

Now we have arrived at our Golden Jubilee, and once again, we thank God for His faithfulness and love, and for His continued blessings to us.

Though the same warm fellowship exists at St. John's, many changes in people have taken place - some friends have moved away to new homes elsewhere; others have been 'promoted to Glory', and we salute them all. Each and every one contributed his or her own special gifts to the life and work of the Church, and we are richer for their stay with us. Many new folk have joined us to continue the grand succession - and so the story continues.

The pattern of activities is largely unchanged. Worship, fellowship, service and witness are still the cornerstones of our church life, and we offer our grateful thanks to all who maintain these things, day by day and year by year.

As patterns of living in the surrounding community change, the challenge for the Christian community is to be ready to adapt to these changes. We must continue to meet the needs of our congregation and community, while holding fast to the truth of the Love of God, the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

# St. John's Methodist Church

Woodside Road, Amersham, Bucks, HP6 6AJ

**'In Christ we trust'**

## 1960 Back to the future 2010

# 50th Anniversary



We hope that all who read this brochure will find it interesting and inspiring. We pray that God will continue to work amongst us and through us, and use St. John's to further His purposes of love in our neighbourhood and in the wider world.

"Our confidence is all in You, the faithful God of love."

St. John's is in the Amersham Circuit of the Methodist Church and is a member of



For more information on our anniversary programme and other church activities please see:

[www.amershammethodist.org.uk](http://www.amershammethodist.org.uk)

or telephone

Minister: Rev'd David Jebb MA, BTh. Tel: 01494 433504

Senior Steward: Ray Richards. Tel: 01494 583233



A message from our Minister  
Rev'd David Jebb MA, BTh.

Dear Friends,

As the Minister, I am delighted to celebrate with you the 50th anniversary of St. John's Church and its rich Methodist heritage. We're reminded how faithful God has been in the last 50 years, and this faithfulness will take us into the future with confidence.

May this wonderful year of celebrations be a very special start in knowing that God's love will live and grow in our hearts.

As one of the modern contemporary writers, Bridget Willard, says... 'Church isn't a building. Church is what you do. Church is who you are'.

Church is the human out working of the person of Jesus Christ. So come, let's celebrate God's love and promise at St. John's.

I look forward to meeting you sometime during the church anniversary celebrations in 2010/2011.

With every blessing,

David Jebb



## Ministers of St. John's 1960 - 2010

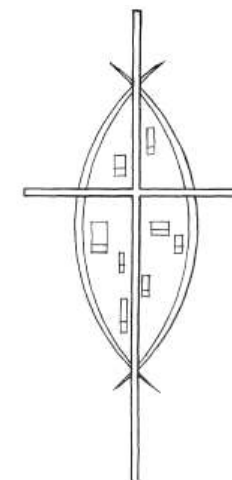
Rev'd F Leslie Henry	1956 - 61
Rev'd A Kingsley Turner	1961 - 62
Rev'd J Henry Doddrell	1962 - 67
Rev'd Herbert W Carlisle	1967 - 71
Rev'd J Wallace C Jenkins	1971 - 79
Rev'd P Guy Stanford	1979 - 86
Rev'd F Barrie Heafford	1986 - 93
Rev'd William Murphy	1993 - 96
Rev'd W L Vaughan Tong	1996 - 06
Rev'd David Jebb	2006 -

### Church Stewards 2010

Ray Richards  
Cathy Watson  
Helen George  
Ann Seymour  
Judy Rea

**Treasurer**  
Gordon Dean

**Property**  
Keith Hailey  
Ann Seymour



### 50th Anniversary Planning group

Ray Richards  
Helen George  
Ann Seymour  
Rosemary Dean  
Bill Presley  
Judy Cyster

During our anniversary year we will be supporting these charities  
Please be as generous as you can.  
Gift Aid envelopes are available.



Registered Charity No 1041574



Registered Charity No 1097940

Another project in which all the churches, including St. John's, co-operated was the inauguration of the Sycamore Club in October 1978. This meets weekly and cares for psycho-geriatric men and women. It is staffed by volunteers from all the local churches.

The International Hospitality Weekend is also shared with all the churches. Amersham families entertain overseas students from London and Buckinghamshire colleges for a weekend. This provides the students with perhaps their only opportunity to experience home life in Britain and their hosts with the chance to learn about other people's customs, culture and points of view.



### OPEN DOORS COFFEE LOUNGE

Wesley Room  
Saturdays 9.30 - 11.30am

Coffee Soft Drinks  
Tea Biscuits



In April 2005 'Open Doors' Coffee lounge began serving refreshments on Saturday mornings in the Wesley Room to the many parents, friends and children who attended the Kumon classes and Popstars dance academy.

Its popularity has grown through the years and there is always a buzzing atmosphere from the sound of people chatting and children playing and many friendships have been made.

One of our regulars said: "I think that there is a little bit of God at work somewhere here, so I want to say thank you to all those who give up their time to run the lounge.

During April 2008 members and friends of St. John's came together for a weekend of friendship, fellowship and worship. The weekend was led for us by members of the voluntary Lay Witness Movement who shared their Christian experiences with us and helped lead the worship and praise. We had meals together at church and in people's homes.

The weekend gave us encouragement for the future and brought the church family much closer together.



Although this brochure is to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the opening of St. John's Methodist Church in Woodside Road, Methodists have been worshipping in Amersham-on-the-Hill and Chesham Bois for 150 years.

The first recorded gathering of Methodists for worship in the Amersham Common area was in 1860. Mr & Mrs Grover of Loudhams Farm, Burtons Lane, allowed a small group of Primitive Methodists to meet once a month somewhere on their premises. It is not known whether worship was held indoors or in a barn, but apparently the service was always followed by a good tea!

Charles and Frank Beckley, the former a local preacher, were worshippers at these farm services, and they and the little Society made a great step in faith when it was decided to move out of the farm and into their own premises. The Society, then in the care of Rev'd James Horberry, also minister at Chalfont St Giles, built a chapel in Chestnut Lane, at the junction with New Road. The land was supplied by Sir William and Lady Elderton, who lived where Stubbs End Close is now.

**PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL 1924 - 1959**  
**Woodside Road, Amersham**



A new chapel at the Blackhorse Bridge end of Woodside Road was built and opened in 1924.



The Society grew during the Second World War with the arrival of Londoners seeking the comparative safety of Amersham.

After the war the Society purchased a wooden army hut of First World War vintage, to use as a hall, and the chapel was redecorated to be used solely as a place of worship. There was a reopening and rededication ceremony in 1951.

As there was further movement of population away from the city and suburbs into the area, thoughts of building a larger church germinated. Bucks County Council had bought land in Woodside Road nearer the centre of Amersham for a fire station and police houses, but the site proved to be too small for both projects. Negotiations between the Council and the Chesham & Chalfont St Giles Circuit Stewards, resulted in the exchange of the Woodside Road chapel site for the land adjacent to the fire station, and work on the present church and hall began.

A large amount of money for the new church buildings came from compensation for bomb damage following the destruction of the Methodist church in St. John's Square, Clerkenwell, London, and as an acknowledgement of this generosity, the new church at Amersham was to be called St John's. Further sums of money came from the Joseph Rank Trust, the local congregation and the sale of the Woodside Road chapel site .

The fundraising scheme, 'Amersham Adventure', suggested a variety of ways in which people could help, including purchasing bricks for £5 each, stones for £50 or pillars for £100.

The intention was that the building should be both a place of worship and a centre for community life. The concept of the design, by Mr Alister MacDonald, is described in the brochure for the opening: "viewed from the main road, this grouped composition in brickwork of blending colours with its paved and rose-bedded central area seen through a modern cloister, immediately draws the passer-by to contemplation. It does not need a label to proclaim that this is a community group of buildings having a religious purpose."

The symbol of Christianity, the cross, is high on the church wall. The design as a whole depicts Suffering, Creation, Richness and Sin.

The new hall was completed in the autumn of 1959. The stone laying ceremony for the church took place on Saturday 10th October. The three stones were laid by Rev'd Lawrence O. Brooker, then Chairman of the London North West District; Jayne Parsons, Margaret Theobald, and Andrew & Paul Joiner representing the Sunday School, who had worked hard to raise funds for the new premises; and Mr John Gotobe, a Trustee of the destroyed church of St. John's Square. All activities and Sunday services then took place in the hall while work on the church continued.

St. John's Church was opened by Mrs S A Comben and dedicated by Rev'd Lawrence O. Brooker on 2 April 1960 in the presence of Rev Dr Eric Baker, then President of the Methodist Conference, who preached the sermon. In the hall after the service Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher, the Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, extended his greetings to the new church.

The minister presiding over the move "up the road", and an interim period in premises generously made available by the Free Church, was Rev'd F. Leslie Henry, he had encouraged members in their great venture and had worked energetically to steer the plans and project to completion. He was also the first minister to live in the Woodside Road manse, which had been purchased the previous year.

A feature of early youth work was an annual summer camp at Seaford Sussex, This was initiated by Rev'd Wallace Jenkins and his wife Freddie for the youngsters of St . John's and Little Chalfont Methodist churches. About 30 youngsters and half a dozen helpers would stay at a Methodist church (first at Seaford, and later at Lancing) sleeping on the floor and participating to a wide range of activities and worship. People still talk of the fun they had, the way that every age-group took part, also of the wonderful spirit that was at these camps. St John's still knows that youth work is important and the Youth Hall hosts a substantial group of Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Guides and Brownies.

The Young Wives Club held its inaugural meeting in December 1959 and welcomed its first speaker in January 1960. In 1971 it was renamed Monday Club and opened to all women, Membership is not confined to St. John's and other women including from other Amersham churches, have joined in its meetings and activities. The Monday Club celebrates its own 50th anniversary this year too.