

Report for the Fryerning A.P.C.M. 2009.

2008 was a very significant year in the history of the church in Fryerning. After discussions lasting over a generation, and fundraising for many years, the most significant building work for over a century has taken place. The boldness of the vision to undertake this work on a grade one listed building is a great testament to the vision of those involved. It also is a physical statement of the value of the church to the community, underpinned with a belief that this beautiful building that has served the community of Fryerning for over nine hundred years is still relevant to the spiritual needs of people and will be into the future.

The construction of a new vestry, together with toilet facilities and a kitchen, the installation of new heating and lighting systems and re-carpeting the has given the church building a feel of being loved and cherished. Particular thanks are due to Brian Green for both his vision for the church over many years and also for project managing the work. His experience and expertise has been invaluable. Work continues, with local craftsman Michael Bysouth having been commissioned to provide new items of furniture for storage in both the vestry and under the tower.

The building work inevitably meant there was some disruption to the functioning of the church building for worship, with funerals and weddings that would have happened here being transferred to Ingatestone. The P.C.C. made the decision to continue Sunday worship here, and thanks go to Judy Parmenter, Alan Beach, our wardens, our sides-men, readers, choir and many others who undertook extra work and also endured some difficulties to ensure that the church was able to continue as a place of worship during the main period of the building work.

Particular thanks are also due to Roy Garnham in his role as treasurer during this period, as again considerable extra work has been involved. The work would never have happened without the generosity of many individuals who have the gratitude of all who worship in the building now and who will in future generations. Fay Cherry and her team of fundraisers have continued to be active in raising funds to both support the developments and in covering our commitments to the wider church in the Diocese. The Spring Lunch and Harvest Supper and Christmas Bazaar are valuable events for the community in Fryerning. This year before the Harvest Supper we had a concert in church given by Revd. Miranda Seaman and some friends, together with items from Isla and Pippa Stevens. This was well attended and gave an indication of the kind of activity now possible in the church. Thanks go to Janet Collins for her work in organising the Ride and Stride event in September. A number of people rode on behalf of the church in the Friends of Essex Churches event, making a valuable contribution towards both the funds of our church and also the funds of the organisation. It was particularly good to have the local scouts riding on behalf of our church, and thanks go to Steve Morrell and other local leaders for encouraging them to participate.

Worship has been the purpose of the building, from those who had the original vision back nine hundred years ago, until now. Our thanks are due to Derek Bevan for leading many services for us, together with his commitment to the choir. My thanks also go to Revd. Sue Cruse and Revd. Miranda Seaman, who have shared leading worship here with me. We also welcomed the Rt. Revd. Bishop of Chelmsford, John Gladwin in leading worship, and the Revd. Charlie Kosla. During my sabbatical after eleven years of ordained ministry, extra responsibility fell upon Sue, who handled everything professionally. Many people from our congregation were part of the service in November at Ingatestone where Sue's extra responsibilities as Associate Minister were recognised and the gifts she brings to ministry celebrated.

The Remembrance service this year welcomed the older Scouts, who played a full part in the event, together with Civic representatives and the church Junior School Deputy Head Teacher. This involvement of younger people in the service, together with those who had served in the War was particularly poignant, as many of those remembered each year were themselves very young. The Nine Lessons and Carols service was again our best attended service of the year. Refreshments were served from our new kitchen, making everything much easier, and over three quarters of the congregation were still in church an hour after the end of the service. The congregation at the Christmas Eve Crib service was the highest we have had, with over ninety, including over sixty adults. The children from Church of England Junior School also came to hold their Christmas service in the church, together with over thirty adults. Our Family service continues to be the best attended service each month, with a committed group of people attending. Refreshments are now being regularly served after this service, which has proved popular. Thanks are due to Kevin and Denise Williams for all they do for the Family service. There continues to be the need to consider the spiritual needs of those who regularly attend this child friendly service and the P.C.C. have endorsed the need for this to be addressed through the introduction of an adult oriented modern service. Our traditional services continue to be supported by a faithful congregation who have attended for many years. The attendances at our 8 a.m. Book of Common Prayer services reflect the fact that a number of regular worshippers from Ingatestone join us. The Matins and Sung Communion service are greatly enhanced by our small but enthusiastic choir, who also are often almost the entire congregation at the Evensong, together with a small number of choristers from Ingatestone. Our thanks go to John Moore-Bridger who continues to play at the majority of our services, and to Richard Overill who plays at our Family Service. With the ending of the building work we have been able to return to holding funeral and wedding services, where thanks are due to

Sheila for her expertise as vergers and Claire Renowden for playing on some occasions.

We had an exceptional response to our Harvest this year, for which the church looked particularly lovely. Over thirty boxes of basic food items for Bulgaria were collected from our church, and together with Ingatestone and the school we collected over one hundred boxes. We also had some fresh produce and other items that went to Homestart in Brentwood. Sue and I self funded to be part of the delivery team for Harvest for the Hungry in Bulgaria in November, where we saw for ourselves the dire needs.

Barbara Huxtable with the flower arrangers, Maureen Stewart with changing the altar frontals and the continuing work of the kneeler group, all bring dedication to making the church look beautiful and enhance our general worship experiences. On the first Sunday of the month the bell ringers come from Ingatestone for our main service.

The church has been well represented in Churches Together activities, though there is still a vacant position on the general committee. Barbara Hallows and Janet Collins represent us on the Deanery Synod. Barbara is also on the Deanery standing Committee and is one of the Brentwood lay representatives on Diocesan Synod. I am one of the clergy representatives.

2008 has been a significant year in the history of the church in Fryerning. We have always had a beautiful building, but it is now equipped for mission in the 21st century. We need to build on the positive developments of the last year as we look forward to serving the community in the future.

Patrick Sherring.