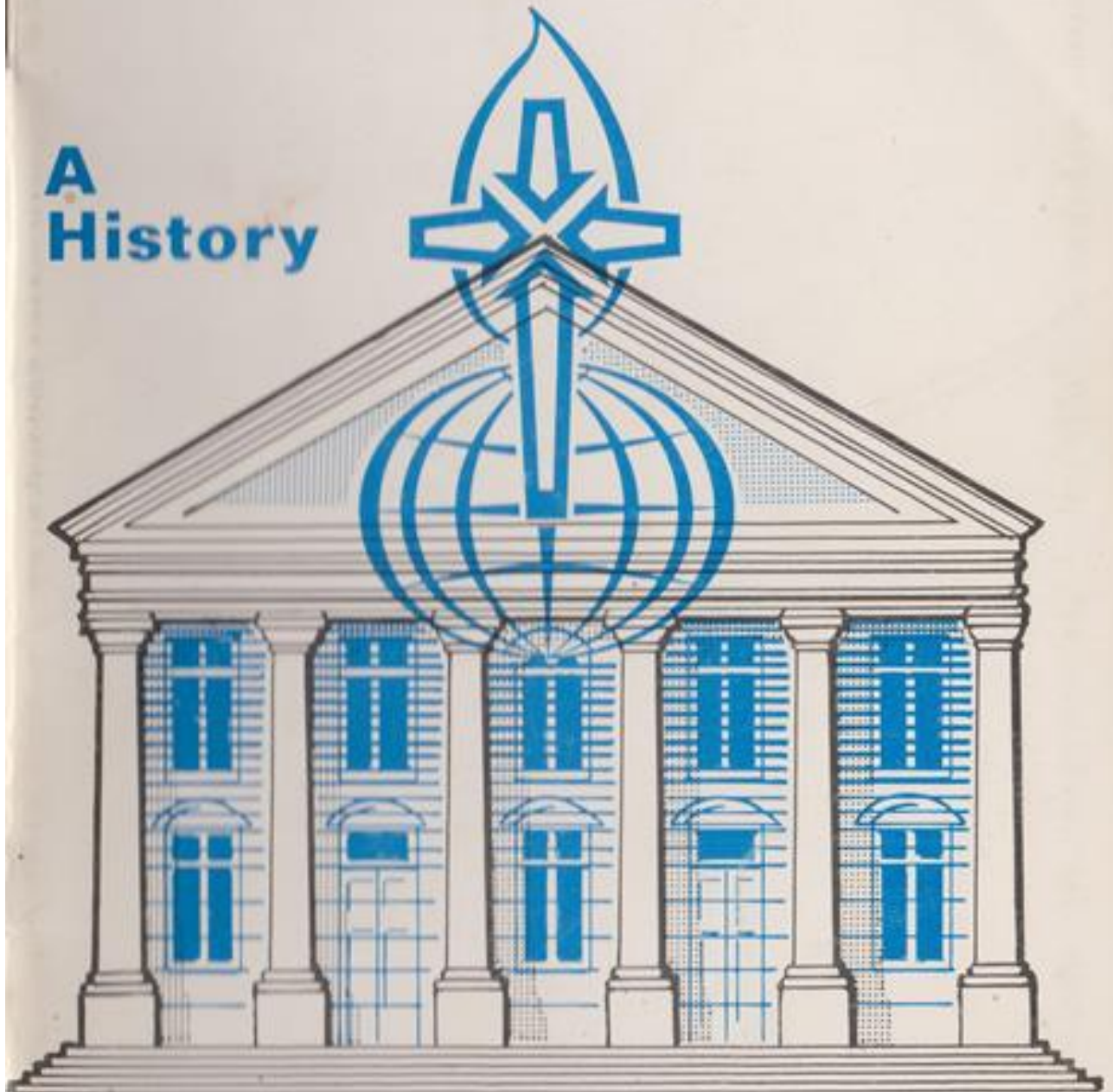


The Swindon

# Baptist Tabernacle

A  
History



## PREFACE

Sheila and David Pope have served a most valuable purpose in writing and producing this booklet for us. At this critical stage in the life of Baptists in Swindon it is important to have an up to date survey of our tradition.

Tradition is the living and moving stream that brings us to where we are; it never stands still, or at least if it does so stagnates and fails to carry people anywhere. In these pages will be found the life and movement of people called Baptists who have already moved buildings once in the course of their obedience and are now about to do so for the second time. What this will do is to encourage us as we, their heirs and successors, take the steps of faith that seem to be God's calling to us today.

Sometimes, in the midst of our developing ecumenism, people ask us what we are doing to safeguard our tradition. The answer that these pages provide is that a tradition cannot be safeguarded – it grows and develops. A tradition is something in which we can all be sufficiently confident that we are prepared to risk it and in the process what is valuable and enduring will last and what is transient will pass away.

The whole value of history is that it is like a family album of photographs – it tells you where you have come from. As you read this booklet you will remember some of the events and people that are pictured in its words. As you remember you will be reminded that these are your roots and that will give you courage in facing whatever future God has in store for you.

We are contributing our family story and our tradition to the stories and the traditions of the other central churches and in so doing we believe we are shaping the future under God. We can never be sure, of course, but then those of whom these pages speak walked like us, not by sight but by faith.

Ruth and John Matthews

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The impressions of the inside of the Tabernacle and of the proposed Central Church are by D. V. Pope, the photograph of the exterior of the Tabernacle was taken by H. G. Ellery and the photograph of the organ and pulpit is reproduced by courtesy of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England).

July 1977

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# The Swindon Baptist Tabernacle

## The Beginnings

NO HISTORY of the Baptist Tabernacle can be complete without mentioning how the Baptist cause in Swindon started.

At the end of the 1830s Swindon was developing. Workmen were arriving to work on the Swindon-Paddington railway line of the Great Western Railway. To begin with these Baptists made the journey out to the church at Stratton but their minister Rev. Richard Breeze realised the need for a place to meet in the rapidly developing Swindon. At first people from Stratton conducted services in private homes and later in a room over an ironmonger's shop at the corner of Fleet Street and Queen Street. In 1848 land was bought in Fleet Street and a chapel opened in January 1849 as a mission church of Stratton Green. These were not easy days for the new congregation. They were regarded with suspicion and often pelted with rotten fruit and eggs until it was discovered that the newcomers were peaceful and the persecution stopped. It continued as a mission church until 1885 when the Swindon Church was formed with 24 members and Rev. Richard Breeze continued as minister of both churches until his retirement. Growth was slow in these first years but gradually numbers were built up and in 1868 the church was extended.

In 1882 it was decided to build a chapel in Gorse Hill as the work was developing there. In the same year an application was received from Cambria Baptist Chapel asking to be taken over by the Fleet Street Church. Cambria Chapel had started in 1866 for Welsh speaking people working in the Great Western Railway works. However as time went on, English became the language spoken there and they expressed a wish to be attached to the Fleet Street Church. The building was bought from the Monmouthshire Association for £55 and since then a small flourishing community has existed there, led through the years by a succession of excellent leaders.

### The Building of the Tabernacle

MEANWHILE the church in Fleet Street continued to grow in numbers and in 1883 the following resolution was adopted – “That the steady prosperity of the Church and the constant increase of its members rendering it impossible for us to provide sittings for those who apply for membership, necessitates our taking steps to provide greater accommodation and as the high commercial value of our present site would make an enlargement of this Chapel too expensive and unsatisfactory, it is hereby decided to appoint a Committee to make enquiries as to what eligible site can be secured, with cost of the same, and report to the Church thereon.”

In September 1884 the “Sites Committee” reported as follows – “A very eligible site in Regent Street has been offered at a fair price. The Committee have reason to believe that the sale of the present premises will realise sufficient to cover the greater part of the cost of a new Chapel and Schools and although respecting and sharing the sympathy and affection which the members generally must feel for the old place which has been for so many years their spiritual home they cannot overlook the claims of others, nor the immense advantage offered by the solution of the financial difficulty – so that taking all things into consideration the Committee unanimously incline to the opinion that the best interests of the church will be served by adopting the proposal to sell the present premises and remove to another site.”

The church gave this report overwhelming support and the sale of Fleet Street went ahead. In June 1885 a large site was purchased in Regent Street on the Rolleston Estate for £474. This site was part of a green field with farm buildings nearby. Many of us can now appreciate how great a step this was. At this time the town planning was not complete, but it proved to be an excellent purchase on land half way between Old and New Town enabling the church to grow up in the centre of Swindon.

Plans were drawn up for the new building in a Classic style of architecture. It was to be built of Bath Stone and the front was to have six massive columns supporting a pediment. The chapel was to be 74 feet by 48 feet 6 inches with the schoolroom 67 feet 5 inches by 30 feet 2 inches. The contract was given to Mr. Thomas Barrett of Swindon for £5,798.

A building fund was set up; the first gift being £2.1.0d from a widow. 50 bags were made available to collect money to be given at the stone laying ceremony. This took place on the 4th November, 1885 when four stones weighing nearly a ton each were laid by five members of the congregation. The first was laid by the Church Secretary, Mr. W. B. Wearing and underneath this stone was placed a bottle containing the *Daily News*, *Swindon Advertiser* and *North Wilts Herald*. The second stone was laid by Mr. Samuel Colbourne, and underneath this a copy of the Baptist Magazine and Baptist Year Book. Mr. H. S. Deacon laid the third stone and a bottle containing copies of the *Baptist* and the *Freeman*, two denominational publications. Mr. A. D. Williams and Mr. Hawson laid the fourth stone. Under this was laid some coins of the realm and a parchment giving a brief history of the church, her pastors and present officers – the number of members – 305 and scholars in the Sunday School – 535 and an affirmation from the Pastor, Rev. F. Pugh: “On the date and by the Brethren before stated, these stones were laid to the Glory of God, in the presence of many witnesses, in full persuasion of the saving power of the Gospel, and the effectual working of the voluntary principle for the advancement of true religion.”

#### **Growth and Extension**

AFTER THIS there was a revival in the work of the church and it is recorded that there were so many to be baptised that they had to hold two baptismal services, one on Sunday and one the following Wednesday.

On February 17th 1886 the Memorial stone for the schoolroom was laid over the entrance with the following inscription – “This memorial stone was laid by Samuel Iles, Esq. of Bristol, on behalf of the Officers and Teachers of this Sunday School, as a memento of their untiring zeal and faith in God.”

The building progressed rapidly and on Wednesday 20th October 1886 the opening service was conducted at the Tabernacle by the Rev. E. G. Grange of Bristol. As numbers grew the schoolroom became too small and the Primary Schoolroom was built by voluntary labour.

The Tabernacle has always valued its connections with other churches in the town and when the National Free Church Council opened a branch in Swindon, it appointed representatives to the council and held the first week of United Prayer and Communion in January 1892.



The church was growing so rapidly that in 1895 Rev. S. J. Ford, a man who had just completed his ministerial training was appointed to help the pastor with his work at the Tabernacle and also at Gorse Hill and Cambria.

In 1898, land was purchased for the Caretaker's house and in 1901, land was bought at Rodbourne for an extension church. Extension work at Gorse Hill was prospering and as larger premises were needed, a site was bought in 1901 and the opening service performed in 1904 by Rev. Dr. John Clifford.

The Tabernacle's first missionary representative – Miss Minnie Russell – set out in 1903 and eventually went to work with the B.M.S. in China. Since then a number of people have gone overseas from the Tabernacle to give service in various countries and in various ways.

In 1907 a small church and school at Salisbury came on the market and the Tabernacle put in an offer of £150 for it. This was accepted and the church transferred to the site at Rodbourne, opening for worship in April 1908.

It had been the procedure, enforced by the rule of the church, that candidates for membership should come before the church to relate their experience of conversion and witness for Christ. However in 1894 this rule was amended and a Committee of visitors reported to the Church. In 1908 it was further amended to call for a written report instead of a verbal one.

In March 1909 the Tabernacle was thoroughly renovated at a cost of £140. When the Tabernacle was built room was provided for an Organ Chamber but because of the 'Building Debt' they had not been able to afford an organ. People began to feel the need for an organ and a fund was set up for its purchase. An organ was offered from West London Tabernacle for £80, installed for £148 and used for the first time in June 1911.

In 1913 the members at Gorse Hill asked to become a separate church and this the Tabernacle agreed to although continuing to give substantial financial help for the next three years.

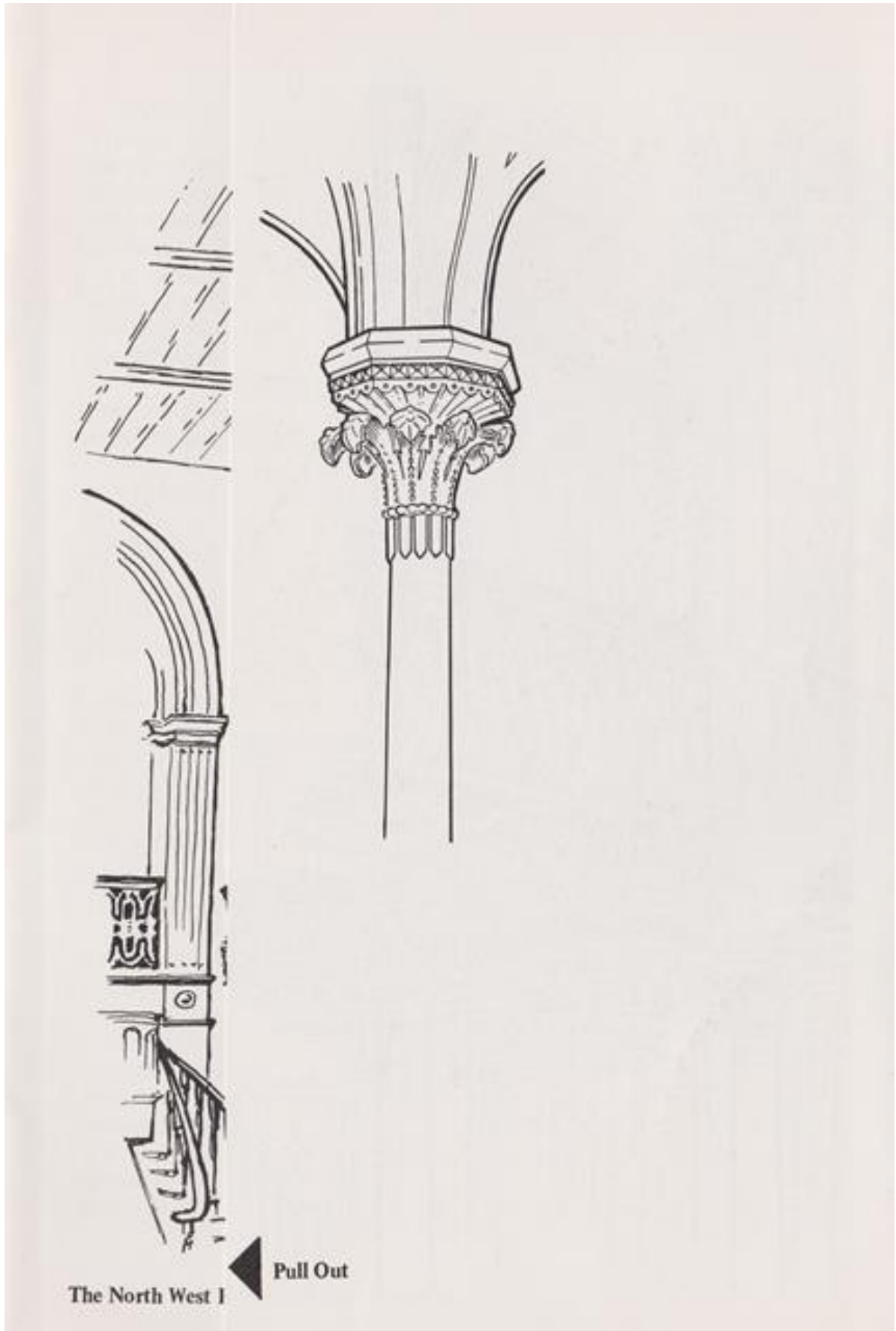
During the First World War a number of young men from the Tabernacle went to the war and 15 of them died in the service of their country, their names being recorded on a plaque in the Tabernacle. After demolition these names will be transferred to a book of remembrance.

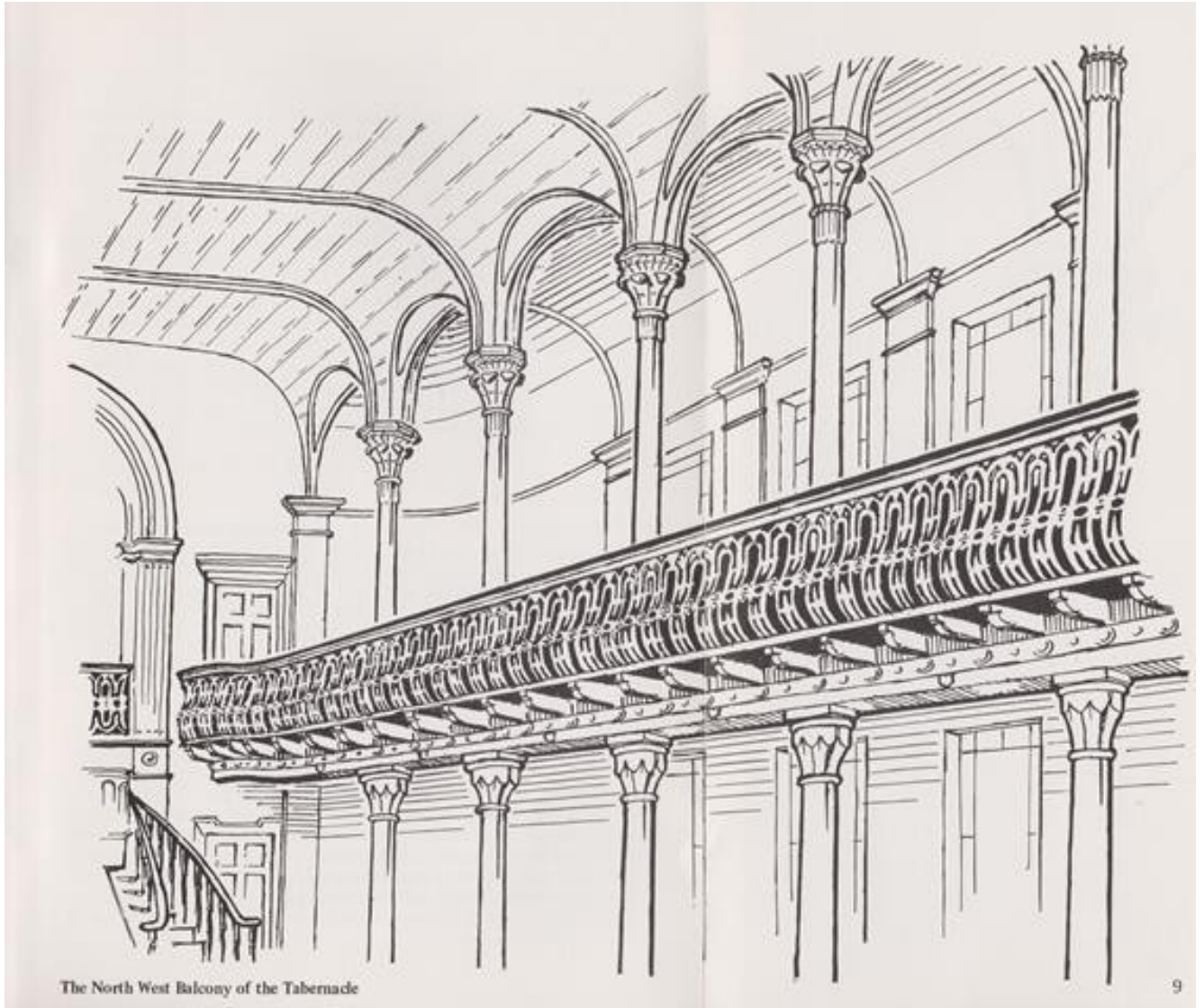
During this time the Baptist Church Hymnal was introduced and also the Service of Dedication of Infants.





The Organ and Pulpit of the Tabernacle





The North West Balcony of the Tabernacle

### **Between the Wars**

AFTER THE war finished, it was felt that some opportunity should be given for recreation and social intercourse and the Church Institute was formed in the large schoolroom. Many of today's older members couple their memories of the Institute with those of the early morning service held for many years on midsummer day.

In 1924 a Manse was bought for the minister and some improvements were made to the Tabernacle building. Electric light was installed in the church and the following year an electric organ blower was bought.

About the same time Cambria were having problems with their building and money was loaned to them to do the necessary repairs. This debt was paid off in a few years.

In 1929 a new heating system was installed and the draughts which had troubled members for years disappeared. In 1936 to mark the Jubilee of the church, money was set aside to repair the stonework of the Tabernacle and to recondition the organ.

### **Women in the Church**

THROUGHOUT the years in the Tabernacle women have taken a part in the life of the church. Under a revised constitution in 1908 women were eligible to become Elders and Deacons but it wasn't until 1920 that women were elected to these positions. However, since then women have played their part as both Elders and Deacons and in 1971 the first woman minister, Rev. Ruth Matthews, was appointed.

### **The Children**

THROUGHOUT the years many organisations have started – some have continued to this day, others closed when they had served their usefulness. The Sunday School has always been part of the Church. In earlier days because of high numbers it was necessary to hold two schools – one from 9.45 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. and the second from 2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. A Bible class was held for those over 15 but the boys and girls were kept separate. During the Second World War the Schoolroom was commandeered by the Armed Forces for training and sleeping so the Sunday School was held in the Church or in Clarence Street School.



Around 1960 it was felt that the Sunday School should be more integrated with the adults in the church and the children's parents and so Junior Family Church was started. As new teaching methods were introduced, the need for accommodation grew and the galleries were divided into rooms and given appropriate names such as the Carey Room. As part of the Junior Family Church activity some of the children entered the local scripture examinations held each year. The Tabernacle children did very well in these and on a number of occasions won the Trophy presented for the best 'school'. Another innovation helped people become familiar with the names of the children. Two children helped to give out hymn books before morning service and also helped with the collection. Their names were put up on the notice board for people to see. A Cradle Roll service was held each year, enabling parents to continue the link which had been established when they brought their children for dedication.

When the Methodist Central Hall closed their children were united with those of the Tabernacle and followed the same scheme of work. So, as our 'togetherness' has grown, all the churches have become involved in a joint Junior Family Church where differences in denominational procedure are no longer obstacles to the children becoming one part of the whole Central Church.

#### **The Temperance Movement**

THIS MOVEMENT was prominent in the 19th century and in 1882 the Band of Hope was formed in the Fleet Street Church. Their members could be identified by a small square of blue ribbon which they wore on their coats or dresses. Singing formed a good part of their activities and one of their better known songs was: 'My drink is water bright, water bright, water bright. My drink is water bright from the crystal stream.'

The Band of Hope lasted for about 40 years but its effect on its members was life-long and was also felt by their children and grandchildren.

#### **Young Peoples' Society of the Christian Endeavour**

THIS SOCIETY was started in 1894 when it was felt that the young people of the congregation should have some direct Christian teaching apart from Sunday School and Church Services. Some of the practical work they took on was to distribute gifts and parcels at Christmas time to the needy of the district and the "Christmas Parcels Fund" was instituted to pay for these gifts.

During the Second World War the Senior Endeavour made themselves responsible for sending parcels of food and clothing and news to the young men and women of the Tabernacle who had joined the Forces. This continued until all the young people had been demobilised. The Y.P.S.C.E. continued to function until sometime after 1950 but it was decided to replace it with the Young People's Fellowship which it was felt catered for the needs of young people better. This has continued with one or two breaks, in various forms and with various names to suit the needs of the young people until the present day.

### **The Uniformed Organisations**

In 1941 a church meeting agreed to form 'Open' companies of Guides and Brownies and 'Open' troops of Scouts and Cubs. Information is scarce about these organisations in the early days until the 1960s when a new troop, 13th Swindon Scouts and Cubs were formed. They later amalgamated with St. Augustine (Rodbourne) to become the 5th Wyvern Scouts.

The Guides were reformed in 1965 but because of lack of leadership joined the 4th Swindon (Trinity Presbyterian) until 1970 when the 25th Swindon Guides was reformed. The three Guide companies of the Central Church now share their meetings and work in close contact with each other although remaining separate units. The Brownies carried on until 1950 when the pack closed to reopen under its present leadership in 1963.

### **The Church Magazine**

In 1926 the Tabernacle Institute Magazine was started. Unfortunately it did not achieve popularity and lack of support closed it. In 1936 a magazine was started again by the Rev. Clifford Cleal and has continued in some form until the present day. At first the magazine was printed by outside agencies but as the cost of printing rose it was decided to cut stencils within the church and duplicate them, so part of the Schoolroom became the 'office' with its own duplicating equipment. The duplicating of the present day magazine, *The Spokesman* has moved to the offices of the Thamesdown Voluntary Services Council and a team of dedicated people edit, type and collate these magazines which are then distributed to the homes around Swindon by the Church Visitors. These visitors report to the ministers any problems which may occur within the Church Family.

### **Membership and Stewardship**

In 1964 the question of Open and Closed membership was raised and after much discussion the church constitution was changed in 1965 to read "whereby people who were true Christians but did not wish or could not be baptised by immersion were admitted to Church membership as Associate members."

Also in 1964 a Stewardship Campaign was undertaken with two main aims; (1) to increase the power of the spirit of God in the Church and neighbourhood, (2) to increase the Christian Fellowship in the Church. Amongst other things two suppers were held which were attended by a large number of people. Printed questionnaires were circulated and the results included 21 new church members, a number of people inquiring about baptism and more people using the church envelope scheme for their giving. The Flower Fund was also instituted and has since then provided flowers for the Rostrum.

### **The Pigeons**

IN THE LATE 60s pigeons were becoming an increasing nuisance on the front of the church and Rentokil was called in to see if they could remove them. Various schemes were tried with not very satisfactory results. To this day the pigeons still reside on the ledges above the front of the church as many present members know to their cost, having spent time before the Sunday services cleaning the steps.

### **Christian Unity**

IN FEBRUARY 1968 a motion was taken at church meeting for the guidance of the representatives going to the Baptist Union meetings. "That this church believes that discussions on Christian Unity should take place between the Baptist Union and other denominations". Later that year a special church meeting was called to review the Tabernacle buildings and five options were put forward;

- (1) To stay as we are with no radical change
- (2) To alter the building structurally and perhaps sell the rear
- (3) To develop the rear of the building and sell the church
- (4) To redevelop the whole site
- (5) To move to a new site.



Reaction to these ideas came from all sides and it was agreed to allow the church officers to look into all the possibilities. During the next three years various possibilities were discussed but in 1971 the Town Council finally decided they did not want to purchase the Tabernacle and would have no objection to a request being made for it to be removed from the List of Scheduled Buildings. So the decision was taken: "We, the members of the Baptist Tabernacle, Swindon instruct our advisors Messrs. Kemp and Kemp, and Peter Reynolds to apply for outline planning permission to develop the site for mixed commercial and/or religious development".

In September 1971 the Swindon Churches Commission reported on the churches in the centre of Swindon and the following month a 'Ways and Means' committee was appointed to consider its recommendations. In the meantime joint services with the Methodist Central Hall and Trinity U.R.C. took place during the summer months.

#### **Transport and Tapes**

WHILE THESE discussions were taking place, the more mundane aspects of church life had to be considered. The transport department no longer ran Sunday morning services and people from some areas were finding it increasingly difficult to get to church. Consequently a system was arranged for people with cars to pick up those without and bring them to the service, a mini-bus collecting those in areas not covered by private cars. In 1972 a number of cassette recorders were purchased so that some of the services could be taped and taken to people who could not get to church regularly on a Sunday. This service is much appreciated by those who use it.

#### **The Ecumenical Experiment**

IN OCTOBER 1972 a special church meeting was held at which the following motion was put forward: "That the church resolves to enter a covenant with such other churches in the centre of Swindon as will share with us, to become an area of ecumenical experiment and to share our life as closely with those other churches as we can. That this church further resolves to become part of a new worshipping, witnessing and serving fellowship as soon as the necessary steps can be taken. We declare our intention of sharing in a new ecumenical centre and accept the ministry of a team of ministers from various Christian traditions as laid down and safeguarded in the guide lines for Areas of Ecumenical Experiment. We declare our intention of



## The Proposed Central Church



doing all in our power to bring this project to fulfillment for the sake of God's Kingdom and in the Name of Jesus Christ". After much discussion the voting was, for 51, against 15. Therefore as there was a two-thirds majority the motion was carried.

### The Central Churches

SHORTLY AFTER this a letter was received from the Methodist Central Hall asking if they could share the Tabernacle buildings until such time as the ecumenical centre became a reality and in April 1973 they moved in with the Tabernacle congregation. Other churches had expressed interest in the scheme, namely Trinity U.R.C., Broad Street Church of Christ and Sanford Street U.R.C.

In March 1973 the Swindon Central Churches Council was formed, its first task being to carry out negotiations leading towards a new ecumenical centre and to make application to become an area of ecumenical experiment.

Since the Methodists had joined the Baptists it became increasingly obvious that the Tabernacle did not have enough space for all its activities so in April 1973 the Tabernacle/Central Hall became joint tenants of St. Aldhelm's Hall from St. Mark's Parish Church.

### **Property and Archives**

THE NEGOTIATIONS for new buildings had received a number of setbacks during the years but in November 1973 a special church meeting recommended that the Tabernacle site be made available for redevelopment of a building for ecumenical work in the centre of Swindon. Although the plans for a new building did not go smoothly the life of the Central Churches has continued to develop and the plan for an ecumenical centre has never wavered. In February 1974 the five churches covenanted together and the Team ministry was formed. This led to a progressive union of many of the societies and organisations. In January 1976 a new pastoral system began with the congregation being grouped into areas each with a district visitor who reports any pastoral needs to the Team.

Although a lot of the work was done in conjunction with the other central churches the Tabernacle still held its own church meetings and in June 1975 a proposal to have budgetary giving within the church was recommended and accepted. Around the same time it was agreed to purchase a new house for the caretaker and a property in Belgrave Street became available and the caretaker moved in. It was agreed that, with the Tabernacle's long history and the hope that it would soon have new buildings, all the archives should be sent to County Hall, Trowbridge, for safe keeping.

In November 1976 the ministers told the church of their intention to buy a property in Prospect Place to be nearer the Central Church, so the manse in Windsor Road was put up for sale.

### **United Worship**

IN SEPTEMBER 1976 the worship of the five churches was united, although evening services had to move from building to building. In February 1978 the Baptist Tabernacle, Methodist Central Hall, Sanford Street U.R.C., Broad Street Church of Christ and Trinity U.R.C. will formally be constituted as Central Church, Swindon.

### **The Closure of the Tabernacle**

AT A special church meeting in February 1977 it was agreed that, because of the current economic difficulties, the Baptist Tabernacle should be closed for public worship on the 3rd July, 1977.

As the premises were becoming unusable and repairs would not have been a good investment it was also decided to seek to have the Tabernacle demolished as soon as possible.



The Exterior of the Tabernacle

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Many people have memories of both happy and sad times in the Tabernacle but we look forward to the future of Central Church as our forefathers looked to the future in 1885 when they built and moved to the Baptist Tabernacle, Regent Circus.

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## PASTORS

Rev. Richard Breeze	1855-1865
Rev. John M. Murphy	1866-1873
Rev. G. T. Edgley	1873-1876
Rev. Frederick Pugh	1877-1897
Rev. W. Llewelyn Williams	1898-1906
Rev. J. Ivory Cripps	1908-1914
Rev. A. J. Nixon	1915-1923
Rev. E. W. Probert	1924-1934
Rev. C. H. Cleal	1935-1942
Rev. C. Sidney Hall	1945-1959
Rev. W. Langthorne	1960-1962
Rev. David Hodges	1964-1970
Rev. John and Ruth Matthews	1971-





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**SWINDON CENTRAL CHURCHES**  
**Baptist Tabernacle 1886-1977**

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**Order of Service for Morning Worship**  
**Sunday July 3rd, 1977 at 11 a.m.**

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The Service will be conducted by Revd. Sidney Hall (Pastor 1945-1959),  
and Revd. David Hodges (Pastor 1964-1970).  
The preacher will be Revd. Clifford Cleal (Pastor 1935-1942).

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## **WORSHIP**

### **Scripture Sentences**

**Hymn (Baptist Hymn Book No. 33) Te Deum Laudamus**

1. We praise, we worship Thee, O God,  
Thy sovereign power we sound abroad:  
All nations bow before Thy throne,  
And Thee the eternal Father own.
2. Loud hallelujahs to Thy name  
Angels and seraphim proclaim:  
The heavens and all the powers on high  
With rapture constantly do cry,
3. "O holy, holy, holy Lord!  
Thou God of hosts, by all adored;  
Earth and the heavens are full of Thee,  
Thy light, Thy power, Thy majesty."
4. Apostles join the glorious throng  
And swell the loud immortal song:  
Prophets enraptured hear the sound  
And spread the hallelujah round.
5. Victorious martyrs join their lays  
And shout the omnipotence of grace,  
While all Thy Church through all the earth  
Acknowledge and extol Thy worth.
6. Glory to Thee, O God most high!  
Father, we praise Thy majesty,  
The Son, the Spirit, we adore:  
One Godhead, blest for evermore. Amen.



## Prayers

### Greetings and announcements

The Choir: The Anthem, "Thanksgiving" by Eric Thiman.

### A word of explanation to the young people

Hymn (Baptist Hymn Book No. 264)

1. Thy hand, O God, has guided  
Thy flock from age to age;  
The wondrous tale is written,  
Full clear, on every page;  
Our fathers owned Thy goodness,  
And we their deeds record;  
And both of this bear witness,  
One Church, One Faith, one Lord.
2. Thy heralds brought glad tidings  
To greatest, as to least;  
They bade men rise, and hasten  
To share the great King's feast;  
And this was all their teaching,  
In every deed and word,  
To all alike proclaiming  
One Church, one Faith, one Lord.
3. Through many a day of darkness,  
Through many a scene of strife,  
The faithful few fought bravely  
To guard the nation's life.  
Their gospel of redemption,  
Sin pardoned, man restored,  
Was all in this enfolded,  
One Church, one Faith, one Lord.
4. Thy mercy will not fail us,  
Nor leave Thy work undone;  
With Thy right hand to help us,  
The victory shall be won;  
And then, by men and angels,  
Thy name shall be adored,  
And this shall be their anthem,  
One Church, one Faith, one Lord.

## WORD

Scripture Readings Joshua 24 verses 1, 13 - 28  
Hebrews 4 verses 1 - 12

Hymn (Baptist Hymn Book No. 247 – Tune Deerhurst No. 370)

1. God hath spoken by his prophets,  
Spoken his unchanging word;  
Each from age to age proclaiming  
God the one, the righteous Lord!  
Mid the world's despair and turmoil  
One firm anchor holding fast,  
God is on His throne eternal,  
He alone the first and last.
2. God hath spoken by Christ Jesus,  
Christ, the everlasting Son,  
Brightness of the Father's glory,  
With the Father ever one;  
Spoken by the Word Incarnate,  
God of God ere time began,  
Light of light, to earth descending,  
Man, revealing God to man.
3. God yet speaketh by his Spirit  
Speaking to the hearts of men,  
In the age-long word declaring,  
God's own message, now as then.  
Through the rise and fall of nations  
One sure faith yet standeth fast;  
God abides, His word unchanging,  
God alone the first and last.

Sermon: "Adventures in Obedience"

## RESPONSE

The Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

The Offering

Hymn (Baptist Hymn Book No. 256)

1. For the might of Thine arm we bless Thee, our God, our fathers' God;  
Thou hast kept Thy pilgrim people by the strength of Thy staff and rod;  
Thou hast called us to the journey which faithless feet ne'er trod;  
*For the might of thine arm we bless Thee, our God, our fathers' God.*
2. For the love of Christ constraining that bound their hearts as one;  
For the faith in truth and freedom in which their work was done:  
For the peace of God's evangel wherewith their feet were shod;
3. We are watchers of a beacon whose light must never die:  
We are guardians of an altar that shows Thee ever nigh;  
We are children of Thy freemen who sleep beneath the sod;
4. May the shadow of Thy presence around our camp be spread;  
Baptize us with the courage with which Thou blessed our dead;  
O keep us in the pathway their saintly feet have trod;

## THE BLESSING







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## SWINDON CENTRAL CHURCHES

### Baptist Tabernacle 1886-1977

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Order of Service for Evening Worship and Holy Communion  
Sunday July 3rd, 1977 at 6.30 p.m.

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The presiding ministers will be Revd. Ruth Matthews, and Revd. Derryck Evans.

The preacher will be Revd. John Matthews.

Scripture Readings: Revd. R. A. Cowley, General Superintendent,  
Baptist Union.

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### MEMORY

The Choir: Introit, *God is Good*.

Affirmation: (The congregation will stand)

**Minister:** God created every race of people to inhabit the whole Earth's surface.  
We were to seek God and perhaps touch him and find him.

**Congregation:** Yet he is not far from each one of us,  
For in him we live and move,  
in him we exist.  
He has brought us into being  
and without him, we could not be.

Hymn (Baptist Hymn Book No. 403)

1. For all the saints who from their labours rest,  
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,  
Thy name, O Jesus, be for ever blest.  
*Allelujah! Allelujah!*
2. Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might;  
Thou, Lord, their captain in the well fought fight;  
Thou, in the darkness still their one true light,  
*Allelujah! Allelujah!*
3. O may Thy soldiers, faithful, true and bold,  
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,  
And win, with them, the victor's crown of gold.  
*Allelujah! Allelujah!*
4. O blest communion, fellowship divine!  
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;  
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.  
*Allelujah! Allelujah!*
5. But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day:  
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;  
The King of glory passes on His way.  
*Allelujah! Allelujah!*
6. From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,  
Through gates of pearl, streams in the countless host,  
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
*Allelujah! Allelujah!*

Prayers of Confession

Silence

Assurance of Pardon

## EXPERIENCE

The Choir: Maunder's setting of the Magnificat.

Scripture Readings Genesis 12 verses 1 - 9  
Revelation 21 verses 1 - 7; 22 - 27  
and chapter 22 verses 1 - 5

Hymn (*Praise for Today* No. 4)

1. All who worship God in Jesus, all who serve the Son of Man,  
In the Kingdom he prepared for us before the world began,  
Know the purpose of his coming is the test of all we plan:  
Lord Jesus, live in us!
2. As the need of man increases in a world that grows afraid,  
When the tempter finds a reason why the truth should be betrayed,  
We who bear the name of Christian, we know who must be obeyed:  
Lord Jesus, live in us!
3. It's his deeper revolution that redeems us from the Fall;  
It's his reconciling Spirit shall make comrades of us all;  
It's the joy of God within us cries in answer to his call:  
Lord Jesus, live in us! Live in me!

Sermon: "I AM; that is who I am"

## HOPE

Hymn (Baptist Hymn Book No. 492)

1. All my hope on God is founded;  
He doth still my trust renew,  
Me through change and chance He guideth,  
Only good and only true,  
God unknown,  
He alone  
Calls my heart to be His own.
2. Pride of man and earthly glory,  
Sword and crown betray his trust;  
What with care and toil he buildeth,  
Tower and temple, fall to dust,  
But God's power,  
Hour by hour,  
Is my temple and my tower.
3. God's great goodness aye endureth,  
Deep His wisdom, passing thought:  
Splendour, light, and life attend Him,  
Beauty springeth out of nought,  
Evermore,  
From His store  
New-born worlds rise and adore.
4. Still from man to God eternal  
Sacrifice of praise be done,  
High above all praises praising  
For the gift of Christ His Son,  
Christ doth call  
One and all:  
Ye who follow shall not fall.

#### Act of Commitment.

*Minister: Let us renew our commitment to one another.*

*Congregation: Before you, our Father, and in the presence of each other, we declare our loyalty to the common life which is your gift to us. Gladly we accept the demands which you make upon us.*

*Minister: Let us renew our commitment to the world-wide Church of God.*

*Congregation: Before you, Jesus, Lord and Christ, we pledge ourselves to share in your mission through the Church. We accept your calling and seek to find fulfilment in partnership together.*

*Minister: Let us renew our commitment.*

*Congregation: Before you, O Holy Spirit, we offer ourselves to dwell with all people as you dwell with them. Let God's salvation be made known and His justice be revealed in the sight of the nations.*

*Minister: Amen! Christ our beginning, Christ our end, Christ with us now and forever.*

*Congregation: The Grace of the Lord Jesus be with us all. Amen.*

#### The Offering

## **MEMORY, EXPERIENCE & HOPE**

#### The Communion

#### Words of Invitation

#### Hymn (Praise for Today No. 40)

1. I come with joy to meet my Lord,  
Forgiven, loved and free,  
In awe and wonder to recall  
His life laid down for me.
2. I come with Christians far and near,  
To find, as all are fed,  
Man's true community of love  
In Christ's communion bread.
3. As Christ breaks bread for men to share,  
Each proud division ends.  
The love that made us makes us one,  
And strangers now are friends.
4. And thus with joy we meet our Lord.  
His presence, always near,  
Is in such friendships better known:  
We see, and praise him here.
5. Together met, together bound,  
We'll go our different ways,  
And as his people in the world  
We'll live and speak his praise.



**Words of Institution**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Distribution and Sharing of Bread and Wine (We shall eat and drink as we are served)**

Minister: *ALLELUAH! ALLELUJAH!*

Congregation: CHRIST HAS DIED  
CHRIST IS RISEN  
CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN  
ALLELUAH!

**Hymn (Baptist Hymn Book No. 539)**

1. "Forward!" be our watchword,  
Steps and voices joined;  
Seek the things before us,  
Not a look behind:  
Burns the fiery pillar  
At our army's head;  
Who shall dream of shrinking,  
By our captain led?  
Forward through the desert,  
Through the toil and fight:  
Jordan flows before us,  
Zion beams with light.
2. Forward, flock of Jesus,  
Salt of all the earth,  
Till each yearning purpose  
Spring to glorious birth,  
Sick, they ask for healing,  
Blind, they grope for day:  
Pour upon the nations  
Wisdom's loving ray.  
Forward, out of error,  
Leave behind the night;  
Forward through the darkness,  
Forward into light.
3. Glories upon glories  
Has our God prepared,  
By the souls that love Him  
One day to be shared:  
Eye has not beheld them,  
Ear has never heard;  
Nor of these has uttered  
Thought or speech a word:  
Forward, marching forward,  
Where the heaven is bright,  
Till the veil be lifted,  
Till our faith be sight.

**THE BLESSING**

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