



WELCOME TO

The Ventlinge church

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.

SOMTHING ABOUT THE VENTLINGE CHURCH

The Ventlinge Church is the most modern church on Öland. It is situated by the main road, in the middle of a farming village bordering the moorland of Alvaret to the East. You can hear the waves from the Kalmar Sound. To the South is the village of Grönhögen with its fishing harbour and nowadays also a golf course. Since the Middle Ages, this area has lived by fishing and stone industry.

The church was built in the 12th century without a tower but with a nave, a quire and an apse. The quire had its own porch. A West tower was raised early in the 13th century with an arch opening into the church. The nave had a floor of limestone and had benches along the sides. A couple of steps led up towards the quire and the altar in the apse. There were a side-altar dedicated to St Lars (Lawrence) by the South side of the triumphal arch and on the North side there was an altar dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The opening of the triumphal arch separated the quire by a screen. There is a mural on the North wall under the gallery showing a late medieval ship with a man on the quarterdeck.

In 1812 the quire and the apse were pulled down and the church was extended towards the East. A sacristy was built on the East side. A new wooden floor was laid on top of the medieval side-benches, which covered the medieval floor. A new porch was built in the middle of the South wall and soon afterwards the tower was adorned by a lantern. In the spirit of the time, an alter pulpit was added to the church.

Nowadays the church has been totally renovated. The character of the medieval church has been recreated within the framework of the 1812 building.

WELCOME TO THE VENTLINGE CHURCH

Welcome Inside!

When you enter the church, you come into a small ante-room with space for street clothes. There is also a Visitors' Book in which you are welcome to write down your thoughts about the church and your visit.

The Church Interior

When you enter the church you will notice the special light, the open space and the simple, modern furnishings. Traditional pews have been replaced by light chairs that can be moved around to suit particular services. The church is small, but there is room for just over 100 people if the beautiful stone benches along the sides of the nave are also used.



The Baptismal Font

In 1937 Malcom Åkerberg donated the font, which he had made himself. It is made of limestone from Grönhögen and has three parts.

It is placed near the entrance as a reminder that baptism marks the entrance into the church.



The Candle Bearer and the Altar

The candle bearer, which stands North of the font, was made by a blacksmith from Torslunda. You can light a candle and, in the peace and quiet, you can remember all your loved ones who have gone before you into eternal rest.



At the East End you can see the altar, the powerful focal point of the church, made of very beautiful grey-blueish Öland limestone, austere and elegant. Behind the altar there is a brass crucifix supported by a stone holder (crafted in England.)



The Pulpit

The carpenter N.J. Jonsson from Glömminge made it in the year 1879. It was previously situated above the altar. Nowadays the altar is free standing and the pulpit is a decoration that is hardly ever used.

The choir of the parish, Kören Sydöland, always stands hear when singing in church.

The Mural

Below the gallery, on the North side of the nave, there is an unusual mural from the 15th century. It depicts a red ship against a light-brown background,



The Organ

A new digital organ was purchased and installed in 2014. Since the old organ-face remains in place, it still looks the same as before.



The Sacristy

What was previously a porch is now a shared space. Part of it is a sacristy with handmade shelves for vestments and other textiles and cupboards carved in situ. The North part is now the kitchen, which has most mod-cons, and where coffee can be served for up to 90 people without any problems.



Today's Church

In 2014 the church was re-dedicated by the then Bishop Jan-Olof Johansson. The building had been closed since 2005, due to severe mould problems. The church, which you see today, is a modern expression, not only visually but also technically. The digital organ can be programmed to play by itself, and projector technology helps the visitor to follow the readings and the hymns easily. All this technology is directed from an Ipad.

In connection with the re-dedication, the parochial church council decided that Ventlinge should be the main church of the Parish of South Öland, which consists of six churches: Smedby, South Möckleby, Ventlinge, Ås, Gräsgård and Segerstad. In practice, this means that the Parish Mass is celebrated here every Sunday with the exception of major feast days and solemnities, when all the churches celebrate their own Mass and other services of worship.

In connection with Mass, coffee is offered before the service. This has proved to be much appreciated and attendance at church services is very good. Rather than meeting for enjoyable conversation outside the church after the service, as was the custom in the past, we now meet for coffee before the service.



This church is one of 18 churches in the Joint Parish of Southern Öland. It is situated in the Parish of South Öland.

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