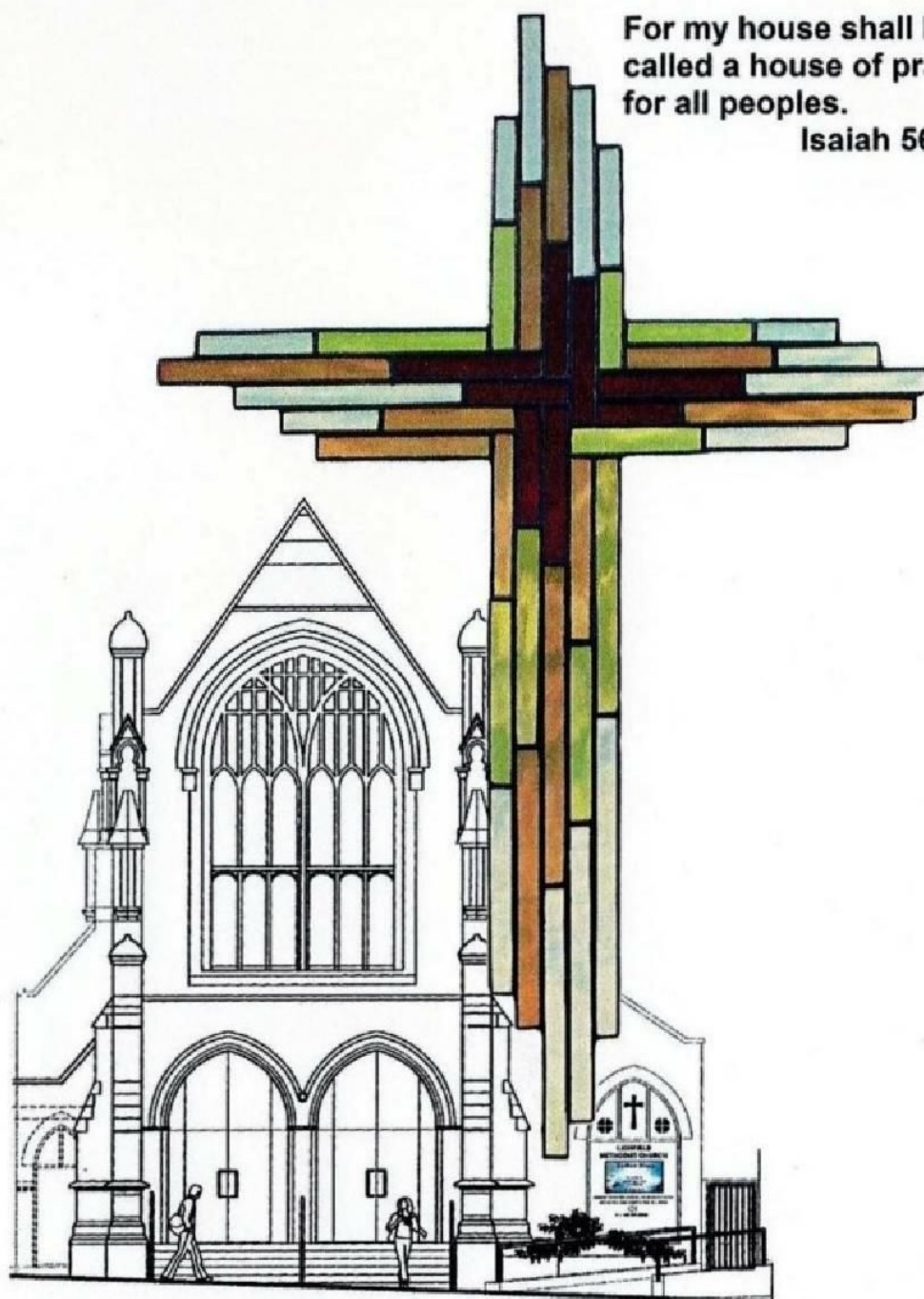


# The Story of Lichfield Methodist Church

## 1992-2012

For my house shall be  
called a house of prayer  
for all peoples.

Isaiah 56 v 7



## **FOREWORD**

Thank you for buying this booklet, which has been produced as a sequel to the "Centenary History", published in 1992, to bring the story of our witness to Jesus Christ in the work of our Church up to date.

The last twenty years which 'Bridge the Millennium' have seen many significant happenings at our Church and to some are a lifetime or longer, and to others seem like a blink of the eye! In common with many other Churches throughout the country, we displayed the oval 'Millennium' message shown on our cover.

We have tried to identify changes in ministers, styles of worship and by no means least of all, alterations to the premises; first the new halls and meeting rooms and most recently the major refurbishment to the worship area.

Many different people have written sections of this booklet, which will explain a variety of styles of narrative. In the knowledge that we are part of God's plan and that He is working amongst us, we hope that you will find reading this a pleasing source of information or reminiscence.

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## CHAPTER 1—THE BUILDINGS

### THE 1998-99 REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME



*Inside the old Church Hall (1923 Building)*

Our Church buildings needed to grow and develop so that we could reach out in welcome to the local community.

The reasons for redevelopment included the following:-

Lack of modern usable space.

Hall roof made of asbestos tiles and in a state of decay.

End wall of hall bulging out on to street.

Uninviting premises.

Lack of concourse space.

No disabled toilet facilities.

Lack of office space

Our vision was to be a place of support and care, offering a Christian welcome of warmth, friendship, refreshment, fun, peace and prayer.



### The Timescale for the Redevelopment:-

April 1995

General Church Meeting agreed to proceed with the development which would provide us with a new and larger Hall on the first floor, a large meeting room downstairs, office space, storage facilities, facilities for the Coffee Shop including a new kitchen equipped to local authority hygiene standards, toilets including those for the disabled, facilities for the "Live at Home" scheme, a new entrance front and rear and, for the first time, wheelchair access to ALL parts of the buildings via ramps and a lift.

September 1995

"3C-Vision" (3CV) Project title was launched - a Caring Church for the Community. At a Gift Day £60,000 was either given or pledged.

June 1996

Redevelopment Working Party formed:- Rev Paul Davis, David Bray, John Jefferson, Janice Rhodes, Margaret Israel and David Stephen.



*The start of building - September 1998*

January 1997

Second Gift Day and Launch of the Project itself with Rev Kenneth Street.

January 1998

Tenders Received - scheme to cost almost £700,000.

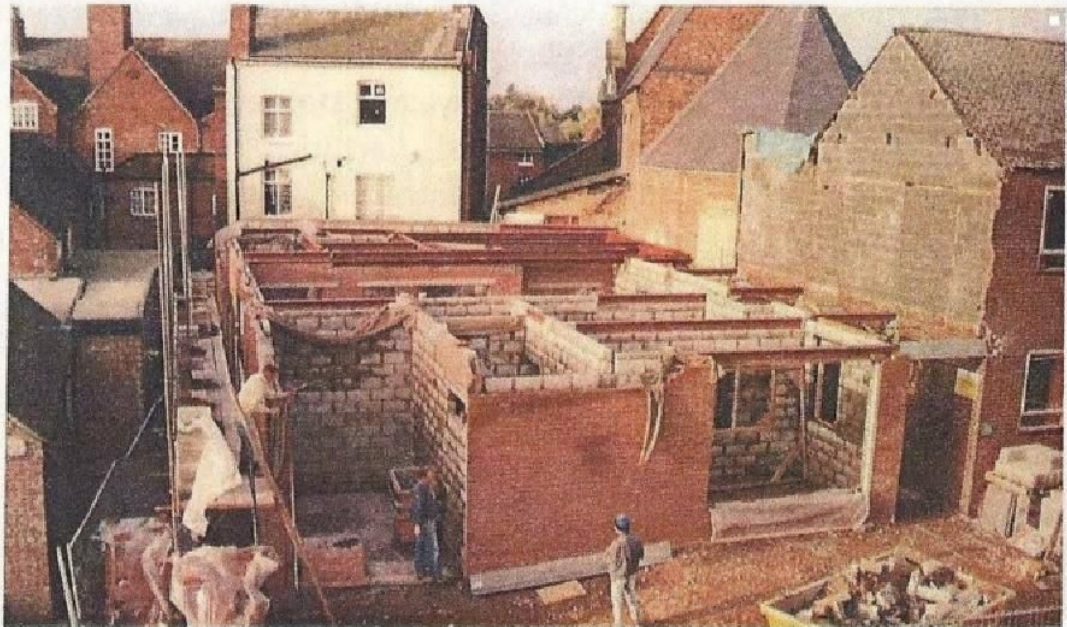


June 1998

Work started on clearing the site, including the demolition of the old Church Hall.

26 September 1998

Laying of the Foundation Stone.



*The new Ground floor layout can be identified*

December 1998

A "time capsule" which had been created was installed in a length of plastic drainpipe secured into the brickwork near the apex of the Backcester Lane wall of the new building.

19 May 1999

Completion - At this point the building became legally the property of Lichfield Methodist Church. At this stage it was 'officially' Lichfield Methodist Centre, Backcester Lane, with only limited physical connections with the Lichfield Methodist Church, Tamworth Street.

#### THE 'SELF WORKS' PROGRAMME BEGINS.

From June 1999 to June 2001 there was a programme of work done to fit out the new building and to up-grade the remainder of the premises. The value of this work was well over £30,000 yet it cost us less than £5,000 in materials.

The total number of jobs listed was 119 !



*Building complete showing temporary entrance to the premises*

*Summary of Redevelopment Finances, 8/11/1999*

<b>Original Budget: £700,000</b>	<b>Current Forecast: £691,173</b>
Opening Balance	58,611 (from earlier fundraising)
Income, all sources	<u>488,780</u>
Total to date	547,391
<u>Balance left to raise</u>	<u>143,782</u>
Outstanding pledges	approx £12,940
Tax refunds due from "Gift Aid"	approx £3,700

*Clive Carter, the Church Treasurer at the time said:*

*"If we can maintain our historic levels of private donation/pledge/covenants and our fundraising activity, I would expect all loans to be repaid in August 2003 or before."*

**AND THEY WERE!**



### FUNDRAISING

Activities to raise money for the project included the following:-

Auctions	Treasure Hunt	Concerts
Talent Scheme	Book Sale	Beetle Drives
Pantomime	Quizzes	Trail of 10p Coins
Hospitality Meals	Bric-à-Brac Sale	Fantasy Football
Nearly New Sale	Saturday Stalls	Gift Days
Barn Dance	Flower Festival	Coffee Mornings
Fashion Show	Organ Recital	Sunday Lunches
St Valentine's Day Dinner	Christmas Market Stalls	
Airport Transport	Aluminium Can Recycling	

### THE OPENING

The new premises were officially opened on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> November 1999 by Rev Nigel Collinson, Secretary to the Methodist Conference, when there were so many people that an audio-visual link was made to the upstairs Hall so that those seated up there could see and hear what was happening.

This was followed in the evening by a Barn Dance in the Upper Hall.

### DID YOU KNOW.....?

*A legal agreement had to be reached with our neighbours on the one side of the premises to take over their land for the duration of the building work. This agreement cost over £1500.*

*Car parking charges for three cars had to be paid for the staff of the "House of Minster" shop which came to £700.*

*It was discovered that 26 telephone lines serving eight properties in Tamworth Street were attached to our old hall wall in Backcester Lane. BT had to dig new channels for them in Tamworth Street; the whole operation to get these lines removed took six months.*

*When lowering the floor in the Church in August 1997 the remains of the*

old gas lighting stands that flanked the communion rail were discovered. The supporting wall for the back part of the Church floor was built directly on soil.

The remains of the fire places which were in the cottages that stood on the Church site before 1891 are still under the floor.

The Church has a right of light and air across the next door property under a deed granted in 1923 when the old hall was built.

Security - Seven volunteers, one for each day of the week, were recruited when the premises started to be used in mid-1999. Their task has always been in two parts: to go down to Church around 10pm to ensure that all lights were switched off and all doors correctly locked, and to set the intruder alarm; then, not later than 7.30am the following morning to go to Church again to unlock and disarm the intruder alarm. Most of the original seven were still doing the job 4800 days later, in 2012. With two return journeys each, this means that so far the team has covered around 20,000 miles between them just on this task!

### THE 1998 TIME CAPSULE

When the 1998/9 rebuild of the Church Hall was under way - and this was several years before the 1891 Capsule (see overleaf) was known about - it was decided to enclose a Time Capsule in the eaves of the new building at the Backcester Lane end. The items which were sealed in a length of plastic drainpipe included:-

A Tellytubby	A Lottery Ticket!
A Mobile Phone	Bible
	Credit Card
List of fundraising activities for the 1998/9 Redevelopment	
Christmas tree prices 1998	A Safeway/Tesco till receipt
Postage Stamp	Lichfield Mercury
Silver 3d bit and a £1 coin	Photo of the old hall
Willersley Castle Weekend programme	
Packet of wild flower seeds and Catalogue	



## THE DISCOVERY OF The 1891 TIME CAPSULE

**"113 year old Time Capsule found at Lichfield" or  
"How to Make the Annual Church Meeting more Interesting!"**



1. Start by renovating appropriate stonework in the Church building.
2. Find an ancient time capsule and open it!

For anyone with a sense of history, Lichfield's Annual Church Meeting on 2nd May 2004 was very interesting indeed. A sealed Victorian bottle, which had never seen the light of day for the entire twentieth century, had been discovered under a Foundation Stone by the builder who was replacing some of the crumbling sandstone fabric of the building! This bottle was emptied at the meeting - it had been opened by carefully cutting off the bottom with an angle grinder, as it had been so well filled with papers that to try to get them out of the top would have been impossible.

Inside were a copy of the 'Lichfield Mercury' and of the 'Lichfield Herald and City Times' each dated 7<sup>th</sup> August 1891 (which was advertising amongst other things, 'Bovril Chocolate' and 'Bovril Cocoa!') and a 'Methodist Recorder' from 6<sup>th</sup> August 1891, a penny, halfpenny and farthing dated 1891, a drawing of the building then under construction, a list of the Chapel Trustees and a copy of the Preaching Plan for the 'Tamworth and Lichfield Circuit, 1891'. This Plan showed times of services then held at Tamworth, Lichfield, The Barracks, Little Hay, Alrewas, Hopwas, Syerscote and Kettlebrook. All of these except Kettlebrook had a midweek evening service and Tamworth had two!

The reverend gentlemen of the Circuit were Rev. T Orton of Tamworth and Rev G M C Fish of Lichfield. The 'Lichfield Mercury' contained adverts



Unfortunately, although the 'Mercury' and 'Recorder' survived the opening reasonably well, the other papers were turning to dust within a week of opening the bottle. These are all to be replaced in the foundations, along with another container with artefacts from 2004 and a message which we hope will provide as much interest to Methodists of the future.

- 9 -



### THE TAMWORTH HOUSE FLATS

The ground floor of Tamworth House next door has for many years been let as shop premises, latterly as 'Mankind' Menswear. The upper floors were largely disused other than as storage areas and for occasional Sunday School use, and had become rather dilapidated. The Church decided in 2001 that it would be good stewardship of resources to make the second and third floors of the building into good quality apartment accommodation which would then be available for rent to suitable tenants. A serious risk of dry rot, due to inadequate ventilation, was discovered in the basement which needed to be made into a storage area for the shop above, so that the first floor could be converted at a cost of around £56,000 into an apartment also. These works, completed in 2006, were carried out to a high specification under the close guidance of Clive Carter and the rentals have covered conversion costs and continue to generate a useful income for the Church.

### REDEVELOPMENT 2012 - The Next Stage of the 3C Vision

This project was inspired by the desperate need to replace the wooden window frames at the front of the Church in Tamworth Street. This made us take a long hard look at the whole frontage of the Church and the image the Church presents to passers-by.

An architect was soon involved and some of the ideas shared with him were - make the Church look welcoming, warm and inviting and a place which looks bright, light and loved with the worship area clearly visible from the pavement. It would also give us the opportunity to improve our means of communication with passers-by.

Very early in the planning it was realised that it would be necessary to re-instate the front doors which in turn meant that the worship area would also have to revert to its original orientation. Consequently there was the opportunity to look at other ways of improving the worship area. The main elements of the current scheme are therefore:

- The frontage of the Church on Tamworth to be improved with steps leading to large glass doors, a more attractive ramp for disabled

access and better means of advertising events to passers-by.

- The worship area to be “turned round” and the focus of worship to be improved.
- The rear of the resulting worship area to be opened up to provide extra seating and greater flexibility to use the area for more comfortable seating as part of the Coffee Shop.
- The upper windows in the worship area to be insulated and the heating system in worship area to be made more efficient. Although this is an expensive part of the project it is thought to be important on an environmental basis and also in expectation of greater use of the worship area during the week.



*The Bike Ride in progress—a well-earned breather!*

- Provision of more efficient means of using audio-visual techniques in worship.
- Removal of the pipe organ and replacement with a good quality digital instrument.



It was encouraging that when the scheme was first presented to a meeting of the whole Church it was not long before it was pointed out that it had always been intended that the worship area would be improved as the final part of the original 3C Vision.

The Minister, Rev Malcolm Peach, and several others completed a 44 mile Bicycle Ride to visit all the Churches in the Circuit to raise awareness of the Gift Day held that day. This was concluded with a Barbecue at the Manse which anyone in the Church could attend.

### **THE 2012 TIME CAPSULE**

The following Items have been placed in a Time Capsule which was installed on 19th June 2012 under the raised floor in the new vestry at the front of the Worship Area, alongside five of the foundation stones from the original (1923) Schoolroom:-

A Draft Copy of this booklet  
CD of 1998 Re-development      'Centenary History' booklet  
Lichfield Mercury - including 'Malcolm's Bike Ride' Article  
    'Mercury' Article about 2012 Refurbishment  
Church Information about 2012 Refurbishment Project  
    Church Information Booklet  
Hymn Book - 'Hymns and Psalms' - in use up to 2012  
Hymn Book - 'Singing the Faith' - in use from 2012  
Hymn Book - 'Common Ground' Communion Booklet 1999  
    Diamond Jubilee New Testament  
Church 'Welcome' Card              'Praise and Celebration' Card  
Circuit Directory 2011-2012              Circuit Plan  
Set of Church Notices              Stewards' Rota      'Talent' Magazine  
    'My Gift to God is Made through my Bank' Card  
    Cycling Map of Lichfield District  
Articles about the Opening in 2004 of the 1891 Time Capsule  
Photo of Circuit Plan 1891 found in the 1891 Time Capsule  
Pictures of old Tamworth Street      A Railway Ticket  
'Visit Lichfield 2012' Brochure      'What's On?' in Lichfield 2012

Methodist Recorder      DVD of Welsh evening, March 2012

Set of 2012 Mint Coins

Arthur Price 'FairTrade' and '2012' Spoons

'Mysteries' Article'      'Mysteries 2012' Programme

'Churches Together What's On?' - May 2012

'Titanic' Disaster Centenary Article

Boys' Brigade Diamond Jubilee Souvenir Badge

Boys' Brigade Membership Card 2011-2012

Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee Souvenir Supplement

Diamond Jubilee Souvenir Booklet

Diamond Jubilee First Class UK Postage Stamp

Facsimile of *Queen Victoria's* Diamond Jubilee Newspaper, 1897

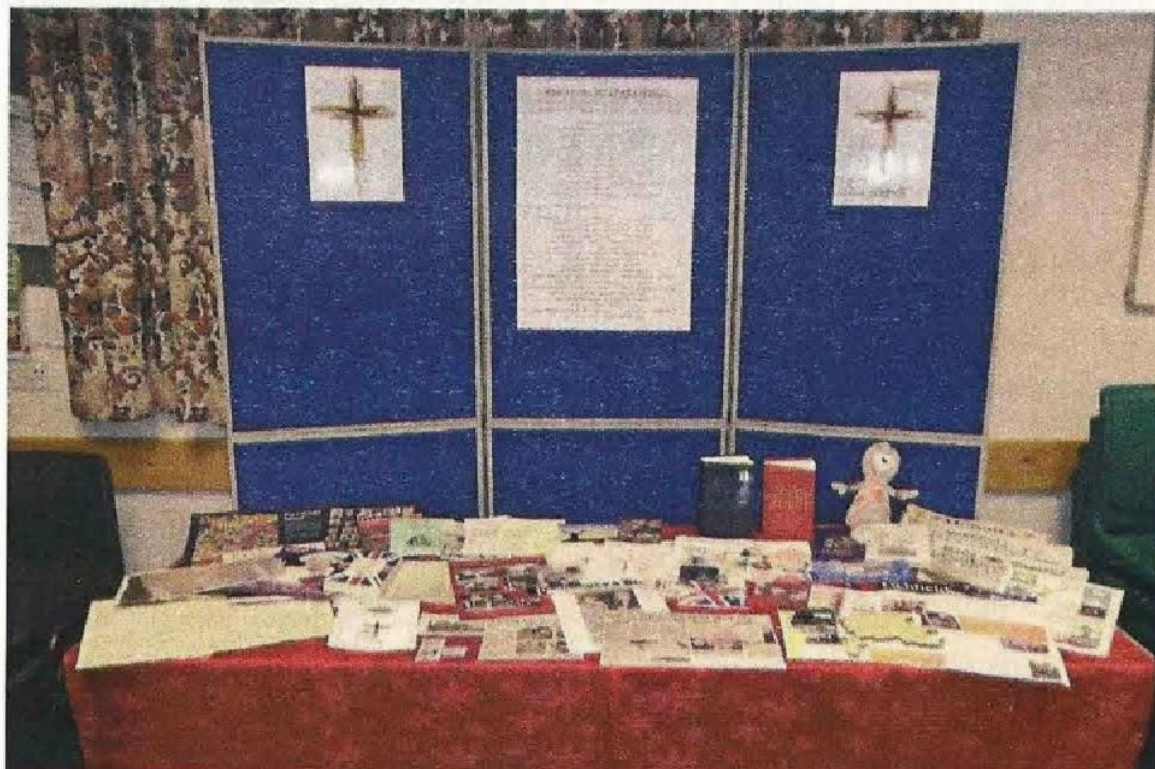
Eight 'London 2012' Olympic Commemorative 50p Coins

Olympic and Paralympic Games Stamps Set

Olympic Torch Route Article and Coffee Shop Notice

'Wenlock' London 2012 Mascot

Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy's 'Lichfield' Poem



*A display of the contents of the 2012 Time Capsule*



## CHAPTER 2—WORSHIP

### MINISTERS AT TAMWORTH STREET METHODIST CHURCH

#### The Complete List to 2012

1891	Rev. G. M. C. Fish	1938	Rev. H. Thompson
1892	Rev. Hulton	1941	Rev. R. Corner
1895	Rev. Wooliscroft	1943	Rev. K. Atkinson
1896	Rev. T. Barr	1945	Rev. J. Greaves
1898	Rev. Boase	1946	Rev. R. McNeal
1899	Rev. Hopper	1950	Rev. Norbury-Clarkson
1901	Rev. Waldron	1953	Rev. E. Avery
1902	Rev. Kewley	1957	Rev. G. Gibbs
1909	Rev. C. H. Luckman	1959	Rev. G. West
1912	Rev. P. Ellis	1965	Rev. Raymond Turner
1914	Rev. C. H. Hodgson	1972	Rev. W. N. James Hutchens
1916	Rev. J. Butler	1980	Rev. John D. Davies
1917	Rev. M. Smith	1984	Rev. Peter B. Mortlock
1918	Rev. W. Horner	1993	Rev. Paul H. Davis
1921	Rev. L. O. Brooker	2002	Rev. John P. Atkinson
1924	Rev. A. Stirzaker	2009	Rev. Malcolm Peach
1928	Rev. G. Howells		
1930	Rev. W. Freeman		
1931	Rev. H. Holroyd		
1936	Rev. T. Russell		

### TAMWORTH AND LICHFIELD METHODIST CIRCUIT, 1992 - 2012

The responsibility of the members of the meeting is to act as faithful stewards of the resources of the circuit and to use them wisely to the glory of God. The Minute Book reveals some of what has been achieved over the past twenty years.

There have been four Superintendent Ministers with different gifts and ways of working, each trying to use the skills and experience of the lay members of the Churches in order to best serve our communities.

We have been blessed also by other presbyteral ministers, deacons and lay workers.

Many members of the Circuit meeting and of Church councils have served faithfully for many years, others only for a short while, but all have made a commitment of time and talent and been prepared to give prayerful consideration to sometimes difficult decisions.

Reading through the Minutes of the meetings, it is striking how the topics recur - repairs and refurbishments of the manses; building projects at the Churches are suggested, planning permissions sought, monies raised, work supervised, and an opening service is held; Church/chapel centenaries have been planned for and celebrated; local preachers have been placed on note, on trial and then welcomed as fully accredited preachers; the more recent development of worship leaders and an increasing recognition of their contribution to worship.

A difficult part of the work of the circuit meeting during this time has been to oversee the closure of several Churches in small communities in the Tamworth area - Fazeley chapel had just been closed, and was followed by Dordon and Dosthill, Mile Oak, Amington and Wilnecote over the next ten or so years. Each time, the circuit staff had to try to help the members of the Church councils come to a decision about their future with prayer and then with a service of thanksgiving for the work of worshipping and serving God which had taken place in those buildings and in those communities over many years. The work of the Circuit Meeting is, in the words of a member quoted in the Minutes, to discuss the problem of balancing the value of having a Church to minister to each community as against the costs of having to maintain many buildings.



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The task of raising money for Home Missions and the World Church has gone on steadily, and is reported at every meeting. There are reports of various initiatives from District synods which have to be implemented (organisational, financial and training related) and matters have been discussed at the request of the Methodist Conference and have been sent to be put before Conference by local Churches in return.

Local concerns and events are reported - shoe boxes are collected for Operation Christmas Child; circuit services arranged, including an open air Songs of Praise at Tamworth Castle; ecumenical events supported including an evening with Imam Jahanghir Miah from the chaplaincy team at Swinfen Hall Young Offenders Institute; work with young people in the circuit has been continuing, from weekends away at Purley Chase to Holidays Clubs and workshop days and participation in national events such as Easter People and ECG.

There is much reporting by the Circuit Treasurers (only three in the twenty years) of the financial concerns of the circuit. The work has involved establishing fair allocation of and collecting assessments, paying stipends and salaries to the staff team, ensuring the manses are in good order, adhering to employment legislation, and establishing good practice in record keeping, to ensure that the circuit funds are managed to the best effect.

There have been moments when the national mood or world events suddenly break through - the "Y2K" Millennium Bug caused concern, the outbreak of foot and mouth disease led to contacts being made with local farmers offering prayerful support, a letter was sent to a family whose daughter was killed locally, a service was held to celebrate the opening of the National Memorial Arboretum; discussions were had on the merits of online banking and most recently, concern was expressed about the thefts of lead from Church roofs.

There is an increased awareness shown of the need for all Church buildings to be made, as far as possible, accessible to all (loop systems, facilities for those with disabilities etc.) and for risk assessments, safeguarding and health and safety requirements to be taken into consideration.



## FORMS OF WORSHIP

At Lichfield Methodist the varied services provided are aimed at allowing everyone to worship God in a way that they feel comfortable with. There are the weekly 9.00am, 10.30 (Family Service) and 6.30pm services on a Sunday. Yet within these there is room for services with varied focuses, such as the monthly Praise Service through to more meditative services and Iona style worship.

As a church and circuit we are blessed with a strong and diverse group of Lay Preachers who all communicate God's word in an authoritative and sympathetic way, through the grace of God. This means that the emphasis of any service is always different and challenges the congregation.

At the family service the whole church starts the service in celebration together, before the different age groups go to their own sessions. Once a month the whole family remain together for our all-age service; worshipping together in joyful unity, a real blessing. These are often linked with baptisms, confirmations and welcoming new members; as through God's love more people are being called to join our family.

In response to Jesus' call for us to remember Him through the sacraments, we regularly gather around the table and share the Bread and the Wine together. A mixture of styles have been adopted for this, including the set services in the Worship Book, but also more free interpretive styles of sharing together are used.

In response to the call to spread the message the church is experimenting with alternative forms of worship. There is now an established 'Café Church' in a local Costa, which meets every couple of months. The family service on a Sunday is occasionally also delivered in an 'alternative style'. There is a sense that we want to reach out from our building and touch the community, acting as a conduit for God's redeeming work.

As a church we cherish our time with God and each other and enjoy the opportunities it gives us for fellowship. There is a tangible belief that, as we gather, Jesus is amongst us and this is reflected in the welcome all receive and the acceptance that we come just as we are to meet with our Lord.



### LAY WITNESS WEEKENDS - OCTOBER 2007 AND MARCH 2010

In 2006 the Church Leadership discussed ways of helping individuals to have a closer relationship with Jesus Christ and to build up the fellowship within the Church, this resulted in an invitation to the 'Lay Witness Movement' to lead a weekend in October 2007 entitled 'SHARING GOD'S LOVE'. The weekend involved members of the congregation sharing in worship, fellowship meals and discussion groups led by members of the 'Lay Witness Team', some of whom also shared testimony of their own Christian experience. Many members of the Church spoke with emotion at the final meeting of how they had entered into a closer relationship with Jesus.

Following this the movement were invited back in March 2010 to lead a second weekend 'LIVING IN GOD'S LOVE'. The format of this second weekend was very similar to the first weekend but the content this time was designed to help Christians with their personal spiritual growth. As at the first weekend many testified to the positive impact the weekend had made on their Christian experience.

As a result of these weekends Bible study groups were started as well as the monthly 'Men's Lunch'

### MUSIC GROUP





The Music Group was started in 1990 to offer an alternative style of music for worship and to make use of the many talented musicians in the Church. The line-up has evolved as people have come and gone but still thrives and continues to enhance the worship of the Church. Members are of all ages (from teens to 60+) and the current line-up includes saxophones, flutes, clarinet, keyboard, guitars and drums, plus singers. In addition to playing for our own services we are regularly called upon for special events at other Churches in the area. We all love being able to play music together and using our talents to worship God.

### MUSIC FELLOWSHIP



The Music Fellowship Choir began in September 1998 with the arrival of Ian Williams, a talented teacher, singer and organist who inspired and trained the singers. They wanted to be known as a 'Fellowship' rather than a 'Choir' because friendship and care for one another was of great importance. At that time, the original number of singers was twelve and at the time of writing is about twenty-two.

When Ian left the area, Nigel Power took over for two years, then Janice Rhodes for three and finally, Marion Brannan, retired Head of Music at



King Edward VI School has been conductor and accompanist since 2005. The singers perform at concerts and services in the Lichfield Church and other Churches in the Circuit. Rehearsals on Monday from 2.30-3.30pm always welcome new members.

### FLOWER GROUP

'May God grant that our hearts, our eyes and our hands may receive his inspiration, enabling us to glorify His House with the beauty of the leaves and blossoms which he has created.'

In 2012 we are a small group of six ladies who, on a rotational basis, try to be inspired by the words above and create arrangements for Sunday services. This is achieved using the weekly donations given in remembrance or celebration by our congregation for which we are very grateful. The arrangements are later dismantled and the flowers distributed to the sick, the sad or the housebound. We have also made the Church look beautiful for a number of weddings and of course the annual celebrations of Christmas, Easter and Harvest. We look forward to the challenge of decorating our newly refurbished Church later in the year.



### BANNERS IN CHURCH

Rev Paul Davis brought a book home from his Sabbatical in South Carolina in 1996 and gave it to me asking if I could do something with the ideas from it, perhaps for Christmas. It is called 'Banners for Worship'. There is a quote on the last page -

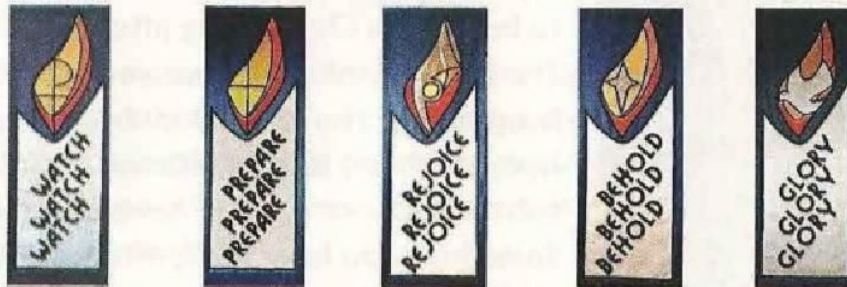
"Beautiful Banners truly enhance the inside of any sanctuary, Sunday School classroom or other Church meeting place. They proclaim God's glory to all who step inside the Church and serve as a reminder of



God's continuing presence in our lives."

There were already some banners in Church by then, including a seasonal series made by a Church Group.

I made a series of five banners for Advent which has remained a feature of the decoration in Church during the weeks leading up to Christmas, from designs in the book and one for Easter Day and Good Friday.

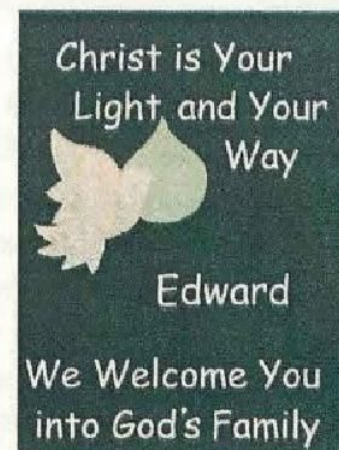


*The "Advent" Banners*

The Baptism banner (right) includes the letters of the name of the child or children, stuck on with double-sided sellotape which has intrigued some families who have had a photograph taken with the banner at the end of the service and this effect is now reproduced digitally for the Church notices, thus personalising the experience for the baptismal party.

The number and variety of banners increased when I was asked to make a banner with the children during the first February half term Holiday Club in 2000. This was by way of an experimental activity; I had no idea really what the children would be capable of producing in a limited time during a busy session, and I had to go outside my own comfort zone and work with colours and textiles without using needles and pins. I quickly discovered the joys of double-sided Bondaweb and how to use an iron safely with small children - no mishaps so far!

Since then we have produced a banner during each Holiday club week and some others during other workshop days. Some work just as craft activities and have a limited life, and others have been really successful as banners, illustrating Bible texts (one depicts all the books in the Bible







giving some sense of the size of each book) or lines from worship songs.

I have tried to use simple shapes - leaves, hands and little figures so that each child can recognise the one he made at the end of the week and know that it will continue to be hung in Church long afterwards.

The banners from previous years have been hung during the Holiday club and children have still been able to pick out their leaf or fish a year, or indeed several years on. Something you have made with your hands, eyes and skill and your creative spirit, truly does live on and serves "as a reminder of God's presence in our lives."

#### COVENANTING AND GIFT AID

We also worship God through our gifts of money. At the time of writing, Gift Aid is available which increases the value of donations to the Church made by those who pay UK Income Tax. Gift Aid donations are regarded as having basic rate tax deducted by the donor. The Church receives your donation - which is money you've already paid tax on - and reclaims the basic rate tax from HM Revenue & Customs on its 'gross' equivalent - the amount before basic rate tax was deducted.

Basic rate tax is currently 20 per cent, so this means that if you give £10 using Gift Aid, the donation is worth £12.50 to the Church.

In order to make a Gift Aid donation you'll need to make a Gift Aid declaration. The Church will ask you to complete a simple form - one form can cover every gift made to the same Church for whatever period you choose, and can cover gifts you have already made since April 2000 and/or gifts you may make in the future.

Before the Gift Aid Scheme was introduced, gifts to the Church could add funds to the Church if they were 'Covenanted' - the donors signed a Covenant by which they promised to pay a certain sum to the Church each year for seven years, which was usually collected through the Envelope



Scheme which recorded these donations made through numbered envelopes each week.

Currently the Church benefits to the tune of around £10,000 per year. Anyone who is a UK taxpayer, and who does not 'Gift Aid' their gifts - and there are generous members of our congregations who do not - is earnestly requested to do so; the Church Stewards can supply the relevant information.

Some people make their offering for the work of the Church by Standing Order, and in response to concerns from some who felt uncomfortable at letting the Collection plate pass them by without putting anything on it, some laminated 'tickets' were produced which stated "My Gift to God is made through my bank".

### MORNING PRAYERS

God's house is built on prayer. During the Superintendency of Rev Peter Mortlock, the Tuesday Morning Prayer time started. It was originally named 'Staff Prayers', but it was never intended for staff only, it was for everyone. Some years ago the Prayer Box was made available for people either visiting, especially through the Coffee Shop, or from our own Church community. Each week these prayers are included in our prayer time. Prayers are always confidential. It is good to receive 'Thank You' prayers to God for prayers answered, often in ways people never thought possible. We also pray for God's Church, especially His Suffering Church, His World and Nations. There are people within the group who lead us in times of prayer, including prayers of Praise, Thanksgiving and Intercession. These Prayer group Morning Prayers start at 9.30am for about half an hour. As the 21<sup>st</sup> Century hymn calls us, "ALL ARE WELCOME!"

### BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER GROUP

This group meets fortnightly. Leaders changed but were replaced as new people have come into the Church. We have completed the study of numerous books in the Old and New Testament, e.g. Jonah, Joshua, study of Joseph, Genesis 1 - 11, Acts, Romans, Revelation and Isaiah. One



memorable occasion was the study of the complete book of Revelation led by Rev. Robert Cox in one evening, on his visit from the USA for a 6 week pulpit swap with the Rev. Paul Davis! God continues to bless our group and consistently answers prayer for those in and outside our Church.

At another Bible Study Group, the people privileged to attend were presented with captivating titles such as "To give us fresh eyes - reflections on Faith" or "Spiritual Resources: readings in John with Open Ears". We were taken with Geoffrey Ainger's deep understanding of the Scriptures - and his wit and wisdom - to explore the spiritual essentials for real life: how we are 'nourished' and how we should be sharing that 'nourishment'. Warren Bardsley and Geoffrey made a good team on some of these explorations of faith.

### ALPHA COURSES

Since 2003 an Alpha course has been run each year with an average of nine people attending. Some are Church attenders who desire to brush up on their faith, while others are seekers who have come to us using the Alpha website, or from the coffee shop, or are acquaintances. There have been varied discussions and many questions raised. Each time we have seen God working as He brings people together with similar problems or interests. The highlights have undoubtedly been the joy of many committing their lives to Jesus.

### NURTURE GROUP

A group of about eight meets fortnightly to study God's Word and apply it to our lives today. This group started in 2004 in response to people asking for a follow-up after Alpha. One highlight has been the joy of a member who suddenly realised that salvation is all of grace and not of works. God's Word continues to thrill and challenge us.



## CHAPTER 3— THE CHURCH COMMUNITY -

### YOUNG PEOPLE

#### SUNDAY SCHOOL - TRAILBLAZERS

In many ways our current Sunday School is very similar to 20 years ago although we are much less formal now. Times have moved on and many of the Church families do not have their roots in Lichfield but have families spread across the country. We continue to have lots of children and young people involved in the Church but the number attending each week is generally lower than in the past. This reflects the pressures on families to visit relatives or to join sporting clubs which run on Sundays. We also have a number of youngsters who regularly come when staying with their grandparents. This means that each week we can have a totally different group of children to that of the previous week. We are also aware that the sizes of the different groups will vary over time and that sometimes children need to move up early or stay back to be with their friends or to fit the needs of the individual children in the groups. In recognition of these factors we no longer keep a count of how many Sundays the children attend and in recent years we have stopped doing formal Promotion ceremonies. We try to make Sunday School a welcoming place where children can feel comfortable whenever they come and have great fun - decorating biscuits is a favourite activity with all ages which we usually find a way of linking to the theme.

The Sunday School was re-designated Trailblazers early on in the new century - updating the name to tie in with the Holiday Club which the Church began running in 2000. As a Church we were conscious that in this day and age going to Church was no longer something that every family did and that many families have never been in a Church or possibly even heard of Jesus. The Holiday Club sessions were designed to introduce children aged 5-11 and their families to Jesus whatever their previous experience of Church. We wanted the families who come to the Holiday Club sessions to know that similar sessions ran on Sunday mornings which to which they are welcome. The four different groups cater for all ages between 0-18 years. Creche: 0-3 yrs (approx.), Scramblers: 3-6 yrs (approx), Explorers: 7-11 yrs (approx), Questers: 11 yrs +.



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The aim of Trailblazers is to provide the children and young people in our care with:-

- A good knowledge of the Bible and how it relates to their lives now.
- An understanding of the Christian faith and how it is relevant in their lives, and
- To encourage them to feel part of and join in the life of the Church.

We hope to plant the seed in our young people, which, over time will grow to fruitfulness in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and in Christian faith.

Over the years we have used a variety of different teaching materials and for a few years we even wrote our own. Generally we now use material based on the lectionary which ties in with that being used in the main service to help emphasise that we are all part of the same Church each worshipping and learning together. As a general rule, we start each session in Church, joining in worship with the congregation and then separate into our different groups at about 10.50 am. On the first Sunday of each month we share activities together and sing songs and choruses and look at those Bible stories so familiar to older members of the Church and which we feel are important for the children to learn about but which are not always covered in the main service e.g. creation, Noah, Jonah. We feel these sessions give our teenagers the chance to gain experience helping with the younger children and give the younger children the chance to get to know those in the older groups, including their leaders. This helps when the time comes for them to move up into those older groups. On the third Sunday of each month we stay in Church and join the congregation for all age worship, often helping in the service. We maintain close links with the Youth Fellowship group, which is held on Sunday evenings for young people over the age of 13 years. Many of our young people will attend both sessions. We no longer have Sunday School anniversaries - instead we lead the nativity service on the Sunday before Christmas and often help in all age worship.

There have been many dedicated staff over the years who have given their time to help run the Sunday School and we thank all those who have been involved in the past. How many of us remember those dedicated people in our past who inspired us in our Christian faith? We are grateful to our



current volunteers who range in age from teenagers through to the over 60's. Whatever their age everyone has something to offer the children in our care from youthful exuberance to grandparent figures. We all have different skills to offer and show our young people how much they are valued as part of the Church. It is great when we hear of people who have gone through our Sunday School who are now involved as Sunday School leaders, worship leaders etc. who are now passing on this faith to new generations.

During the first phase of redevelopment, which involved replacing the old Church hall, Sunday School was held in the upstairs rooms in Tamworth House next door. Each Sunday we trooped out of the front of the building along the road and up the stairs to what were rather dilapidated rooms. It was great to move back into the new rooms when the development was finished - to have lots of space for games and activities and plenty of storage space for our equipment. During our current redevelopment we have again had to be flexible and imaginative in our use of the available spaces whilst the congregation worship in the upstairs hall. We look forward to things getting back to 'normal' and to seeing what the new worship area looks like and deciding where we will sit.

### **CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY CLUB**

A team of volunteers of all ages have run a holiday club every year since 2000 during the February half term holiday, to reach out to the local population, sharing the gospel message with children from all over Lichfield. The activities have included sharing Bible stories through drama, video/ DVD, puppets and actions for all to join in. The themes of the stories have also been followed through in a wide range of crafts and games.

One of the best bits of the holiday club is the indoor picnic which takes place after the Friday morning session - the food is provided by the Church members and many turn up to meet and talk with the children and their families.

"It was awesome" was how one boy described his morning at holiday club. With the Olympics taking place, this year our theme was "Going for Gold" and we shared with the children how Jesus calls us all to be on his team.



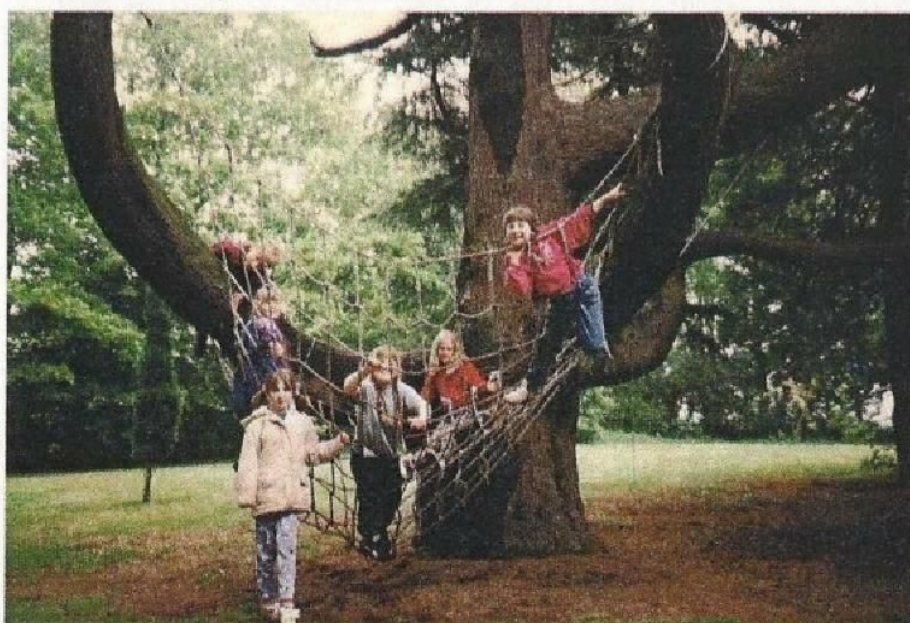
## SHELL GROUP

The "Shell Group" is a non-uniformed youth organisation of the Methodist Church for children aged 7-13yrs.



In 1992 the group's membership numbered 30-40 youngsters, mostly from Church families. Each member made promises at their membership reception to:

- Seek new experiences,
- Help other people,
- Enjoy the world,
- Love God, and
- Live a full life.



*Shell Group Activity Weekend at Purley Chase*

They proudly wore the Shell Group badge depicting the 'shell' sign of a pilgrim. Members took part in Church services, Youth Circuit events and activity weekends at Purley Chase in Warwickshire or to Youth Hostels with The Boys' Brigade - a first weekend away from Mum and Dad for some of the children.

The Group now aims to *be* Church to children who otherwise would have little or no contact with the Church. The leaders share God's love with the children as they chat, play and make things. Meetings end in prayer.



The children enjoy visits from Church members, and in turn, produce cards for elderly or house-bound Church members and join the more active Church members taking part in the Lichfield Mysteries. Originally, bridging the gap between children and adults of the congregation, Shell Group now encourages dynamic interchange between children from outside the Church and Christians within.

### YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

With a current membership of 17 young people and 6 leaders, Youth Fellowship meets once a week and exists to nurture young people in their Christian journey, aiming to do this through social activities, Bible study, discussion and worship.



*Youth Fellowship Weekend in Wales, 2008*

Annually the members and leaders attend a Christian Conference, gathering with 1000/1400 other Christians - this event can prove a highlight for the young people and often features in their faith development. Other fun activities include karting, bowling, ice skating, cooking and serving a meal for 70 people, weekends away, seeing the sun rise on Easter Morning and many more. Those who leave to go onto further education or those who move away often speak of Youth Fellowship with fondness and happy memories.



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### YOUTH CLUB

Youth Club started at the end of 1997 offering a safe space for teenagers to come and relax on a Friday evening with activities such as pool, table tennis, board games, tuck etc. In the last 5 years we have purchased flat screen TV's to play Wii and PS2 games with proves a hit with the members (and the leaders!). Over the years numbers have fluctuated with highs of 40 and lows of 10 led by a team of Christians who feel that offering young people, churched and unchurched, a safe space to meet in a relaxed environment is part of our Church's mission statement.

### THE VERY YOUNG!

#### TIDDLERS PRE-SCHOOL

Tiddlers Pre-school rose out of the Mother and Toddler Group which was going strong within the Church in 1999. This transformation took place as 'outreach' within the wider community of Lichfield to welcome children and families from all corners of the city. The children set off for school and nursery well prepared for their new adventures after spending quality play and learning time with us whilst exploring the exciting toys and activities on offer. Highlight of our year - probably the big red fire engine coming to visit, which the children could scramble all over!

#### TIDDLERS' TODDLERS

Tiddlers' Toddlers is a group for parents, grandparents or carers, with babies and children under 2½ years, which opened in June 2000 as part of the Church's 3CV project for the new community buildings.

Each session offers a variety of activities plus fruit and toast at snack time. We try to show God's love and care by how we run the group and we have small celebrations for the main Christian festivals. From small beginnings, we have grown to a group that has an average attendance of 30 families each week and 16 Church members involved on a rota basis to provide the service. It remains hard work but we have fun and the feedback we get makes it all worthwhile.





*Tiddlers' Toddlers*

## **THE UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> LICHFIELD BROWNIES**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Lichfield Brownies started at Lichfield Methodist Church in 1957 under the leadership of Elizabeth and Dorothy Wait. One of the leaders in 2012 is the granddaughter and great-niece of the original leaders!



Over the years Brownie units have seen many changes, especially with the uniforms, but fundamentally they still run to the same principles of being girl-led, following a balance and varied programme which helps build confidence, and provides opportunities for the girls to experience.

One ex-Brownie from the 1950s remembers being taught how to tie different knots, going to Church Parade and learning home skills in order to gain badges. Although many Brownie traditions still exist, the girls may in 2012 find themselves gaining badges in areas such as Computer Skills and Science Investigation.

The unit celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2007 when past members met together at Church to share memories, a “camp-fire” sing-song and refreshments.



### 9<sup>TH</sup> LICHFIELD BROWNIES

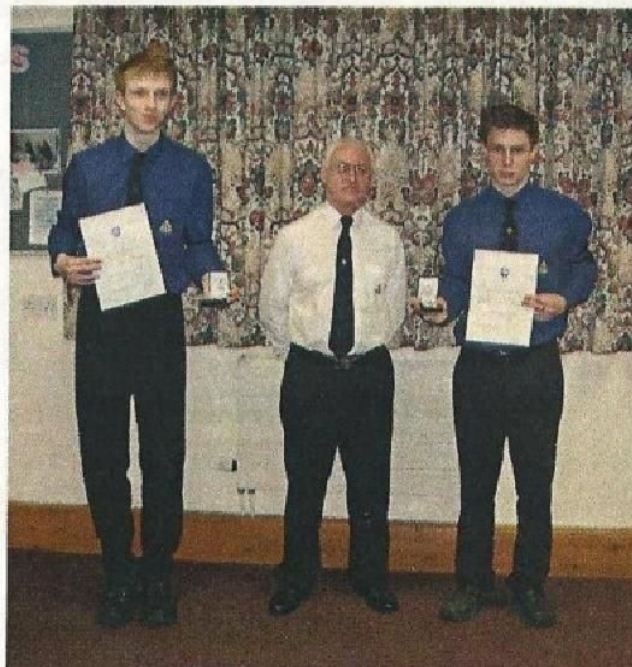
The 9<sup>th</sup> Lichfield (Methodist) Brownie Pack was officially registered with Guiding HQ on 26 July 1978 and remains one of the youngest packs in Lichfield. Unfortunately, very little is known about the early history of the pack.



The pack meets on a Friday evening and enjoys something of a 'weekend' feel. Nevertheless the girls take part in a varied programme which has included dancing, acting and boating at Kings Bromley as well as traditional craft activities. Recent trips out have included a bus and boat tour of London and Cadbury World. For the service element of their promise the girls have raised money on behalf of BBC Children in Need and other children's charities.

We have enjoyed sleepovers at the hall and most recently a joint district pack holiday at Beaudesert Scout and Guide Camp to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Despite the damp weather the girls took part in all the activities and especially enjoyed the campfire singsong.

### 1<sup>ST</sup> LICHFIELD BOYS' BRIGADE



*Presentation of BB "President's Badges"*

The BB promotes its object of "the advancement of Christ's Kingdom among Boys", working with lads aged from 5 to 18 doing weekly activities appropriate to their ages. Although the Company is now only small in numbers, our Band has for several years led the British Legion Remembrance Day Parade at Alrewas. Two of our Boys paraded in front of HM Queen Elizabeth II at the BB Royal Review at Windsor Castle. We have been to camps at Dyffryn Ardudwy and most memorably at the national site of our brother organization, the FDF, in Denmark.

More recently we have been on activity weekends at a variety of Youth Hostels, jointly with members of the Shell Group.

Being the nearest BB Company to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, it was natural that we should have been involved in The Boys' Brigade Memorial Garden there right from the start. Many of our Boys have helped with both the construction and the subsequent maintenance of the Garden, and three of them were privileged to be chosen to "Cut the First Sod" in September 2007.



*Luke, Dominic and Chris cutting the First Sod, BB Garden, National Memorial Arboretum. With NMA Chief Executive, Charlie Bagot-Jewitt holding William, the Anchor Boys' Mascot!*



## **CHAPTER 4 - THE CHURCH COMMUNITY - ADULTS**

### **METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN—NETWORK FELLOWSHIP**

Women have met in this Church each Tuesday afternoon for many years, most recently under the title Ladies Network Fellowship. We have Speakers, Members Afternoons, and Devotional meetings. Each year we celebrate the New Year with a meal together. We welcome women from Circuit and local Churches to our Anniversary where we share in a short service with a special speaker followed by a very good afternoon tea. We attend District events, day meetings and residential weekends. We are a friendly and caring mixed age group, have some fun times and would encourage anyone to come along and find out what goes on.

### **TUESDAY CLUB**

Tuesday Club has been meeting regularly for over fifty years. Beginning as Young Wives in 1960, with four members, Pat Winter, Bobbie Hewitt, Gill Silverwood and Joyce Buckley, we became Tuesday Club as we all became a little older. We celebrated our Golden Anniversary in 2010.

We knit squares for blankets, support charities with donations to our speakers and enjoy summer outings and Christmas lunches.

We now meet once a month to share fellowship over a cup of coffee or enjoy a speaker. We treasure the warm fellowship and friendship which supports us all and the outreach of the Church.

### **WESLEY GUILD**

Since our Guild re-started in April 1997 (101 years after the Wesley Guild became an official meeting within the constitution of Wesleyan Methodism!) we have been meeting roughly every two weeks on a Tuesday evening from September to the following June each year.

There were fourteen people at the first meeting, a number which has remained fairly steady over the years.

In 1992 the “medical mission” of Guild outreach had been revitalised and the Nigeria Healthcare Project was launched. By 2009 over £1,000,000 had been raised, supporting 18 projects around Nigeria.

Our Guild supports the Project with money collected from Carol-Singing at the Tesco store - an event much appreciated by customers and staff alike.

Memorable meetings have often been those led by members of our own community: for example, Service in the Royal Navy in WW2, Mission Service, Poetry and Drama, Law and Order, Photographic Skills, Music Appreciation, Railway Signalling, Memories of Childhood, Family and Occupations.

We have also had fun with Beetle Drives, “Call My Bluff”, party games, indoor curling and cricket, Morris Dancing and play readings.

In the 1980s there were more than 1000 Guilds across the country, but this has now reduced to around 230. Here in Lichfield we continue to be a faithful, caring group of friends.

### FOCUS GROUP

The group started after Rev Dr. Howard Mellor, then principal of Cliff College came to a Home Missions event at our Church in 1986. He asked how Christians formed their ideas about the issues of the day, whether in politics, workplace or society. This led to three or four couples deciding to meet once a month in each other’s homes. Each member would contribute to a shared meal, then the host would lead a discussion, often with the week’s newspapers as the Focus. Now about twenty folk are members, of whom about a dozen usually squeeze into a sitting room on the first Saturday of each month.



### MENS' LUNCH

'Let's book a table at The Turnpike and invite men to come for an informal get-together - we could pick up any who are housebound' said Michael Butler in Feb 2010.

'Chaps don't meet like that, nobody will come' said Don Male.

'I'll do it anyway' said Michael, suffering greatly from Parkinson's.

Lo and behold, a dozen men turned up. Ever since then we've met on the last Friday of the month, where anything and everything can be shared over the meal. 25 came to our Christmas lunch. Thank you to Lindy and the team at The Turnpike for making us Methodist men so welcome, and most of all thank you to Michael for not listening to me!



*"Grub up!" at the Turnpike!*

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## **CHAPTER 5 - OUTREACH**

Our Church is very fortunate to have a wide variety of Outreach activities in addition to the more formally constituted groups mentioned previously. We hope that the following chapter will give a good sense of this.

### **PASTORAL VISITORS**

We are really proud of our pastoral care set up. Our aim is that everybody in our Church has somebody who cares for them - and this is their pastoral visitor. Each pastoral visitor has a group of people with whom they keep in touch. Pastoral care has friendship at its heart. Our pastoral visitors visit the people in their group 4 times a year with the Talent magazine and often more frequently depending on the differing circumstances. The tradition of holding a Newcomers' Tea around November time has continued, in order to welcome recent additions to the family of the Church.

### **TRANSPORT**

We identified the fact that some people had difficulty in getting to Church for services or other meetings, regularly or occasionally, and set up a list of those who needed transport and of those who were willing to provide it either on a rota or an ad hoc basis. Several people have, over the years, acted as coordinator for this scheme.

### **COFFEE SHOP**

In 1992, the Coffee Shop was open on Friday and Saturday mornings and served drinks and cakes to shoppers in the concourse alongside the Church.

With the opening of the new premises in 1999 we were able to open on four days with increased hours and a menu offering soup, sandwiches and jacket potatoes on Fridays and Saturdays as well as drinks and cakes. There are currently about 75 volunteers from among the Church

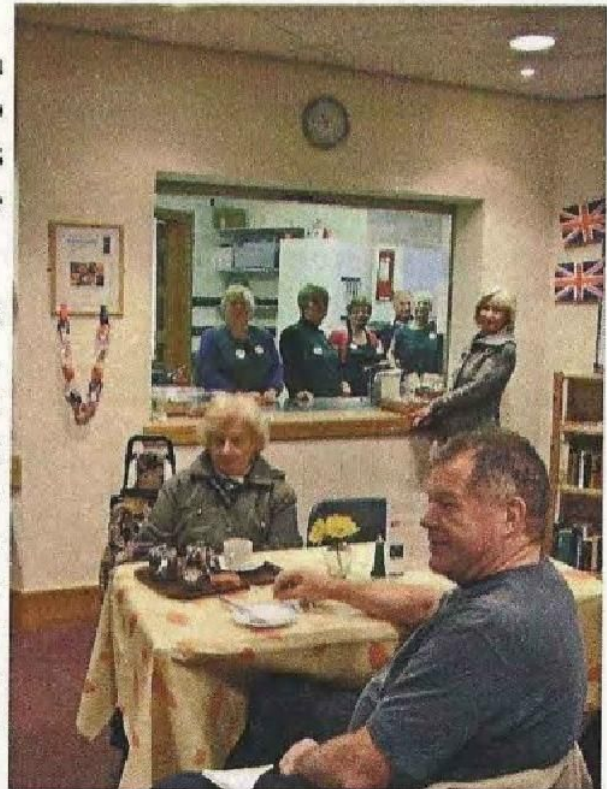


congregation and beyond, aged from 13 to 83(ish!), without whose willing commitment we could not operate.

Our turnover is now around £15,000 per annum; half the profits go back to the Church and have made an important contribution to general running costs and half to local, national and international charities via the Mission and Outreach Committee.

In keeping with Lichfield as a "Fairtrade City", the Coffee shop uses as much Fairtrade food as possible, for example tea, coffee and sugar.

We work hard to be welcoming and friendly to our customers, many of whom are regulars known to us by name, and to offer a listening ear for those who need to talk or have a word of prayer. The coffee shop is a vital part of the mission of the Church in our community and a way for people to venture into our building and find fellowship as well as food.



On 30th June 2012, coinciding with the completion of the refurbishment of the Church, the Coffee Shop opened especially early, at 8.30am, in order to provide refreshments to those who turned out to watch the 2012 Olympic Torch Run go past the front of the Church. This was just one part of an epic journey starting at Land's End on 19th May, visiting each capital city of the British Isles, and more than 1000 communities along the way. The route passed within 10 miles of 95% of the UK population on its meandering journey, which ended at the Olympic Stadium in London for the opening ceremony on July 27th.





*The Olympic Torch Bearer outside the Church, 30th June 2012*

### CAFÉ CHURCH

In June 2011 a group of people decided to try a new style of 'worship' and developed Café Church. Café Church aims to show the love of God over coffee and cake and it brings Church to the community in their own environment rather than expecting them to come to us. The evenings held bi-monthly include a quiz, a short talk, Bible study and discussion questions based on our evenings' topics which have included self-confidence, relationships, money, health and new beginnings. A short prayer closes the evening. These evenings are held in cafés in Lichfield and are attended not only by people linked with the Methodist Church but also Churches across Lichfield and Burntwood and by people who have no Church connection. We hope in the coming year to be able to develop Café Church and allow more people to meet with God and discuss their faith outside of a Church building.



## TRAIDCRAFT



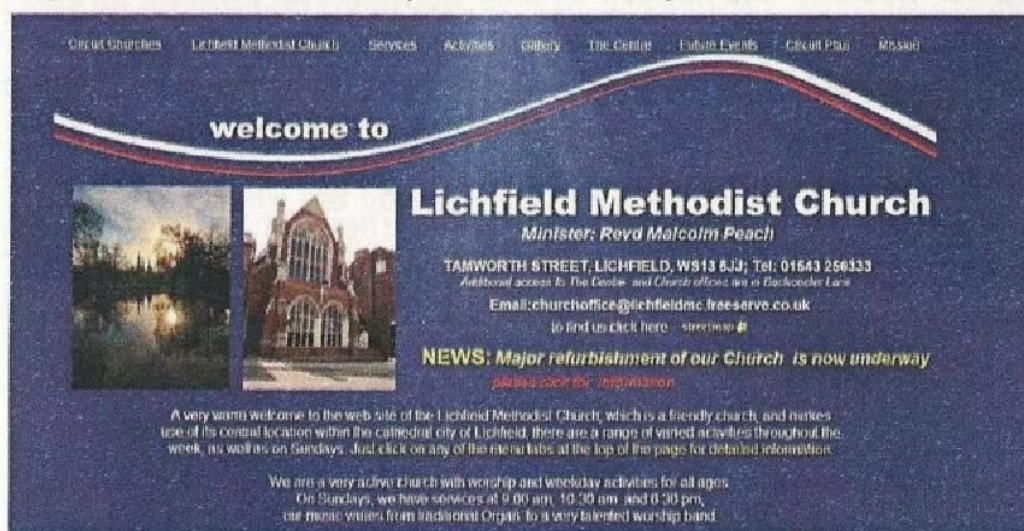
Fairtrade is supported in various ways throughout the Church. One of these is through Traidcraft. In 1998 a group called YAG (Young Adults Group for those 20-30 years of age) started manning a Traidcraft stall once a month. The products were supplied by Wylde Green United Reformed Church in Sutton Coldfield on a sale/return basis.

The stall has been well supported by Church members. In 2003 the group started to purchase stock directly from Traidcraft and the stall has slowly grown over time. We are now pleased to offer a wide selection of products, holding stalls twice a month, along with the opportunity to order items from the catalogues produced by Traidcraft. Each purchase made from Traidcraft ensures farmers from various countries are given a fair price for the produce they sell. Any additional funds raised are given to Traidcraft's Exchange charity which supports farmers by helping them learn to run their business both locally and within the international market.



## WEBSITE - CHANGING TIMES!

I have heard that we should expect that change to happen in social and technical aspects of our lives, to be five times faster than we did 20 years ago! It is amazing that in March 1989, Tim Berners-Lee with the help of Robert Cailliau, wrote a proposal that referenced ENQUIRE, a database and software project he had built in 1980, and described a more elaborate information management system. It came to be known as the WorldWideWeb. Today we take it as a normal feature in our daily lives with greater reliance on computers in our daily life.



As evidence of these changes, nearly 90% of our Methodist Circuits and Churches in the UK and around the Methodist world have a “web” site of some description.

Our former Superintendent, the Rev John Atkinson asked if I could create a Circuit Web site. The current site is under the umbrella of our Circuit Web site, [www.tamworthandlichfieldcircuit.org.uk](http://www.tamworthandlichfieldcircuit.org.uk)

Each of our individual Churches have their own web page and within it they are allowed to have a simple single page (with links to own web site, if they have one) or multiple pages, as we have in our Lichfield site.

From an analysis of the web site the latest set of figures show that we have on average 460 unique visitors EACH DAY. This has increased in two years from less than 200 people visiting our Circuit web site and in particular our Church web pages!



### What Does It All Mean?

Well, it shows that a much broader community is interested in what is happening in our Churches. People are using the web to investigate what is going on and it is our opportunity to reach out to more people than within our immediate circle.

*A number of encouraging comments have been made e.g. "At our Church we have had a number of visitors at Christmas services, because they have made enquires through our website". A person from Germany viewed our web site and noticed a name that she was familiar with from her school days and asked if I could pass an email to her friend, I am pleased to report that indeed it was her school friend and they eventually met up in the UK! I can add my own experience for we were at a service when a young family came in and to our surprise they were a family from the South East whom we knew, they did not know that we attended Lichfield Methodist Church, they were visiting relatives and as they were staying a few days enquired via the web site as to where the nearest Methodist Church was!*

### SAMARITAN'S PURSE





We have been supporting the Operation Christmas Child Appeal for about 20 years now, sending an average of 450 shoe boxes filled with gifts and toiletries for children and young people living in some of the poorest parts of Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Local schools and people from the community and Church lovingly fill a shoebox, which is then collected by Samaritan's Purse and added to the grand total, which last year was 1.2 million shoe boxes. 'A gift at Christmas to share the love of Jesus - which is sent unconditionally and without any obligation.' The Church community is delighted to share in this appeal each year, and it has become an established tradition.

### BOXING DAY WALKS

For many years there has been a tradition that Lichfield Methodist Church has a walk on Cannock Chase on Boxing Day. We all gather at the Glacier Boulder and undertake a gentle 5 mile circuit through Birches Valley. Although numbers have reduced a little over the years it's still a great opportunity to enjoy some seasonal fellowship and walk off the excesses of Christmas Day before getting back to finish off the turkey!





## MISSION PROJECTS

“To give and give, and give again...”

... the hymn pinpoints all our giving, including giving for use outside our local Church. We support many charity appeals, including our World Mission and Mission in Britain funds. In 2006 Nichola Jones came and spoke of the needs of the Bethany Homes for severely handicapped children and adults in Palestine. The spontaneous response was a retiring collection of £350! A group of friends soon launched a ‘Mission and Outreach’ ‘Bethany’ appeal for a year. Then came a year for HIV/AIDS ‘Love Boxes’ for the Methodist Church in Southern Africa, followed by a year for ‘Methodist Relief and Development Fund’ worldwide, then for ‘Compassion’ to rebuild the Wesley Hospital in Haiti. Our current M. & O. appeal is for ‘Restore’, for Christian support for refugees and asylum seekers in the Midlands. It is easy to say ‘there is not so much money around’ - but our own belts can be tightened so that care for others in huge need is increased. In the 16th century Menno Simons, a Protestant leader in Holland and Germany pressed the call for Christian social work. His prayer is one that can hardly be bettered:

“Awaken us, O God, to that faith which dies unless it clothes the naked, feeds the hungry, comforts the sorrowing, shelters the destitute and binds up the broken: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

May our Church live this prayer - now and always!

### JMA

J stands for JUNIOR,  
M stands for MISSION  
A stands for ALL - ‘cos everybody’s welcome!  
Day by day, through JMA  
We’re sharing in Mission the Jesus Way.

This song used to be sung at each annual service at which JMA awards were presented and indicates the work of what is now called ‘Junior Mission for All’, formerly known as the ‘Junior Missionary Association’. In 1992 many children - and some adults - had collecting booklets which they used to record regular donations each week for JMA. More recently the



booklets have been changed for the now familiar yellow cylindrical collecting boxes, still used by children and adults alike. Over the past few years more than £500 per year has been raised for the work of JMA.

### CHAPLAINCIES

The Hospital Chaplaincy Team has been working in Lichfield for many years. We visited Victoria Hospital under the guidance of a Methodist Minister and a Church of England Chaplain. When Victoria and Hammerwich Hospitals closed, the Samuel Johnson Community Hospital was built and we continued our care there. The Hospitals are now run under the care of NHS Burton Hospital Foundation Trust and Burton Hospital Chaplaincy now supports our work at the Lichfield Hospital. There are four of us in the Team and our aim is that one of us visits each day to offer, where required, an opportunity to talk confidentially with patients about matters of concern and to help patients get in touch with a representative of their own faith. Our service is available to people of all faiths and those who do not profess any religious belief. We also offer Holy Communion twice a month at the patients' bedsides. It is a privilege to be able to offer the love of God to people in this way especially at a time when they are feeling very low and need support.

Some of our ministers and lay people have also been involved over the years in Chaplaincy work at Swinfen Hall Young Offenders Institution, working in confidence with many young offenders, for some of whom this has been the only helping contact with people on the 'outside'.

### ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS AND ALANON

For many years, our Church has provided a place for both Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) and Al-Anon Groups to meet confidentially to help deal with addiction and its effects on families.



Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from



alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; A.A. is self-supporting through members' own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Their primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

Al-Anon Family Groups hold regular meetings where members share their own experience of living with alcoholism. Al-Anon does not offer advice or counselling, but members give each other understanding, strength and hope.

### PARISH NURSING.

A grant from Connexional funds enabled a pilot project to take place to assess the value of "Parish Nursing" as a model for pastoral care in the local Church. Lynda Herbert was appointed initially in a voluntary capacity and later on an employed basis to lead this experiment. Despite the confusion resulting from the term "Parish Nursing", which was strictly neither "parish" nor "nursing", a group of volunteers working with Lynda was able to support some members of the Church community who may not otherwise have been catered for. Also a number of health promotion and training events were held. A committee of interested health professionals was set up to further this work. Lynda's own ill health resulted in the project as such being closed before the anticipated four year timescale was completed. It nevertheless indicated that it was a model of ministry worth pursuing although not necessarily within the terms of reference of Parish Nursing UK.

### PATHWAY PROJECT

One strand in the history of the Pathway Project was 'Clinton House', set up as a women's refuge by Lichfield Council of Churches in Lichfield. A Methodist member, John Kibble was very active in this and a Methodist deaconess was appointed warden. When this model was no longer viable, the project was taken over by the Pathway Project, a pioneering



organisation from Burntwood, founded by Kathy Coe, and which is now a key focal point for domestic abuse services in the area. Another initiative of the Council of Churches which John founded with the active participation of Rev. Paul Davis, was the Furniture Transfer Scheme, now under the auspices of The Michael Lowe Charity. Well Cottage Centre for jobseekers was another initiative of that period involving John, St Chads and Council of Churches.

Lichfield Methodist Church began supporting the Pathway Project by donating dried and tinned food which is collected during the Harvest festival services.

The Pathway Project supports women who need help with issues of domestic abuse. There are 3 refuges in our local area and the donated food is boxed into emergency food packs to provide the women, who often have children with them, support during the early days at the refuge when they may not have any money until they are able to access the benefit system.

A 24 hour helpline is available to offer advice, support and information for anyone suffering domestic abuse. The Project has a children's worker and a parenting support worker who can offer counselling and advice to those who need it. A Lifeskills training programme helps build self-confidence and teaches skills in how to apply for jobs, and every day skills such as safety, shopping and budgeting.

#### LICHFIELD LIVE AT HOME SCHEME.

The "Live at Home Scheme" had its conception in ideas discussed at the Methodist Homes Board in the autumn of 1986 & spring of 1987. Rev. Peter Mortlock, the Superintendent Minister, was a member of the Board (later he served as national Chair of the Charity), and spoke passionately about the need for support in their own homes for those aging, and his belief that Methodist Homes should be taking a lead in this support. As the Charity agreed that something should be done, Peter was told in no uncertain terms to "*put his money where his mouth was!*" - and set up a





pilot scheme in Lichfield. Thus in the autumn of 1987 support was forthcoming from the Church, Local Authority, Health Authority, G.P.s and funding Charities. The scheme was opened in 1988 with Marilyn Shears as its first Co-ordinator. Today, the Lichfield Scheme is the only remaining scheme of the first five pilots; it has expanded considerably since its first ever member, Hilda - a lady who had spent many years in psychiatric hospital following post-natal depression - was helped to enable independent living in her own flat! Today the scheme's influence and work is pivotal within the local community but perhaps, even more importantly, it remains an example to Churches and communities across the country of what is possible when Church, communities, statutory and voluntary agencies work together with good will and common purpose. Lichfield Methodist Church should feel proud of the Scheme associated with its Church life - a contemporary example of the social responsibility and social care that has always lain at the heart of Methodism. Lichfield Scheme is the parent of what has become over 50 schemes across the country now serving 10,000 members.

#### CAUSEWAY

In 2007 this Christian group for adults with learning disabilities was formed. Twelve adults together with some carers meet monthly at Church on a Friday evening and share fellowship together. At each meeting we sing simple worship songs; have a Bible story told using drama, pictures or a DVD and then do a related craft activity. There is a special prayer time in groups when the adults are invited to give their thanks and requests. One highlight has been meeting for a day's workshop with other Causeway groups. We have fun and great joy as we praise God.

#### OPEN DOOR OF HOPE

As service users we noticed a gap in mental health services in Lichfield. Several users, led by Mike Wetson, opened an alternative to fill the gap.

The group started in 2011 in our Church with just six members. Only a

short time later there were nearly fifty members, proving that there was a need for the service.

The group came together to cater for Mental Health Service Users and their carers and families to help those suffering from Bi-Polar, Depression and Schizophrenia. The aim was to share experiences and problems through a range of activities in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere.

We found it very helpful to share issues and problems with others who had had similar experiences.

One of the meetings each week was devoted to a talk from a healthcare professional about the support available. Members pay a £1 membership fee and £1 admission for each session, held three times a week at the Church.

We have attracted support from a number of local organisations, including: St. Michaels Mental Health Centre, Greenhill Health Centre, Lichfield Council of Voluntary Services, South Staffs Mental Network and Staffordshire County Council.

### HAWTHORN HOUSE

Since the 1980s a small group of Methodists, initiated by Rev Peter and Mrs Margaret Mortlock, has met monthly at Hawthorn House in Burton Old Road to visit the adult residents there who have learning disabilities, but sing and clap with gusto. We take a keyboard and sing their favourite songs, for example 'If you're happy and you know it clap your hands', 'He's got the whole world in His hands', 'When you walk through a storm' etc. The members of staff welcome us warmly, join in the celebration, and, at Christmas, ply us with mince pies!

### THE FRANCISCO ROJAS SCHOOL

Francisco Rojas opened his family home in Arequipa, Peru, to start a Christian school mostly for poor or street-children, who would not otherwise receive any education. Rev. Kath Share, supernumerary minister here, had a friend and colleague living in Devon who was linked





*The Family House (School) - La Perla, Arequipa*

to a charitable group led by Francisco Rojas' daughter Maria. The link was set up with our Shell Group, later with our Tiddlers' Toddlers group and now as a part of our Church Mission outreach. We have helped to equip the school's computer suite, its new nursery department and met other vital requests. Six of our Church members and ex-members have visited the school and were received as 'honoured guests'.



*Pupils at the Pre-School Building - La Perla, Arequipa*

Each year, a group of us travels to Devon for a thanksgiving service and to hear about the school's progress and the wonderful work being done in Christ's name within this very poor community.

### CONCERN FOR PALESTINE

In 2008 a retired minister in Lichfield Rev Warren Bardsley served with the World Council of Churches as an Ecumenical Accompanier in Palestine/Israel in Occupied East Jerusalem. The assignment involved living alongside Palestinians; monitoring human rights abuses at military checkpoints, attending house demolitions and home evictions and working closely with Israeli peace activists/United Nations organization and other groups which campaign for a just peace in the Holy Land. On his return, Warren brought these concerns to the attention of the Lichfield congregation and to Churches Together in Lichfield. A major public exhibition (Just Peace) was organized in the Church in June 2010 around which a series of meetings and seminars were held. Other activities have included concerts by Christian singer-song writers Garth Hewitt and Martin John Nicholls; a Lent course 'Messages from a Broken Land' in 2011 looking in depth at the issues and in March 2012 some members of the Church joined a pilgrimage to Palestine/Israel led by Warren and Ann Farr, who had also served with the Accompaniment Programme. We were also visited by Salim Shawamreh, a Jerusalem Palestinian whose home has been demolished and re-built several times. Out of all this, a 'Concern for Palestine' Group has been formed in Lichfield to support Palestinian Christians and others in their struggle for freedom and self-determination, to raise public awareness and to campaign for peace with justice in the land of Jesus.



### 'EXTERNAL' USERS

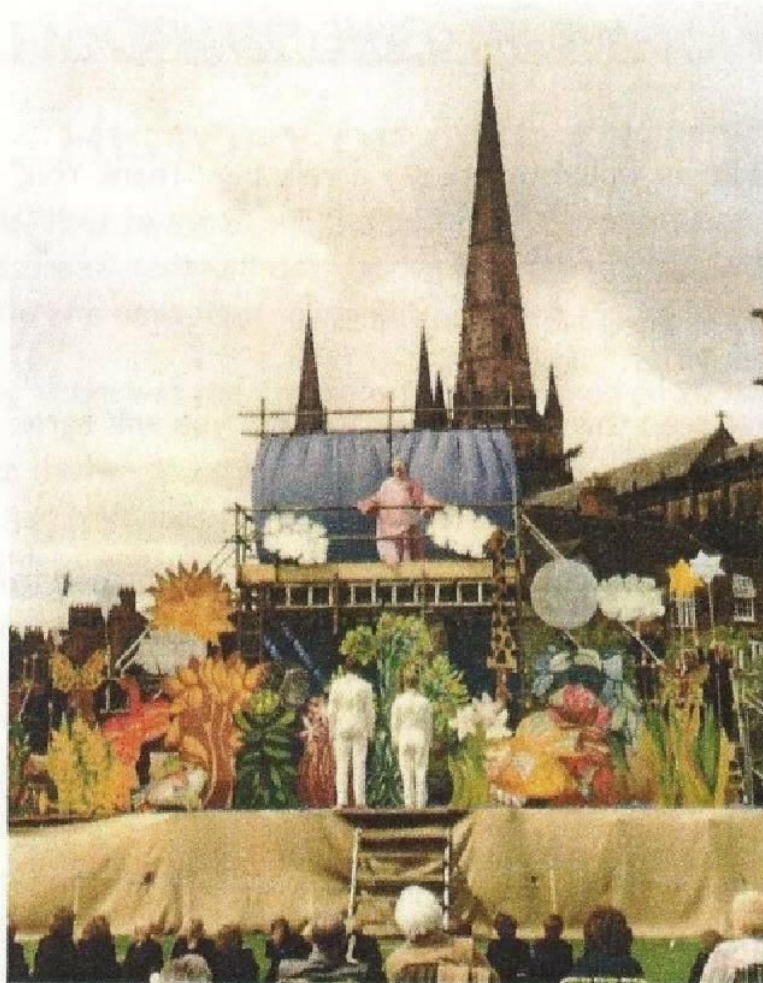
Over the years, since the new Hall came into use, a large number of groups has used the premises on a regular and/or frequent basis, including the following:-

Churches Together in Lichfield	Embroiderers' Guild
Richard Paul Singing Class	Extend Exercise Class
Lichfield Gospel Choir	Lichfield Child Minders
Lichfield Churches Criminal Justice Group	Lichfield Operatic Soc.
Lichfield Players	Parkinson's Society
Parkinson's Society Exercise Group	Rhythm Time
U3A ('University of the Third Age') Bridge Group	U3A 'Music Makers'
U3A Rummikub Group	U3A Scrabble Group
Wildfire Folk Youth Ensemble	Whisters
Spellbound Bead Company	'Kaleidoscope' Choir
Staffordshire Action for Blind Association	
Staffordshire Archaeological & Historical Society	
The Carers Association South Staffordshire	
'La Jolie Ronde' French Class for Children	

### LICHFIELD MYSTERIES

This Community Arts Project was imaginatively envisaged by Robert Leach of The University of Birmingham in 1994. The cycle of plays includes those extant from Durham, York, Wakefield, Chester and Coventry, and includes the Lichfield Fragments - perhaps the oldest surviving pieces in English - written down in about 1430. The plays have been slightly modernised to eradicate obscure passages and are put together in three parts, telling the stories from the Old Testament, the events surrounding the Nativity and finally the Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ.

The tradition of a three-year cycle developed from the concept of The Trinity; thence the original tradition of three separate stages on which each play was to be performed three times during each of the days under the canopy of the three spires of Lichfield Cathedral - the three "Ladies of the Vale".



*Lichfield Methodist Church performing "Adam and Eve" on Stowe Fields*

Lichfield Methodist Church players have performed in every Mysteries cycle to the date of writing, since its launch in 1994. We have joined the 'Flight into Egypt', blossomed with 'Adam and Eve' in the Garden of Eden, celebrated the 'Entry into Jerusalem', crossed the Red Sea in 'Exodus' and been saved from 'Noah's Flood'.

Each event has been a memorable occasion for us and also for many of our Shell Group youngsters. The very first performance attracted about 13,000 visitors to the city and will be ingrained in many hearts. 500 of us paraded through the city, around midnight, torches held high, singing 'Gloria tibi domine!' (Glory to you, O Lord!). The image of the Crucifixion hit the national broadsheets.

Long may this venture thrive!





*The Worship Area - as it was in the 1990s and in 2012.*



**£3.50**

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