



WELCOME TO  
the Church of Segerstad

# 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 OF SEGERSTAD

The Eastern road on Öland is lined with churches and villages. The church of Segerstad is situated on the East side of the road. A small clump of pine trees separates it from the previous vicarage. The church school was built North of the church. For a long time, the Segerstad light-house has watched over the shipping.

The church was built in the early Middle Ages and was one of the smallest on the island. The tower at the East end might have been built originally on top of a straight-ended quire. The medieval vaults rested on a central pillar. In the mid-18th century an extension of the nave was built towards the West. At that time there was a bell-tower in the church yard.

However, the church was still small, and the medieval church was pulled down and later replaced by a neo-classicist building, now with the tower at the West end. It was dedicated in 1843. The church was provided with an altar pulpit. At a renovation in the mid-18th century the pulpit was moved to the North wall of the nave and a new reredos took its place. The church interior is one of the best preserved ones on Öland.



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## - the church in the Midst of the Area

The church of Segerstad is one of six churches in the Parish of Southern Öland. It is mainly open in the summer when we celebrate Mass /Services of Worship or First Vespers of Sunday on a Saturday evening. We do of course also celebrate the major feasts, such as All saints Day, Advent, Christmas and Easter. The church is open for funerals and weddings all the year round.

### The church Yard

As far back in time as we can trace it, the almost square church yard has been surrounded by a stone wall. By the Western gate there is a climbing stile with a stone marked with the inscription "Wanderer think of the end 1776 /S S/ Pastor" The initials refer to Sven Sahlsteen.

In the tower there are two bells. Originally the small bell hang in the bell-tower in the church yard. It was cast in Stockholm and is decorated with flowers and ornaments. The large bell was cast in Kalmar and has an inscription from the Psalm of David, 100, verse 4. Do please look it up in the Hymnal when you enter the church!





## Welcome inside!

The church is airy and light, a so-called hall church, in which the quire and the nave make one single room. The colours are green and blue.



## The Altar

The reredos, made by Einar Forseth dominates the church. It was put in during the 1949 renovation and it show the motif of “Let the children come to me.” The scenery is presented on the sun-drenched Alvar, a way in which the artist sought to make the motif close to the viewers. There is a modern silver cross on the altar as well as four candlesticks made by the Silver Smith Olle Hvenmark from Källa. The communion chalice is a rococo work from 1776 by Lars Magnus Kallerström at Kalmar. Both the hymn number tablets placed in the quire were made in 1839 by the master builder Peter Isberg. The sculptured top parts show the symbols of faith, hope and love (a cross, an anchor and a heart.)

## The Pulpit

To begin with, the pulpit, made by Claes Wallberg, was an altar pulpit (that means it was mounted above the altar) but at the renovation in 1949 it was moved to the North wall.





## Local artists

On the North wall of the nave there is a large oil painting by Per Ekström, a well-known Swedish artist, born at Segerstad. (1844-1935.) A smaller oil painting, also by Ekström, hangs on the South side. These paintings are hung particularly during services of worship. Per Ekström was born to the North-West of the church, and the house is still owned by his relatives. Ekström is often considered to be the first, and maybe the most prominent of the landscape painters in Sweden. His way of painting the sun and the air gave him the name “the Sun Painter” and his motifs were often the open Alvar of Öland. The family grave of Per Ekström is on the East side of the church.

The two chairs in the quire were made by Johan August Gustafsson. (1852-1932.) He was a well-known wood-carver who made many sculptures on Biblical models. Already from the age of 14-15, he began to create displays and figures of wood. He is said to be the first person on Öland to use a bicycle, which he had built himself. When an Art and Industry Exhibition was organised in Stockholm in 1897, Johan sailed alone in his open little boat from Seby to Stockholm, where he exhibited some of his works. The JAG (Johan August Gustafsson) Museum can be found here at Segerstad, and there you can see some examples of his work. The family grave of Johan August Gustafsson is on the South side of the church, surrounded by a boxwood hedge.

## Music

There was no organ in the church of Segerstad until 1881. It was built by Karl Engström and rebuilt in 1949 by Hammarberg.



## Baptism

The church has a baptism altar with wooden columns from the 1733 Peter Buschberg reredos. The baptismal font is the oldest inventory in the church, consisting of both older and newer parts. The foot comes from the central column of the medieval church. The bowl itself is a Gotland piece of work in limestone from the 13th century. The pillar of the font, also made from Gotland limestone, crowns the sundial in the church yard.



## Hope in the form of a candle-bearer and a votive ship

Below the gallery there is a candle-bearer where you can light a candle in memory of your departed loved ones. The church's votive ship is a model of a whaling ship, donated in 1977.

## Welcome back!

Our church is open and welcomes you even though there are only a few services, since worship alternates between the six churches in our parish.



The Joint Parish of Southern Öland consists of 7 parishes that together manage 18 churches and 1 chapel. The church of Segerstad is situated in the Parish of South Öland.

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