

# VIREDA CHURCH

**O**n the road between Lekeryd and Hullaryd you pass Vireda Church, clad in red shingles. Vireda is still a typical church village with a school and parish hall across the road. The name Vireda first appeared in 1322, as “Wirydh” when the Reverend Folke acknowledged the papal bull. It is believed that there was an earlier church here in the beginning of the 13th century, or perhaps even in the 12th century. The oldest parts of the existing church are from 1344, determined by tree-ring dating of the wood.

Originally, the church consisted of a nave and chancel built in wood, and in the late 15th century the church was extended to the west. The groin-vaulted sacristy was constructed in stone in the 16th century. The congregation outgrew their church in the 17th century, but it was not until the 18th century that money was available for an extension: a semi-circular stone apse in the chancel (east), a timbered church tower (west) and a transverse arm or transept (north). At this time, the balcony was also constructed and the first organ, made by Jonas Wistenius, was installed. To enable this, the ceiling had to be raised.

The wall paintings in the nave are from around 1500 and depict e.g. the Passion with Jesus as the ruler of the world, and the Deadly Sins. The paintings were limed-over in the 17th century, but during a renovation in 1938, they were recovered, retouched and preserved. The motifs in the ceiling include e.g. the Ascension of Jesus, the Resurrection, and the Lord’s Prayer, and were painted in 1757 when the ceiling was raised. The artist, Olof Rosenblad from Gränna, then also painted the Last Judgment on the transept ceiling.

The large, carved stone baptismal font is believed to come from the earlier church. The rood cross in the chancel and the smaller crucifix on the south wall are both from the 15th century. The pulpit in intarsia was donated by Per Brahe the Younger in 1663. Plaques and funeral escutcheons commemorating e.g. Gustaf and Henrik Hammarberg from Viredaholm, the latter also known as “Stenbock’s courier”, hang in the transept.



Interior, looking towards the chancel. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



## HIDDEN GEM 3



### HOW TO GET HERE

From Lekeryd drive north towards Linderås. From Aneby drive north towards Hullaryd, and then drive west from Hullaryd.

Coordinates:  
N 478274 / E 6419369  
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°  
54' 55.8" N, E 14° 38' 0.1"  
(WGS84)



View of Vireda Church from the south. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.

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## HIDDEN GEMS

There are so many things to discover in the countryside! Here, Jönköping County Museum presents some of the cultural environment and heritage attractions in the county.

They include well-known cultural monuments such as Habo Church and the Smålandsstenar Stone Circles, but also lesser known gems such as log-driving remains in the river Valån and Stengårdshult Church. Around the county you can find evidence of how people lived and worked in the past, everything from castles and manors to abandoned embankments and clearance cairns in forest areas.

The idea with Hidden Gems is to tempt you to make excursions in the cultural landscape – here you find our history, revealed in different ways in the physical environment. This heritage is worth experiencing and protecting. Bit by bit, we will be adding more sights under the heading Hidden Gems, both for people living in the county and visitors from further away. The more people who discover these gems, the better chance that they will be preserved for the future.

### FACTS

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In Jönköping County there are more than 4 000 registered ancient remains, 87 cultural environments of national interest, close to 130 listed buildings, around 150 churches, some 100 rural community centres with old settlements, a large number of industrial heritage sites, and two cultural reserves. There are also a large number of cultural environments with buildings worthy of conservation. More information about the sites can be found on the websites of the County Administrative Board, the municipalities and the local heritage societies.

### GOOD TO KNOW

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Access to the Hidden Gems varies. Some sites are well signposted, with easy access and proper parking facilities, etc. Others are more challenging to reach. Visitors may have to walk some distance, sometimes through scrubby forest, only to be met by a broken sign (if there ever was one) when they reach the site. All the sites, however, have an exciting and interesting history.

Please note that many of the cultural heritage buildings are privately owned and can only be viewed from the outside. Also, please respect private land. Many churches are open in the summer. During other times of the year, the churchwarden may be able to open the church for you.

