs to the reredos. It was then used as a stepping stone and later stood outside in the church yard, subject to the ravages of the weather, until it was restored to its original use in connection with the 9th centenary jubilee of the church in the year 2000.



The Silver of the Church

The beautiful Communion silver from the 18th and 19th centuries is used whenever the Sacrament of the Eucharist is celebrated.



The Apse

An almond-shaped halo surrounds Christ in Glory, pictured in the chire ceiling above the high altar. In his right hand, Christ holds a book and in his left hand a spire with a cross. This mural from the early 12th century is clearly influenced by the Eastern Christian icon tradition.



The Christmas Crib

Over Christmas an entire landscape is presented, showing numerous clay figures. At the centre, we see of course the new-born Jesus with Mary and Joseph. This crib was bought by the parish from the church of Carolus in Malmö when that church was de-sacralised.

The Church Wand

The church wand is an item that we rarely use these days. It was made in 1783 and is still not worn out, even though, besides waking anyone who had fallen asleep, it was used to stir the fire in the iron stove (!). A plaque reads: "Awaken the sleeper to listen". Today we interpret that as a reminder that we belong to the people of God and we live under God's care.



Worship

The worshipping congregation is the greatest adornment of the church at Resmo. You are always welcome to worship here. The Mass is usually celebrated every other Sunday.



This church is one of 19 churches in the Joint Parish of Southern Öland. It is situated in the Parish of Resmo-Vickleby.

Postal Address: Office Tel:
Södra Ölands pastorat +46(0)485-380 12
Kyrkgatan 3
386 92 FÄRJESTADEN

sodraolands.pastorat@svenskakyrkan.se
www.svenskakyrkan.se/sodraoland

Welcome to follow us on Facebook



facebook.com/SvenskakyrkanSODRAOLAND

