

## **St John's Methodist Church Woodside Road, Amersham**

Our present church, St John's, was opened in 1960 - a bright modern building with church and rooms set on three sides of a central garden. According to the architect, no label was needed 'to proclaim that this is a community group of buildings having a religious purpose'. However, we have recently labelled ourselves with a new sign on the covered arcade! The name 'St John's' was given to the new church as some of the money for building the church came from compensation for war damage and loss of a Methodist church in St John's Square, Clerkenwell. The cross high on the church wall is intended to depict Suffering, Creation, Richness and Simplicity.



**St John's cross**

There are records of Methodist preaching in Amersham Town in 1818 and in 1839 and the chapel in the High Street opened in 1899. The earliest record of a Methodist meeting in the Amersham Common area dates from 1860, when a group met for worship (followed by tea) at a farm in Burtons Lane . Eventually the society had funds and was given land on which to build its own chapel near the junction of Chestnut Lane and New Road. Some members of the congregation who made the move to St John's in 1960 had memories of the chapel in Chestnut Lane.

In 1924 the Methodists moved again - into a new chapel on Woodside Road, not far from Plantation Road. The society was then part of the High Wycombe Circuit, which covered a large area from Bledlow to Chalfont St Giles to Chesham and Lee Common. John Wesley visited Wycombe many times between 1739 and 1789 and also preached at Chesham - there is no record of him ever preaching in Amersham.



Side view of Chapel with front entrance on right

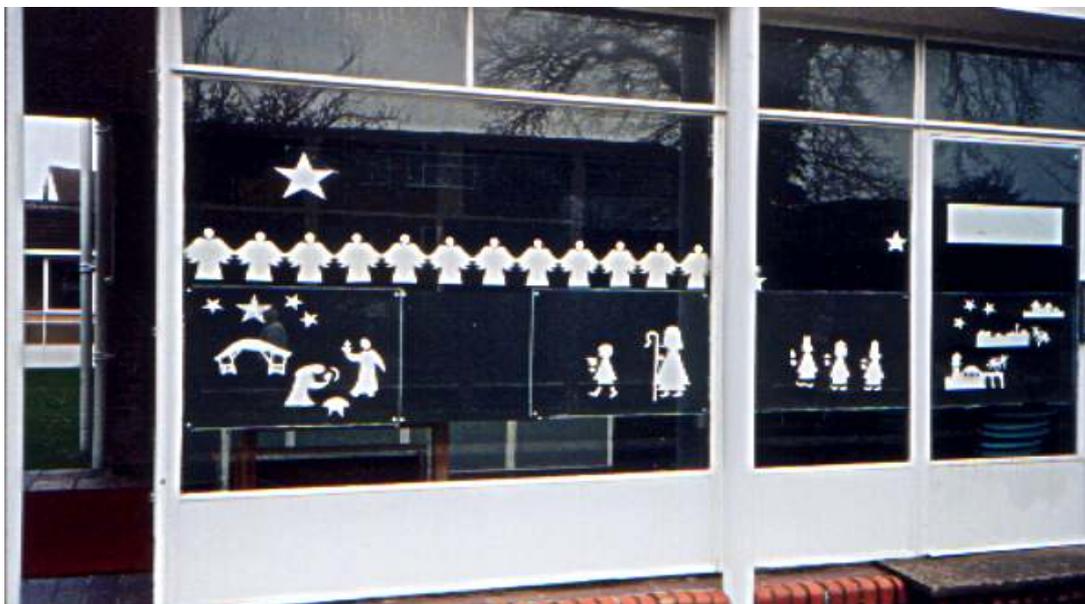
In 1951 the Amersham Common Methodists formed a new local circuit with societies in Chalfont St Giles and Chesham; this grouping was renamed the Amersham Circuit in 1962, by which time there was also a Methodist church in Little Chalfont. Rev Vaughan Tong, the current minister at St John's, is the Superintendent of the Amersham Circuit of 8 churches and also has pastoral charge of Little Chalfont.

Our building still fulfils its religious purpose as a place of Christian worship and service. We have made some modifications to the sanctuary and the meeting rooms to provide appropriate settings for the 21<sup>st</sup> century for worship and for other meetings (Monday Club, Women's Meeting) and activities. We have had two 'Open Doors' events, when we have invited friends and neighbours in to see the church and have coffee and children have tried a craft activity.



At St John's' Open Doors Sept 2003

We have also run an after-school Advent Club for 7s-11s in addition to Kites, our Sunday morning session for children.



Advent Club frieze Dec 2003

The youth hall was added in 1989 and is used extensively by the Scout Group and Guides, Brownies and Rainbows each week; playgroups, theatre groups, the Blood Transfusion Service,

various exercise classes and tuition groups make regular use of the halls and meeting rooms. Our newsletter is produced and distributed every two months.

St John's is one of the partners in the covenant of Churches on the Hill Amersham. The churches join for evening service and, twice a year, for morning service, when there is a combined choir; we support Lent House Groups, meetings of the governing bodies of the three churches, and attend study groups or any special services which any one of the churches might have during the year.



At Churches on the Hill Amersham Weekend Oct 2003

We also participate in Churches Together in Amersham in a range of work - Christian Aid, Workaid, International Student Weekend, Sycamore Club - and in the Good Friday Walk in Amersham on the Hill.