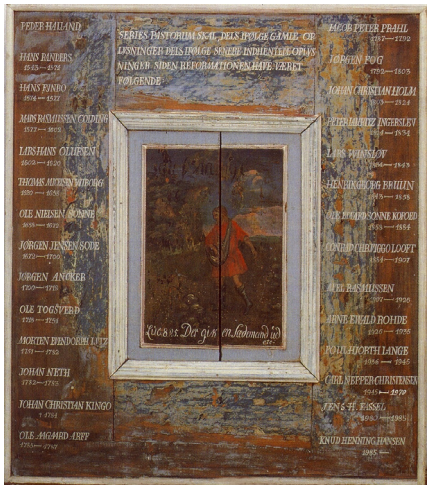
Priests

The church's priest listing board hangs in the porch, showing the names of all of the church's priests from the Reformation up to the present. Presumably the woodwork used for making the priest listing board had previously served as the door of the church's confessional when the church was Catholic.

Jørgen Jensen Sode: a prominent priest
Jørgen Jensen Sode was one of the most prominent priests to have served in Østerlars. A portrait of Jørgen and his wife Maren, as well as their children Jens, Herman and Margrethe, hangs on the north curved wall of the nave. The painting was made to celebrate Maren's 50th birthday in 1686. The couple are entombed beneath the church floor, and when the grave was opened in 1955, not only the skeletons were preserved. The priest's ruff was still around his neck. Unfortunately, it disintegrated when they tried to pick it up, but the beautiful piece of lace with gold thread from Maren's clothing survived being picked up. Today the lace has been preserved and can be seen in the display case. One of the church's two bells, hanging in the detached bell tower west of the church, bears the name of Jørgen Jensen Sode. The bell inscription states that it was cast in 1684 while Jørgen Jensen Sode was parish priest at the church.



Østerlars Church's priest listing board

Four round churches – four brothers
Bornholm's four round churches are linked by their architectural similarities and historical roots, and in the late 1600s there were four brothers who served as priests at these very same churches, as Jørgen Sode's brother, Hans Sode, was priest in Nyker, his brother Jakob Sode was priest in Olsker and Mads Mikkelsen was priest in Nylars. The last-mentioned does not bear the Sode name, as he did not have the same father as his three brothers, but the same mother. Incidentally, the brothers' sister, Karen Sode, was married to Povl Ancher, the rebellious priest in Hasle and Bornholm's freedom fighter, who was also the brother of Maren depicted in the painting, i.e. Jørgen Jensen Sode's wife. Before her marriage to Jørgen Sode, Maren was married to Oluf Sonne, also a priest at Østerlars Church, with whom she had eight children. This shows how the powerful clergy families on Bornholm in the 17th century intermarried and constituted the ancestry of the Bornholm lineages Sode, Sonne and Anker.

Vicarage
South-west of the church is a red limewashed timber-framed farmhouse which is the church's vicarage. Construction of the present building was begun in 1836 by then parish priest Lars Winsløv, but it replaced a four-wing farmstead at the same site. In the spring of 2016, Østerlars Vicarage was nominated as one of the fifteen loveliest vicarages in Denmark, in a competition organised by "Denmark's Architectural Heritage".

Black and white photo of Østerlars Vicarage
(Photo: Bornholms Museum, year unknown)