

# Welcome to *Fågelö chapel*



**Svenska  
kyrkan**

Mariestads  
församling

# Fågelö chapel

*"From time immemorial the parishioners have come to church to worship. Babies have been baptized, young people have been confirmed and given the Holy Communion, couples have entered into matrimony and the dead have been buried in peace."*

*(From Sockenboken Torsö, Nils Forsell 1951).*

The wooden chapel with a nave and a western tower was built near the lake on the grounds of Fågelö gård. It was consecrated in 1883. It was last restored in 1994. Today the chapel is used mainly in the summer.



The altarpiece: nature seen through the beautiful window behind the altar. ▶▶▶

"The coronation of the heavenly queen", an oil painting from the 18th century, hangs above the inner door. During the latter part of the Middle Ages, St. Mary was portrayed as the heavenly queen in accordance with Revelations 12:1. Here St. Mary is a symbol of the church. In this painting she is standing on the globe, treading on the snake under her feet. ▶▶▶





The apostles that were placed on the pulpit in the old chapel built in 1703. ▶▶▶

The view from the bell tower. Bell-ringing is done by hand. ◀◀◀



The votive ship was donated to the chapel in 1948. It is a three-masted barque with rigging. ▶▶▶



## Some history

Torsö has been inhabited for a long time – there is an ancient find of a flint axe that can be dated back to circa 2 500 B.C. It is believed that Torsö was an important cult centre. There was once a heathen temple in Hov (near the church of Torsö).

The heathen inhabitants of the island seem to have been fervent worshippers as the islands are named after two gods and one goddess in the aesir cult: Torsö after Tor, Onsö after Oden and Friggön (present day Dillö) after Frigg.

Christianity may have been introduced and accepted on the island in the end of the 10th century. At excavations in 1948 of a grave in Nolby that was dated back to 950–1050, it was discovered that a woman was buried in the Christian way, west–east position. However she also had some of her belongings (a knife, steel and flint) with her, as was the heathen burial custom. The first named vicar on the island was Gummundus, in 1293.

Many graves in the churchyard testify to the living conditions of island life. All houses and farms had their own boats and many men owned and captained small cargo boats sailing to ports in Sweden and Europe. In former times the islanders had to travel by boat or on the ice. It is understandable that they resorted to prayers and offerings for safe voyages.

# The abandoned churchyard

500 metres northwest of the chapel is the abandoned churchyard, the site of two earlier chapels. In the Middle Ages a chapel was built that was consecrated to St. Peter and the Virgin Mary. Seafarers made their offerings to the pictures of St. Peter and the Virgin Mary hoping for safe returns from their voyages. The old churchyard is now fenced in and a memorial stone has been raised there.

In 1661 the roof fell in and the chapel was abandoned. 37 years later the building of a new chapel started. It was consecrated on Midsummer Day 1703 and was in use until 1882 when it was pulled down.



▲  
The memorial stone was taken from the quarry at Vattersjön on the north of Torsö.



▲  
An old gravestone in the abandoned churchyard:  
The triangle with God's all-seeing eye surrounded by the heavenly light, symbolised by the rays.



Welcome back to visit the chapel again!