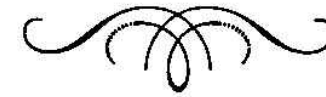


Archivist

FOLLY
METHODIST CHURCH



1887 - 1987



A

Souvenir Booklet

Celebrating



100 YEARS



of

FOLLY METHODIST CHURCH

(1887 - 1987)



**containing a brief history
and letters and greetings from friends.**



INTRODUCTIONS

A birthday is an excellent reason for a celebration - whether we are still counting or not! A Centenary, of course, is extra-special by any reckoning, and deserves appropriate applause. How glad we all are to express our thankfulness to God for a century of Christian worship and preaching at the Folly Methodist Chapel.

Many will be able to recall happy and meaningful events that are a precious part of its history. Lives have been transformed and strengthened by a fellowship changed by Christ's presence and directed by his Holy Spirit. A great deal has been recorded over the years, but most of the record concerns spiritual events that cannot be translated into words.

The London (North-West) District of Methodism sends greetings to the friends at Folly and joins in the chorus of thanksgiving to God for this hundred-year ministry.

May this celebration, enriched by memories, inspire us to go forward with courage and confidence.

Stanley K. CHESWORTH
Chairman of the District



A church centenary is an occasion of great joy. All of us in the Harpenden Circuit share with you and rejoice with you.

No-one can read the story of Folly Methodist Church or share its life without recognising the great debt that is owed to those that built it a century ago, and who across the years have served it. Times and membership change, but through its life many have received blessing as people have met in worship and fellowship. Names and faces come to mind - and we give thanks to God.

But more than that - our gratitude is to God for Jesus Christ the church's one foundation. It is in the face of Jesus that the glory of God is revealed. It is in the name of Jesus that we live and

move and have our being. It is by the spirit of Jesus that we are led onward.

May the Lord be with you all.

Michael WEARING
Superintendent Minister, Harpenden Methodist Church



One hundred and not out! A quite impressive period of worship, witness and service for the Kingdom of God, by any standard, especially taking into account the changing fortunes of our church family over these years, in a geographical area which is betwixt and between...! We share the life of Harpenden on one side, and Wheathampstead on the other, a fact which in itself often brings divided loyalties - especially on the ecumenical scene.

We pay our tribute at this time of celebration to all those who have gone before us, into whose labours we have entered, and would also offer a special acknowledgement to those who in these more difficult times carry on the good work in a period of challenge and change. A small but committed group offering dedication to the cause of the Kingdom in a variety of practical ways. A Remnant in the biblical sense!


We are grateful for the support of many who, although belonging to other churches and districts, from time to time encourage us in a variety of ways, without whose interest we might find ourselves in dire need. Our appeals for aid never go unanswered, and we really do appreciate all the help received.

The future reaches out before us, and our aims and object remain the same - to be His witnesses and proclaim the Good News in word and deed. In a world of change this responsibility is changeless.


Greetings and God's richest blessing to all at The Folly.

George M. KENNEY
Minister

FOLLY METHODIST CHURCH



A Brief History



* * In the Beginning... * *

Methodism at the FOLLY really began in 1885 with open-air services in the summer, and in the warehouse of the local hat factory during the winter months. These were conducted by preachers from Luton who travelled by pony and trap.

During these early years funds were raised by a few families to enable a permanent place of worship to be built. Prominent among these early worshippers were members of the Smith, French and Munt families. Their descendents have been members through the years, and some are in office at the present time.

* * The First Building * *

The church was built by Messrs. Goldhawk of Kimpton and opened on the 17th of October 1887. It was known then as the Folly Wesleyan Mission. The building was one large room with accomodation for approximately 100 people. Services were held on Sunday afternoons and evenings. The Sunday School met in the mornings, its first teachers being Charles Smith, Henry Smith, Thomas Latchford and John French.

The church was in the Luton Waller St Circuit which supplied the weekly preachers. The worshippers in those far off days had to endure the discomfort of hard wooden forms for seating, not to mention the often smoky coke stove which supplied the heating.

* * The Church Hall * *

In 1928 the 7 trustees decided that a seperate hall was needed for the Sunday School. Mr W.J.Hunt, the Trust Secretary, undertook to raise the money, and in his capable hands the target sum was soon reached. Donations were received from Joseph Rork, George Bernard Shaw, Sir William and Lady Beach-Thomas, and Mr and Mrs H.F.Kemp of Mackeyre End, plus members and local residents. The hall was built by local builders, Messrs Smith Bros who were church members. The Sunday School scholars also helped in the fund raising by 'purchasing' a brick for the sum of 5 shillings. These were laid by the scholars at the main Stone-laying Ceremony on the 14th of April 1928. The hall was opened on the 8th of June that year by Mrs H.F.Kemp. The vestry and kitchen was also added at this time.

* * Sunday School Expansion * *

The Sunday School then moved into the new hall. The Superintendent at the time was Mr Edgar Gray. Now that the Senior School was using the hall, a Primary Dept. was started and met in the church under the leadership of Miss Edie French who was previosly a teacher in the Senior School. At her retirement she had completed 60 years service in the two departments.

* * Licenced Premises! * *

Early in 1933 a Registrars Licence was granted to allow marriages to take place at the Folly Church. The first wedding solemnised was that of a previous Sunday School teacher, Miss Elsie Gray, and Mr Stanley Taylor.

*** * Modernisation * ***

The Church was modernised in the mid 1930's, forms were removed and replaced by pine pews, a new communion table was given by Mr Wm Pearce, two matching chairs were the gift of Mr Charles Smith. The new pine pulpit and communion rail were also installed. Then the old coke stove was removed and both the church and hall were supplied with central heating. New windows replaced the original frames and the external walls were pebble-dashed and the interior walls plastered. A porch to the church entrance was also built. Two stained-glass windows in memory of former church members and local men lost in the 1914-18 War were also added. The second window had a plaque added later on recording four service men and a nurse who were lost in the Second World War.

It was after all these alterations that an ecumenical service was held in which the Rev. A.M.Baird-Smith, Rector of St Helen's Church of England, took part. The occasion was so unusual for those days that it was considered to be of national interest and an announcement of the event was included in the B.B.C. 9 o'clock News that evening.

*** * The Golden Jubilee * ***

The Golden Jubilee was celebrated in 1937. Many former preachers were present, some of whom had attended the opening of the church. To commemorate the Jubilee a new room for the Primary Dept of the Sunday School was built opening in 1938.

In 1938 Mr and Mrs C.A.Deaville came to live locally and became members of Folly. They held office as stewards and Sunday School and Youth Club leaders for many years, giving unstintingly of their time and service.

*** * Circuits & Curtains, Crosses & Clocks! * ***

The new Harpenden Circuit was formed in 1942 with Rev.C.Claud Mayes as Superintendent and Rev.Francis J.Woods as our minister and so our long connection with the Luton circuits was severed.

More changes came about in 1968. Blue velvet curtains were hung behind the communion table, these and also the electric clock, the pulpit fall and a New English Bible were all gifts of members and church friends. Above the curtains an oak cross was hung and this was made by Mr George Gray. The old American organ was sold in 1970 and replaced by a new electronic organ at a cost of £268.

*** * After the Flood! * ***

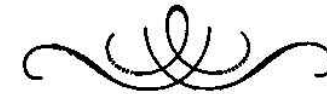
Extreme weather conditions in February 1985 caused the heating system to become frozen, and the pipes and radiators burst when the thaw came. The Church Council decided that a completely new system with frost protection thermostats should be installed. This work was carried out and completed in December 1985. Then the electric wiring was declared unsafe and had to be renewed. All this sadly depleted our cash reserves. Funds were raised by coffee mornings, garden evenings and donations etc., helped by interest free loans and an insurance payment.

During 1986 the church, vestry and cloakroom were redecorated and new blinds were given and fitted to the church windows. Early in 1987 the renewal of the premises was completed by the redecoration of the Primary room, kitchen and hall. All was now ready for our Centenary Celebrations. All this work was done voluntarily by George Jumont, Dick Lowe, Les Smith and Ethel Deaville, all church members, and members of the 'Defty' family.

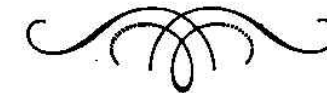
GREETINGS & LETTERS



Many friends of Folly Methodist Church were asked to write something for this Centenary booklet. On the following pages will be found greetings and letters from:



- Rev. The LORD SOPER of Kingsway
Rev. Francis J. WOODS
Rev. Roy WEDGEWOOD
Rev. Bryan RIPPIN
Kathleen & Geoff HAWKRIDGE
Rev. David WILLIE
Rev. Kenneth & Mrs Catherine GARRARD
Rev. Cliff WARREN
Rev. Bill DAVIES
Rev. David MULLINS



*** * And Now! CENTENARY YEAR! * ***

As we enter our centenary year we only have 23 members, the majority of whom are elderly. Those holding office at the present time are as follows:

- Mrs E.Deaville -Church Steward and Treasurer
Mrs E.Defty -Communion Steward
Mr J.Jumont -Communion Steward
Mr A.Lowe -Church Secretary
Mrs J.Howard -Missions Secretary
Mr L.C.Smith -Organist (for 60 years)
Mr J.Howard -Assistant Organist.



As we celebrate let us remember all those who have witnessed and faithfully served in God's work here. With the strength and power of our Lord, and the example given by those who have gone on before us, we continue in our endeavor to discern the will of God for the FOLLY CHURCH, and with his help to carry it out.



I am glad to offer a word of greeting for the souvenir booklet. For many years now it has been my privilege to visit the Folly and I treasure there my friendship with Claude and Ethel. I knew that Ethel would carry on after the sad death of her husband and, in commending this souvenir booklet, I pay my tribute to all who have made Folly a centre of friendship and service.

Rev. The Lord Soper of Kingsway



It is 45 years since my Ministry began in the newly-formed Harpenden Circuit. Those dark war days carry personal memories, for in 1943 Edna and I began life together in our first home at Batford. Joy and sorrow are mingled in thanksgiving for the courage and faith of those to whom it was a privilege to minister.

Heartiest congratulations and good wishes for your Centenary. I hope that your Celebrations will bring inspiration and encouragement. These are difficult days for the Church and we face a harder task than our forefathers did 100 years ago. But the offer of the Gospel is as relevant as ever, both to meet the needs of men and women, and the problems of the more complex society in which we now live.

May you keep the flag flying and the faith sure.

Francis J. WOODS
Minister (1942-46)

I am glad to have this opportunity of sending greetings in your Centenary Year and, more than that, my wife and I look forward to being with you during the year, sharing in one of your weekend "specials".

I do not recall that I ever heard how the area came to be called "The Folly"; but it was no folly, rather a Christian stratagem and conviction, that led our Methodist forebears to establish a cause there a hundred years ago. A Centenary is naturally an occasion for looking back, and there are many blessings to be thankful for, not least for the memories of people, the generations of people who have served faithfully across those years - some indeed of the recent past, who live on in our hearts. We are thankful for them and rejoice for them now in a higher service.

Yet such an anniversary is not just a time for nostalgic backward-looking, but can be a time for renewal of faith and forward planning. So much has changed in these hundred years, in dress, travel, recreation, the achievements of science, modes and manners and moral values - change not least in the church itself. Ours is almost literally another world in 1987 from that our founding fathers knew in 1887. But the purpose for which they laboured, in the establishment of Christian witness and worship in the neighbourhood, it is our task still to maintain, in ways appropriate to this generation; and in the words of John Wesley, the founder of our denomination, "The best of all is, God is with us".

God, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is with us still, and there lies our gratitude for former years, our confidence in the present, and our faith in the future. "We'll praise Him for all that is past and trust Him for all that's to come."

Roy WEDGEWOOD
Minister (1968-73)

I am so glad to be able to send my good wishes to the Folly on the achievement of its one hundred years. My association with the Church has always been a sort of borrowed one through my friendship with Claude and Ethel Deaville and my one-time membership of the Order of Christian Witness group. But some of my first experience of trying to be a preacher was at the Folly, and the kindness and support of people in those days I remember with gratitude. It was through those first services there and in other country Circuit churches that my sense of call to the ordained ministry evolved. Ever since then I have had a great appreciation of the value of "small" churches, and now working in London's East End, can recognise many of the same qualities of faithfulness and courage in the small urban churches where I work and to which I belong.

With you I thank God for what has been and for what remains as a constant inspiration. With you I pray for the Church's future.

Bryan RIPPIN
Poplar Methodist Mission



Dear Folly Friends,

Congratulations to you on the achievement of your Church Centenary. May it be a real blessing for you all.

100 years of worship and witness is something for which to be truly thankful, and we join you in praising God for all the way by which the People Called Methodists at the Folly have been led.

We know that you will be thinking a great deal about those choice souls whose lives have adorned the Gospel, and who through the years have kept the light of Faith and Love shining brightly from the little wayside shrine in Wheathampstead. We count it a privilege to have shared for a while in your fellowship and we pray that 1987 will prove a joy and an inspiration to you all.

Kathleen and Geoff HAWKRIDGE
Minister (1978-85)



I send greetings to all at Folly in this Centenary year. I realise that special anniversaries are a time for looking back and I recall with pleasure the years I spent with you. We shared some good times -in worship, in fellowship and in service.

These themes lie at the heart of the church's life and you showed a deep sense of commitment in all those areas. There were times when we wondered what the future might hold but we felt that loyalty to our Lord meant that we had to trust Him to show us the way ahead. I am sure the same attitude marks your faith today.

This year is also a time for looking forward and I pray that God will continue to guide you as you seek to serve Him. Enjoy your Centenary Celebrations as you praise God for the past and as you commit yourselves to Him for the future.

David WILLIE
Minister (1973-78)

Greetings on your Centenary! One hundred years is a long time in the life of a church, and for all those years you and your forebears have maintained a faithful witness and regular worship. Men and women, boys and girls have grown to know and love Christ in your fellowship and have served the church and the community, as your members still do. You will have many memories of people and events which will gladden your celebrations.

It has always been good to share in your services. Your recent coping with problems of heating and decoration is an encouragement to us all.

We wish you a happy Centenary with its special programme and great joy and blessing in the future.

Kenneth & Catherine GARRARD



As an 'old boy' of Folly Methodist Church, it is a great joy and privilege to be invited to send a word of greeting on the occasion of your Centenary Celebrations.

Looking back over the past hundred years of worship and witness, we all give thanks to God for the way in which His goodness and love have been reflected through the example of so many of His people as they have strived faithfully to serve Him in the life of their local Church and Community.

It is my hope and prayer that you will use the opportunity of this memorable Anniversary to respond to the challenge of the present age by considering what new forms of ministry and service may lie ahead.

May you go forward into the future confident that God is with you, that you are His people, and that in Him all will be well. God bless you all.

Revd. Cliff WARREN
Southampton



The celebration of 100 years of work and witness at Folly is a cause for thankfulness. Thankfulness to God who gave the vision to those who began the work, and thankfulness for those who over the long years, through good times and bad, have kept alive the vision, leaving us a legacy of faith and hope.

My contribution, as a member of the circuit staff without pastoral oversight for Folly has been small, but I remember with gratitude the warmth of the fellowship and the commitment of the leadership, which in turn inspired others to offer themselves in Christian service.

The achievements of the past are self evident. What now of the future? May those who still faithfully share in God's mission at Folly be open and receptive to the guidance of His Spirit for the future.

Go forth and tell! The doors are open wide:
Share God's good gifts with people long denied.
Live out your life as Christ, your Lord, shall choose,
Your ransomed powers for his sole glory use.

Bill DAVIES
Superintendent Chaplain of Prisons

I am very pleased to add my congratulations and warm greetings to the many that you will be receiving in this your centenary year. Although my time with you was brief - 1980/81 - it was a rich experience for me, fresh out of theological college and in my first pastoral charge, and I am extremely grateful for the love and support I received among you.

In these uncertain days the celebration of 100 years of loyal and faithful witness is no mean achievement. Who can tell what God has done in and through his church at the Folly over this time? Lives have been influenced, decisions made, commitments affirmed and hearts kindled - and still it goes on as the Spirit of God breathes through your lives and carries you on, you know not where. Success in God's terms is not measured in numbers or financial gain. It is more to do with being faithful to Christ and him alone. That is your achievement and the achievement of those who went before you.

May God continue to bless you and build you up in faith, hope and love.

David MILLINS
Minister (1980-81)

This booklet was compiled and printed,
in 1987,
for the occasion of the Centenary of

FOLLY METHODIST CHURCH
WHEATHAMPSTEAD
HERTFORDSHIRE
