

Christ Church



Ramsbottom

Memories of 50 Years of Christ Church 1972 - 2022



List of Ministers

Ministers from January 1972 - **B**aptist or **M**ethodist

One minister from each denomination

1972 - 1975	Rev John Palmer (M)
1972 - 1978	Rev Harold B Saunders (B)
1975 - 1980	Rev Michael Prowting (M)
1978 - 1987	Rev Ronald McLaren (B)
1980 - 1987	Rev Alan Skipsey (M)
1987 - 1988	Alan Morton (M) - Lay Pastor
1988 - 1992	Rev Leslie Dawson (M)
1988 - 1992	Rev Ted Kelly (B) - Student

Only one minister

1992 - 1995	Rev Barrie Peterson (B)
1995 - 1996	Ruth Shoreman (M) - Lay preacher
1996 - 2005	Rev Gordon Hornblower (B)
2005 - 2006	Rev David Burton (M)
2006 - 2011	Rev Christine Jewitt (M)
2011 - 2019	Rev Claire Nicholls (B)
	Student and Minister
2020 -	Pastor Richard Selby (M)

Introduction

This booklet has been compiled by John Leyland, with contributions by members of the congregation, past and present, and is also based on church minutes, reports, newsletters, publicity e.t.c.. It was produced for the Anniversary Afternoon Tea held on Saturday 17th September 2022

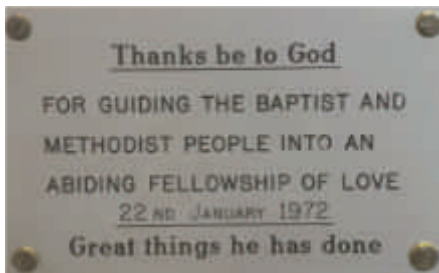
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Brief History of Christ Church

Reminiscences by Susan in blue

Back in 1971 Ramsbottom Baptist Church were experiencing problems with their church building and after several meetings with Market Place, Methodist church, who they already had strong links with, the two churches united together to become Christ Church, Ramsbottom. The church premises at that time was at Market Place Ramsbottom, until it moved to its present situation at Greats Eaves Road.



Christ Church was formed on 22nd January 1972 at a service in the chapel at 3.30pm followed by a tea in the school room.

At the time we had 2 Ministers, one of each denomination, the first ministers being Rev Harold Saunders for the Baptist and Rev John Palmer for the Methodists, and it seems inconceivable that we could afford to pay for 2 ministers. However we moved to just 1 minister in 1992 and would alternate between Baptist and Methodist ministers from there onwards.

Over the years we have had various symbols & logos for the church and as an 11-year-old, and part of the Junior Church we, were asked to design a sign which could be used for our new venture. A simple cross with the letters CC on either side was chosen. This sign was then replaced in 2012 when we decided a more dynamic symbol; that would stand out was designed with the help of Lisa Hodgkinson.

(Some of the logos are on the front cover)

Also in 1972 the current pulpit was bought at a cost of £100, and was dedicated on Sunday 12th November.



View of the Organ and Pulpit - 1974

In October 1974 the old church building celebrated its centenary and my memory was that all the Junior Church children were given an old 1d penny and a notelet with a picture of the church on front of it. I still have the notelet but not the penny. And no I didn't spend it, I just don't know where it is at present.

On the 9th December 1979 a very special service was held by the Rev Ron McLaren when the guest speaker was the actor Peter Adamson who was better known as Len Fairclough from Coronation Street. It was entitled "What do you want to drink".

In the 1990s, major problems were found with the building, and initially new central heating was installed. This however discovered other problems, and it was decided to move to a new building, as the money in the Baptist Building fund could not be used to renovate Market Place.

The building was finally sold in January 1997, with the congregation moving to the Youth Centre. The current building was first dedicated at a service on the 4th July 1999, when the foundation stone was laid. The first service was held in December 1999, with the official opening in January 2000.

The Pram Club moved to the British Legion from 1997 - 2000, and then stopped in 2006, but restarted as Little Stars in 2012, until it closed due to the lockdown in 2020

The new building enabled groups to rent the rooms, and the congregation to put on social events as well as fundraising events. There was a Friday games evening, with table tennis, darts, pool and carpet bowls, and since 2010, a Saturday morning cafe to liaise with the parents of Baby Ballet, as well as our own fellowship, and the wider community with some attending regularly from Ashton Lodge and Great Eaves Road. Family Fun afternoons and evenings were also organised to encourage the parents of Little Stars and Baby Ballet to attend, with some success.

The Cafe worship monthly service was started by Rev. Christine Jewitt in 2009, as a Fresh Expression of doing church informally, and it continues to this day.

The latest venture is the Thursday morning cafe to link in with Ramsbottom Pantry, which started in October 2020 when 2 local residents wanted to provide free meals during the school holidays.

Reflection from Richard Selby

I started here as a Lay Pastor on 1st January 2020. Things started slowly in the first two months. Partly because the preaching plan had already been prepared and so I had very few opportunities to preach until March, but also because I wanted to take time to get to know people and find out what made the church tick. Then, on 22nd February, we had a Vision Day, from which an updated Mission Plan was produced. We were excited to be moving forward at top speed once more.

But then in March, just a couple of weeks later, everything seemed to come a sudden stop: the first COVID lockdown was imposed! Except we didn't stop – we just changed direction. We could have easily just pressed the pause button on church and waited until things returned to normal, but instead we reinvented what church was. As far as we were concerned, the building may have closed but the church is still open. It's often said that a church is the people and not the building, and never has this proved to be so true. This church can be very proud that within a week of the lockdown we recommenced prayer meetings, but on something called Zoom. At that time very few people knew of Zoom, but luckily for us John Leyland did, and he got it all set up. Little did we know then how much Zoom would become part of our lives and the love-hate relationship that we'd have with it! We also very quickly set up a church WhatsApp group for sharing news and prayer requests, which is still very much in use today. Susan also set up a "Contact Pyramid", so that we could stay in contact with everyone and provide pastoral support, which is also still being used.

We also started providing what quickly became known as "service at home", both on video and on paper for those who weren't online. It was agreed that as a church we remained united in prayer and worship. The paper versions were initially posted (when we weren't even allowed to

drive around) but then later we delivered most by hand, which enabled socially distanced conversations on doorsteps. And we still send paper services to the housebound and those in Care homes. I'm the first to admit that my first attempts at video services were rubbish: a weird hybrid between paper and video. But thankfully I was able to master the art of video editing quite quickly and things improved. At their peak, the services were watched by over 300 people, although this included the Bolton Road congregation. I never did get used to preaching to a camera though, as you could probably tell! We still video our services and put them on our YouTube channel.

Very early on in the lockdown I had to come to church to put a notice on the door and to check the building was OK, which I regarded as an essential journey. While here, I went for a prayer walk around the nearby streets, which were eerily deserted. I felt a real sense of fear and anxiety in our community. There was a sense within the church that we should provide help for our community. Practical help, such as deliveries of food and medication, was being organised by Bury Council and other organisations were discouraged by the Council from doing anything in parallel. But we felt that we should offer a support line for anyone in Ramsbottom who wanted a chat or perhaps a prayer. So we set up a hotline (thanks again to John) and a rota, and distributed hundreds of flyers via the supermarkets. But didn't receive a single call. In a way that's good as it meant that there wasn't the need that we anticipated. And the support line did establish some lasting links with Bury Council, and raised the profile of the church in Ramsbottom.

Then, as Lockdowns started to be relaxed, we were able to meet again. Rules changed sometimes on a weekly basis and so we had to continually react very quickly. Steve Bailey did a fantastic job at keeping track of the rules, maintaining the risk assessment and advising what we could and couldn't get away with. Over the summer of 2020, we started off with

mid-week services in addition to the “service at home”. We were sat 2 metres apart with masks on, couldn’t talk to each other, all the windows and doors were wide open, there was thorough cleaning before and after, and of course we could not sing. But it was better than nothing and it was wonderful for an opportunity to actually meet people again. Then we gradually moved back towards more normal services, continuing to push what we could do without breaking the rules. We had singing outside in the car park when we weren’t allowed to sing inside, with poor Marjorie playing inside as loud as she could so that we could hear her. We had services just for young families with puppets. And every service for quite a while became café style so that we could reintroduce refreshments after the service while maintaining our social distancing.

Another big change came in February 2021, which is when the Ramsbottom Pantry became part of the church. What started off in a small way using our church building during Lockdown, now helps over 80 people each week with food and other essentials such as school uniforms. The Pantry gives us a way to engage with our community that this church has wanted for a long time. Off the back of the Pantry, we started a drop-in café every Thursday morning, which provides an opportunity for people from the church to build relationships with people who use the Pantry, and with others. We provide practical and emotional support and share our faith when an opportunity arises. There’s a wonderful atmosphere, where people of all backgrounds are made to feel welcome and cared for.

I believe that this church can be very proud of the way that it responded to the changes and opportunities that COVID created through the last 2 ½ years. Let’s make sure we remain agile and open to change as we move forward.

Baptisms and Membership

The question of a Baptistry within Christ Church was an obvious priority when the two churches merged. Initially the Baptistry was planned to be within the body of the church, and supported by columns in the schoolroom.

The cost would have been £1,000 and a fund was set up in late 1973 to raise the money. By November 1974, the cost had increased to £2000, and, as the installation had become a priority under the terms of the constitution, it was suggested that it should be built downstairs at the back of the stage. This was built by Bill Raw and Alan Stanhope at a total cost of £256 and completed in early 1976. Bill Raw was the first to be baptised. Many were baptised in the Baptistry including Joanna Smale and Kathleen Middleton in 1981, Edith Webster and Hilda Ogden in 1982, Jackie Hedley , Janet Candler and Ben Smale in 1983, Vivienne and Norman Mitchell in 1985, and also Mavis Bithell in 1985.



Alan Stanhope at the front and Bill Raw at the back

The last baptism at Market Place took place in April 1995, with 6 Baptist and Methodist members joining Christ Church



From Left to Right

Harry Allen officiating, Brian Connor, Rev. Barrie Petterson, Helen Collins, Carl Taylor, John Leyland, Lucy Butterworth, Joy Taylor

The first baptisms in the new building were Andrew Nash and Michael St Ledger, led by Rev. Gordon Hornblower, followed by several more, with the latest being Rosie Barnes in 2017. I remember that the heating of the baptistry failed overnight, so the water was freezing, but Claire and Rosie continued.

The baptistry has also been used by other churches such as Seedfield and Holcombe Brook Methodist,



Jenny Leyland - 2004



Ben Connor - 2008



Robert Leyland - 2009



Catherine Connor- 2009



Debbie Carter - 2015

Until 2011, new members had to decide whether to become a Methodist or Baptist member, but since becoming a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP), new members are encouraged to be members of Christ Church. In April 2022, Diana Howarth, Joyce Ashworth, Judith Duckworth and Norma Swan became the latest members at a service led by Pastor Richard Selby,



Photos of Services



Last service in Market Place - 1997



Arthur Isherwood
cutting the first turf



Service to
dedicate the
new building
4th July 1999



At the Youth Centre



First service at Great Eaves Road - December 1999

Organs at Christ Church

Marjorie Burgum

During discussions on the joining together of the Ramsbottom Baptist Church and the Ramsbottom Methodist Church it was agreed that the organ and altar furniture from the Baptist Church should replace the existing organ and pulpit in the Methodist Church. The cost of moving the organ, under the direction of Mr. Stanley Wynne, was £1290.

This organ served us well until sadly a leak in the church roof caused serious damage to it. (1992/3) The pipes from the organ were eventually sold to a Ramsbottom firm.



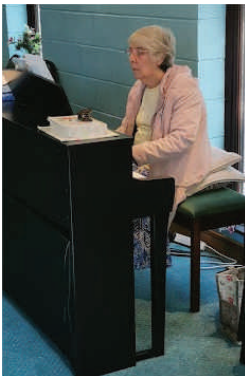
For a time we used 2 pianos for the church services until, in 1995, we were given an organ from Haslingden Baptist church, and we donated £50 to their church funds. In 1997 we vacated the building and worshipped in the Ramsbottom Youth Club. At some point between 1997 and 2000 the organ was given to a Baptist church in Bradford.

In the church minutes of July 1999 it states that Central Methodist Church offered their organ, which they no longer needed. We accepted their

offer but could not take delivery until our new building was open. (Their building was sold because of the Millgate Centre).

Unfortunately this organ began to cause problems so the decision was made to purchase a new one at a total cost of £5690. The 2 large speakers were placed above the doors leading into the worship area but proved too loud for people sitting at the back so were moved to just in front of the stained glass windows.

In 2018 there was a donation to the church towards the purchase of a digital piano. The organ was sold and this together with the donation and a small Methodist bequest to be only used towards the purchase of an organ we purchased the present digital piano at a cost of £2169.



Worship Groups

As well as the organ and piano, there have been several worship groups and choirs in the 50 years, as the style of service evolved





In 1972, there were separate Methodist and Baptist hymn books, although another 50 Baptist books had to be bought due to the size of the new congregation. Mission Praise was then used for many years, and now the main hymn book is Songs of Fellowship, although since 2008, hymns have also been projected. After the sound system was replaced in 2019, the sound is now managed digitally by Valerie Haigh. There are also YouTube videos of hymns that were used during lockdown, when we weren't allowed to sing.

Reminiscence by Susan Applegate

In 1981 a new choir was set up to perform the Cantata “ Night of Miracle’s”, conducted by Margaret McLaren and narrated by Rev Ron McLaren. Some of the choir members are still about today including Marjorie Burgum, Joan Raw, Connie Butterworth, Bill Steventon, Edna Miller and myself (Susan Applegate).

We also got asked to perform it at a church in Altrincham on a very cold and snowy day. My memories of that day was it was very cold in their church, which was very small and we got tea and mince pies afterwards. The performance was well received but there were more of us than them in the audience.

Other cantata’s we performed from 1981 to 1985 included Saints Alive , A Grain of Mustard seed and Greater than Gold. For these the Sunday school also took part and in Saints Alive played some musical instruments, or took part in the dramas along-side the singing. Over time the number of members and soloists dwindled so “Greater than Gold” was our final performance in 1985.

To say we were not in the digital age at that time we did manage to produce a tape of us singing , which I still have, and I can still hear my Mums voice in the back ground, as well as Shelia Barnes and Alan Cookson.

We recorded Praise My Soul, The King of Heaven for a video for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, and this is available on You Tube - search for Praise My Soul, Jubilee Massed Choir



Junior Church and Families

The Junior Church led the Anniversary service for many years, led by a visiting preacher, with a service in the morning for younger children, and the older children at the evening service. There was also an afternoon service with a demonstration by the Junior Church. There was always a visiting preacher for the 3 services.

CHRIST CHURCH RAMSBOTTOM
(BAPTIST - METHODIST)
JUNIOR CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

---ooOoo---

Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.
Isaiah 55,6.

The 1976 Anniversary Services of the Junior Church will be held on :-

SUNDAY, 2nd MAY, 1976

The Preacher will be :-

Rev. N. Wade of Haslingden

The Morning Service will commence at 10.30 a.m.

with special singing by the children

The Afternoon Service will commence at 2.30 p.m.

The Junior Church will present

"LIVING WATER"

A time of sharing together in Jesus

The Evening Service will commence at 6.0 p.m.

Special singing by the Choir

Teachers' re-dedication

We invite you to join with us in praising God and thanking Him for His goodness.

Yours in His service,

G.W. Raw,
Junior Church Secretary.

The Annual Toy Service was held in December and the toys were received by Bury Social Services. The Toy Service was held until the 2010's and then replaced by a Gift Service, which continues today.

Reminiscences - Susan Applegate

I remember being part of Junior Guide in the 1970s, a mid-week children's activity. On one occasion I remember playing a game of Mr & Mrs Ramsbottom and their son Albert at the zoo, read out by Joan Allen.

We would line up in 3 teams each person given a name. e.g. Albert, Mr Ramsbottom, Lion, monkey etc. The idea was when your name was read out, you had to run around the rest of your teammates and back to your position. If the word family was used, then all human beings ran, and if zoo or animals then all the animals ran. I just remember it as lots of fun.

1982

The Junior Church received a bequest, called the 'Hannah Webster Trust',



where the income from the investment each year went towards prizes for good attendance. This was presented by Mr Wynne. This continued for many years, with the children being given book tokens before the service, giving them time to buy a suitable book that could be presented. The presentation was normally by a senior

member of the church, who told the children of their time in Junior Church when they were their age.

1983

The numbers of children attending Junior Church appear to be on the increase, and we are now able to operate a Creche, three infant classes and three junior classes with an average class size of six pupils. We are now in a position where each class has, effectively, two teachers. This enables each teacher to share in worship, and obtain spiritual food whilst, his or her opposite number is teaching downstairs.

The leaders of each class were :

Creche : Mrs Dorothy Ellis, Mrs Alice Bracegirdle.

Infant 1: Mrs Edith Kennedy, Miss Marjorie Burgum.

Infant 2: Miss Connie Butterworth, Miss Helen Barnes

Infant 3: Mr Stuart McLaren, Miss Pamela Bracegirdle

Junior 1: Mrs Hilda Ogden, Miss Susan Applegate

Junior 2: Mrs Diana Bailey, Miss Joanna Smale

Junior 3: Mrs Joan Allen, Mrs Sheila Barnes

Late 1980s Sheila Barnes was the Superintendent, a role she kept until 2010, when Diana Bailey took over.



The children held a number of fundraising events, for example in 1989 for a hospital in Zaire, organised by the Baptist Missionary Society. A total of £98 was raised by selling cakes and buns to the fellowship, as well as a Car Treasure Hunt, which then became a regular annual social event, ending at Sheila's house for a barbecue.

They also took part in Hunger Lunches, to remind the children that children in other parts of the world didn't have regular meals.

Reminiscence - John Leyland

I remember setting the Treasure Hunt in June 1993. As I worked in St Annes, I set the clues on my way home through Blackburn and the Grane Road, and it was very long. I also remember going to Townley Park in Burnley, through Rawtenstall and Crawshawbooth, although this was probably another year. We also went to Bolton one year, and I remember that Karen Allen and Judi Ellis did their shopping at Morrisons on the way back to Sheila's, so arrived very late, and everyone thought they were still on the Treasure Hunt looking for clues!

The Junior Church usually had a Nativity presentation or sang at the Carol Service

The annual report for 1991 has this paragraph written by Sheila

The children contributed to the music of the Candlelight Carol Service. My memory of this service will be the look in young Robert Leyland's face as the microphone, which he had been twiddling with, crashed down in the middle of our carol. The singers had great difficulty in suppressing their giggles! The service for them definitely ended in a note of laughter, and that's good!

Christmas Parties were held in the downstairs hall, usually with Fancy Dress





Nativity 2017

There were regular Fun Days and evenings, and Louise organised Pancake Parties and Light nights as an alternative to Halloween



Fellowship Groups

Christ Church has always held weekday meetings to share fellowship away from the traditional Sunday services, all of which have some biblical input. These usually involve a time of fellowship over drinks, and either are open to all members of the church, or are aimed at specific groups.

The regular meetings in January 1972 when the 2 denominations joined to form Christ Church were

Getaway Club - Monday evening once a month. This was set up by young mothers to 'get away' from their family, and continued until 2020, with some of the original members.

Tuesday Afternoon Family Fellowship on the second and fourth Tuesdays between 2 and 4 p.m..

Ladies Fellowship on Tuesday evenings every fortnight

Ramsbottom Crusader group met on Wednesday evenings.

A **young people's group** (9-13) met on Thursday evening

Bible Study and Prayer Meeting at 7.30 on Thursday evening

There were no regular meetings on Friday and Saturday.

Later on a Meeting Point group met as a house group after the Sunday service.

Most of these groups continued for many years, in one form or another.

Fundraising

In the 1970s and 1980s, there was an annual Gift Day to raise money, usually for repairs to the building. At the end of the 1980s, as the church decided to leave Market Place, fundraising concentrated on raising funds for a new building, and in 1995, a fund raising committee was set up. Many events were held between 1995 and 2000, often at member's houses as the Youth Centre was only available on a Sunday..

Some of these events were

- Christmas Fairs
- "Gardener's Question Time" held at the Dundee United Reformed church in April 1997. The event was organised by the Ramsbottom Horticultural Society led by Tony Bracegirdle giving an illustrated talk on how to grow prize winning roses. This was repeated at the Flower Festival in 2000
- Open Day at Marjorie Burgum's house.

- Piano recital by David Martin, the keyboard player in the worship group, given at the Ramsbottom Civic Hall.
- Connie Butterworth organised a diminishing coffee party scheme. The idea was that Connie invited 6 people to her house for coffee, and those 6 people inviting 5 new people each and so on. Although not everyone completed the plan, over £500 was raised.
- Vivienne Marshall twice invited the congregation to her house, first for a barbecue after church one Sunday, and again for a Tuesday afternoon.
- Bill and Joan Raw also opened up their house on a Saturday morning to display their mementos of Kenya.
- Dorothy Ellis organised a buy a date diary which ran for one year
- Louise Leyland held an Usborne Books evening.
- Pam Sanders and Helen Collins organised an evening at a Ladies fashion shop in the town
- Kathleen Horrocks sold pottery featuring pictures of the old church.
- Susan Applegate ran the Webb Ivory Christmas orders again, as well as a Quiz night held at the Cricket Club in September.
- Sheila Barnes arranged for the Willpower Youth Theatre to perform Hobson's Choice at Dundee United Reformed Church which was well attended and greatly enjoyed.
- Stanley Drinkwater arranged for a group of his friends to perform a Theatrical Review at the Theatre Royal in Ramsbottom,

Fundraising continued in the new building from 2002, but especially in 2009 when there was a problem with the roof, with performances from

Tony Berry from the Houghton Weavers, Brass Bands and Lizzie Jones. Focus then switched from 2010 to raise money for charities, rather than church funds, and the Community Cafe was started on a Saturday morning. Christ Church has always been very generous in it's giving to Baptist and Methodist Missions, and other charities such as Christian Aid, Action for Children, McMillan, Bury Hospice, Comic Relief and Children in Need



Christ Church – Ramsbottom

Great Eaves Road, Ramsbottom, Lancashire. BL0 0PX
www.christchurch-ramsbottom.co.uk

Proudly present:

‘A Lancashire Evening’

Featuring:

Mr. Tony Berry

Lead singer of the Houghton Weavers, in his one man show of humour, songs and stories.

On:

Friday 4th September 2009 at 7.30 PM

Tony returns by popular demand for more of his stories, humour and, of course, his music. This is Tony's third concert with us. Please come along and support this venture.

Tickets, which include a hot supper, are:

£7.50

From

Steve or Diana Bailey

Also in our Autumn concert series:

Rossendale Ladies Choir in concert – [Saturday 26th September 2009]

Tottington Public Band in concert – [Saturday 24th October 2009]

Lizze Jones Monologue – [Friday 6th November 2009]

Greater Manchester Police Big Band [at Ramsbottom Cricket Club]

[Friday 27th November 2009]

Further details about these concerts soon.

The Get-Away Club - Joan Raw

If I remember correctly, The Get-Away Club evolved from a Baptist Ladies' Group called the Contact Club.

The Get-Away Club. For ladies only (although on occasion men were invited), meant 'getting away from husbands and housework etc for an hour or two!' The Club met on the first Monday in the month in the evening, It was not intended for ladies only from our own Church, but for friends also to join the Club as well, and we had about 20 ladies attending quite regularly. The only months there would not be a meeting were January, because of the weather, and July, because of holidays.

There was always a short devotional time at the start of the meetings and also, sometimes, a funny story. Drinks and biscuits were served at the end.

The speakers over the years were many and varied: slides of people's holidays, flowers or gardens, speakers from different Charities or a specialist subject, craft evenings, and also the ladies went on trips out to places, i.e. Warburton's bread factory, Manchester Town Hall, The Midland Hotel and others.

A meal out in August to different restaurants was always enjoyed.

December was the Christmas Party, each person bringing something off a list, including turkey, salads etc, and one or two desserts. Everyone brought a gift so there was a lucky-dip type of choosing. Quizzes or Games followed (inc. Sheila Barnes' Charades!! when she was Chairperson) – some loved this some not so, but we had a laugh. The evening ended with mince pies and tea/coffee and some Carol singing.

From the subscriptions which were collected every week, and which

covered the charge of speakers, the Club was able to give money to a Charity chosen by the ladies and also some money to Church. This was decided at the AGM .

While it existed, The Get-Away Club was a great success – much enjoyed. Sadly, over the years we lost quite a few members for various reasons, and then, after 2 years of isolation because of Covid, numbers were so depleted that it never got going again.

I'm sure the ladies who remember the Club will agree that, while it lasted, it was a really enjoyable time together and a good night out.



Wednesday Lunch Club - Joan Raw

The Wednesday Lunch Club was originally a Wednesday Afternoon Fellowship. This was started as a meeting with a short devotional time then a time of games, quizzes etc.

During the time of our Minister, Gordon Hornblower, it was decided to change the format to having a short service, which was taken by either

ourselves, or sometimes a lay preacher would be invited to take, and then we would share lunch together; the meals being prepared by some of the ladies

Numbers grew, as some people who lived in Ashton Lodge joined us, as well as some who heard about this by word of mouth, so it was decided to use an outside caterer. A company in Loveclough, Home Made Fayre, started to bring in a two course meal which we served ourselves. This worked very well for quite some time.

During the ministry of Rev Clare Nicholls, the format changed yet again, and also the title Wednesday Lunch Club came into being. A Bible Study took place before lunch,. Then we would move into the other room where we had a short devotional, or thought for the day, followed by lunch and a quiz.

At Christmas a meal out was arranged each year, and various venues were visited, including Smithill's Hall and Bury College to name two.



The caterer from Home Made Fayre had to retire on health grounds so another one had to be found fairly quickly. A lady who ran Be Delicious Catering was recommended to us and brought a two course meal to church, again which we served ourselves. This carried on until the pandemic forced us to stop.



Unfortunately, numbers attending the lunch had dwindled considerably before the pandemic and we had been looking at different options. When the restrictions were lifted, it was decided that it would not be feasible for the Wednesday Lunch Club to start up again.

Many good times were had over the years on Wednesdays, as many of you will remember.

Memories from Joan Allen

One memory is when we slung a fabric tent over the pews to stop bits falling onto worshippers from the ceiling. The fabric was donated by BDA and erected by our men. That was the old Market Place Methodist building.



Carl Taylor and the fabric tent which was in place from 1993 - 1997

In 2014, we commemorated one hundred years since the start of WW1 with an afternoon tea (waitresses dressed in appropriate black with white apron and headband, as tea houses were in 1900s). Edith was the hero of the day, standing at the kitchen counter for 2 to 3 hours cutting crusts off sandwiches. It was very well supported and a bit teary at times as tales of heroism and despair were read out. We saw the memorial penny sent to relatives of fallen servicemen. All tea was served in china cups, etc. all brought out of cupboards, attics, etc. and lent for the occasion. Only one piece was broken (by Edith, and it was her own!)

We had away days and weekends, where we had teaching and got to know each other better. (Some at Whalley Abbey and some in the Lake District.) Also days in the park, playing games etc. and family fun days, when activities were organised for children of all ages, with quizzes and puzzles for the more mature.

We mustn't forget Lizzie Jones evenings, musical concerts such as organ recitals, choirs and brass bands.

Memories From Mary Vale

I had been to Christ Church occasionally when there had been Churches Together events in Ramsbottom but had never been to a Sunday service. However when Covid struck in 2020 all churches had to close so I was no longer able to attend Holcombe Brook Methodist Church, my usual place of worship. We could watch services on line which was really helpful but it wasn't the same.

Holcombe Brook Church didn't open as soon as Christ Church when Covid restrictions were lifted slightly and I found that Christ Church were holding a half hour act of worship on a Tuesday afternoon. I decided I would attend. It was so nice to be able to be with other Christians in fellowship together. But it was very different! There was a limit on the number who could attend. Masks had to be worn, hands had to be sanitised, chairs were 6ft apart, there was no singing or talking to each other but we could listen to the one leading the worship, we could listen to hymns, prayers and Bible Readings. But what a blessing it was just to be there.

When restrictions were lifted a little more the number allowed at a service was larger but we still had to wear masks at all times. The chairs were still 6ft apart. But singing outside was allowed so at the end of the service we went into the car park. The door was left open and we sang two or three hymns with Marjorie playing the piano just inside. It was wonderful to be able to sing together after such a long time not being allowed to.

Now that Covid restrictions have been totally lifted it is wonderful again to be able to join in worship on a Sunday morning, sitting next to each other, singing hymns and praying together and joining in conversation over coffee and cake after the service.

I'm sure I can say on behalf of all of us living at The Cottons who attend Christ Church how very thankful and grateful we are for the very warm and friendly welcome we have received from every one at Christ Church.

Flower Festival

On 24th and 25th June 2000, our church held a Flower Festival as part of Ramsbottom's Millennium Festival of 17th to 24th June, entitled "Old Traditions – New Beginnings". The event was the idea of Shirley Barrow and Kathleen Horrocks, who put much time and effort into its preparation, along with some expert flower arrangers. Tea was provided by Gladys Hamer and her team of volunteers.

Tony Bracegirdle and Shirley Barrow also held a Gardener's Question Time as part of the celebrations.



