

## THE CHURCH OF RUOVESI NATURAL PART OF THE LANDSCAPE..

Three routes lead to the church: the main road of the village from the east, the church road lined with the birches of Ritoniemi Mansion and the road from the lake shore.

Whichever route you choose, the sight is impressive. The church is the most magnificent building in Ruovesi; after nature and the people it is the most valuable treasure here.

## TO LISTEN TO THE WORDS OF GOD..

The bells invite us to the church. Surprisingly enough, the belfry of Ruovesi was built before the church. The famous church builder Antti Piimaen designed it in 1772, and it was built on the spot where the main gate of the present churchyard is today. Some twenty years later in 1793 - the church had been finished - the belfry was moved to its present site. Under a favourable weather, the sound of the church bells can be noticed nearly twenty kilometers apart. There is also a small church museum, and a coffee shop located in the belfry, and these are open during ceremonies and other events in the church.

On the 23rd of August 1778 there was a great celebration day in Ruovesi. The church, called Sofia Magdalena according to the queen, was consecrated. The old church, which had been finished in 1654, had been pulled down in that spring. The construction work of the new church was supervised by Matti Akerblom, a church builder from Erajarvi, and it was completed in eleven months. The cross-shaped church with its hipped roof, central tower and central cupola is a brilliant architectural masterpiece. It is beautiful, full of light and acoustically excellent. In the interior of the church history lives in harmony with the present. The old chandeliers, the altarpiece depicting the Transfiguration of Christ, the baptismal table, the mission candlestick and the altar statue depicting the lordship of Christ date from different ages but contribute to the peaceful harmony of the interior of the church.

## THE CONGREGATION IS ON ITS WAY TO THE PROMISED LAND, THE GLORY OF GOD

The Ruovesi Church is a place where divine services are held; a place where God and man meet. The church was built, and it is used so that faith, hope and love can "bear and grow" within its walls. Religious ceremonies and, in a way, also other events such as concerts and parish activities are divine services where man is looking for the living God and God for man. The church attracts about fifteen thousand visitors every year.

The oldest known graves in the cemetery of Ruovesi date back to the mid-nineteenth century. When walking in the churchyard around the church, you can find some interesting details: the grave of the daughter of the famous Finnish artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela, and the memorial statue of those who lost their lives in the shipwreck of the steamship Kuru is there.

Moreover, the old church boat "Eeva" of Tuuhoskyla inhabitants, lies in the church boat shed. The altarpiece of the Ruovesi Church was painted by the German artist Bernhard Reinhold in 1876 and it was bought from Paris.

The painting makes a powerful impression on the visitor. From one generation to the next we are all in faith allowed to look at the Glory of our Savior -once we shall meet face to face. May the Almighty God, Son and the Holy Spirit bless and protect you! Amen.