



WELCOME TO
ÅS 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. 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 ÅS

The old Parish of Ås is at the Southern end of Öland, where the old Ölandish domestic animal farms still dominate. The King's deer herds can be seen on the land towards Ottenby Grove.

The Church School is nowadays a hostel and thousands of bird watchers walk around the Lighthouse Långe Jan (Long John). Of the former priest's residence, only the barns to the south of the church site remain. King Karl X's high wall separates the village from Näsby to the East. The church and the church yard are surrounded by the land of the Ottenby Royal Farm.

Built in the 12th century, this is Öland's only preserved church with the tower at the East end. Originally the apse with the altar was in the tower. The nave had a porch facing south. Some small windows provided limited light in the church.

The nave was extended towards the West in the 1770s and in 1820 the quire and the apse became the sacristy. Thus the church of Ås became a neo-classical hall church with the pulpit above the altar and a lantern on the tower. The porch is now at the west end. During the latest renovation, it was discovered that the medieval church had stone benches along the sides. The bells in the tower have rung in the New Year on Television.



WELCOME TO ÅS CHURCH

The Church of Ås is the most southern on Öland. It is mostly open in the summer but there are services on major festivals throughout the year.

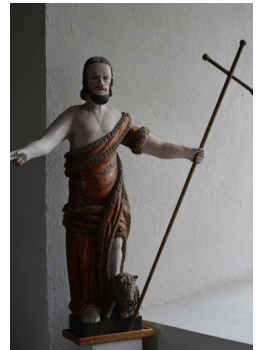
Predikstolens placering

The place of the Pulpit
When you enter, you will notice that the Church at Ås is small and intimate. You will see that the location of the pulpit is usual. The pulpit was placed above the altar in order to stress symbolically that the proclaimed Word was equal to the Sacrament of the Altar. This thinking was rejected in the last century and it was no longer permitted to place the pulpit above the altar. The pulpits in the churches at Ås, Ventlinge and Hulterstad are a few that are still found in this position.



Sculptures and Paintings

The sculptured and painted reredos was made in 1749, but since 1820, when the altar was moved, it is joined to the pulpit. The original central part was the crucifixion scene, nowadays hanging on the north wall. The crown of the altar shows the gateway into the heavenly city. In front of it stands an angle, erasing from the Book of Life the innumerable sins of the person who turns to the Lord. The master of this work was Anders Dahlström the Elder, who has made similar reredoses at Smedby, Långlöt and Runsten.



Anders Dahlström the Elder has also made the two sculptures found in the window niches in the quire. They represent Moses with the Ten Commandments (in the North window) and John the Baptist with the Gospel (in the South window.)

The Organ

The first organ for the Church at Ås was installed in 1803. It was a second-hand organ from the “German Prayer House” at Karlskrona. 30 years later it was replaced by an organ built by Johan Petter Åberg at Vassmolösa. The present organ was purchased in 1883 from the famous company of Åkerman and Lund. In connection with that installation and the erection of the organ face, designed by Ludvig Peterson, the ceiling of the organ gallery was lowered



The Votive Ship is a Gift

The votive ship is a full-rigged ship with three masts, built and given by the light house henchman Karl Johan Bolinder in 1888. The reason behind the gift is not known, nor do we know if this is a model of any particular ship, but there is a carving at the stern which was probably a name plaque. The model was renovated as part of the interior renovation at the end of the 1970s, carried out by Anders Nilsson and Martin Ohlsson.



The Artist Brita Edman

There are three works by the artist Brita Edman in this church. On the South wall hangs a woven picture entitled “The View from the Tower of the Church of Ås” and “The Blue Trinity” is found in one of the South windows. On the North wall hangs the application “Glowing Cross.”



The Memorial Garden

Designed by Brita Edman, the Memorial Garden is found midway along the North side of the nave. It is marked by a cast iron cross with an angel, made in 1860.

The Sundial

South of the church, beside the pathway is a sundial, made in 1994 by the church caretaker Christer Andersson 1994.



S:t John´s Chapel

On the way to the Southern tip of Öland and Långe Jan you find Kyrkhamn (Church Harbour,) an important medieval fishing harbour. A chapel was built here in honour of S:t John. In the 13th century, the Church was interested in the southern tip and Kyrkhamn, the village there, mainly because of the fishing. The Monastery at Nydala held the patronage rights of the “Ecclesia de Othanby” (the Church at Ottenby) in order to secure its provision of herring. We do not know whether the Chapel was a mother church or a daughter church, nor whether it had the right to administer baptism and funerals, which medieval chapels were not supposed to have. In Scandinavia, the borderlines regarding what was called a chapel or a church were somewhat fluid.

The chapel and its place were abandoned during the Reformation period. Nowadays there is only a grass-covered elevation where the walls of the chapel once stood. A cross is erected in front of the ruin, which can be seen as a miniature of what the chapel might have looked like. Stone from the chapel was used to build the lighthouse.



Korset vid St Johannes kapell

In the Parish of South Öland, there are six churches: Ås, Södra Möckleby, Gräsgård, Smedby, Segerstad and Ventlinge. Sunday services are mainly held at the Ventlinge Church. The Church at Ås is primarily used in the summer, when there is a café, exhibitions and music. The Parish of South Öland hopes that this information has been of value to you. Before you leave the Church, please sit down for a while for rest and reflection.

Welcome back!

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

Postal Address:

Södra Ölands pastorat

Kyrkgatan 3

386 92 FÄRJESTADEN

Office tel: 0485-380 12

sodraolands.pastorat@svenskakyrkan.se

www.svenskakyrkan.se/sodraoland

Welcome to follow us on
Facebook



facebook.com/SvenskakyrkanSODRAOLAND