



WELCOME TO
The church at Algutsrum

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 ALGUTSRUM CHURCH

The church at Algutsrum is situated high up with a view of the Kalmar Strait. The ruins of the Chapel of St Canute at Gråborg also belong to the parish.

A find of a rune stone might be part of a Viking age wooden church built on this site.

A stone church with an apse, built in the Öland style, was constructed towards the end of the 12th century. The West tower might have been built at the same time. The nave was rebuilt in the 14th century when a stately Southern portico and larger windows were added. Remnants of the portico remain in the climbing steps towards the market place. The church was widened by adding to the nave on the North side, but this was insufficient, so the addition was knocked down and rebuilt in the 19th century. The present church was built by stages between 1822 and 1865, when the nave was lengthened towards the West and the tower was added.

A stately late medieval reredos is preserved, and tradition claims that it came from the Chapel of St Canute. Other medieval items include the baptismal font, a prime bell, a chalice and a triumphal crucifix. A large image of Our Lady is kept in the County Museum.



WELCOME TO THE CHURCH AT ALGUTSRUM

You can see the church at Algutsum from the Öland Bridge. The church is situated high up with surrounding villages in all directions.

Parish Life

The Algutsum church is one of two in the Glömminge-Algutsum parish. Services of worship are celebrated in the church on most Sundays and holy days, often followed by coffee and mingling. The choirs enrich our worship with singing and music. Because of its size and good acoustics, this church is a favourite for concert. The parish hall, called Rydbergsgården, can be found to the East of the church. Weekday Mass is celebrated there and there are also a number of parish activities during the week.



The Market Booths

Church and Enviroment

Together with the parish hall, the old market booths next door to the church provide a beautiful environment. A market has been held at Algutsum since the mid-18th century and the booths are used even today. In 1960 an old tradition of worship in connection with the summer and autumn markets was restored.



The Parish Hall to the right

A Memorial Grove

The memorial grove, designed by a parishioner and situated on the North side of the church, was dedicated in 2006. It is a calm and beautiful place with the rippling stream and an old walnut tree.

Welcome in through the Porch

Through the porch door, you first enter the church ante room, the porch. On the South wall there is a medieval gravestone with a relief of a kneeling monk.

From the porch, you enter the church interior, which is large and light. In the quire you see the carved reredos from the end of the 15th century. This reredos might have hung in the Chapel of St Canute in the village of Borg, some 7 kilometres East of Algutsum. This chapel has been a ruin for centuries. Sometimes the parish worships there in the summer.



The Memorial Grove

The Reredos

The suffering Christ with his five wounds are seen in the middle, surrounded by the Virgin Mary and the saintly king of the Nordic countries: Canute, Olav, Erik and the Apostle of Finland, Henrik. Following the Mass on Maundy Thursday, the altar is stripped and the doors are shut in order to be re-opened on Easter Sunday, the Day of the Resurrection of Christ. The painting above is by a local artist.



The Reredos

The Pearls of Life

Inside the altar rails, you can see the golden Pearl of God, the central pearl of the Pearls of Life. The other pearls and explanatory texts are placed in the windows of the church. The pearls were donated in 2015 by the Algutsum Missionary Ladies Sewing Circle. The Pearls of Life is a modern Rosary, created by the Bishop Emeritus, Martin Lönnebo.



The Baptismal Font

On the wall above the font hangs a crucifix with a 16th century image of Christ.

Children have been baptised in the 12th century font throughout the centuries and they still are today. The font is not only a beautiful medieval item, but has a function in our church in connection with baptism. At baptism, the child is given an angel of baptism. The baptism angels are produced at the Bergdala glass works in Småland.

Furnishings

The wall hanging with the theme "The Guide," shows Christ in the midst of the lovely Öland landscape. It was given by the Algutsum Missionary Ladies' Sewing Circle and was created by the textile artist Sara Olaisson from Öland.

By the candle bearer, there is an old church chest, probably from the 18th century. Church chests were found in all churches, containing the church funds and other valuables, such as the communion silver. The chest has three locks. The vicar and the two church wardens each had their own key. The gifts for the poor, administered by the church, were kept in the chest.



The Votive Ship

The ship was a donation by the Seaman Anders Fredric Engström in thanksgiving for surviving a shipwreck. It was common for seamen to donate such ships to churches to show their thanksgiving to God for on the seas. The ship from 1860 is named the "Walkyrie."



The church has a communion chalice from the late Middle Ages.



The Glömminge-Algutsum parish hopes that his information has been of value to you. Please sit down for a time of rest and reflection before you leave the church.

Welcome back!

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

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