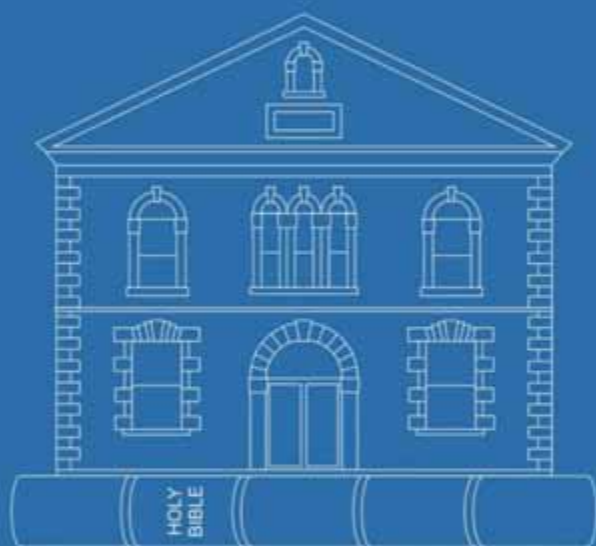


# Tabernacle

Hannah Street, Porth



150 Years

1874 - 2024



## 1 Samuel 7:12

Then Samuel took a stone and set *it* up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying,

“Thus far the LORD has helped us.”

# **Tabernacle English Baptist Church**

## **Church History 1874-2024**

For this booklet the Church is indebted to its contributors for their sterling work in recording the history of the Church.

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### **FOREWORD**

We give all glory and praise to our God for us being in the position to recall the life of His church in Tabernacle, Porth over the last fifty years. The story picks up from the preceding booklets that recorded the first hundred years of Tabernacle's existence as a church. It is one means of us celebrating the church's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The world has changed quickly over the last fifty years and the background in Wales is one of people showing little interest in God and their spiritual state. However, in this booklet we celebrate God's work in helping the saints in Tabernacle persevere through the sustaining Grace and Love He provides.

At the start of 2024 we have been studying the book of Samuel, some words found in 1 Samuel 7:12 aptly describes our journey with the Lord. It reads "Thus far the Lord has helped us". The Lord has kept our fellowship 150 years and our journey with Him continues with His help.

To God be all Glory, honour, and praise.

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Part B contains a description of the church's journey from 1974 to 2024.

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**Part A**  
**The Centenary Souvenir Booklet**  
**1874 - 1974**  
**Published April 1974**

Foreword by David Jones

“... upon this Rock will I build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matthew chpt16 v18.

It is now 1974, hundred years since our Church was founded. Why does it still stand? Tabernacle stands as a building, and as a living testimony, because the men and women who attended through the years, together with we who attend today, still believe that Jesus Christ is the foundation of our salvation and our life.

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I am sure that each member who belongs to the Tabernacle and who is part of the one family in Christ, is proud of the historic past which our Church has. We can trace through the pages of this book the way God has led and guided His people to make the right decisions when decisions had to be made, and to make the right stand when a stand had to be made.

When we pause to look back, let us remember that those people of old were people who were constantly marching forward in His footsteps. Our responsibility today' is to carry on with the witness and testimony which was started in the Tabernacle in 1874.

## Beginnings – 1874

The stage on which the first acts of our Church drama were played was that of Porth, but the Porth of a hundred years ago. Characters passed from the scene for many a long year were then the happy children whipping their tops and playing their marbles in its few streets.

In those days, quite often, on Sundays or Holy days, a 'brake' loaded with roisterers would be seen wending its rowdy way towards towns and villages beyond the Welsh border, where intoxicating drinks could be bought to their hearts' content. Sunday clubs had not been thought of, and the public houses in Wales were shut, so this was their method of getting their enjoyment.

In 1872, two years before the actual beginning of our story, there were but few English Baptists in Porth. Those few frequently attended the services of the Wesleyans, as they could not understand the Welsh of the Welsh Baptists.

Occasionally the few English Baptists would wend their way to a small room over a certain 'stores' in Dinas, somewhere near the Dinas Station. In that unpretentious temple they bowed their knees to Him who is no respecter of person or of place. The leading spirit in this little band was a young man of twenty-two years of age, by the name of Thomas Jones. He was to become later Alderman T. Jones, J.P., of Penrhiwceiber and President of the East Glamorgan Association of English Baptist Churches.

When they could no longer have the 'stores', the little band met in homes opened up for them. They would meet for prayer and meditation in the Sacred Scriptures. Tabernacle's roots were planted in the hearts that loved the Bible intensely.

Ultimately it was decided to apply to the Llanwonno Board Schoolroom, which later became the Porth Boys' School, for the purpose of commencing and establishing an English Baptist Church in Porth.

The band succeeded in obtaining the use of the schoolroom for preaching services, but not for Sunday School purposes. So, the Welsh Baptist Church at Salem offered the use of the gallery of their chapel for this purpose. This was gratefully accepted. With these arrangements then, the Porth English Baptist Church was established on 4th January 1874.

**The members were:**

Mr and Mrs Edward Powell

Mr and Mrs Thomas Davies

Mr and Mrs Thomas Jones

Mr John Poulsom

Here the work started, and the blessing fell. The congregation in the schoolroom increased and continued to increase. At last, it was thought advisable to secure sufficient ground in Hannah Street where a small vestry could be built, which at some future date could be enlarged into a more spacious edifice.

This was done. The land was secured. The few brethren dug out the foundation for their future vestry in their spare time. Like Nehemiah's men, "they had a mind to work". The building was soon erected by Messrs. Charles Jenkins and Son, Porth.

Enthusiastic meetings were held to celebrate the opening, and the young Church enjoyed her bright day of small beginnings on 11th July 1875.

At this period a distinct epoch in the history of the Church emerged. Now housed in a commodious building, with many strangers seeking her fellowship, it was thought advisable to seek the services of a Pastor.



## Pastors

### THE FIRST PASTORATE

**Rev DAVID THOMAS**

**1875 - 1878**



*Rev David Thomas*

The first Pastor to head the list of the Pastors of Tabernacle was Rev David Thomas. Mr Thomas was a weaver by trade. On weekdays he could be seen bearing a wooden pole on his shoulder, from which hung the bag containing his home-made wares, as he went rounding up his customers. But his shuttle and his loom by no means dimmed his sensitiveness to spiritual things. Life's problems are not all met with and solved in classroom or cloister, but also in the daily round and common task.

This gracious man was also a bard, and his bardic name was Dewi Ogwy. He was greatly beloved by his flock, but the records are scant, and there is now no-one left who is able to speak of this weaver-bard-preacher. His ministry was a fruitful one. The little assembly was prospering on every

hand. At last, it became necessary to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes. The building was enlarged with much prayer and faith. When completed, it was called "The Tabernacle". The opening celebrations were held on the 4th and 5th November, 1877. The converts before those days were baptised either in the Feeder or in the river at the bottom of Hannah Street. The first to be baptised in the Chapel was Mrs Llewellyn of Cymmer.

The life of Mr Thomas, however, seems to have been a strange mixture of romance and tragedy. On Sunday, 20th October 1878, he was expected to preach at Argoed. The congregation came, but the expected herald of the cross was not in the pulpit. That day, an eloquent sermon was preached from an empty pulpit. Mr Thomas, on his way to Argoed the previous night, had lost his life in a train collision at Pontypridd. To some kind friends trying to help the dying pastor in the midst of the wreckage, he said, "Leave me alone, see to the others." These were his last words, a glowing testimonial to his life.

## **THE SECOND PASTORATE**

**Rev JOHN DAVIES**

**1878 - 1879**

The next year the second Pastor of the Young Church was called to office. The Rev John Davies became minister of the Tabernacle. But, after being in charge for only a few months, he too was called Home. The Church was once again without a Pastor.

## THE THIRD PASTORATE

**Rev OWEN OWENS**

**1880 - 1896**



*Rev Owen Owens*

The calamities which had befallen the six-year-old Church had weakened her very much. She had only narrowly escaped becoming a total wreck. However, with undaunted faith, another Pastor was called to fill the pulpit. This was RevOwen Owens from Pontypool College. When MrOwens took over the Pastorate, the congregations had become so small that the Sunday Services were being held in the vestry. To this disadvantage was added another, namely, the crushing debt incurred in the building of the new chapel.

The arena where the difficulties were fought out was the same place where they have been fought out ever since – the prayer meeting. The burdened few poured out their hearts in supplication to God, knowing fully their own weakness and inexperience. Gradually, by faith and prayer, the power of God began to absorb the weakness of man, and Tabernacle began once more to move on from strength to strength. In faith, the tiny congregation moved back into the chapel. This act of faith was rewarded. To their great joy, the congregation grew, until, in a short time, the Sunday evening

services were held in a full house. In these crowded gatherings God worked in mighty power, while the week-night prayer meetings was the power house of action. The debt problem also was solved, and Tabernacle now became a veritable 'hive' of workers.

In 1896 Mrs Owens was found to be in failing health. The doctors advised that the Pastor and his wife should go to South Africa. It was thought that the South African climate would benefit her. The Pastor had to announce this painful decision to the Church. It was received at first in dazed silence, then with a storm of grief. In sixteen years and Mr & Mrs Owens had greatly endeared themselves to the flock. The membership had grown under Mr Owens ministry. The membership when he resigned was 253. During this time, too, the Baptist Church at Bethany, Ynyshir was started as a branch of the Tabernacle, and also the Church at Penuel, Trehafod.

Also, one young man, Mr George Brown, had taken up work as a missionary in the Congo, and another, Mr Arthur Evans, had taken up full time training for the ministry. So, in its own neighbourhood and abroad, Tabernacle was spreading out its roots.

Mr and Mrs Owens left for South Africa, but it was not long before Mrs Owens passed away. Mr Owens remained in South Africa, labouring for the Master in Johannesburg.

# **THE FOURTH PASTORATE**

## **Rev WILLIAM EDWARD PRINCE**

### **1898-1908**



*Rev William Edward Prince*

For two years the Tabernacle was again without a minister. In 1898, however, the Rev Prince of Danygraig, Swansea, was invited to the Pastorate and accepted the call. His ministry was predominately one of loving persuasion and active loving care. His was an attractive, loving and warm personality, and we find that he drew many to the Master and to the Church by this love of Christ, which constrained him.

He loved to get into closer touch with the people and put into practice schemes by which this could be achieved. He organised 'cottage' prayer meetings, and a "Look-out Committee", whose function was to find and invite to the services those who did not worship anywhere. He loved to meet and help all sorts and conditions of people in their homes.

Twenty-three years had now passed by since the opening of the Tabernacle. The building was in need of painting and decorating. As has been done many times since, the members willingly set to and did this task themselves. Hearts and hands thus saved the Church many pounds and were amply rewarded by the fresh appearance of the Sanctuary.

Meanwhile, these were days contingent upon the Welsh Revival, and the chapel was becoming too small for the congregations. Eventually, in 1903, a resolution was passed to enlarge the chapel. Acting upon all architect's advice it was decided to add a new wing, this plan was at a cost of £1,280. During this period the great Welsh Revival had broken out and was sweeping in mighty power throughout the land. Many in Porth who never used to enter a Church door were now blessedly saved and sought fellowship in the Tabernacle. We read and have heard of wonderful baptismal services, lasting through morning, afternoon and evening services until 10 o'clock at night.

However, the physical strain was now telling upon the Pastor. In 1906 he was so ill that he handed in his resignation. The Church would on no account accept it. Instead, they released him from pastoral work for the time being in order that he might have a chance to recuperate. This rest period lasted for two years. At the end of this time, when medical advice was sought, the doctor advised that Mr Price should not take up his Pastorate again. The news that their Pastor must leave them, and for such a reason, was received with consternation. Few pastors have been able to win the love of their people as did he.

There was great sorrow, indeed another storm of grief when the break was made. Mr Prince left the Tabernacle in 1908. Later he was able to take up the ministry again with a pastorate at the Maesyberllan Church in Breconshire. He laboured there until recent years. He has left many tender and loving recollections among those who knew him.

**THE FIFTH PASTORATE**  
**Rev THOMAS WILLIAM HART**  
**1912 - 1915**



*Rev Thomas William Hart*

For four years after the departure of Mr Prince, Tabernacle was once again without a Pastor. On June 11th, 1911, it was decided that the name of the Rev J.W. Hart of Shrewsbury, be submitted to the Church with a view to the Pastorate. On 30th July, 1911, Mr Hart was duly elected, and early in 1912 he took over the Pastorate.

During the interregnum the Church had somewhat degenerated, as so often happens. The membership had decreased, and the children's services on Sunday evenings had ceased to function through lack of workers.

But, with the advent of Mr Hart, new life opened up once more. The various organisations became active again, and gradually the Tabernacle began to recover from the pastorless years. Decline is a hard thing to arrest, and harder still to convert into progress. Nevertheless, under God's blessing, this was being done. The Church was almost clear of the shadows, when storm clouds began to gather once more. The Great War, August 1914, was declared. This deeply affected the life of the Church, the community,

and especially of the youth.

Mr Hart had come to Porth from Shrewsbury, a garrison town, stiff with militarism. The needs of the men at the front appealed irresistibly to him. Therefore, in April 1915, he applied to join the Army as Chaplain. In June of that year he went away to the war as chaplain in the King's uniform. The departure of Mr Hart was received with much regret, for though he had only been in Tabernacle for three brief years, his ready helpfulness and companionship with the young people had greatly endeared him to all. Occasionally Mr Hart would return from France to occupy his pulpit at home. But as the war dragged on, he insisted that his resignation should be accepted. So, the Tabernacle once again entered a bleak and barren period.



**THE SIXTH PASTORATE**  
**Rev RHYS BEVAN JONES**  
**1919 - 1933**



*Rev Rhys Bevan Jones*

From 1915-1919 the Church was again pastorless. But on September 1st, 1919, it was decided to approach the Rev R. B. Jones and invite him to become the Pastor of Tabernacle. Mr Jones had been approached previously but could not then see his way clear to accept the call. So, when on 28th September 1919 Mr Jones accepted the call, the Church at Tabernacle was jubilant. Rev R B Jones was one of the mightiest preachers of the Gospel that Wales has had the honour of rearing. It was during his ministry that the beloved "Sister Sutherland" was appointed as Deaconess to the Church. She is still remembered as the guide and mentor of our youth by many of us today.

These were vivid and exciting years. Battles for truth in many places were fought and won, halcyon times of blessing came down, sometimes we thought we were at the very gates of Heaven. Many truths, some startling, some challenging, some comforting, all intensely gripping were poured into our understanding. We met great men and women, from home and foreign countries, such as the Sadhu Sundar Singh, Madam Karinskaya, Pastor Fetler, Dr Shields of Toronto, Sir William Ramsey, F. B. Meyer, Rev Herbert Lockyer and many, many others.

Young people would crowd into the vestry afterwards, with autograph books, to shake hands, have a word and signature from those wonderful people.

While the Tabernacle went out boldly against the Lord's foes, she herself grew greatly in numbers and in grace. The membership went up to more than 500, the Sunday School went up to 700, and had to be held in two sessions.

It was at this time, too, that the Church at Mount Pleasant was inaugurated under the auspices of the Tabernacle. It is now carrying on, on its own, but is ever loyal and devoted to the Mother Church from which it sprung.

What of the Tabernacle now, since those glorious years have fled? It has seen many changes; it has experienced times of leanness and times of plenty. However, we are thankful to let it be known that one thing has never changed in the slightest degree, and that is, the strong sound of news going forth of a Saviour willing and able to save.

The blow was soon to fall. After thirteen and a half years of wonderful ministry the beloved Pastor, Rev R. B. Jones, became fatally ill and in April, 1933 was called Home. The news of his passing rocked the town, and his funeral in itself was an historic occasion.

The Church had also sent more missionaries forth. In 1923 Mr Tudor Jones was dedicated for missionary work abroad, and sailed to Japan, where he laboured for many years. How thrilling it has been in recent months to meet Mr Jones, as he officiated at our Sunday services at Tabernacle. He is now in his seventies, but how buoyant and vital in mind, spirit and body! How he still rejoices in his salvation! I imagine he could say, along with another writer, "I am higher in hope, deeper in faith and better in health than at any other time in my life".

Less than a year after Mr Jones' dedication, two more answered the call to missionary work. Miss Nancy Russell was called to missionary work in Ireland and Miss Lily Jones, the Pastor's daughter, to missionary work in Japan. Now, of course, Miss Russell is known to us as our very dear friend Mrs Trevor Griffiths and she lives among us. She has the oversight of the Church Aion, at Ynyshir, carrying on the work of her late beloved husband and our affectionate friend Rev Trevor Griffiths. Miss Lily Jones married Mr Tudor Jones. They worked faithfully and happily in Japan for many years, until Mrs Jones was called to lay her burden down and depart to be with Christ which is far better. Mr Jones is now Pastor of a Church in Vancouver.

Their work in Japan is nosy being carried on by their own children, in this way does God blaze the trail.

If all were to be written of the Tabernacle's story during these years we would need many volumes indeed. Suffice it to say that it was a period so rich, so vital, that it will never fade from the memories of those who had the joy of living through those days.

# THE SEVENTH PASTORATE

**Rev HAROLD CARTER**

**1935 - 1937**



*Rev Harold Carter*

How did this affect the Tabernacle? Well, we read of breathings of praise and thankfulness to God for the rich gift the Church had received for all those years, and the wonders that God had done. The story is one of praise and of continuing expectation from God. The Church ministry and business was maintained by the former Associate Pastor, Rev G. Ll. Jones, Mr R. B. Jones' son, for many months, until arrangements could be made. Decisions had to be made, business had to be transacted, and the work and witness had to be maintained. But again, and again we learn that meetings and more meetings were given up to prayer. No resolutions were put forward, prayer was the chief concern of' deacons and people.

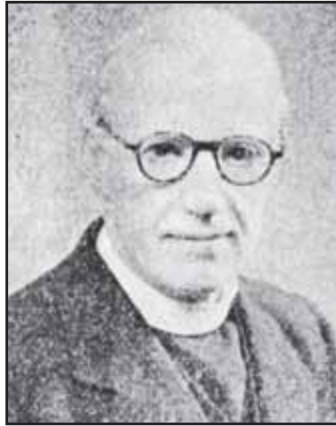
This being so, we find in 1935, complete unison in the call of Rev Harold Carter to the Pastorate of' Tabernacle. Mr Carter began his ministry as Pastor of Tabernacle on Sunday, November 24th, 1935. This pastorate Continued until November 1937, when Mr Carter took up his work at the Liverpool City Mission. This was a work very dear to his heart, and it was well-known beforehand, that when this opening came, Mr Carter would take it.

This was a period in the Church's history of' plodding on; we can talk of no spectacular events; nevertheless, the word was preached faithfully. The people grew in grace, people were called to service, and souls were born again under this gracious man's short ministry.

# THE EIGHTH PASTORATE

**Rev F. S. COPLESTONE**

**1938 - 1953**



*Rev F. S. Coplestone*

The oversight of the Church at Tabernacle next fell to the lot of Rev S.F. Coplestone of Rhydyfelin. Mr Coplestone had formerly been a student at the S.W.B.T.I. under the Church's former beloved pastor, Rev R. B. Jones. Rev Coplestone settled in to his new home and Church in October 1938. A reception tea and welcome meeting were held, when greetings were extended to Mr and Mrs Coplestone from each Church organisation. It was a time of happy fellowship in those early years of ministry.

In September 1939, the bomb fell – only too literally. Our country entered into war with Germany. This means a long and dark passage in our Church history at the Tabernacle. Strange language creeps into the accounts of the meetings held. We hear of provision being made in case of enemy action during services; of a deacons' meeting being broken up because of a bomb falling in the vicinity; of meetings being postponed or cancelled; of difficulties due to "the black out", and of young people constantly leaving, being called up for action in the various armed forces. Later, we were to hear of more dreadful things-of young men, such as David John Williams, Ronald Poulson, Mervyn Poulson and Albert Forte, laying down their lives for their country's sake.

There was also the industrial depression to contend with. Work had been scarce for a long time and many families had moved away. It was a hard, dark time. Yet we hear of good things too. We hear of help being given to the needy, at home and abroad; of the feeding of necessitous children; of writing to young people in the forces; of faithful work being done.

But the strain was very great. Congregations became smaller and smaller, hearts began to fail and interest wane, as a great spirit of depression and lethargy fell. In 1944 we hear of the Officers and Pastor calling a special meeting for leaders and teachers in all organisations and all who were interested in re-dedication and deepening of spiritual life. This meeting was well attended and given heed to, as the Pastor pleaded for more depth and holiness in his people, in life and example.

The Sunday School also suffered during these years. No more did we have the two sessions and a school of 700. The numbers went down as low as fifty to sixty. But the teachers were faithful, and the pure Word was still taught. The Sunday School Anniversary Services were still held, and the Young People's Demonstration Service, although many impromptu alterations had to be made often, of which no-one was conscious but the organisers.

These were sad, hard years, from Pastor people alike.

The war ended in August, 1945. With what thankful hearts we heard the news! But what havoc and disruption it had caused in Church life, social life and personal life. A renaissance was badly needed.

In December, 1953, the Pastor brought us the news that he was leaving the Tabernacle. He had decided to accept an invitation to become Secretary to the Society for the Distribution of the Scriptures to the Jews. His ministry ended on the last Sunday in 1953. He had been Pastor for many difficult years. He had preached long and faithfully, ever seeking to instruct the people in the truths of the faith.

# THE NINTH PASTORATE

**Rev J. VINCENT**

**1955 - 1961**



*Rev J. Vincent*

So once again the Tabernacle was left without an earthly shepherd. But once again the miracle happened. It seemed as if the difficulties through which the Church had been, now bound the members together in a deeper bond of fellowship, and a deeper sense of responsibility.

The Officers took upon themselves to do the visiting and look after the welfare of the Church. Lady district-visitors were once again appointed.

Then, one Sunday morning in 1955, the longed for breath of life seemed to infuse itself into the congregation, Rev J.Vincent of Cardiff was preaching. He spoke of the presence of the Risen Christ in the midst. The congregation was deeply moved.

On September 19th, 1955, after much prayer and thought, the Deacons recommended that Rev J. Vincent be asked to accept the Pastorate. The Church agreed. It is recorded that there was a "remarkable unity of spirit" at that Church meeting, which ended with the doxology. The renaissance was upon us, the deathly sleep was passing. So, the Church entered into its Ninth Pastorate. The harmonious unity of spirit-and shall I dare to



say-of love, set the atmosphere for the ensuing ministry. The love in the heart of our Pastor and his wife deepened in texture and strength, the love of the people for them, for each other and for the Lord.

The Induction Service was held on November 10th, 1955. The Church at Salem kindly lent their vestry for the induction tea, as that at Tabernacle was too small, and not very well equipped. The sisterhood freely provided the tea. The Manse at 62 Cemetery Road was purchased, and now we find a Church galvanised into new life. Volunteers came forward to paint and decorate, and jobs were done at the Manse.

In spiritual things also there was new interest. The Bible Class was formed, in conjunction with the Prayer meeting, on a Monday night. The Children's Hour, always a strong meeting, with a gathering of never less than 70-80 children met on a Tuesday night, also the Young People's Guild met on a Tuesday night. The Sisterhood was held on a Thursday night. The Sunday School began to pick up slowly, though this was a longer, harder fight. We also had a Converts Class once more.

The Church also gradually branched out into more outreaching projects, such as Guest Nights, a Children's Mission, and an Inter -Varsity Fellowship Evangelical Team Campaign. Unfortunately, in this Campaign, the Asian 'Flu was widespread, and the students went down with the sickness in relays. Fortunately, when one lot was down, another lot was up. Our memory of Mrs Vincent, who was local doctor as well as Pastor's wife, is of her setting out every night at 10.30 p.m. with stethoscope and bag to administer tablets to and take temperatures of afflicted students. The Church and the students were very blessed in all these efforts, even if they seemed unfruitful outwardly.

In November 1958, the Pastor's Anniversary Services were held. The Rev Harold Carter of' Liverpool, our former minister, was the Guest Preacher for the occasion. On the Saturday evening a Church Social Evening was held. Friends were glad to avail themselves of the opportunity to renew friendships with Mr Carter.

In December 1959, it was realised that the Church building was in serious need of redecoration, modernising and decoration. Much thought, prayer and discussion was given as to the structural alterations to be made. There was also the question of how to find the money to finance these, plans. Eventually all was planned, and the Pastor appealed to the Church for the necessary funds. He asked in December for members to give private and personal notes of promise as to how much they would be prepared to offer

for this work. These promises were to be redeemed by April 1960. While the work was in progress we worshipped at 'Arosfa', the Old Peoples' Hall at Dinas Road.

When the work was completed, we had a beautiful church, and the promises had been, most royally redeemed. There was no debt to shadow the brightness of a new start. The Church had been most tastefully decorated and modernised. The pulpit area was opened out and carpeted in blue, the old rail being taken away. New blue cushions and a blue fall adorned the pulpit, and beautiful new blue curtains hung from the windows.

The new pulpit furniture comprised a Communion Table of oak, one carved centre chair, and four side chairs. The whole Church was glowing, as the light streamed in above the delicately painted mural above the pulpit, and the music sounded out from our new organ, we all said in truth: "Oh Worship the Lord in the beauty of Holiness." A special service of dedication and thanksgiving was held, as we left the Old Age Centre and came back to our beloved Tabernacle.

In February 1961, Mr Vincent received a call to the Pastorate of the Church at West Wickham, Kent. He told the Church of this at the Annual Church Meeting. He said that he felt that he had accomplished the work to which he had been called at the Tabernacle and felt the need of moving on. There was genuine sorrow at parting with the family at the Manse. The pastor and his wife, and Joy and Grace, had made themselves dear to all. But no man must be held back from what he has come to know is God's will for him to do.

So, on Thursday, April 30th, 1961, a farewell service was held. Presentations were made and farewells, were said. As the family left Porth early on a Tuesday morning, the good wishes and prayers of the Church followed them, and another chapter began in the history of Tabernacle.

# THE TENTH PASTORATE

**Rev MORRIS BIRD**

**1962 - 1968**



*Rev Morris Bird*

The deacons and the faithful workers carried on once more. The Church prayed and worked and waited until May 1962.

Then it was decided to approach Rev Morris Bird of Bristol, whom we had now met several times. Mr Bird accepted the call to the Pastorate, and the Induction Service was arranged for October 13th, 1962. The tea was arranged by the sisters of the Church and set out in Salem vestry, kindly lent to us. It was again a happy occasion, with many well-wishers present, including Mr Vincent, our former pastor, Rev Trevor Griffiths, our dear friends from Mount Pleasant, and Pastor Evans of the local Elim Church. So, the Tabernacle Church once more got into real harness for another season of worship, work and witness.

Perhaps this Pastorate could be called the Pastorate of Re-organisation. Under Mr Bird's leadership, various departments were streamlined. The Sunday School was divided into three distinct departments, the Primary, the Intermediates and the Seniors. Each department had its own service of worship under its own leaders and used its own teaching media. The

Children's Hour, which was still a flourishing meeting, with a steady nucleus of 60-70 children, was divided up, as Mr Bird formed a junior Girls' Group and a junior Boys' Group out of the older age-group, while the small children still met in the Children's Hour. The teenagers met in their Young People's Group on a Friday evening.

Mrs Bird took on the Presidency of the Sisterhood and the leadership of the Sunday Afternoon Primary. She carried out these duties very ably, and we all came to appreciate very much, her willingness, her work, her sincerity- and grace, before long there was another family at the Manse as Andrew, Elizabeth and Debbie made themselves known and loved among us.

In May 1968 Mr Bird informed the Church that he had accepted the call to the Pastorate of the Millbridge Church at Minehead. He believed it to be a call of God, and his ministry at the Tabernacle would terminate on Sunday, 10th August. A farewell tea was prepared; once more presentations were made and farewells said, as we wished the family every blessing on their new venture.

# THE ELEVENTH PASTORATE

**Rev H. TAYLOR**

**1971 -**



*Rev H. Taylor*

This history has now brought us up to the present day. To whom now could we turn for a minister and leader? The pulpit engagements were filled by a succession of Godly ministers, none of whom, however, seemed to be the one destined to fill the vacant pastorate.

At this time, our own Church Secretary was himself passing through a crisis in his own spiritual growth. Mr Bert Taylor was more and more becoming convinced that God was calling him out to full time pastoral ministry. He had been trained for the ministry at the Glasgow Bible, Training, Institute, but up to the present time he had not felt any call to specific church ministry. He was known and loved at the Tabernacle, being a natural leader in spiritual things in our times of waiting, and choice as a preacher on the many occasions when he had ministered for us.

Eventually it dawned upon some, of the deacons, that here was the man to meet our need. The early Church, when in need of an earthly shepherd, appointed one from their own midst, one who was bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. So, Tabernacle, ever willing to follow in the footsteps of the early church, decided to do the same thing, and to engage our own Barnabas from within our midst, instead of a stranger from a distant town. So, Rev Herbert Taylor was ordained and inducted to the ministry at Tabernacle on March 6th, 1971.

Does it work wherever He may find hearts fully attuned to His will., perhaps you ask? We answer-God works.

Precious times of' blessing are being experienced at the Tabernacle. The vestry is full on a Tuesday night for the Prayer Meeting, where one may feel the breathing of the atmosphere of the presence of God. How wonderful if the numbers would increase and flow even into the other rooms! The children's work in all departments is vividly alive. There is a band of dedicated young people, active and growing in grace. One feature of the life of' the young people is the established practice they now have of going together each September for a holiday in fellowship and worship at the Christian Conference Centre at Filey.

The Sunday Services are a time of real worship and studying of God's word. We have been gladdened and strengthened by the coming into our midst of a group of friends from Treorchy. Their story is told later.

There are also some innovations such as Children's Church on Sunday morning at 10.30 a.m., which picks up the threads again, where they were fraying with the old Sunday Morning League. The Young Wives' Fellowship is also an innovation.

This meeting is held on a Thursday morning and seems to be a valuable means of outreach to young women in the district. Coffee mornings, lately formed, also serve this purpose. The methods are different, but the message is ever the same, that of salvation through Jesus Christ alone. The Sunday School is busy and happy every Sunday afternoon. You might hear a record-player or a tape recorder, or a guitar, but make no mistake, the lesson has been given from the Word of God.

A word must also be said of the alterations in structure made in the back premises. We can now boast of a fitted kitchen, and a minister's parlour. They are not very big rooms, but an enormous amount of work has been done in them, often with much laughter and perspiration, as well as prayer.

So, the story of the Tabernacle at present is one of happy fellowship, of much work and witness, and biggest thrill of all, it is a story of souls here and there coming to know and trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

What of the next fifty years? We do not know; the problems and difficulties, the joys and the sorrows, the trials and the triumphs are hidden from our eyes. But this we do know -

He who has blessed, will bless.

He who has led will lead.

not just for fifty years, or a hundred years, but for ever and ever.

Let us finish this narrative with praise to the Lord Jesus Christ, whose we are, and whom we serve.

Far back across the years He came.

His living presence like a flame

By Hermon's Mount and Jacob's Well

The glory of His Being fell.

May we all continue to know this living presence and this glory, and then the story of the Tabernacle will go on from strength to strength.

# Messages from the Church of 1974

## THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

One cannot write a history of the Tabernacle without remembering many a face, beloved and now in glory. Their names stand out in the annals of our Church history, and we would like to remember them now.

We think of Mr Tozer, praying for those who “might have had their appplecartas upset” during the day, and for the women who found it difficult in those days to “make two ends meet”. We think of Mr David, old and yet ever renewed within. Of Mr Anthony Dew, slender and white haired in his ninety-third year, small in stature but a giant in spirit. We are glad to have his daughter, Miss Elsie Dew, still worshipping with us. We think of Mr Price Lewis, as historic in his way as Secretary as Rev R. B. Jones was as Pastor.

We shall never be able to forget Mr Charles Vaughan (Charlie), eighty years old, still rosy and smiling, and drawing the children to sing like angels. There was Mr James Edgar Jones, faithful and true.

There was Mr Morgan, the roadman, storing up lessons for us, as he swept up the leaves in the street.

We think of Mr David Vaughan, sturdy and active; we think of Mr Redwood, sincere and deliberate in word and deed, of Mr Ben Davies, deep in his knowledge of Bible truths and graphic in his teaching of them. Of later years we think of Mr Timothy Morgan, gracious in person and character. These were all deacons in their time, and leaders in Church life.

We think of many more, well known and loved their faces pass before our mind's eye as we write. We have missed them all, but we are glad as we remember that they are now, as we shall be one day, mingling in glory with the great cloud of witnesses about the Father's throne.



# OUTREACH

While the main avenues of outreach are contained in such activities as hospital work, campaign work, personal work and Church activities, there has always been, and still is, a strong missionary interest in the Church at Tabernacle.

Down through the years in our history there have been some who have been called out to full time Christian work. We think of our old friend Mr Richard Russell, called to work in the Liverpool City Mission. Who can forget his sermon to us, on “the great and hindering family of the ye-butters”? We pray God’s blessing upon him now in his frailty and ill health.

There was also Mr Bill Price Lewis. He ministered for some years in London and is now doing work of great spiritual value as he teaches as Head of Department of Religious Knowledge at the Greenshaw High School, Surrey.

We think also of our friend Andrew Phipps and his wife Elaine in their work at their church in Newport, as Andrew teaches at Grammar School as well.

Overseas missionaries, city missionaries, and deputation workers are frequently in our midst. They tell us of their work and experiences in many places. We support and pray for them all.

We have our own special interest in this sphere. By 1965 one of our own young people from within the Church, Miss Margaret Morgan, felt the conviction that she was being called to enter foreign missionary service. She was already a trained nurse. She therefore took missionary training at the Mount Hermon Missionary College for two years. Eventually, after many farewells and some tears, Margaret sailed away to Bangkok and Thailand. We remember her Faithfully. We have been thrilled to see her back on two occasions, aid to learn all about her life and work in Thailand. Now she is nursing at the leprosy clinics at Palas and Saiburi.

We thank God for her obedience to His will and her grace in undertaking this unattractive work. We pray for her very much as she binds up the disfiguring scars of disease and seeks to heal the even more disfiguring scars of sin with the story of the Saviour’s love.

**BETTY DAVIES**

## Miss Margaret Morgan



*Miss Margaret Morgan*

Although living thousands of miles away, in a different country with different climate, customs and culture, still feel very much a part of the Fellowship in the Tabernacle. It is as if there is an extension of the Fellowship rather than a separation, a breaking away. In Genesis we have the verse “Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring’ his branches run over the wall”. A previous pastor serving at the Tabernacle likened me to a branch running over the wall! If this is so then the church at the Tabernacle is that fruitful bough by a spring. What a lovely picture this is. How wonderful is God’s plan that by the prayers of His people at home, nourishment might be drawn from that eternal Spring and flow to Thailand, bringing blessing and fruitfulness to myself and God’s work here.

Our work in South Thailand is amongst the Malay Moslems, and the Thai Buddhist people. Both groups are very different, with their own language, culture and religion. But they are similar in that they adhere to the faith, which is familiar to them, and are slow to accept the truth of the gospel.

As at the Tabernacle, we are celebrating the mature age of one hundred years, the Malay church is just emerging. Now only about one year old! There was much joy as we witnessed the first baptisms in 1973. If the Malay believers are compared to babes, then the majority of our Thai believers could be compared to infants. Many have come to faith in Christ

within the past ten to fifteen years. How much these who are young in faith, need the concern, love and support that the elder sister church at home can give.

If a theme arises throughout this centenary book, I am sure it will be the one of God's faithfulness. As we look back over the past years, we are forcibly reminded that "He abideth faithful". As I left to go to south-east Asia in 1964 the verse the Lord gave me was from Isaiah 54 "For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord who has compassion on you." This has proved to be true. His love is as steadfast as ever, His peace grows deeper, and His compassion never fails.

**M. MORGAN**

## **THE TREORCHY STORY**

**RHYDDID THOMAS**

It may seem strange to find that in reading the 'Porth Story', the story of the Tabernacle in this year of Centenary, we are confronted with a Treorchy Story'. Why a Treorchy Story in the middle of a Porth Story? Strange it may seem to many, yet when we reflect upon the Scriptures and upon our own spiritual experiences, we should not be surprised to find much that is strange considered only with human natural reasoning.

Some of' the Lord's people in Treorchy were certainly confronted with strange events and experiences. But God ever takes the acts of men and turns them to His own glory. For the folk in Treorchy there was a time of' waiting while God did His "turning".

There came a visit to the Tabernacle in Porth for an Easter meeting on a Good Friday. We were welcomed by the Pastor at the time, Rev Bird. The welcome was warm, and it was obvious that there were those there who loved the Lord.

As the time passed, there were other visits. These became so regular that they ceased to be visits, and "The Tabernacle", Porth became the spiritual home for this group of' Treorchy Christians. Home is where a family dwells,

and strange as it may seem, these Treorchy Christians are at home in Porth.

Treorchy people going to chapel in Porth! How ridiculous! All the way to Porth from Treorchy! Doesn't make sense!! (God sending His only begotten Son to earth to die! How ridiculous! All the way from Heaven to Calvary! Doesn't make sense!!)

Christians in Porth, Christians in Treorchy, and God speaks, "The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another. In what place, therefore, ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye, thither (Neh. 4: 19, 20). The trumpet was sounding. It has been heard now in the Tabernacle for a hundred years! May it continue to sound, may we hear, listen and respond.

There is a "Porth Story", there is a "Treorchy Story", but when all has been said, it is really all His Story. It is proven scientifically that the distance from Treorchy to Heaven is exactly the same as that from Porth to Heaven. Amazing, isn't it?

## THE SISTERHOOD



*The Sisterhood 1974*

### **Mrs BRONWEN JONES**

We consider the Sisterhood to be a very important organisation of the Church. Over the Years it has been many different names, such as The Women's Guild, and The Women's League, but it is now known as The Sisterhood

Although it has had many names, this meeting has had but one purpose- to study God's Word, and to meditate upon it, so that each one of us might grow in the Christian life. We also wish to witness to the people around us, and to have a greater concern for those who do not know our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

On Thursday evenings at 7 o'clock, between twenty-five and thirty ladies, mostly members of the Tabernacle, gather together to praise and worship God, to study His Word and to have fellowship one with another.

The meeting is led by Mrs Taylor, the Pastor's wife. First, we have a time of chorus singing, led by Mrs Iris Allen. Then we have a time of prayer, a reading of the Bible and hymn singing. Then we have our message for the evening.

In the Tabernacle, we are privileged, by the grace of God, to have several people who are gifted speakers. Also, the Pastor willingly comes whenever needed and expounds the Word of God to us. From time to time, we have some speakers from other Churches also. It is good to share fellowship

with other Christians, for we are all members of His Body.

Once a year we have a Sisterhood Supper, when the deacons and their wives are invited to join us. Each of the deacons contributes something to the service, a talk, a testimony, a reading, a solo, a prayer, or maybe just a thought. With a sense of God's presence in the midst, these evenings prove to be a happy time together, linking the Sisterhood with the Church.

The Sisterhood serves the Church in many ways. On special occasions, when refreshments are needed, or tea provided, it is the Sisterhood that gives its services in this way. Then a number of the sisters used to see to fabric of the Church, dusting, scrubbing and polishing to a fine shine. Now this is done capably and cheerfully by Mr & Mrs David Williams.

As a company of sisters in Tabernacle, we all say-

We'll Praise Him for all that is past,

And trust Him for all that's to come.



*Young Wives' Fellowship 1974*

## THE GROUP



*The Group 1974*

## MARTIN TAYLOR

Porth in the year 1970-prosperous, materialistic, careless, seeking for satisfaction in spending, beer and bingo, and never finding it. A notice appears on a Church notice-board asking for, three or four young people who are: 1, Dedicated Christians; 2, Possessors of reasonable voices; 3, Prepared to learn to play an instrument to form a group; This was not to bring pop music into the church, but to bring Jesus Christ and His living harmony to the people of Porth and the Valleys. Now we have the Group including three young ladies, a squeaky voice, a medium voice and a growly voice. We also now have three guitars, a tambourine, a little musical knowledge and plenty of enthusiasm.

We set Out to teach the people of Porth a lesson, but we have ended up learning a few lessons ourselves. First, whatever we do in this life for God cannot be done in our own strength, we need to pray and ask God for help. Second, if we try and put ourselves first, as it is easy to do when appearing in Public, God is not glorified. Three, we had to learn the hard lesson of self-discipline with regard to practices. It was not until we came to realise how much Jesus Christ had done for us, and how little we were doing for Him that we surmounted this setback.

God is opening doors for us to witness for Him in this way of song, that otherwise would not be opened at this time. We are very glad of this, for we want everyone to know that Jesus loves them, would have them repent of their sin and seek new life and peace in Him.



*The Deacons 1974*

## **MY OFFICE AS A DEACON**

### **Mr IDRIS ISAACS**

I received the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour 22nd June 1922. God never told me what was before me, or what I should expect.

I moved to Porth and joined the Tabernacle Church on the 11th of November 1926. It is a wonderful thing to be a Christian, but it is 'something responsible to be called to the office of a Deacon.

When I was asked by the late Mr Price Lewis to accept this office, I tried to get out of it. I felt I was not good enough and tried to get out of it, I felt I was not good enough, and I needed more experience. One day, however, I came face to face with the Pastor, Mr R. B. Jones. What a day of fear and trembling that was! Mr Jones said, "If God is calling You to be a Deacon, you cannot run away from Him." So I went home and read 1st Timothy, chapter 3. After talking about the matter to my wife, and after praying, I accepted the office. I was consecrated as a Deacon on January 10th, 1932.

I served under Mr Jones, Mr Carter, Mr Coplestone, Mr Vincent, Mr Bird and our present Pastor, Mr Taylor.

The first time I sat at the Communion Table was on February 7th, 1932. What a band of men there was there in those days. I shall never forget



that time. I sat by Mr John David and Mr Anthony Dew, and I was called to give out the Communion for the first time that night. John David was great-grandfather to Mr Michael David, one of our, present deacons.

It was during these years that Mr Wallace Adams and our present Pastor, Mr Bert Taylor was called to be preachers of the Gospel.

I have always been drawn to the work of visiting the sick and the old people of the Church, and the environment. It has been a real blessing to me many times to bring a word of comfort and prayer to brothers and sisters' who have suffered so long and yet kept a testimony and a witness to the end.

There have been great men and martyrs who have taught us many things. I have seen men and women since I have been a deacon in Tabernacle, who were not great preachers or deacons, but who have preached to me by their lives many times when I have paid them my usual visit. I would like to mention Miss Rachel Jones, and her last words to me "Mr Isaac, be of good cheer." I would also like to mention Mr Percy Evans, and his last words to me, "God bless You Mr Isaac."

The office of a deacon has been a rich and rewarding experience to me, and I have been blessed by the fellowship I have shared in as a member of the Diaconate.

## **MUSIC IN WORSHIP**

### **Mr LLEW JONES**

Down through the years singing has been part of Church worship. It has often been blessed by God in the Gospel appeal. When there is good congregational singing, an atmosphere is created which makes the preaching of God's word easier.

The Spirit of God works in many ways, through the song of an individual, through the singing of the congregation or the singing of' a choir, singing forms part of many an Evangelistic Campaign, such as the Billy Graham Campaigns, and the Don Summer's Campaign at Pontypridd, in which we have recently joined. All through the Bible we read of the singing of' praise to God. In the Old Testament we read of the Song of Moses in Exodus 15; there is much praising in the Psalms, as in Psalm 100 .2, "Serve the Lord with gladness, come before His presence with singing". In the New Testament in Colossians 3-16 we read, "Let the Word of God dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord".

Since an early age I have been interested in music, such as singing and playing the piano and organ. Very often my mind goes back to the days when, being blessed with a Christian home, we used to go home after the Sunday evening service and gather round the organ and sing hymns before retiring. It was a wonderful custom and brought great blessing to our homes. How more wonderful still if such a custom were to be practised once more in our homes!

Since accepting Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, I have placed the talent given me in His service. In endeavouring to perfect God's praise in this way, I myself have been blessed. The words of St. Augustine are so true. "A hymn is a sea of praise of God. If thou praisest God, and singest not, thou utterest no hymn. If thou singest and praiseth not God, thou utterest no hymn. A hymn then containeth these three things, song and praise and that of God."

At times, the hymns of former days, though in Welsh, come to my mind, and together with the English hymns, they have been a source of comfort in times of trial and sickness.

My prayer is that what I have accomplished by God's spirit may have perfected the praise of God, though in a small measure; not that -I might

have the promise, but that He who gave Himself for me may have all the honour and glory due to His Holy Name. May the Master use me ever to win precious souls for the kingdom through the instrument of song.

“Sing forth and honour of His name; make His praise glorious.” Psalm 66.2.

## **A PRECIOUS MEMORY**

**Mrs KATHLEEN JONES**

To belong to the fellowship as a member of the Church at Tabernacle is for me a precious reality, containing many precious memories.

This reality is all the more precious because it is founded upon the word of God. In the Epistle of John we read, “If we have fellowship with Him, we have fellowship with one another.”

When I think of Tabernacle, I think of it, not as a group of separate individuals, but rather as a family. This family is one of widely differing tastes and interests, and yet bound together because we have the same Father and we worship the same Lord.

This feeling of belonging was truly felt by me during the Induction Services of our Pastor in March 1971. There I felt in a special way that the Lord was very near to us, binding “the family” together. I suppose this feeling was heightened because Mr Taylor was, as it were, one of the “family” whom God had chosen to lead the Church.

For him it was a personal act of dedication, and yet it seemed to me that we, as a “family”, had re-dedicated ourselves to the service of the Master.

We know that the blessings we received then were not limited to that meeting, for we experience them daily if we are in a right relationship with Him. As we, as a Church, step out into the future, how wonderful to know that the fellowship we enjoy now will grow and develop, for He has promised, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”.

## **Mrs ROSALIE ALLAN**

“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.”

How wonderful to be able to say this in a changing world. We change, but our Lord is always the same and ready to bless us. I am happy to say that I have proved this time and again in my life.

Tabernacle is the place where I was converted and received a new life through the Lord Jesus Christ, and I have many precious memories of times spent there. In more recent days the most precious times have been spent in the Tuesday night prayer meetings. One meeting in particular was a special blessing to me. This was the night when the Rev John Dart visited us. Mr Dart told us of the time he had spent in London, and of the great work God was doing in the hearts of young people who call themselves Jesus' people.

I was really challenged that night, hearing of these young people. They had had such little experience in the Christian life, they had such little Bible knowledge, but they loved the Lord deeply, and their only aim in life was to serve Him and help others to know Him.

I really felt that there was something lacking in my life. I felt that there was not enough love for my Lord and not enough service.

I prayed that the Lord would do a new thing in my life, that I might serve Him better. Praise God, He has started to do this. Glory be to His name.

## **TED FRANKLIN**

I would like to share a most precious memory of a day in my life I will always remember, and I shall keep in my heart for the rest of my earthly life.

It was the night I was being baptised, with two other people. I had already had great help from the Gospel of St. Matthew, chapter 7, verses 7 and 8, 'Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, Knock and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.' These are the verses that had spoken to me, and they were going to be my testimony. I was the last one to be baptised and as it came to my turn I felt completely alone. But the Lord was with me, and He had something else to say to me.

A few days before I was baptised, someone at home had said in conversation that it was only natural that I, Ted, should be baptised, as five of the family had already been through the waters. But I knew this was much more personal. The Lord had come to me, Ted Franklin, not to five other people, and I felt wonderful. So, this is the message I said to the congregation on the night of April 25th, 1971, and now I have a wonderful new life in my Lord Jesus Christ.

### **VERNON JONES**

It is with great joy in my heart that I write about the many happy times I have had in the Tabernacle.

The meeting I wish to speak of is the one where the young people told of their experiences in Filey, 1971. This meeting gave me a real blessing.

I can remember saying to myself, "I wonder what they have to tell us". I sat in my seat and waited for the meeting to begin. Then we sang the first hymn. Afterwards Martin got up and said that Alun was going to tell us how he met the Lord. How wonderful it was to hear him talking about how he gave his heart to Jesus.

The Lord was there that night and we cried with joy as Martin told us about the life in Filey. It was really wonderful; the Spirit was with us all the way through that meeting. My heart jumped with joy to know what Jesus had done for them.

I'm sure that the friends there that night will never forget it. How wonderful it is to know that our young people are following the Lord. Please pray for them and for the Church so that God will revive each of our hearts and then more wonderful things will be done in the Tabernacle.

### **JANICE HOLMAN**

On a Sunday night not long ago, a group of us in the prayer meeting asked that God, through the Holy Spirit, would bring someone to know their need of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The presence of the Holy Spirit was very real that night, as I sat upstairs in the choir, I knew that our prayer would be answered. Before the last

hymn, Mr Taylor asked that if anyone wanted to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, that they would come forward and sit in the front seat. As we started to sing Ted Franklin got up and walked to the front. As he did this, the tears just poured out of my eyes. It was a wonderful experience to see God doing a great thing because we had asked Him.

In this year, I have been praying that God will do another great thing, that the people I live with and work with, will see more of Jesus Christ in my life and will come to know Him for themselves. Let us be a praying people “asking in faith, nothing wavering”. James 1 v. 6.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL GROUPS



*The Senior Sunday School 1974*



*The Primary Sunday School 1974*



*The Intermediate Sunday School 1974*



*Young People's Fellowship 1974*



## **EPILOGUE**

### **THE PASTOR**

So, the great story continues. We have scanned what God has done in this Church through people over the, last hundred years. We are still in the Book of the Acts. This Living CHRIST by the Person of the Holy Spirit is still at work.

We start to write our next hundred years remembering history is HIS STORY. Our Past has been a wonderful one, our present is as wonderful. May we all so walk with our Lord Jesus that we shall witness the “greater works” which He spoke to His disciples about and which He promises to us today.

It is a great privilege to be a Pastor-a greater privilege to be a Pastor of such a people. We go forward together, conscious of our failures but conscious too of the presence of the Head of the Church with us, and remembering-

They on the heights are not the souls who never erred nor went astray.

Who trod unswerving toward their goals along a smooth, rose-bordered way.

Nay, those who stand where first comes dawn are those who stumbled-

But went on.

Titus 2, 13.

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

## **THE TABERNACLE, PORTH**

**1874-1974**

Founded, and maintained to Preserve the truths of the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only basis for salvation, and the authority and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures as the only canon of faith and conduct.

## **THE CHURCH**

**Pastor; Rev H. S. TAYLOR**

### **Deacons:**

LI. JONES 1946

J. KNIGHT 1960

J.H. Poulson 1946

G. VAUGHAN 1960

I. ISAAC 1951

M. DAVID 1970

J. DAVIES 1970

DW. JONES 1970

R. ROBERTS 1952

P. HICKMAN 1974

A. EVANS 1960

T. FRANKLIN 1974

T.I. JONES 1960

**Secretary: D. W. JONES**

**Treasurer: M. J. DAVID**

**Registrar. J. E. DAVIES**

**Organist: LL. JONES**

**Assistant Organist: Mrs B. JONES**

**Missionary Secretary : Mrs G. MORGAN**

### **CHURCH STATISTICS**

Membership Commencing 1974 -143

## **MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH**

### **SUNDAY**

- 10:00 a.m. Prayer Meeting
- 10:30 a.m. Children's Church
- 11:00 a.m. Morning Service
- 2.30 p.m. Sunday School
- 5.30 p.m. Prayer Meeting
- 5.45 p.m. Community Hymn Singing
- 6.00 p.m. Evening Service

### **MONDAY**

- 6.00 p.m. Junior Girls' Meeting
- 6.30 p.m. Junior Boys' Meeting

### **TUESDAY**

- 5.30 p.m. Children's Hour
- 7.00 p.m. Bible Study and Prayer Meeting

### **WEDNESDAY**

- Officer's Meeting

### **THURSDAY**

- 10:00. a.m. Young Wives' Fellowship
- 7.00 p.m. Sisterhood

### **FRIDAY**

- 7.30 p. m. Young People's Meeting & Activities

**April 23rd, 1974**

At the time of going to press it is necessary that the news should be recorded that our friend and sister, Margaret Morgan, our missionary nurse in Thailand. It was with a sense of shock that we heard that Margaret and her colleague, Minka, had been kidnapped at gunpoint by guerrillas., Muslim separatists, fighting in the Pattini province, 500 miles south of Bangkok. It is thought they have been taken into the jungle to nurse wounded outlaws. Her family, and we as a church, are waiting day by day for news of her whereabouts and her welfare. We are sometimes overwhelmed when we think of the dangers facing the two. We watch and pray for their release, and what rejoicing there will be when that day comes! One thing we are sure of, Our Heavenly Father knows, and he is able and mighty to save and deliver. Margaret and Minka are safe in his hands, and he can work His mighty works even in the strange and deadly company of guerillas.

We pray that God will give them His wisdom and courage and keep them safe and bring them safely home.

**BETTY DAVIES**

## **Part B**

### **Tabernacle's Ongoing History**

**1974 - 2024**

We continue the History of the Church at Tabernacle by considering what has happened in the fifty years since the last booklet was produced.

#### **Margaret Morgan**

As the 1974 booklet went to print, it reported that one of our fellowship, Margaret Morgan, had been taken hostage in Thailand. She had been working there as a missionary nurse. Sadly, she was murdered by the terrorists that held her. The church and community were obviously shocked and mourned her death. The church took comfort in the hope she is in God's hands.

Her mother continued to worship with us until her passing and was a face we always knew would be at a meeting, if she could, regularly lifting us up in prayer and giving a word of encouragement.

## **Pastors 1974 to 2024**

### **11th Pastorate**

**Rev H. TAYLOR**

**1971 to 1986**



*Rev H. Taylor*

At the time of Tabernacle's centenary in 1974, Mr Bert Taylor was the pastor.

The centenary booklet recalls that Mr Taylor had been trained for the ministry at the Glasgow Bible Training Institute but, at the conclusion of his studies had not felt called to specific church ministry. Brought up in Tabernacle, Bert and Alma Taylor had been faithful and active members of the fellowship for many years. They were considered spiritual mentors to many teenagers and young adults as they frequently opened their home to them for bible study and social events. Both were known and loved by the fellowship and being recognised as a natural leader in spiritual things, it became clear to the deacons and agreed by the members that Mr Taylor was the man to meet Tabernacle's need. Mr Taylor described that he was, at this time, passing through a crisis in his own spiritual life and becoming more and more convinced that God was calling him into full time pastoral ministry. Mr Taylor was serving as a deacon and church secretary at the time of his call and on the many occasions when he had preached, his ministry had always been greatly appreciated.

So, Herbert Steadman Taylor was ordained to Christian ministry and inducted as the eleventh pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church on March 6th, 1971. When writing in 1974, Mr Taylor recalled that precious times of blessing were being experienced by the congregation and over subsequent years, this continued to be the case. Not only were good numbers attending, but a sense of God's presence was evident during the weekly Tuesday prayer meetings and a true sense of worship accompanied the faithful teaching and study of God's Word in the Sunday services. Also at this time, there continued to be a vibrant children's work, evident in a busy and happy 'Sunday School' and Sunday morning 'Children's Church'. There was a recognition and thankfulness to God for many faithful young adults who were dedicated to the church and growing in grace. It was Mrs Taylor who began the weekly meeting of a 'Young Wives' group. This began as an innovative means of outreach with the ever-same message that salvation comes through Jesus Christ alone. The Thursday morning meeting continued for many years and saw many ladies converted and brought into the church family. Mrs Taylor also took over as President of the Sisterhood which had been a well-established group for many years. It was primarily the older ladies of the church who met regularly on Thursday evenings for times of fellowship and to study God's Word, brought to them by Tabernacle members and visiting speakers.

During his time as pastor, Mr Taylor based himself in the church building on weekdays to undertake his study and preparation for the weekly services. This also enabled him to be available to those who wanted to speak with him. Mr Taylor was a faithful visitor and encourager of church members and attenders and during his fifteen years as pastor, the church saw souls saved and the membership grow. As Mr Taylor himself wrote in 1974, "The story of the Tabernacle at present is one of happy fellowship, of much work and witness, and, the biggest thrill of all, it is a story of souls here and there coming to know and trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord." This summed up his prayer and vision for Tabernacle.

Just as the Lord, in 1971, had led Mr Taylor to accept the pastorate, so the time came when the Lord again revealed His purpose to him. It was on a Sunday morning, July 26th, 1986, that Mr Taylor spoke first to the officers and then the church that he felt the time had come to retire as Pastor. Following a retirement tea and time of fellowship in the vestry, Mr Taylor's last Sunday as minister was on November 30th, 1986. Over the following years of interregnum, he continued to take Sunday services at Tabernacle as a visiting preacher and along with Mrs Taylor, support the work in prayer and practical ways.



## **Interregnum December 1986 – October 1990**

Once again, Tabernacle was without a pastor. As in previous times, this period in the life of the church was one when God continued to guide and bless. With a dedicated leadership and a faithful membership whose desire was for continued spiritual growth and a strong Christian witness to be maintained in Porth, Tabernacle continued. Following a suggestion from a church member in January 1987, it was decided that communion would be taken twice monthly rather than just on the first Sunday evening of each month. An additional communion service on the third Sunday morning of each month began. 'Children's Church' also came to an end during this time and subsequently, the time of the morning service changed from 11am to 10:30 am.

'Open Doors' began in January 1987 as a means of outreach to those in the local area. Followed by a time of prayer, each Thursday morning the church building was opened and passers-by in Hannah Street invited into the vestry for a warm drink and a chat. Many regularly attended and it was indeed a blessing for those involved, being a means of getting to know people in the locality better and provided opportunities to invite them to weekly and special services like the Carol Service. It was in God's providence that the shop premises owned by Tabernacle became vacant and, following the ethos of 'Open Doors', 'The Bridge Christian Bookshop and Coffee Shop' opened in 1989.

Tabernacle's leadership and members were grateful to the many men who came to lead services, faithfully ministering from God's Word each Sunday. Visiting speakers came from various churches in South Wales and further afield and we were particularly thankful to a few who committed to take a whole month of services at a time for periods of consecutive Bible ministry. As well as regular speakers who were known to us, we were grateful to the many students who came to us from Bryntirion Bible College in Bridgend. One of those students was Neil Evans who was already known to us at Tabernacle as the husband of Tracy, the daughter of one of our deacons, Vernon Jones, and his wife Gwyneth. Neil was in his first year of study when he led our services on February 25th, 1990, and many were blessed by his ministry. So much so, that Neil was invited to spend the month of May on a college placement with us. This enabled him to be fully involved in the life of the church, including preaching for two of the Sundays. He returned to us for the month of August 1990.

**12th Pastorate**  
**Rev Dr R. N. Evans**  
**1990 – Ongoing**



*Rev Dr Neil Evans*

It was clear to both the leadership and membership of Tabernacle that God in His providence had brought Neil Evans to us. It became more and more evident, through prayer and discussion, that we should approach him to be our next pastor. At that time, Neil and Tracy were members of Malpas Road Evangelical Church in Newport. God was also guiding them to Tabernacle as the place where his life as a church pastor would begin. Following the two placements and preaching visits throughout 1990, Rev Richard Neil Evans was ordained to Christian ministry and inducted as the twelfth pastor of Tabernacle, on Saturday 6th October 1990. During 1990 and 1991, Neil continued on a part-time basis to undertake some theological study at Bryntirion and, over subsequent years, has undertaken periods of further study.

For a newly appointed pastor coming to a well-established church, there will always be things that can be changed. As we look back over the early years of Neil's ministry, we see that God gave him wisdom and patience in leading the church. He took time to build relationships with each member and attender, both individually and corporately, and it was through

grounding in biblical teaching that changes were made.

In 1994, the structure of the leadership of Tabernacle changed. For as long as those in leadership could recall, Tabernacle had only deacons. Yet now the biblical distinction between the roles of elders and deacons was made and in keeping with the pattern of the early church, Don Geater and David Jones were recognised as elders, along with Neil himself.

Another major change during the early years of Neil's ministry was regarding the weekly programme of the church, in particular the separation of the weeknight meeting for prayer and bible study into two meetings. The focus of Monday meetings now being for prayer and praise, when we would reflect on the specific teaching from the Sunday services and seek God's guidance for us as a church and His blessing. Wednesday meetings would be devoted to Bible study and these meetings, which took the form of Bible exposition and opportunity for discussion. These meetings proved a great blessing to many who attended and a deepening of spiritual knowledge and growth in grace in their lives through the diligent study of God's word led by Neil was acknowledged. Both these meetings were well attended.

Another significant change was the decision taken to recognise the New King James version of the bible as the one used by us as a church. Our nominated hymn book also changed from the Baptist Church Hymnal to Christian Hymns, which would reflect a stronger link to the doctrinal beliefs of the church. Some years later, we produced our own song supplement, enabling us to sing more modern hymns and songs in our services of worship. This continues to be added to. It was in 2004 that we began producing a weekly newsletter which would be available each Sunday with Bible texts and sermon outlines provided by Neil. They also include points for prayer and praise concerning the life of our church.

In 2005, Neil and the elders led Tabernacle in joining the AECW (Association of Evangelical Churches in Wales), 'a fellowship of churches in Wales which seeks to promote co-operation in fellowship and witness between churches that embrace the evangelical faith'.

As we reflect on Neil's time as pastor so far, we have much to be thankful to God for. Being Tabernacle's longest serving pastor to date, in 2021 we marked a thirty-year anniversary of the time he and Tracy, along with their family, have been with us. Neil, as pastor, has always been supported by Tracy. She has been faithful in her own service to God in undertaking various responsibilities and leading ministries at Tabernacle over the past

30 years too. During these years, we have understandably seen many changes in regard to the ministries undertaken and those who regularly meet. We have seen men and women come to faith, be baptised and brought into membership.

Much will be reflected on in this booklet by many, concerning the various ministries at Tabernacle in recent times. We are grateful to God that over these past decades we have been blessed by expository and consecutive Bible teaching, challenged to seek God more for ourselves and deepen our knowledge of Him. As our pastor, Neil has remained faithful to his calling and we trust that we will together know God's blessing in the years to come.

### **Spiritual Life Reflection**

Rev Dr R N Evans reflects on the spiritual life of the church during his ministry.

Over the years that I have been the Minister of Tabernacle Baptist Church I have had the privilege of sharing in the joys and the sorrows of the lives of the members of the Church. This has led me to reflect on what is it that keeps a Christian going through 'all the changing scenes of life, in trouble and in joy'. The question that I have thought long and hard about is 'What causes a Christian to persevere in the Christian life from day to day and from week to week?'

As I see it, there are many challenges that a Christian faces. Often the challenges are life changing and deeply troubling. At such times, when we call on God in our need and our brothers and sisters in Christ do the same, we are aware of the special grace of God that is made available to us in Christ and are able to testify to that grace, both to those who are in the Church and those who are friends and families. Such challenges are often the most painful and traumatic that a Christian must face.

However, I want to suggest that there is a far greater challenge that we face, greater than those moments of heartache and grief mentioned above. It seems to me that the greatest challenge facing each one of us is what I want to call the 'everyday challenge' or the 'challenge of ordinary life'.

We meet Sunday after Sunday to worship God and a whole week has gone by in between. We have been in our homes, maybe at work, living out

each day as it comes, and for most of the time nothing much happens. Yes, there are the usual ups and downs of life, but often life is very ordinary, and we are left to our thoughts, to our routines, to the business of everyday. Everything is very familiar and much the same. We maybe watch TV in our homes, meet family and friends and generally get on with things.

I think this ordinariness is the greatest challenge that any of us face. My question, and maybe I am not putting the question in the best way, is what keeps a Christian through the ordinary and the everyday? As Paul the Apostle reminds us, we 'are living this life in the flesh' (Galatians 2 v 20) and often the 'flesh' does not refer to strong passions and desires but to the commonplace and the familiar, and yes, even to that which may be described as boring.

Do you get the sense of what it is I'm trying to say? At times of crisis when we call on God, we prove His faithfulness and realise His commitment to us. But what about the rest of the time when all is quiet?

At such times, I think that God works just as wonderfully and miraculously as He does when we call upon Him at the worst of times. In the ordinary days and things of life, God continues to give his grace, to work to keep us from falling, to preserve us by His Power, to hold us in His goodness and mercy, and to keep us safe from 'all the world's distracting noises'. To me at least, it is a great miracle of the grace of God, that He causes us to remain faithful to Him, through all the weeks, months, and years of 'everyday' life.

Together, over the past 34 years that I have been your Pastor, we have set ourselves the task of getting to know God through His Word and through His Son Jesus Christ. We are all familiar by now that when we open our Bibles, we don't look to find ourselves in its pages, but we look to find God and to learn of Him. We have learned of His Love, His Mercy, of the Covenant that He has established with us through Jesus Christ and of his persevering Grace. We delight in His Word, and we also love to discuss it together and to learn together as we share our understanding of a verse of Scripture. As I think about the challenge of living as a Christian from day to day in the 'ordinariness of life', it is the statement that Jesus made in His Prayer to His Father on the night on which He was betrayed when He said, 'All that you have given to Me have come to me and NOT ONE has been lost' (John 17 v 12).

Those of you who have been through the toughest of times have known the grace of God so that you have been kept from falling. All of us have

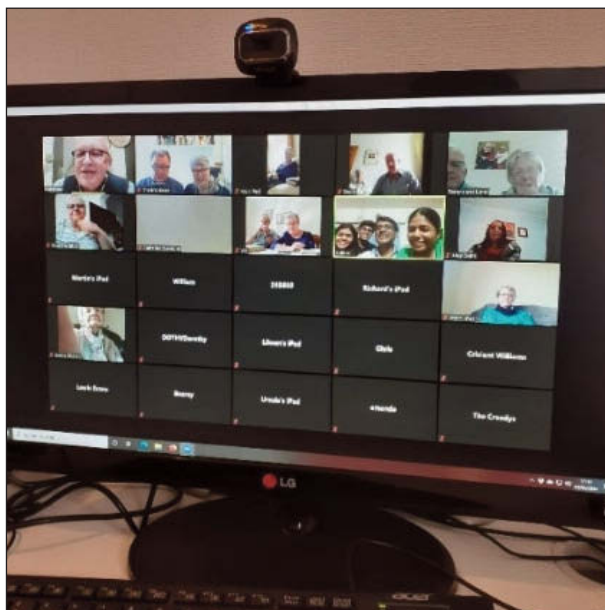
known the challenge of facing 'the ordinary and the everyday' and in so doing we too have known the wonderful keeping grace and goodness of God.

To Him be all the Glory

### **The Pandemic 2020/21**

The whole world was affected by the Pandemic that started in early 2020. From the March, most people were told to stay at home to avoid spreading coronavirus. This turned into months of isolation from friends and family and restricted what we could do.

For the church, it meant we couldn't physically meet to worship or even visit each other. We were very fortunate that we were able to move quickly and for the first time use "Zoom", a video conferencing product to meet frequently but virtually. Many availed themselves of the service even from outside the church in other countries. It also gave surprise access to worship for some who had found physical attendance a problem previously. The minister led frequent Bible studies in the early weeks, and we also held Sunday services and midweek meetings. We even had the occasional good-hearted quiz.



*Sunday Service on "Zoom"*

Like most, we were able to return to our building after some months, September 2020 in our case. It meant we had to sit two metres apart, wear masks etc, but at least some normality returned. Unfortunately, restrictions returned in that winter, and we were back online. It wasn't until the summer of 2021 that things got back to something normal.

The events made us become more tech savvy from young to old. It also resulted in us continuing some online meetings and streaming services so those who couldn't get to the church continued to enjoy participation in the church.

Throughout the time, we were grateful that God protected us and made these ways for us to continue in fellowship worshipping Him. This was a great comfort to many.

## **Children's Work**

### **Sunday School**

From the mid-1970's until the early 90's, Sunday School functioned much the same as it had previously, with the Infant department meeting in the vestry and Junior and Senior scholars meeting in the church. They took the form of collective worship for the first 20 minutes. This consisted of reading and singing. For the remaining 40 minutes, it would divide up into various classes decided by age. There were around four classes in the infant department, four in the Junior department and two adult classes – one for men and one for ladies. A notable feature during this period was an influx of children who became interested to attend, from a housing estate where a lady church member, Mrs Edith Hickman, lived. She encouraged the families there to send their children, but as it was too far to walk the church laid on a weekly minibus to transport them.

Some current church members state that they rekindled their attendance at church when they decided their children should attend Sunday School. For example, Mrs Dorothy Billet remembers speaking to a church member about sending her son and was encouraged, 'No, don't send him, you bring him.' This resulted in her coming back to the church, where she still faithfully attends.

By the mid-90's, both departments were brought together, meeting in the church, as the Sunday School was beginning to lose numbers. With the introduction of businesses trading on Sunday, there was a notable drop in attendance of children who had no family connection with the church but were just sent to attend by their families. Also, the adult numbers were decreasing due to age and illness.

Into the 2000's, Sunday School was a very small number. As the only children attending by now were within the fellowship anyway, it was decided to trial having a teaching meeting for the children after the Sunday Morning service. This continued for a few years. When many of our children had grown into adulthood and left the church for various reasons, with the small number of very young children that were left, we tried Sunday School during the morning sermon. A group of church members would take turns teaching the children.



## **Mid-Week Meetings**

During the mid-1970's into the 1980's, the children's mid-week meetings began to decrease in numbers, but still continued. By the late 1980's, there was no younger children's meeting or any work with teenagers. This reflected the congregation at the time where there were no young families with children of that age.

By the early 1990's, there were a few families with children between the ages of five and two, including the pastor's family. So, once again, a children's mid-week meeting was started. At the same time, there was also a Parent and Toddler group which ran very successfully on a Wednesday morning for several years. The children's mid-week meeting grew and transitioned into a Friday night meeting for teenagers. This proved to be a very popular evening, full of games, tuckshop and teaching. It also included an annual summer weekend away. They also engaged in some charity work raising funds for the Bangladesh charity which the Church still supports. Sadly, when many of the young people were going off to university or starting jobs, the meeting came to its conclusion. The small number of young people still involved with the church would occasionally join with other young people groups in the surrounding areas for fellowship. This resulted in links with the organisation Generation Next. The children below the age of eleven continued to meet for several years. It was noted however, by the leaders of the meeting at that time, that the attendees were happy to play the games which were always a part of the gatherings but were disengaged when it came to the teaching of scripture. As imparting scripture was always the focus, it could not be compromised by giving more emphasis to games, with the result children quickly began to stop attending, favouring more secular clubs where games were the only focus. So, sadly, this meeting also eventually came to an end.

At the time of writing, we are without children's work in the church due to lack of demand and a shortage of children's leaders.



*Group of "YP" members*

## **Music**

Traditionally, the church has had a passion for music. Celebrated in hymn singing and formerly with a church choir. Although the large church choir ceased to function by the early 80's, as did the guitar and choral group, another small instrumental group came into being, but was short-lived. However, a smaller choir was formed, consisting of around a dozen members and under the leadership of Mr David Jones.

The choir performed regularly in church services and anniversaries. The choir was also, on occasion, asked to perform at other places of worship. It functioned for approximately an eight-year period before dissolving. This was due to some members relocating for work and others with family commitments.

The aforementioned anniversaries, which showcased musical items amongst other things, ceased to function by the mid 90's.

Some of these things ended by choice following teaching!

## Fellowshipping Groups

During the lead up to our church celebrations, the ladies of the church met to reflect on the past 50 years. Many have been church members and attenders throughout that period. We reflected firstly on the keeping and sustaining power and grace of God. Their memories are diverse, but all speak of the constant faithfulness of a great God.

“Let us hold fast to the profession of our faith without wavering for He is faithful who promised”.

Hebrews 10 v 23

The many church activities from Mother and Toddlers for our youngest children, Sunday School, Tuesday Club, Youth Club, Young Wives and Sisterhood have all worked over the last 50 years to support the Christian family of the church and to tell the gospel of Jesus Christ. The ladies had many tales to tell and share with one another, which all served to remind us of the deep bonds and memories we share as a community of faith to the glory of God.

They reflected on the teaching they had received and how they had grown, developing a life of faith as the Bible was explained and expounded. There have been many difficult times together as well as the joys, praying and supporting one another in many practical ways. One member noted that after she became a Christian –

*“the bible was opened up to me and everyone was supportive and approachable.”*

We also talked about bringing our own children and friends’ children to listen to the gospel, sowing the seeds with the understating that it is only God who gives growth. One member of our group reflected that many started coming to a Sunday morning service through the attendance of their own children and that their simple telling of bible truths had sparked an interest in “the words of eternal life.”

Many of the ladies have served as Sunday School teachers and mid-week leaders. This moved and changed over the years but always the focus was on the Glory of God and their desire to serve Him...

*“Work out your own salvation ...”* Philippians 2 v 12

Some common threads ran through all the memories we shared over the years. The central place of the word of God in every event and meeting held. Knowing that it is He that sustains and supports as we understand more about His grace and love. Prayer and song as an opportunity to praise God for all His mercies new every morning. Christian friendship and fellowship, as many of are the only Christian in their home.

There has been much fun and laughter too: on Sunday School trips, weekends away with the Young Wives and Young People's (YP) weekends.

As we look to the future, we look back and remind ourselves of God's keeping power, His faithfulness and presence with His people. We reflected that God does not change and that He has kept us. This is a reminder to us of His faithfulness and unchanging nature. We conclude as we began celebrating 150 years ... thus far has He led us ... through difficult times as well as the ordinary everyday things of life. The word of God continues to be our constant guide, the church in which He has placed us our spiritual home and family. Our continuing life of faith is a constant demonstration of God's mercy, grace, goodness and power.



*Tabernacle congregation, 11<sup>th</sup> August 2024*

## **Leadership**

We are grateful to God that throughout Tabernacle's history, God has given gifts of leadership to men within the fellowship. It seems fitting, as an historical account, to pick up where the centenary booklet ended and update the information about those who were in leadership at that time. Over the last 50 years, the leadership has changed, yet God has always provided. Below is a record of those who have served, right up to the present day and our 150-year anniversary.

### **1974 (updated):**

Mr Ll. Jones 1946: retd. 1979

Mr J. Poulsom 1946: retd. 1993

Mr I. Isaac 1951: retd. 1974

Mr J. Davies 1951: retd. 1969

Mr R. Roberts 1952: retd. 1984

Mr A. Evans 1960: retd. 1989

Mr T. I. Jones 1960: retd. 1975

Mr J. Knight 1963: d. 1979

Mr G. Vaughan 1963: d. 1976

Mr M. David 1970: became treasurer in 1972, taking on the role from  
Mr Reg Roberts; relocated in 1976

Mr D. W. Jones 1970: became secretary in 1971, taking on the role from  
Mr Bert Taylor when he became Pastor. d 2024

Mr P. Hickman 1974: became treasurer in 1976; resigned. in 1990  
Mr T. Franklin 1974: d. 2000

### **New Deacons appointed, February 1976:**

Mr Bert Davies: relocated

Mr Vernon Jones: d. 2019

Mr Gareth Taylor: relocated in 1977

Mr Martin Taylor: relocated in 1979

### **New Deacons appointed, June 1981:**

Mr Will Davies: relocated in 1985

Mr Colin Edwards: res. 1990

Mr Al Powell

Mr David Williams: resigned. 1983

### **New Elders and Deacons appointed, 1995:**

#### **Elders:**

Mr Don Geater: d. 2019

Mr David Jones. d. 2024

#### **Deacons:**

Mr David Brookes: who became treasurer in 1990 taking on the role from  
Mr Philip Hickman

Mr David Carver: resigned

Mr Richard Walker

### **New Elders and Deacons appointed, 2019:**

#### **Elders:**

Mr David Brookes

Mr Will Davies

**Deacons:**

Mr Richard Smith: became secretary in 2020,  
taking on the role from Mr David Jones

**Serving Elders and Deacons of Tabernacle, 2024:**

Rev R. Neil. Evans: Pastor

Mr David Brookes: Elder and Church Treasurer

Mr Will Davies: Elder

Mr Al Powell: Deacon

Mr Richard Walker: Deacon

Mr Richard Smith: Deacon and Church Secretary

In 2020, we celebrated and gave thanks to God for 30 years of Neil's pastorate with us and for the 50 years that David Jones had served as church secretary. David Brookes, our current treasurer, has also now served for over 30 years. We are grateful to them and the other men who continue to seek God's will and guidance for us as a church and to the membership who continue to faithfully support them in prayer and practical ways.



*Tabernacle Officers, August 2024*

R Walker (Deacon) W Davies (Elder) A Powell (Deacon)  
R Smith (Deacon/Secretary) R N Evans (Pastor) D Brookes (Elder/Treasurer)



## **International Links**

“There has always been, and still is, a strong missionary interest in the Church at Tabernacle.” This statement, written by Betty Davies in 1974, is still true today.

For many years after 1974, Tabernacle continued to host eight to ten representatives a year from a whole alphabet of societies such as OMF, OMS, UFM and SASRA, whose missionaries worked in a number of countries around the world. Other societies had a more focused concern, such as the Dorothea Mission, working in the shanty townships of South Africa; the Slavic Gospel Association and the Open Doors Mission, who reached out to provide support to churches and individuals living in the former USSR.

David Godfrey of the Slavic Gospel Association was based in Bristol and travelled extensively in Eastern Europe. He became a regular visitor to the Tabernacle, preaching on Sundays, as well as the mid-week meetings, sometimes accompanied by former citizens of the USSR.

There was also the work of mission within the UK and visits were received from the London City Missioners, The Gideons and from Bernard Ward and Ken Price who worked among the Jewish communities of the UK as well as in Israel.

One of the more unusual missionary outreaches was organized and funded by OM, Operation Mobilisation, who supported church planting and mentoring using two ships, the MV Logos and the MV Doulos, to visit ports throughout the world. One of our members, Tanya Edwards, served with OM on their ships.

We learned much about the cultures of other countries, but in addition to financial and practical support, the prayerful concern has always been and continues to be primarily focused on the spiritual needs of the peoples we seek to help.

Today, our missionary efforts are concentrated mainly in Bangladesh and South Africa.

## Sukhen and Puspa Biswas, Bangladesh



*Sukhen Biswas teaching children in Bangladesh*

The members of Tabernacle took Sukhen and Puspa to their hearts after meeting and learning of their Godly passion for educating the children of Bangladesh in the things of God. We have supported them since meeting. Neil Evans and David Brookes visited Bangladesh in 2000 and 2010 to view the work on the ground. Over the years, the progress of Generation Bangladesh has been a great encouragement to us. We asked Sukhen Biswas to write some memories of his connections with Tabernacle!

It's a story of miracle, it's a story of God's faithfulness and His plan in our lives and Ministry in Bangladesh!

In 1995, I got an opportunity to visit many of the rural and remote areas of our country, I saw and visited many rural churches and saw no children's ministry there. God spoke in my heart that these children are the future leaders of these newly established Churches. If we fail to teach them about Jesus, all these Churches will die one day. I and my wife (Puspa) started praying about it and continued more than two years. In September 1997, God called us for His work for the children of Bangladesh. We left our job

and started to work and was trying to write curriculums for children's ministry for our nation.

After a year, in September 1998, me and my wife, Puspa, went to Wales to learn about children's ministry as we had no training on it. It was a huge opportunity for us. This took us in Porth, Rhondda Valley, Wales.

During our study there, we were looking for a Church nearby, we saw and found Tabernacle as it was only around 10 minutes' walk from our place.

We remember, from the first Sunday, we felt a very warm welcome and love in the Church. Everyone loved and welcomed us every Sunday. We started to feel like a family. We remember that on Sunday there was no lunch in the training institute, but every Sunday we were invited by different families of Tab for lunch and dinner. After 6 months of completing the training, it was time to come back to our homeland, Bangladesh, and start the Children's Ministry for our nation. But we had no financial support, we did not know how we will survive in Bangladesh and how we will continue the work according to His calling in our lives.

This small church, Tabernacle, stood up, gave us full financial support to come back and start our work.

Over the last 25 years, Generation Bangladesh totalled 529 Children's Camps and, through those camps, over 78,549 children heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many of them received Jesus as their Saviour and now following Him faithfully. Some of the kids from our Kid's Camp are now working with GB as student workers and are real fruits and a joy for all of us.

We were able to train 7,107 Children's Workers through our 142 School of Children Ministry Training Programme and through five National Children's Workers Conferences.

During the last 25 years, 95,310 children completed our Mailbox Club courses and graduated from them. Most of them received Jesus as their Saviour from our correspondence courses.

God also helped us to produce many Children Ministry Materials in our language, including six years, full curriculum.

We also run Family-Like-Children Homes, Health Clinic for needy Mother and Child, Border Monitoring Program for stop the Trafficking etc.

When we look back, we can only praise God, and thank you all for your great support. All the achievement for God's kingdom was beyond our imagination.

God had a heavenly plan between us and Tabernacle. We believe that He called us, then He also prepared Tabernacle for our support and pioneer this nationwide Children's and Youth Ministry. Praise God and it is a story of miracle, it's a story of God's faithfulness and His plan in our lives and Ministry in Bangladesh!

Thank you all in Tabernacle for supporting us, a local ministry in our nation, and still doing that today.

### **Sukhen and Puspa Biswas**

*Founders, Generation Bangladesh*



*Sukhen and Puspa Biswas and their children, Upoma and Utshob*

## Morning Star, South Africa.



*Morning Star Nursery children*

The members of Tabernacle were very much taken with the work of Morning Star Children's Centre, South Africa. This led to a long connection with their work, surrounding the health and education of children suffering with HIV and Aids. We asked its founder, Joan Adams, to write a few words regarding their connection with Tabernacle.

She writes:

Porth Tabernacle and all its congregants are very dear to Morning Star Children's Centre in South Africa. In fact, for those of us who have visited and interacted with them over the years, they've gone down in the annals of our minds as "salt of the earth" folk.

Our first visit to Porth Tabernacle took place in 2006. This was arranged by Jim & Mary Magness, who also introduced us to a few other Welsh valley churches. Elizabeth vd Westhuizen accompanied me on this trip and we were both introduced to the typical Welsh culture and history and shown fascinating places of interest. We've never forgotten the few Welsh words – croeso, araf and bore da.



Joan Adams

Aspects of our association with Porth Tabernacle that stand out include:

Staying with Vernon and Gwyneth Jones (and Olly) and enjoying their very kind hospitality. Gwyneth makes the best Welsh cakes in Wales and what a dear, thoughtful man Vernon always was.

Gwyneth Bright and friends' 530+ boxes of hand-knitted jerseys/jumpers, other children's clothing, toys, stationery and sweets etc. sent to Morning Star over many years. This became a joint church effort with others from the congregation packing and posting the boxes onto us in South Africa.

Many visits and Morning Star presentations at Welsh FE Colleges (especially Coleg Morgannwg, Rhydyfelin) per the kind initiation of David Brookes, the Director of Learner Services, Coleg y Cymoedd. We even had a group of college lecturers and students coming out to visit us and volunteer their services at Morning Star Children's Centre in August 2011.

Other special memories associated with Porth Tabernacle include visiting and speaking to the children at Porth Junior school. Thank you for these invitations, Tracy Evans. Thank you for telling the children about Morning Star and encouraging them to think of those less fortunate than themselves. Thank you for your donations over the years; never will I forget the many, many pairs of socks collected for us one year and strung right across the extent of the school hall.

Even though Porth Tabernacle is one of the smaller churches we've visited in the UK over the years, their partnership and support of Morning Star has been phenomenal. Thank you, Pastor Neil, for accommodating us so willingly and thank you, one and all, for your love and partnership in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Czech Republic**

The Church renewed links with the Czech Republic in 2006.

In World War 2, our minister, Mr Coplestone, took in a child refugee escaping German persecution. Renatta Collins returned to the Church in January 2024 to film an account of her stay for the BBC “Songs of Praise” programme. She recalled the warmth of her stay and her time in the Church.

The Church was joined by Gabi Lauko and her cousin Lenka who came to live and work in the area in 2006. This started links with their Church in Brno. Paulo Eleder wrote the following memory of their links with Tabernacle:

I remember that night when we first visited a prayer meeting in Tabernacle. It was during the visit of me and my friend Michael, whose aunt, Gabi Lauko, lived in Porth. It was in May 2007. I remember warm prayers and warm acceptance. People were happy and very interested in our visit there. When me and Michael were talking to William Davies, Michael also mentioned that he has never seen the sea because we come from the Czech Republic. After this, William and Julie took us to the nearest coast at night. I remember the smell of the salt and was happy.

In 2007, we stayed three weeks in Porth with Michael. I was happy that we could visit all the meetings in Tabernacle three times a week. Apart from improving in English, we could grow in understanding God’s Word. I was thinking what is different from what I have heard so far. It was emphasis on God’s sovereign and glory, teaching about justification by grace. It was exactly what I missed in my previous life, thinking about my sins and doubting about God’s love for me. It formed my future spiritual life and now also the life as vice-preacher.

This experience led us to the idea of visiting Porth with the Youth Group from Brno. It was in July 2010. Families accepted 12 youths and took care of them for a week! We would travel in a minibus with the singing driver, Will:) Every day, minister Neil Evans was teaching us to understand God’s grace from Romans. This week was important for my marriage as we had strong theological discussions with my future wife, Zuzka. Finally, we both accepted what we were taught, and it is the basis of our current church and mission ministry.

Then we invited Neil to Brno and gained even more from personal teaching and discussions. One of our youths, Mia, from Brno, started to study in Cardiff, and Michael, with Bara, visits Porth regularly.

After all I wonder about God's ways. It was certainly not coincidence that Gabi moved to Porth, and we could visit her and spend such a beautiful time and accept so much of God's truth.

Dear brothers and sisters in Tabernacle, thank you so much for all the good God blessed us through you. I pray that you stay faithful and shining in this world, looking forward to the wonderful future we have with Jesus and with each other!

*Pallo Eleder, Brno, Czech Republic, 3rd May 2024.*



*Visitors from Brno, Czech Republic.*



## The Bridge



The Church had owned the shop next door for many years and rented it to various tenants. It became vacant in 1988 and it was decided to run it with church volunteers as an outreach to the community. It was refurbished, a doorway opened into the Church and set up as a Christian Bookshop and Coffee Shop called 'The Bridge'.

The shop opened in April 1989. It sold a collection of Christian books and greeting cards and sold cakes and snacks, mostly baked by church members.



The original team who managed 'The Bridge' were Gwyneth Jones, Marion Howells, Ann Powell, Vera Edwards and David Brookes. Other church members either baked scrumptious cakes and pies or took a turn serving the customers. Gwyneth's husband, Vernon, would always be on hand to go shopping or help out.



The early years saw huge demand for the lovely produce and, in particular, takeaway items. The team decided to stop takeaway provision, as the main purpose of the shop was to sit and chat with customers rather than increase sales and workload.

Lasting relationships were built with customers, and Christian literature, especially Bibles, were available for the community to purchase. Customers would comment on the beauty of the Chapel when they popped in to use the toilets.

The volunteers built up relationships with their regulars. Over the years, the staff volunteers got older and fewer, as did the managers. The Church leaders eventually made the decision that the pressure on the remaining volunteers was too much and that 'The Bridge' should stop trading.

The shop had, in its time, successfully raised the Church connection to the community, brought the volunteers closer together and been a distribution point for Christian literature.

'The Bridge' stopped trading 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014.

The Church retains the shop for its own use as a convenient space to meet, as and when required.

## The Building



From humble beginnings above a shop in Dinas in 1874, the construction of the current building for the Church evolved over several years until the “chapel” as we now see it was completed. The current building is therefore over 140 years old, but within that time several alterations have taken place. Although they stay in one place, buildings, in a way, don’t stand still and require ongoing maintenance and change to meet developing needs. The following seeks to outline the most significant of these that have taken place since the last record was published in 1974.

From Hannah Street, the appearance of Tabernacle probably looks much the same as it did in the late 19th Century. Look more closely, however, and you will see some modern aspects from the outside and even more internally.



The first of these post-1974 changes was in 1986, when it was decided to construct a new toilet extension to the right of the front façade. Before this, there had been one toilet at the rear of the building. The new toilet block had male and female toilets and access was made available by knocking through a window at the front of the sanctuary. To complete the improvements in this area, the back three rows of pews were removed, and a new internal partition erected to create a new and welcoming reception area. On the opposite side to the toilets, a new cloakroom was created.

The decision in 1989 to open 'The Bridge' as a community outreach has been discussed earlier. As well as an entrance from Hannah Street, 'The Bridge' was made accessible from the chapel cloakroom by taking out another long-blocked-up window and making it into a doorway.

So as to make the front of the Church accessible to less able people, a ramp and new steps were constructed at the front of the Church in 2005.

Then in 2007 the front façade was cleaned and re-pointed. By this time, we had discovered that grant aid was available through the Welsh Churches Act Fund. This fund was a great help in meeting the cost of these and future repairs and improvements.

Also, in 2007, the rear of the building was remodelled to provide an accessible toilet and a ramped access from the rear entrance. Improvements to the vestry were also carried out at this time.

In 2008, we received a message one evening that the Chapel was on fire! The Church Officers rushed down to Hannah Street and were very relieved to find that the fire was in the empty shop next door. Thankfully, the fire brigade was able to put out the fire without damage to Tabernacle. In due course, the shell of the shop was demolished, and the site left vacant. This, however, has left this side of the Church building more vulnerable. More of this below!!!

Tabernacle was originally heated by a coal-burning boiler located in a subterranean boiler room beneath the vestry. This means of heating was changed to gas with enormous cast iron boilers replacing the coal boiler. However, in 2019, after many years sterling service and not a few repairs, the boiler stopped working and we were told it could not be repaired. We contacted a local company who recommended that a new boiler be positioned in the Minister's Room as modern models were very much smaller than the monsters in the boiler room. This came at a cost of almost £15,000 and we were very grateful for a Welsh Churches Fund grant to help us meet this. The process for obtaining a grant, however, takes a number of months and as this coincided with wintertime, we met for six months in the vestry, which conveniently is heated by a separate system. The old boilers were too big and heavy to move, and so remain under the vestry.

At the end of May 2023, we discovered that thieves had entered the building and stolen our audio equipment. They had forced a window adjacent to the vacant site next door to access the building. This was naturally upsetting, but no further damage was caused, so we secured the window, informed the police and made an insurance claim. However, a few nights later, the thieves entered again and because they could not use the window, they broke through the roof in the toilet extension. Damage this time was much more significant - all the copper piping in the building was stolen causing most of the downstairs to be flooded, carpets ruined, and floors soaked. More dangerous was that the copper gas pipes were cut,

thus allowing gas to fill the building. It is a miracle that there was not an explosion, which would have undoubtedly destroyed the whole building and many of those nearby and may well have caused loss of life. The police and our insurers were contacted, but on two separate further occasions the thieves entered, breaking through the repaired roof, causing further damage, and also flooding the meeting room. This meant we had nowhere to meet. The insurers estimated the cost of drying-out the building and repairing the damage would cost over £100,000 and would take at least three months – which turned out to be six months before everything was completed. We were, therefore, homeless but were relieved to find that we were able to make use of a room in ‘The Plaza’, a Council-owned building off Pontypridd Road. This, together with the use of Zoom meetings and even an open-air meeting in the car park of ‘The Plaza’ one sunny Sunday morning, meant that we did not miss one scheduled service of worship. We are very grateful to God for His provision and protection during these troubling times.

We began a gradual return to use of the building in October, first using the Meeting Room and then the main building once heating had been restored. Replacement carpets were not laid until January 2024, however. We now have a refurbished and redecorated building where we can continue our worship of God for who He is and what He has done for us.

What’s next? The need for ongoing repairs continues and we will do our utmost to protect and maintain the building, which has stood for close to 150 years.

## **Memories from some current Church members**

### **Alice Finch**

I came to Tabernacle at three years old, when my father was appointed as Minister. Thirty-four years later, and I am bringing my own daughter every Sunday. So, when it comes to memories, there's plenty to pick from. I can talk of harvest celebrations with displays higher than me, covered with decorative loaves; I can speak of reflective Christmas mornings and Good Friday services; I can recount weddings, funerals, baptisms and dedications; I can speak of my time at Sunday School, weekly Toddler Groups and Youth Groups, both as an attendee and as a leader; I have stories of serving customers at the Shop, of singing on the Church steps at street events overseen by local celebrities, of inviting family and friends to Coffee Mornings and Carol Services; I can pay homage to the people that came through the church doors from Bangladesh, Africa, Czech Republic, Australia and other countries who became a part of a world-wide family. It seems too difficult to pick just one memory from a lifetime lived in and out of Tabernacle – whose people and presence has been steadfast. For within every memory – those I have now and all of those to come – is a steadfast God, whose constant presence remains throughout all other changes. As we celebrate 150 years of this Church, we celebrate His steadfastness.

### **Catherine Crowhurst**

A new country, home and church! We were so excited to move to Wales, despite Peter my husband's diagnosis of Parkinson's, also excited to find a new place to worship. To move from being a pastor and wife to members of a new congregation was certainly a different step.

We both wanted to find a local church, as we knew Peter would not be able to sustain long distances, but also it was important to us to be part of a local fellowship. We saw Tabernacle on the high street in Porth and were drawn to the notice outside the church which was a quotation from the apostle Paul "We preach Christ crucified..." and felt we had to attend a service here.

As we walked into the Church we were greeted by Vernon, one of the deacons. Peter said, "Do you preach the Gospel here?" to which Vernon replied, "Every time."

From that moment on, we knew we were home. We were made to feel most welcome and Kath Jones quickly introduced us to everyone. As a pastor himself, Peter understood the importance of thanking Neil every Sunday for the messages he brought, and we both loved the Bible Study discussions with Neil always involving Peter in that, too. We were so blessed by the word of God and the new friendships in Christ.

As Peter's health began to become a challenge, David Jones drove us to Church every Sunday and to the weeknight meetings. Even when Peter moved to support care in Ty Porth, he valued the visits by Neil, David and others.

After Peter went to be with his Lord, I continued to value both fellowship and ministry. When Covid hit, my lifeline was Neil's daily Bible Studies. The ladies in the Shop make sure I was well looked after, and friendships grew stronger. I also valued a Ladies Group run by Maureen and Kath.

Since living alone, my own health problems preventing me from attending, the Zoom services have enabled me to still feel part of the fellowship. I continue to feel the love and support of my Church and, each Sunday, Neil seems to have been given the right message from God to keep and sustain me. I thank God for bringing Peter and myself to Tabernacle.

### **Lynn Jones**

I first became part of Tabernacle's fellowship almost fifty years ago, when a fellow young mother invited me and my two children to Sunday School. I am so grateful to her. My children were reluctant to stay without me, so, I too, became a Sunday School student. I graduated to the Ladies' Class, taught by the minister, Mr Bert Taylor. He introduced me to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, explaining and expounding bible truths with kindness and patience. In time, by God's grace, I came to a saving knowledge of this same Jesus.

This faith was nourished and increased week by week, not least under the leadership of Mrs Alma Taylor in the Young Wives' Class. I forged wonderful friendships, some of them particularly precious and, I believe, God given.

I received invaluable, wise, advice as well as learning countless bible truths, not only from the pulpit, but also from the more mature Christians in the fellowship, whose generosity and kindness I value to this day.



Our present minister, Mr Neil Evans, took the helm over thirty years ago, since when we have received sound biblical teaching ministered with boldness and assurance. He, his wife and their family have proved a constant source of leadership and friendship over the years. His teaching, together with the love and support of the fellowship, has proved invaluable in so many situations.

There have been times of personal joy where the Church has celebrated with me, births, marriages and the coming-to-faith of two sons. These are prime examples. There has also been the very darkest of times, the loss of a precious son, now in glory. It was during such times that I was conscious of being upheld in prayer and surrounded with love.

An abiding force in Tabernacle has been the strong, confident preaching of God's word, giving guidance and assurance. Being part of this Church's family is truly a gift, without which life could have been so very different.

I thank God for His living word and His continual presence with His people.

"I will never leave you or forsake you."

### **Will Davies**

Having been brought up as a Roman Catholic, it remains a wonder to me that I should have 50 years of memories of this Christian fellowship known as Tabernacle, or simply, 'Tab' to members and friends.

I first came to 'Tab' during the Centenary celebrations in mid-September 1974. Contrary to my own perceptions about Protestant worship, I found myself among a group of people who sincerely believed in God and enjoyed life in all its difficulties and circumstances. They rejoiced in their faith in God and truly believed that Jesus had died for their salvation. Their attendance at the Sunday meetings was not a duty, but a desire to come together and worship God and spend time together, so I continued to attend some of the meetings. I learnt that faith means trusting in another, not in yourself, and your own efforts. On a Sunday evening in early October 1974, towards the end of the evening preaching service, I came to faith in Jesus Christ.

Although we lived and worked in England for a long period of time, my wife and I regularly visited Tab in the intervening years, enjoying the support and ministry of the fellowship. When the opportunity came to return to

Porth, we rejoined the fellowship that had been our spiritual home for so many years. This was not a decision based on sentiment. It was because the ministry of Tab has always been, and continues to be, founded on the Bible, the Word of God.

# Part C

## Closing Exhortation

by Pastor Rev Dr R N Evans

This booklet contains the memories of our common life of faith over the past fifty years. It is a wonderful thing to do, to reflect on how the grace of God has sustained us and brought us together and has kept us through 'all the changing scenes of life'. It has been particularly encouraging to hear from our brothers and sisters in Bangladesh, The Czech Republic and South Africa, as we acknowledge the surprising way that God creates new friendships and new opportunities.

We chose the theme of Ebenezer to shape our reflections. As we have looked back, we have laughed at memories shared, acknowledged the way that God has led us and remembered with affection and gratitude to God our brothers and sisters who have gone to be with the Lord. Many lives have been touched by the fellowship and ministry of our Church and we continue to pray for those who once attended our services but no longer do so, who attended Sunday School or the Youth Groups but who grew up and moved on with their lives. We don't know if any 'soul work' was done for those who once attended, but our prayers for them continue.

We have acknowledged that the idea of Ebenezer incorporates a forward and future view as well as a backwards and appreciative perspective. So, what of our Future? It is absolutely the case that God has not finished with us yet. He has more in store for us. The 'good work' He began He will complete till the Day of Christ.

As we think ahead, one verse that comes to mind for me is 1 Corinthians 3 v 7:

*'So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters but God who gives the Increase'.*

God will give the increase to His Kingdom and to our congregation. There will be those who plant and those who water, but it is God who alone brings life and growth. And He has promised to do so. 'I will build My church'. We have every reason to be hopeful, confident and encouraged in God as we face the future. It's not about numbers of those attending, the age of those

worshipping or the amount of money in the Church bank account. It is about our God's great purpose in building His church and glorifying His Name.

May He give the increase and all glory and honour belongs to Him.

Rev Dr. R N Evans

## Part D

### Appendices and Thanks

<b>Minister</b>	Rev Dr R N Evans
<b>Elders</b>	Will Davies David Brookes
<b>Deacons</b>	Al Powell Richard Walker Richard Smith
<b>Church Secretary</b>	Richard Smith
<b>Church Treasurer</b>	David Brookes
<b>Organist</b>	Mark Geater

Thanks to the many Church members and friends who contributed memories and materials.

Thanks to the editorial team who constructed this booklet –  
D Brookes, R N Evans, D W Jones, R Smith, W A Davies, T Evans,  
A Finch, A Brookes, J Davies.

### **David W Jones**

We give a special acknowledgement to our brother and elder, David Jones, who contributed greatly to this booklet but passed on to be with the Lord before its completion. David was Church Secretary for more than fifty years, as well as Church Organist and contributed in many ways to the fellowship at “Tab”. We miss him dearly, but praise God for knowing him.

**.... to be continued**

