

# Welcome in Østerlars church



Østerlars church is the biggest and oldest of the 4 round churches on Bornholm. Every year a lot of tourists come to visit the church to discover the history behind the spectacular construction, but Østerlars church is still a functional church with regularly services, weddings, baptisms etc. – please be aware of this as you visit the church.

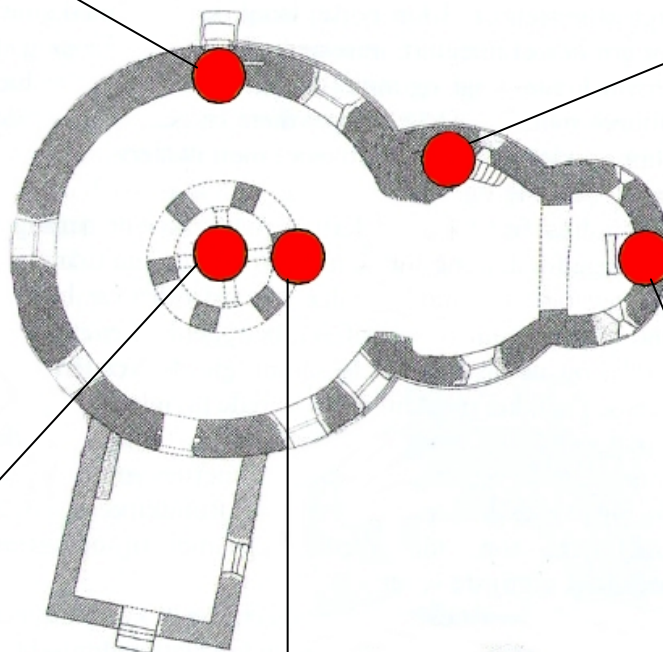
This paper will provide you with information regarding some of the most interesting pieces of interior in the church. If you want to know more you are always welcome to ask the church staff.

In medieval times women entered the church through the northern door and men through the southern door, which is now the only entrance to the church. Notice the big holes on each side of the door – a massive barrier could barricade the door; this is one of the indications that the church was build not only for worship but also for defence. Above the door you can see a rune stone with the inscription: "*Niels and Fuluge (had) this stone (raised) in memory of Thormar their brother*". The door is worth gazing at from the outside as well – the architecture and decoration contribute to the dating of the church.

The walls of the church measure about 2 meters – big enough to house a staircase inside! The solid walls were build of rocks from the fields and coasts of Bornholm. A steep and impassable staircase leads to the upper floors. The staircase is uneven and narrow to delay attackers.



Østerlars church is build around 1150, in times of insecurity. Bornholm was divided between the king and the archbishop, whom were not the best friends. Furthermore, as an island Bornholm was an exposed position for pirates. Østerlars church was build to provide both physical and spiritual defence, so to say.

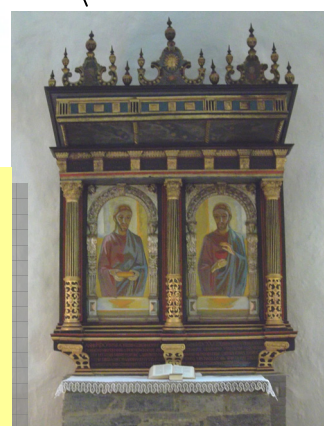


The patron saint of this church was Saint Lawrence. As time went by "Lawrence's church" became "(Øster)Lars' church". There might have been a relic from Saint Lawrence in or on the altar.



The baptistery originally belonged to Rø church on Bornholm but was moved to this church in 1956 as the entire interior of the church was renovated. It's now placed where it might also was placed in medieval times; between the men's and the women's entrance, as a symbol of the baptism being the entrance to Christianity. The baptistery is decorated with relief motifs and was probably once painted.

The altarpiece is from approximately 1600 but the current paintings were made in 1956 by the local painter Paul Høm showing Christ with the bread and the wine. The inscriptions on the frame are, however, older.



A beautiful frieze of frescoes can be seen all the way around the central pillar. Turn this paper to find out more about them!

