



Museum Street  
Methodist Church  
Ipswich



Foundation Stone Laid  
20<sup>th</sup> June 1860

Church Opened  
27<sup>th</sup> March 1861

## Preface

Rev. Margaret Helm

As we celebrate 150 years of Christian witness at Museum Street Methodist Church, we are grateful for many things. We stand with our feet firmly planted in the present but look back on a vibrant history filled with stories of people who developed and shared their God-given gifts in this place. They are part of that great cloud of witnesses about which the author of Hebrews writes so eloquently.

I often wonder what they would think of the challenges that face us in the 21st Century. We take a walk through our community and note a rich diversity of cultures. We see a rapidly changing landscape. We worry about a fragile economy. We pray for peace in a troubled world. We reach out to the poor and marginalised across the street and across the world. We should be grateful for these challenges and for the firm foundation our cloud of witnesses has built for us. Most of all we should be grateful that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He will lead us forward.

Again, I quote the author of Hebrews: Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.



The Church – circa 1920

**Methodism came to Ipswich** from the work done in the Colchester Circuit and it spread from the outlying villages of Manningtree (where John Wesley visited), Brantham and Tattingstone. William Nunn, a gardener and local preacher who was the leader of the Tattingstone Society moved to Ipswich in 1804 and it is believed he was responsible for introducing Methodism into the town. The first services were held in Short Lane, the congregation numbering between twenty and thirty.

In 1811 Ipswich was separated from the Colchester Circuit and became Head of a Circuit with ten Societies. In the same year land was purchased in Long Street (off Back Hamlet) and a chapel was built and lasted for some six years. Due to increasing numbers a further building, much larger, was built in Market Lane, close to the Old Cattle Market and was opened on 5th November 1817 by Doctor Kabez Bunting, four times President of the Conference and one of Methodism's greatest statesmen. The chapel seated eight hundred and services were held there for over forty years.

The present site was purchased for the sum of £1300 in March 1860, Mr William Pretty, a leading Layman in the Circuit and local businessman, gave a £1000 contribution towards it. He also laid the Foundation Stone on the 20th June 1860 with a silver trowel, which is still on display in the Church.

The building of the Church proceeded with such speed that on Wednesday 27th March 1861 it was opened for public worship.

Services were held throughout the day, the morning preacher being the Rev. Morley Punshon, later to become President of the Conference in 1874.

The organ, a gift also from Mr Pretty, came from the Church of St Lawrence in

Dial Lane, Ipswich and was in constant use until completely modernised in 1950. A Minister's house was erected at the back of the Church, housing for a number of years, the Superintendent Minister.

The first restoration to part of the stonework at the front of the Church was in 1888 with the addition of lamps at the side of the gateway and side passage. The interior was cleaned and improvements made in lighting, heating and ventilation, the whole cost being £550. The coconut matting in the aisles was replaced by cork carpet. The original rostrum was removed to Butley Chapel, now closed. Further renovations took place in 1897 and 1925, with gas burners being replaced by electric lights, new coloured glass windows added and the area around the Communion Table enlarged.

1956 saw the conversion of the heating system to oil. 1959 saw a major transformation take place in anticipation of the Centenary of the Church. The front entrance lobbies were redesigned, the whole of the interior of the Church was reversed.

The roof received considerable repair, the rostrum was demolished and a new pulpit, Communion Table and furniture installed. The Organ, with an enlarged gallery to provide adequate accommodation for the choir, remains in its original position.

Modern lighting was installed and several pews were removed from the back of the Church to provide more space for movement. Dark red curtains and carpet added tone and dignity to the sanctuary area of the building.

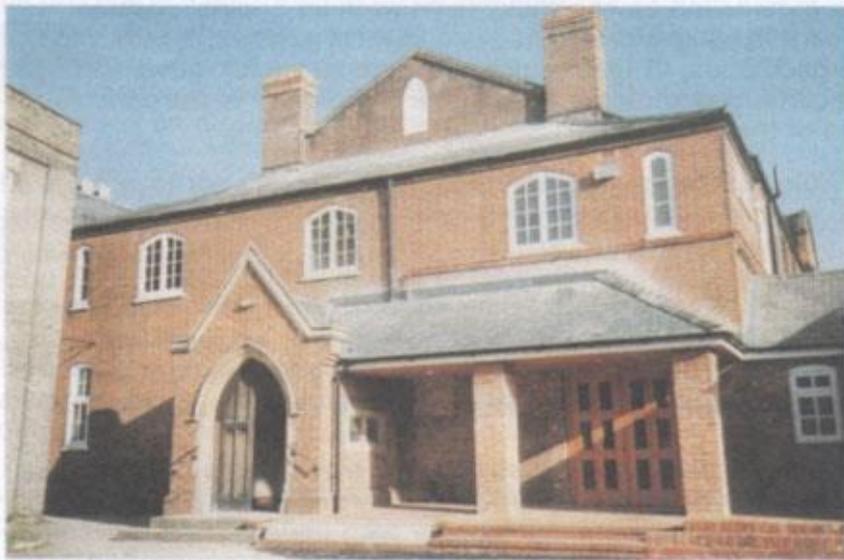
To complete the restoration work, several articles of furniture, pulpit, communion table and rail, Glastonbury chairs, font, reading desk, hymn boards and flower stand, were presented in memory of past and present members of the Church.

The work was carried out during the ministry of the Rev. Frederick Lines, whose son was an architect and had pointed out the advantages and potential that these alterations would make.

The stained-glass windows were given by Mr Bernard Sadler, a local builder and tireless worker and member of the Church, in memory of members of his family. With the complete redecoration of the Church, the work was carried out in four months and reopened on 27th September 1959 with a Civic Service of Thanksgiving.



Black Horse Lane Entrance prior to rebuilding



Black Horse Lane Entrance after 1992 alterations

Further changes have taken place over recent years. In 1992 the upstairs kitchen was totally renovated, the rear of the Church reconstructed and new toilet accommodation added, which has greatly enhanced the premises. The Church roof has been retiled. Alterations have also been made to the downstairs kitchen with new units, tiling and decoration.

1999 saw the Church undergo extensive refurbishment in order to move into the New Millennium, with its witness and outreach to the local community. This was completed under the title of 'Millennium Faithlift' and was re-dedicated on Sunday 28th November 1999 by the Minister, the Rev. David Blatherwick.

The Church has been tastefully redecorated complimenting the colours contained in the stained-glass window over the Communion Table, with the addition of a suspended glass cross, radiating light to all as a focal point of worship. Blue carpet and upholstered chairs have replaced the tiled floor and wooden pews, new heating and lighting systems have been installed and the two front lobbies extended into the Church, with glass doors and windows to provide a quiet place of worship and a bookstall and resources centre. The Sanctuary area has also been enlarged to accommodate Dance and Drama, Musical Groups and Choirs, Exhibitions etc. giving greater flexibility in all aspects of worship and local community activities.

An important part of this "Faithlift" was to prepare ourselves for the increasing use of technology in this 'multimedia' world. Whilst we cannot see what is around the corner, we know there will be more and more changes affecting our lives. With this in mind, we installed a sophisticated lighting system, which allows different moods to be created in the Church, and at the same time will provide the flexibility of lighting to cope with different seating arrangements. With a modern lighting controller, we can programme six different moods or 'scenes' which independently set the brightness of the lighting in eight different zones. Each scene is selected by a single switch, which means that anyone can operate the lights for all but the special occasions. Despite this simplicity, we still have the full flexibility to re-programme these lights to meet almost all eventualities.

The Church was rewired for power, sound, data and video. An electric screen was discreetly hidden behind the pelmet of the oak panelling and can be lowered when required. We can position microphones or video cameras around the Church, and from a convenient wiring point bring all the signals back to the control panel. From here, a variety of video and audio sources can be played back through the audio system or projected onto the screen. These facilities can be used for exhibitions and for accompanying debates with modern slide or video presentations.

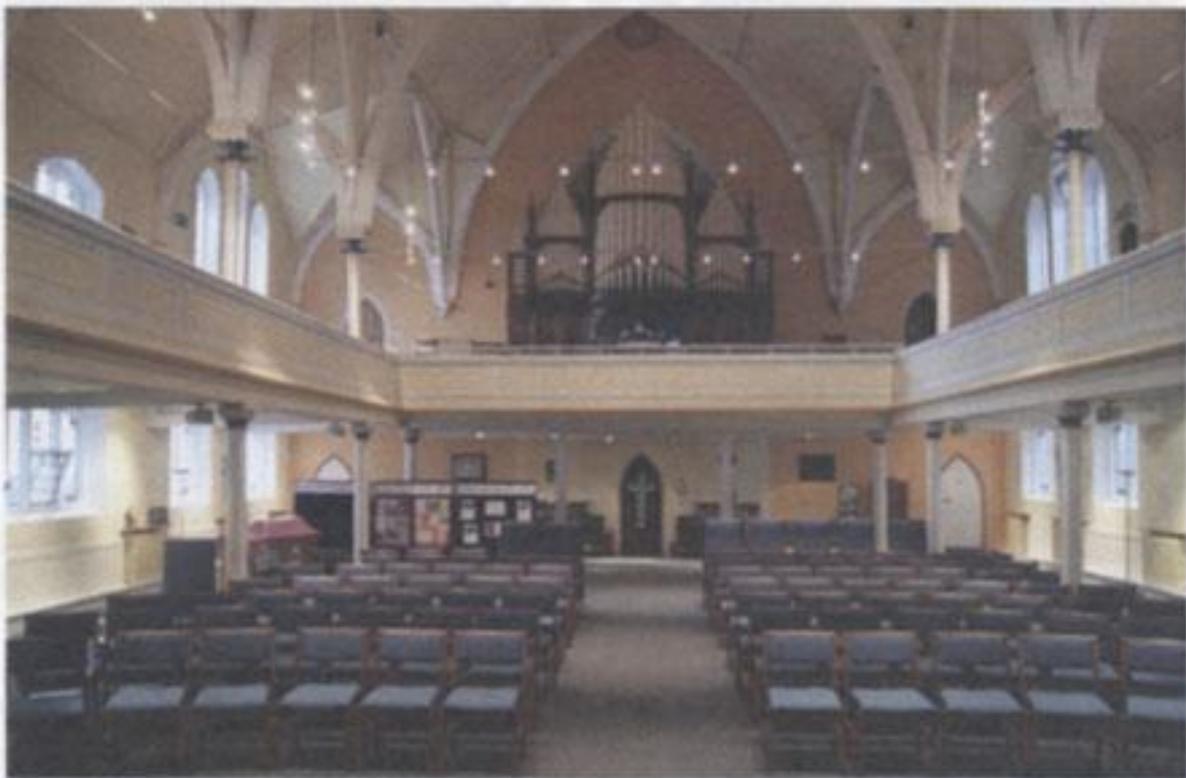
This is not just limited to our 'social' meetings but we are increasingly experimenting with data and video projection to create a multimedia form of worship, where we use image and music to deepen the experience. The day has yet to come when we progress to wanting to access the Internet on-line in our worship services., but this too is possible for when the time is right. One day, we might even broadcast our worship services live on the Internet, particularly for those members and friends who are housebound.

As a town centre Church, Museum Street has an important part to play, both within the community and civic life of Ipswich.

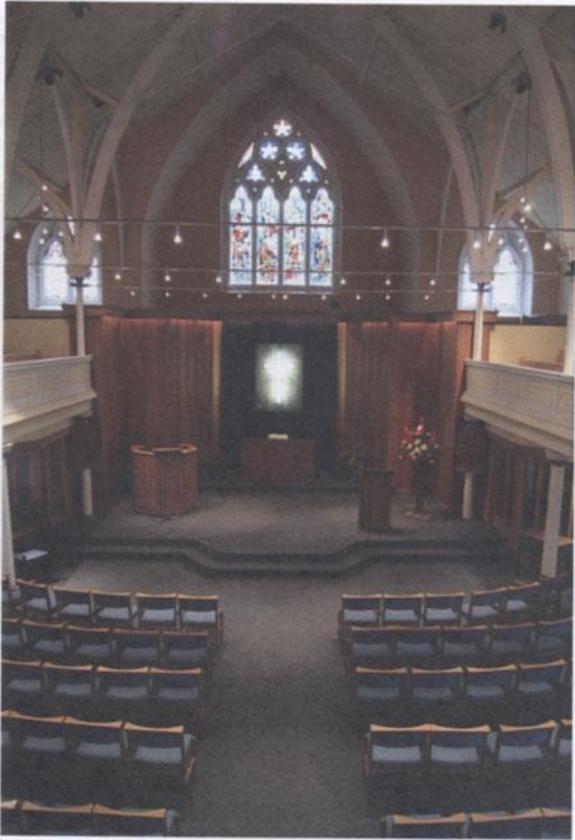
Since the Millennium Faithlift in 1999 the last ten years have seen a lot of property updates. New oak front doors, wrought iron gates to external front stairs and mesh over windows to prevent pigeons roosting. New front wooden door to the side passage.

The rear car park (Blackhorse Lane) has been resurfaced together with new drainage. Complete external painting of windows and replacement of dormer window at the rear of the Church has taken place. Internal works include redecoration of downstairs schoolrooms, building of the coffee bar and new floor covering. The upstairs hall has been re—carpeted and new lighting installed and a new oven and various other pieces of equipment has been installed in the downstairs kitchen.

The Minister's vestry has been completely redecorated from a generous bequest and all Health and Safety issues have been addressed. With all these improvements taking place the Church Property Committee ensures the buildings and facilities are kept in an excellent condition thereby attracting many outside organisations to use our premises.



The Church – as refurbished in 1999 – photo taken 2010



The Church Interior after Refurbishment - 2010

### **Musical Life of the Church**

Museum Street Church has had a rich musical heritage. The Church has, unfortunately at the moment, no functioning choir, but who knows what the future may hold. A Music Group can be available to accompany singing of the more modern hymns and songs which are not easily interpreted on the organ.

### **The Organ**

The origins of the Church organ are vague up to 1935, the first instrument being a gift to the Church. The original specification is unknown.

In 1937 the firm of Cedric Arnold of Thaxted was asked for its view which was to replace it. The war years intervened so the project was shelved until 1948 when Cedric Arnold offered a scheme of rebuilding, which was accepted. It gave valuable new blowing electric motors and a new electric action stop key console.

Work had to be done again on the electrics in 1965 when Hill, Norman and Beard took over Arnold's company. By the early 1980's the organ was really showing its age.

In 1988 Bishop and Sons of Ipswich undertook the work and they completely dismantled the organ and many new parts were built and the interior layout redesigned.

1990 saw the completion of the major overhaul and rebuild giving a musical instrument capable of providing music for recitals, concerts and of course the joy of Methodist hymn singing.

In 2008 Bishops and Sons undertook further refurbishments and this has put the organ back to a superb standard and action response, and it is now a truly magnificent instrument.

## Memorial Plaque and Roll of Honour

Two things that probably will not catch your eyes as you walk around the Church are the Roll of Honour and the Memorial Plaque.

The Roll of Honour is a list of ninety-five names, stitched onto cloth, of those men associated with the Church who fought in the First World War.

The Roll of Honour is on the right-hand wall as you enter the Church with the Memorial Plaque on the left-hand rear wall.

The Memorial Plaque lists twelve names from the ninety-five on the Roll of Honour who died during or after the War.

Fenton Charles Banthorpe  
Albert Henry Brunning  
Alfred Charles Gidney  
Phillip Ernest Pell  
Herbert Stephen Popplewell  
Reginald Nicholas Trott  
Donald and Harry Pretty  
Rowland Rees  
Leslie Haydn Reeve  
Arthur Sidney Strugnell  
William Wisby

Some research is being undertaken into the lives and stories behind the names of the twelve men. Already the research has revealed some interesting information:

At least two of the twelve were recipients of the Military Cross.

Rowland Rees was the son of Rev. Alan Rees, the Circuit Superintendent at the outbreak of the war.

Donald and Harry Pretty were grandsons of William Pretty, the man who laid the Foundation Stone and helped found Museum Street Church.

One of the men died on November 10th 1918, the day before Armistice was signed.

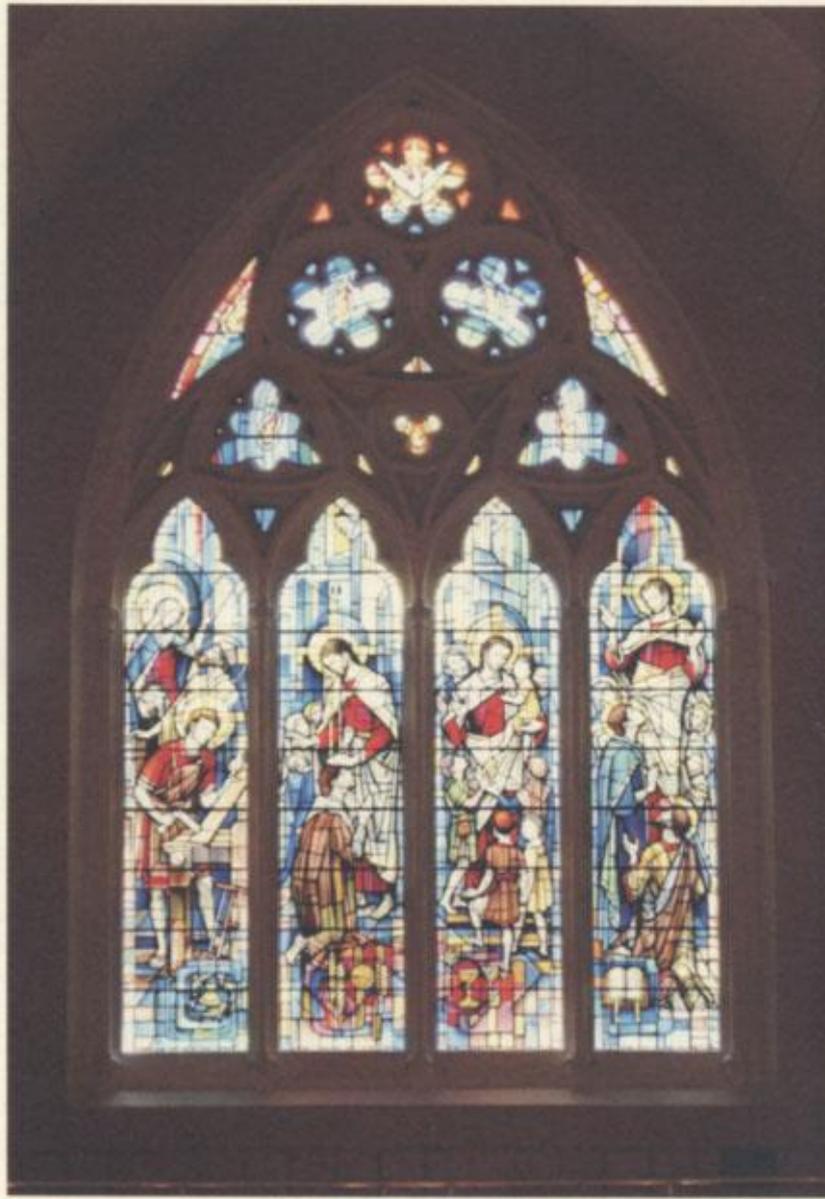
If you have any further information on these names please contact the Church.

## Acknowledgements

The Church is deeply indebted to everyone connected with this brochure without whose research, advice and help it would not have been produced.

## Life of the Church

Sunday Services	
10.45am	Morning Service (Creche and Junior Church)
6.30pm	Evening Service
	Holy Communion usually on the first Sunday morning and third Sunday evening of month also third Wednesday of month at 10:00
Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals by arrangement with the Minister	
Weekly Events	
Wednesday	10:00am to 11:30am come for coffee
Saturday	10:00am to 11:30am come for coffee
Other Meetings	
Network	First Tuesday of month at 2:30pm
Prayer Group	First Wednesday of month at 10:00am
Hot Potato Service	First Wednesday of month at 12:30pm
Getogether	Bi-monthly 2nd Tuesday Oct-Apr at 7:30pm
Bible Study	Second Wednesday of month at 7:00pm
Trimete	Third Tuesday of month at 2:30pm
Trilunch	Fifth Tuesday of relevant months at 12 noon
Community Lunch	Fourth Tuesday of month at 12:30pm
House Groups	Monthly at various homes
Youth Activities	Contact Chris or Maggie Finbow (680306)
Please visit our web site on: <a href="http://www.museumstreet.org.uk">www.museumstreet.org.uk</a>	
Minister: Rev. Peggy Helm	



The Stained Glass Window above the Communion Table