

The Rectory, 1 Rectory Close, Fryerning Lane, Ingatestone,
CM40DB
01277352562 patrick.sherring@fryerningparishchurch.org.uk

Dear friends,

It is amazing how much of my time can be spent in answering questions. I am always pleased to do this, as it demonstrates that people feel I might be able to provide them with an answer! So I thought it might be useful to answer a few of the regular questions here.

Can we get married in the church?

I am always delighted when someone asks this question, as where could be nicer to get married than in either of our grade 1 parish churches where people have been getting married for centuries? If one of the couple lives in Ingatestone or Fryerning the answer is “Yes”. If one of the couple has a connection with the parish, like their parents live here, the answer is “Yes”. If they do not live in the parish, but are willing to worship regularly in the church, the answer is “Yes”. If they are divorced, with everything settled from the previous marriage, the answer is “Yes”. As you can see, there are not too many answers that are “No”.

Will you Christen our child?

We prefer to use the correct term, which is baptise. If you live in Ingatestone or Fryerning, the answer is “Yes”. We will also baptise children of people who worship regularly with us but live elsewhere. We now undertake around twenty baptisms a year, an increasing number. The vast majority are on Sunday afternoons. All are for an individual, and we never group children together.

Can we have a service for our deceased loved one and a burial in Fryerning cemetery?

For many people, this sad question is one that they do not ask as they assume the answer is “No” if the loved one was not a regular churchgoer. The answer is “Yes” if they lived in Ingatestone or Fryerning at anytime during their life. It always saddens me that people go to Chelmsford or Upminster Crematorium without giving a thought to having a service first in church. Our local churches are the natural places to celebrate the life of someone who has lived in the local community. After

the church service, they can then be buried in Fryerning cemetery, or we can go the crematorium. The ashes can then be interred at a later date. Sue Cruse and I are also happy to take a service at the crematorium rather than the church.

Do you welcome children in church?

I always find it amazing that anyone would think we could possibly answer anything other than a resounding “Yes”. At Ingatestone church we have a Family service on the first Sunday of the month that regularly has over forty children as part of the congregation. On the second and third Sundays, in parallel with the main service, we run Sunday Club. This has three separate age groups, all with their dedicated teachers. Recently they produced a wonderfully enthusiastic service to celebrate their year, before a picnic. On the fourth Sunday we have a very child friendly Family service in Fryerning church, where this is often the best attended service each month. Apart from the EMUS under 5s group on Friday mornings from 10.30, we hold a monthly service on the first Monday at 2.15-2.45 for under 5s. At Ingatestone Church, our fundraising is aimed at developing the Petre Chapel so it can be used as a crèche. So together with our packed Crib services and services for the Church School, I think we clearly demonstrate how much we value children.

How can we learn more about the Christian faith?

We run a number of courses to help people learn more about the faith. With our local Churches Together, we run an annual Alpha course starting in September. Together we run an annual Lent course in the six weeks leading up to Easter. Recently we ran a series of evenings on what it means to be part of each of the denominations represented in Ingatestone. At St. Edmund and St. Mary Parish Church, in the last year we have established running a course after each 2nd Sunday service. We ran *Changing lives for good* produced by the Diocese of Bath and Wells and are now about to begin *Apprentice*, a brand new DVD and discussion based course. We also run a basic *Getting to Know the Bible* course. A large number of people have the daily Bible Reading notes and some meet as the Seekers group monthly to talk through points raised in the readings.

I hope these answers demonstrate clearly how we try to let everyone know that the churches exist for the benefit of everyone in the community. This is never better demonstrated

than by St. Edmund and St. Mary Parish Church being packed solid with people for the Victorian Evening in the beginning of December. The Parish Churches have both served our community of Ingatestone and Fryerning for hundreds of years. They are the natural venues for baptisms, wedding and funerals. They are the places to gather to remember significant events, such as Remembrance Day. Above all, they are the places to consider the reason and purpose in life and to worship God. In our churches you will find a diverse community of people, of different ages and backgrounds. They are all seeking to live their lives influenced by the teachings of Jesus Christ, acknowledging God, being strengthened through the Holy Spirit and attempting to use faith to make sense of life in the twenty first century. We would be delighted to see you. If you have any more questions, do not hesitate to be in touch.

Yours in Christ,

Patrick