

St John's Methodist Church
Amersham

1960 - 1981





The world has seen many changes in the twenty-one years since St John's was opened. St. John's itself has experienced many of these changes, in personnel, in activities, and in many other ways too.

But the vision which led to the building of our premises still glows brightly, and the faithful and loving service rendered by so many over the years is still being continued by those who are the present Members.

So - we "come of age"! We thank God for so many blessings in the past, and we brace ourselves to accept the new responsibilities which devolve upon those who attain their majority.

We hope that all who read this Brochure will find it interesting and inspiring, and 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 immediate neighbourhood and in the wider world.

"Our confidence is all in
Thee, The faithful God of
love."

A handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "P Guy Stanford". The signature is written over a horizontal line.

P Guy Stanford
3 May 1981

ST JOHN'S METHODIST CHURCH, AMERSHAM 1960 - 1981

Although this brochure is to commemorate the twenty-first anniversary of the opening of St John's Methodist Church in Woodside Road, Methodist people have been worshipping in Amersham on the Hill and Chesham Bois for over a century.

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 bam, 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 James Horberry, also minister of 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 now is.

Miss Winifred Bryant, who like her father, Mr Owen Bryant, was both Sunday School teacher and Sunday School Superintendent, provided memories of the chapel in Chestnut Lane: mighty prayers were offered up in worship and a mighty draught swept into the chapel when old Mr Woodbridge opened the door just before the sermon so that any passer-by might hear it. The chapel was redecorated in 1913 at the cost of £30 and the first circuit assessment was £2.10s.0d. During this period the Sisterhood began to meet at Mrs Bryant's home in Plantation Road. Some of the present members of St John's worshipped at the chapel in Chestnut Lane. Miss Alice Hoar was taken by her father to the services and Mrs Hall attended with her husband. Miss Ivy Wheeler went to Sunday School at Chestnut Lane where the children had to sit through their lesson on backless benches.

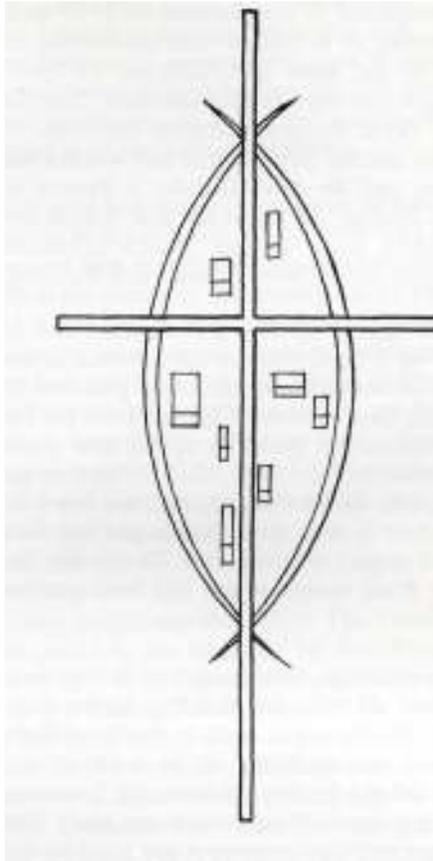
Miss Bryant also remembered an aspidistra on the church table which moved, along with the Society and their minister, Rev Harold Ogden, to a new chapel at the Blackhorse Bridge end of Woodside Road in 1924. This chapel was opened on 30 October 1924 by Mr F Nash JP, with Rev Ernest J T Bagnall, minister from 1893-97, as the preacher. Purchasing the land and building the chapel put a tremendous financial burden on the Woodside Road Society, and many special efforts were held to pay off their debts. There were other problems: the stoke-hole flooded, the slow-combustion stoves belched smoke,

the roof began to spread and the walls to crack. The congregation was, however, constantly encouraged by the text above the platform: "The love of Christ constraineth us".

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 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 on 6 October 1951, conducted by the minister and Circuit Superintendent, Rev Wallace J Heaton, assisted by Rev T J Welch, with an address by Rev Cecil F Walpole.

As there was further movement of population away from the city and suburbs into the area, thoughts of building a larger church germinated. Buckinghamshire 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, Mr Cecil Cole, Mr Stanley Comben and Mr Donald Kingston, 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. All meetings in connection with building of the new church were held at the house of Mr & Mrs Carl Belton. The first turf was cut by Mr Carl Belton, Mr Percy Hall, Mr George Cook and Rev Leslie Henry, closely watched by Mr Comben. 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 sale of the Woodside Road chapel site and from the local congregation. The fund raising 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 each.

The intention was that the building should be both a place of worship and a centre for community life. In the brochure for the opening, the concept of the design, by Mr Alister MacDonald, is described: "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, a design as a whole depicts Suffering, Creation, Richness and Sim Mr MacDonald explained the design in greater detail in a letter to resident: "The six golden coloured plates placed irregularly are in ten signify riches, spiritual rather than earthly. The crossed wires repress tangle of life and the curved flat members, life itself."

The new hall was Completed in the Autumn of 1959 and opened by Mrs C A Cole, still a member of St John's. The stonelaying ceremony for the church took place on the same day, Saturday October 10. The three stones were laid by Rev Lawrance O Brook'er, then Chairman of the London North West District; Jayne Parsons, Margaret Theobald, Andrew and 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. The building contractors for the whole project were Comben and Wakeling Ltd.

St John's Church was opened by Mrs S A Comben and dedicated by Rev Lawrance 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, Bart, 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 F Leslie Henry, who 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.

The total cost of the buildings, furnishings and fittings was nearly £40,000. The freehold site cost £1,600, the building works £31,441.13s.3d, the furnishings £4,294.0s.7d. The organ, built by Frederick Rothwell & Sons Ltd and specially prepared for additions to be made at a later date, cost £2,069.8s.lid. This, and the Society's faith in the future was a sound investment. The building has been virtually unaltered since 1960, but has been enhanced by gifts from individual members and from families in memory of loved ones. Panelling has been added to the front of the pulpit and the organ completed by Henry Willis Ltd. The small room behind the hall was comfortably furnished in 1977 and is called the Sholl Room in appreciation of the legacy which made redecoration possible. Plans to improve the vestibule and porch are now being considered and it is hoped that the alterations will be completed in time for the 21st anniversary. The premises have been well cared for by the Trustees and the Property Committee and, in the early years, by Mr Cole. There is now a rota of helpers for sweeping and polishing to assist the regular cleaner. The time at Woodside Road chapel has not been forgotten. The font, the brass vases and the altar chairs came from the chapel, and the former communion table is now in the vestibule.

The congregation at St John's soon took advantage of the increased amount of space available for all activities. Many people besides those particularly mentioned devoted time and effort to all aspect of the church's work.

The Young Wives Club had held its inaugural meeting in December 1959 and welcomed its first speaker in January 1960. The club, since 1971 called the Monday Club and open to all women, celebrates its own 21st anniversary on 9 March 1981, and some early members are still attending the meetings. Membership is not confined to St John's and women from other Amersham churches have joined in its meetings and activities.

The Sunday School grew and during the ministry of Rev A Kingsley Turner in 1961 started meeting in the morning. At the same time an era came to an end with the retirement of Miss Bryant as Superintendent and the appointment of Mr Alan Swindells as her successor. Eventually the 11-14 age group became so large that the 11 years old, in the care of Mrs Eileen Yunnie and Mr Ray Richards, had to move into one of the barn buildings, previously an open carthouse, on the community centre site. There, as Mrs Yunnie wrote at the time, "in spite of cooker, sink, weaving looms, we have a worship table — blue cloth — cross — open Bible — offertory bags — flowers, and sometimes a picture of Christ and a globe of the world." All the Senior Department later moved into the St John's Ambulance Hall, which they still use each Sunday morning.

Work amongst young people also flourished. The Youth Club was at various times during this period in the hands of Mr Ron Smith, Mr John Harding, Mr Ronald Fenn and Mr Ernie Joiner, who still teaches in the Senior Department and helps at the Junior Club. Members of the Youth Club attended the MAYC London Weekend, which more recent groups of young people from St John's have also found an exciting and exhausting experience. Later, the Youth Club closed for a time, but was restarted in 1972 and led for several years by Mr Monty Croissant. The Youth Fellowship met first in Mr and Mrs Pearn's home and then, in 1965, at Mr & Mrs Stirling's home after evening service. Successive groups of young people have been grateful for the hospitality of their leaders.

Annual garden parties and Christmas bazaars helped to pay off the debt on the new building, achieved in November 1963, and to boost general church finances. The Ladies Working Party, started by Mrs Constance Rees, spent many hours sewing and knitting in preparation for these events. The garden parties were then held at Mr and Mrs Comben's home and always included a special attraction for the children. One year there were rides on a miniature railway and one member thought he would volunteer to be in charge of this the following year. Sadly the railway was abandoned in favour of donkey rides, and Mr Jim Jackson found himself spending the afternoon looking after some rather stubborn animals.

THE 21ST ANNIVERSARY WEEK-END MAY 2 – 3 – 4, 1981

SATURDAY, MAY 2ND:

From 10.00a.m.-DISPLAY OF
FLOWER & ART ARRANGEMENTS
IN THE CHURCH Theme:
"ANNIVERSARIES"

Coffee will be served from 10.30 a.m.

* * * * *

EXHIBITIONS OF ART, PHOTOGRAPHS, PRESS CUTTINGS,
ETC.

7 p.m.
SOCIAL EVENING - TILL 10.00 p.m.
Come & meet your old and new friends.

"

SUNDAY, MAY 3RD

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY SERVICES AT 11.00
a.m. & 6.30 p.m.

You are invited to a Buffet Lunch, after
morning Worship, at which we shall
share in the 21st Birthday Cake.



MONDAY, MAY 4TH

CHURCH FAMILY RAMBLE: 10.00 - 4.00 p.m.

We hope that you will join us.
If you don't like walking! meet the others
for a picnic at Marlow

*We 'll praise Him for all that is past
And trust Him for all that's to come"*

When Rev Kingsley Turner became Chairman of the London North West District in 1962, Rev J Henry Doddrell succeeded him as minister at St John's and as Superintendent of the reorganised and renamed Amersham Circuit. During his first year Mr Doddrell suggested that a party from the Harlesden Cripples Guild (now the Shaftesbury Guild) from his previous circuit might enjoy a day in the country and a visit was arranged. St John's has continued to entertain a party from the Guild each year since then. A picnic lunch is enjoyed in the garden at "Raans", home of Mr and Mrs Dick Woodley, and tea is prepared and served by members of St John's in the church hall.

Mr Doddrell encouraged St John's members to establish links with other churches in the neighbourhood. The church was represented on the Chiltern Council of Churches and also participated in the Anglican/Methodist Conversations, the first series of many discussions on church unity. The churches worked together on the "People Next Door" campaign and out of this grew the local churches committee, an important ecumenical forum where joint action is discussed and planned.

At St John's itself activities for young people expanded. The first Brownie pack opened in 1963, followed by the Guide company in 1964 and later a second Brownie pack. These complemented the Cub pack and Scout troop which were already in being.

In 1963 Mrs Olive Dee and several members performed an Easter play, "Thirty Pieces of Silver". This gave a new dimension to Holy Week and a Drama Group was formed to prepare for the following Easter. They continued with Easter productions and other presentations for several years after that.

The scope of St John's concerns was again widened when the Sisterhood was urged to include regular meetings for Women's Work in their programmes. Mrs Spooner reported to the Leaders' Meeting in 1963 "what a great help it was to have the Women's Work missionary meeting once a month." This is still the pattern each month for the Thursday afternoon meetings. Both Mrs Spooner and Mrs Hall have been made Life Presidents of the Sisterhood in gratitude for the many years of service they have given to the meeting.

Mepibers were kept informed of all aspects of St John's work in a bi-monthly newsletter which was published for several years until 1969.

St John's has welcomed many visiting preachers and speakers over the past twenty-one years. Among these, in 1964, was Rev Kenneth Greet, now President of Conference, who came to a circuit Christian Citizenship rally at the church. In January 1965 Dr W S Lloyd Webber, now Director of Music at Westminster Central Hall, gave the official opening recital on the organ after its completion.

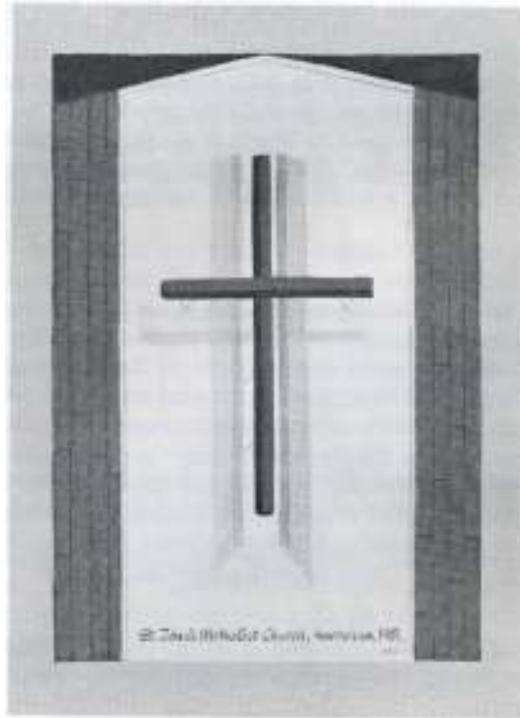
Rev Herbert W Carlisle came to Amersham in 1967 and his pastoral care and preaching were greatly appreciated by the congregation. In 1969, through a member's contact with the headmaster of a school in Paderborn, St John's was asked to entertain a party of German schoolchildren to give them the opportunity of experiencing family life in this country. The Leaders' Meeting readily agreed to this and Mr Dick Woodley found hosts for everyone in the party. Some church members are still in touch with friends from Paderborn, although Amersham's main contact in Germany is with its twin town, Bensheim.

During Mr Carlisle's ministry the question of the Stewardship of Time, Talents Treasure was discussed by the Leaders' Meeting and in 1971 the decision was made to investigate possible methods of putting this into practice.

By the time Rev J Wallace C Jenkins came to Amersham in September 1971, the church had agreed to adopt the Stewardship system and Mr Fred Hammond was appointed Director of the proposed campaign. Mr Jenkins explained the implications of Stewardship in the first edition of the revised newsletter in January 1972: "Ours is a lively church, a growing church, with teeming opportunities around us to present a Christian challenge to others. But it is easy to be a passenger in such a team, to enjoy coming to a full church for a service, but to let others do the front-line job. . . The Stewardship Campaign we are to hold in March is a call to many of us to a more costly commitment for Christ." During the campaign members pledged to use their talents and time in a variety of ways, serving both the church and the community.

The Finance Committee has found it much easier to plan ahead as a result of receiving the pledges of treasure. Circuit assessments continue to rise: in February 1963 the assessment was £163.15s, by September £201.3s; in 1971 it was £384.50 and in 1980, before the introduction of the Mission & Service Fund, it was £5,115. Overseas and home missions and other connexional funds are supported from the pledged income. Garden parties held at 'Raans" and sales of work have been organised to raise funds for several local charities and special appeals. In 1980 events were arranged to help fund a Hospice at Berkhamsted, to contribute to Stoke Mandeville Hospital's building appeal, and to add to Amersham's total collection for Christian Aid.

Stewardship renewals have been held at regular intervals since 1972 and have challenged members to review their commitment to Jesus Christ and His world.



The commitment is visible: week by week faithful service is given by all those involved in Junior Church, class meetings, the intercession group, women's meetings, youth clubs and uniformed organisations. Our worship is enriched by the choir, led by Mrs Winifred Kingston since 1967; by the Junior Choir, restarted within the last few years, by the organists and the orchestra, which was started in 1979 and is now a flourishing group, and by St John's local preachers, including Miss Helen Smith, who went on the Plan in 1934. Miss Betty Smith has now completed 50 years as a Junior Church teacher and it was a special moment for her when the first grandchild of one of her early pupils was entered on St John's Cradle Roll. Members of the church are reminded of the wider aspects of Christian concern at meetings for Home and overseas missions, at discussions on topics of social responsibility, by joining other churches in work for the Bible Society, for Christian Aid and Vellore Hospital, South India, and by supporting the World Development Movement in its call for justice for people suffering poverty or oppression. The children make their contribution to the wider work of the church by collecting their JMA money each Sunday.

Successive Church Stewards have prepared the church for worship for all occasions ranging from quiet winter evening services to Harvest Festivals and Junior Church Anniversaries, when extra seats, tables for vegetables and platforms for performers have to be found. In 1974 the Stewards and the Junior Church staff prepared the car park for an open-air Harvest Festival celebration, using straw bales to form a cross in the centre of the open space. The weather remained fine for the whole morning.

An invaluable contribution to the church's worshipping life is made by the Poor Stewards, including Miss Alice Hoar, who reverently prepare the communion table, and by all who arrange the altar flowers.

At Sunday services and in class meetings of St John's has constantly sought to build up its own community in faith and fellowship. In March 1979 an event was arranged with this specific aim in mind. A Church Family Weekend was organised, with the guidance of the then Chairman of the District, Rev R L J Kaye, to provide members with the opportunity to meet each other in an informal atmosphere. On the Saturday morning small groups of people worked together to interpret the theme of the weekend, "Believing, Belonging, Behaving", in a dramatic, visual or musical form. Other groups studied Bible readings and prayers on the same theme for use in worship. After the Sunday morning service, which had included a session in discussion groups, everyone was entertained to lunch in members' homes.

In December 1980, over fifty St John's people shared in preparing a Christmas concert. The full house was delighted by a Victorian melodrama and individual items, and challenged by a presentation of the Nativity in a modern idiom.

St. John's has continued to strengthen its links with other Christian communities. Naturally there are links with the churches in the Amersham Circuit. In 1966 St John's Choir, with their organist at that time, Mr John Duncombe, sang at the Ascension Day meeting to celebrate the centenary of the Methodists Chapel in Chalfont St Giles. A more recent feature has been a choral service on Palm Sunday when singers from all the churches enrich worship in preparation for Easter. Singers and non-singers met and sang together in a barn at Lee Common in June 1980 to celebrate 200 years of the Methodist Hymn Book. The young people of the circuit meet at various events during the year, including a special youth service, a quiz evening and a weekend at Green Park, Aston Clinton. A circuit Women's Fellowship Rally is held each year, and the Monday Club share a Christmas party with the women's meeting at the Amersham High Street church.

St John's is still represented on the Amersham and Chesham Bois Churches Committee which has expanded over the years to include all the Christian communities in the area and which continues to bring Christians of all denominations closer in understanding. The twice-yearly International Hospitality Weekend is shared with all the churches following "People Next Door". 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.

People of all the churches worked together at Easter 1977 when a pageant depicting "The Way to the Cross" was presented in St Michael's forecourt, Sycamore Road. This was an unforgettable experience for performers, choir, backroom helpers and spectators, and a witness of faith to the people of Amersham. Other presentations by the Amersham churches have included a further performance of the Easter pageant, a Christmas presentation, and a lively production, in March 1980, of "Joseph and The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat".

Another project in which all the churches, including St John's, co-operated was the inauguration of the Sycamore Club in October 1978. This weekly meeting cares for psycho-geriatric men and women under the guidance of the Department of Mental Health for the Elderly and is voluntarily staffed by members of all the local churches. Members of St John's meet other elderly people in the area when they visit the Croft on a Sunday afternoon each month for a short service of prayer and favourite hymns.

Ecumenical housegroups have been meeting for about four years for Bible study and discussion; during the session of Lent 1980 there was a series of meetings on the Work of the Holy Spirit, led by four of the local clergy, who also meet regularly for prayer and fellowship. Another series of meetings is planned for Lent 1981. The local congregations combine for worship during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and Christian Aid Week, holding the services in a different church in turn.

Encouraged by Mr Jenkins, St John's has now established a warm and friendly relationship with the Methodist Church at Lancaster Road, Netting Hill, West London. Travelling has been in both directions. Young people from St. John's helped to redecorate part of the Netting Hill premises, and all ages have been to London to share in a day of discussion on work and worship. It was an exciting time when a party of visitors from Netting Hill arrived at St John's in August 1977 to use the hall and rooms as a holiday base for a week. Facilities at St John's, the King George V Playing Fields and Amersham Swimming Pool were well used that week, which included a very wet day's

coach outing to Woburn and culminated in a concert featuring the Netting Hill holidaymakers as star performers. The lively tambourine playing and gospel singing were new experiences for most of the Amersham audience. Two further parties have spent a week at St John's and friendships have been made and renewed on each occasion. More importantly, St John's has learned something of the delights and difficulties of living in a multi-cultural and multi-racial community.

Mr and Mrs Jenkins' farewell party for the whole church in the Summer of 1979 was a Ceilidh (country dance evening) in the Manse garden. This was in the lively spirit of their time in Amersham memorable for their energetic commitment in all spheres of St John's work, from joining the intercession group to playing "crocker" with the Junior Church children.

Rev P Guy Stanford has been minister at St John's since September 1979. He is, like his predecessors, Circuit Superintendent and shares the pastoral care with his colleagues, Rev Marjorie Hopp at Chesham and Rev Margaret Lawson of the United Church at Dean Way, Chalfont St Giles.

Mr Stanford's congregation at St John's frequently includes new arrivals to the area: the church has a very mobile population. At present the membership numbers 200, but many more friends are involved in some way in St John's services and other activities. Mr Stanford has continued and encouraged many St John's traditions, including the annual Junior Church holiday on the South coast; the newsletter, which reached its 100th edition in January 1981; and carol singing for the National Children's Home in the week before Christmas, which in 1958 raised £30.10s and in 1980, £328. The House-to-House Collection for the National Children's Home has also been faithfully organised each year. In 1958 the total for this was £57.9s.6d. and in 1980 the collection amounted to £804. He has introduced St John's to new experiences: the 1980 General Church Meeting was well attended after the congregation had shared Sunday worship and an informal lunch together: a recording was made of the morning service in October 1980 for Radio Oxford, and broadcast in November; an informal monthly evening meeting has been started to provide a "Meeting Point" for men and women of all ages; and has welcomed the suggestion that a service of Holy Communion is held each month on a Wednesday morning so that the community has another opportunity to meet in worship and fellowship.

The challenge for the future is that as patterns of living in the surrounding community change, the Christian community must be ready to adapt to meet the needs of its congregation and its neighbours, 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. Echoing the words used of the new building in 1960 as the present members of St John's prepare for the 21st anniversary, perhaps the prayer should be to ensure that St John's church never needs a label to proclaim its purpose and its people's care for each other, their neighbours and the one world-family.

At the Amersham Manse 1960-81

Rev & Mrs F Leslie Henry	1956-61
Rev & Mrs A Kingsley Turner	1961-62
Rev & Mrs J Henry Doddrell	1962-67
Rev & Mrs Herbert W Carlisle	1967-71
Rev & Mrs J Wallace C Jenkins	1971 -79
Rev & Mrs P Guy Stanford	1979-

St John's Church Officers

Church Stewards

Roger Cloke Ernest
de Boos Horace
Noble Audrey
Pontin Katharine
Short Ronald
Armitage

Property Committee

James Jackson (Secretary)
Ernest Joiner
Michael Thewlis
Gordon Dean
Ronald Armitage
Jack Mead
Wendy Hartley
Roy Bickerton
Ralph Toon
Ronald Pontin

Postscript-1985.

Another four years have rolled away since this brochure, celebrating our 21st Birthday, was printed. Now we have arrived at our Silver 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 personnel have taken place; some former 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 the 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 key-notes of our life, and we record our grateful thanks to all who maintain these things, day by day and year by year.

Two particular features deserve special mention; one ecumenical, the other, domestic. We had high hopes, in the Spring of 1984, for the formation of a Local Ecumenical Project, in which we should have been drawn into closer cooperation with our three neighbouring Churches - St. Michael's, St. Leonard's and the Free Church, but, unfortunately, one of the Churches failed to reach the required number of votes in favour. However, our relationships remain unimpaired and as close as ever, and we look forward to further working together in the coming days.

On the domestic front, we are involved in extensive repairs to the fabric of the building, part of which has been completed, and part still to be done. And, most exciting of all, a decision has been taken to begin to raise funds for the construction of a Youth Hall on the spare piece of land to the rear of the car park. Some £35,000 will be needed, but we believe that this is not beyond our reach. The reason for the scheme is the great expansion in our youth work - particularly in the uniformed organisations, two hundred members of which come on to our premises every week. The extra space is urgently needed, (as are funds!) and we have been thrilled by an initial gift of £1000 from the Scouts and Guides, raised by a most successful "Gang Show" at the end of last year. If everyone follows their example, the dream may become reality sooner than we think!

The Church Members and friends continue to exercise a loving ministry in many different spheres in the community, and, as the Circuit Church, St. John's continues to support and encourage the work of all the Churches and the wider witness which they seek to make. Response to the needs of today's world is not overlooked either, and generous support is given not only to emergency appeals, but to the unending work of overseas and home missions, and to the work of the other Divisions of the Church.

St. John's is in good heart, and as we reach another milestone in the Church's story, we recall the words of an old hymn which look both to the past and to the future:

"The days of old have dowered us
With gifts beyond all praise: Our
Father, make us faithful To serve
the coming days."

St. John's Officers.

Church Stewards:

Alasdair McGuffog
David Lambert
Patrick Peters
Margaret Welch
Sylvia Parrott Ian
Sawyer Ronald
Armitage.

Property Committee:

James Jackson (Secretary)
Ernest Joiner
Michael Thewlis
Gordon Dean
Ronald Armitage
Jack Mead
Wendy Hartley
Ray Bickerton
Ronald Pontin
Teresa Hailey
Keith Hailey
Helen Smith
Ian Sawyer.