

# WELCOME TO **KITEE** STONE CHURCH



**KESKI-KARJALAN  
SEURAKUNTA**



Kappelintie 4, 82500 KITEE



[www.kiteenseurakunta.fi](http://www.kiteenseurakunta.fi)

## KITEE AND THE EVANGELICAL-LUTHERAN PARISH OF KITEE

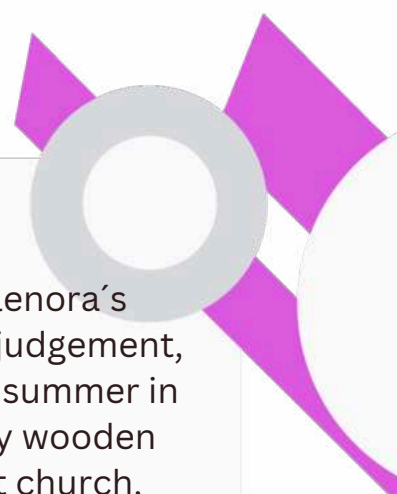
Kitee is one of the oldest populated areas in North Karelia. As early as in the 15th century the people were obliged to pay taxes, in the shape of squirrel and marten skins, to the archbishop of Novgorod. In the 16th century Kitee was a dependent parish of Sortavala, and the Orthodox church was situated in the area of the present centre, in Selkue. After the peace of Stolbova (1617), Kitee being a part of the Swedish kingdom, the influence of the Lutheran church started to spread also in Kitee.

The first vicar in the Evangelical-Lutheran parish of Kitee was Yrjö Pietarinpoika. The governor-general allowed him to become the vicar in Kitee area, and on the 23rd of March 1630 he was nominated for the post by the cathedral chapter. Kesälahti parish joined to Kitee parish 1st, January 2013. Rääkkylä parish joined to Kitee parish 1st, January 2017. There are about 8 700 members in Kitee parish.

### THE CHURCHES

In 1642, an order was given to build the first Lutheran church in Suorlahti, near Lake Orivesi. The church was burned only after 15 years, as well as the Orthodox church, due to the disagreements between people.

In the beginning of the 1670's the second church was built on the place of the present church. During the periods of Lesser Hate and Great Hate this church was badly ruined.

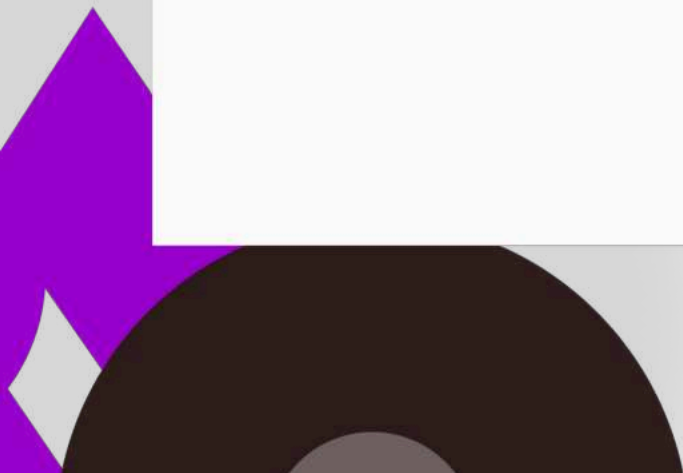


The third church was built in 1761 and it was called Ulrika Elenora's church. The altarpiece, presenting Saviour's coming to the judgement, was painted by Mikael Toppelius. The church burned at Midsummer in 1876 due to careless handling of fire. After this, a temporary wooden church was used for services. At the same time, the present church, designed by architect F. Sjöström, was being built. This church was completed in 1886, and it was consecrated at Epiphany in 1887.

But in the same year, on the 16th of September 1887, there was a fire in the church. The wooden parts of the church burned due to the repairs of the roof. The church was not insured, but the members of the parish made big sacrifices and the church was rebuilt and consecrated on the 28th of September 1890. The church was renovated in 1968 and 1991.

The church has room for 1500 people. The altarpiece is painted by Berndt Erik Lagerstam, presenting the Holy Communion. It is a reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci's painting. The organ is made by Kangasala organ factory in Finland.

A few times a year the church is full of people. On each Sunday there are on the average about 80 people in the service. All people, as well groups as individuals, are welcome to our church.





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