

Svenska kyrkan
SÖDRA ÖLAND

WELCOME TO
The Church at Vickleby

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 present 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 VICKLEBY

Vickleby church is the centre of a well-preserved parochial environment with the church, the church yard, the vicarage and the school together at the centre. The church was built in the 12th century with an apse but no tower.

From the beginning, there were porticos towards the North and the South. The large tower at the West end with its several arched floors was added in the early 13th century. In the past, the tower was used for secular purposes.

Remnants from craftsmen and residents have been found. Medieval furnishings include a baptismal font and the late medieval small bell.

In 1778 the nave was lengthened towards the East by adding a new quire. The blue colouring was added at the same time. The interior is dominated by rococo and neo-classicism. The work of the Vickleby artist, Artur Percy, including the decorative painting of the pews, binds the whole into a unit.

The medieval tower portico with its eight-leaved slanting rose reminds us of the passion of Christ on the cross.



WELCOME TO THE VICKLEBY CHURCH

Welcome to the Vickleby Church. Worship has been celebrated here for almost 1000 years.

Before you enter the church, stop and look out across the Strait of Kalmar. To the West, you look down into the centre of the parish towards the vicarage with its beautiful glass veranda along the village street. The priest at Vickleby has lived here ever since the church was built in the 12th century. Towards the North you can see the nowadays closed village school, which shows how close the church and the school once were. To the East of the church you can look out across the Great Alvar, the moorland of Öland. The small stone building across the road is the mortuary of the parish.

In the church yard, you can make a stop at the grave of Carl Malmsten. Carl Malmsten founded the Capellagård, which still functions as a school for craftsmen at Vickleby. The artist Arthur Percy is also buried in the Vickleby church yard.



The West Porch

Entering the church, you pass through the West porch, which was probably cut in the 13th century by a very skilled stone mason. The beautiful rose has fascinated many visitors. The rose is a reminder of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus, who stood faithfully at the foot of his cross. Here it encourages us to hold on to our faith and to continue further into God's house.



The West Porch

The Porch

You have now entered the porch. Here you can light a candle for someone you are thinking of and want to pray for. The porch is the ground floor room of the tower. Higher up there are several floors where supplies could be stored and visitors could spend the night. There is also a secret compartment where valuables could be hidden away. Even higher up is the bell chamber where the two bells hang. Every morning at 08.00am and every evening at 20.00 (from Easter until the Harvest Festival) the medieval small bell rings out across the Vickleby village. The same sound has reminded people of God's presence at Vickleby for 700 years.

The Church Interior

At Vickleby, the church interior is marked by a restoration undertaken in the 18th century when the medieval apse and the narrower quire were knocked down and the church was lengthened. At that time, the reredos, the pulpit and the pews were added, giving the church its harmonious 18th century character. The reredos was originally painted in 1713. Originally it was much smaller than it is today. There was not enough space in the quire for a large reredos, but when the church was extended, a larger reredos was wanted so it was complemented by one plank at the top, providing more sky, and two at the bottom, allowing for more grass. The joints are clearly visible. In the mid-19th century, a new reredos was acquired, (which nowadays hangs on the South wall above the font.) The old reredos was forgotten but was rediscovered during a renovation in 1938. Princess Sibylla (the mother of King Carl XVI Gustaf) has donated a crucifix for the altar.



The Altar

The altar is the central focus, reminding us that God himself comes to meet us here on earth. The white linen linens can be seen as the swaddling clothes of Baby Jesus or as the shroud in which the body of Jesus was wrapped in the grave. When Mass is celebrated, the beautiful 18th century communion silver is used.



The Baptismal Font

This is the oldest item of this church. Baptism into the Church of Christ takes place today in the same font in which the 12th century residents of Vickleyby were baptised. The Church of Christ is one and the same throughout the ages.

The reliefs that once adorned the font are now difficult to see. In 1778, the font was placed as decoration on the roof ridge of the quire, subjected to the wind and the weather. In 1938 the font was taken down and restored to its proper place inside the church.



The pulpit with its rococo ornament shows how Jesus struggled in prayer in Gethsemane in the evening of Maundy Thursday. Facing the quire is an image of the Ascension: you only see the feet of Jesus, above the empty tomb. (It did not look like that, but we understand the artist's thinking.)

The Votive Ship

The votive ship above the pews on the North side was a gift to the church, reminding us that the church is like a ship, sailing towards heaven. Guided by the wind of the Spirit through the storms and the chaos waters, the people of God are secure on board. The Old Testament tells us how Noah built his boat – the Ark – in which the people and the animals were saved from the flood.



The Vickleby Vestment

The Vickleby church owns a rich collection of vestments and textiles in different colours, reflecting the seasons of the liturgical year. The finest vestment is green. It is composed by the Vickleby artist Arthur Percy and embroidered in silk on silk by Sofia Widén, Studio Licium. On the back flowers from Öland's moorland, the Alvar, are embroidered: orchids, rockrose, chicory, poppy etc. This vestment was given to the church in 1944 in celebration of the 60th birthday of Maja Nording, the legendary owner of the Bo Guest House.



The Christmas Crib

The Christmas Crib can only be seen during Christmastide. It was given by the artist Birger Frohm in memory of his parents, who lived at Vickleby.

Worship

The worshipping congregation is the greatest adornment of the church at Vickleby. You are always welcome to worship here. The Mass is usually celebrated every other Sunday at 16.00 (18.00 in July and August.) and most Tuesdays at 18.30. On the Sundays when there is no Service at Vickleby, you are welcome to the church at Resmo (same times) or to the church at Mörbylånge at 10.00.

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

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