

# TO SERVE THE PRESENT AGE



To commemorate the redevelopment of Ludlow Methodist Church 2006-2026

**Let us build a house where love can dwell,  
StF 409 v 1,4 and 5**

Let us build a house where love can dwell  
and all can safely live,  
a place where saints and children tell  
how hearts learn to forgive.  
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,  
rock of faith and vault of grace;  
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:  
*All are welcome,  
all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where hands will reach  
beyond the wood and stone  
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,  
and live the world they've known.  
Here the outcast and the stranger  
bear the image of God's face;  
let us bring an end to fear and danger:  
*All are welcome,  
all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where all are named,  
their songs and visions heard  
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed  
as words within the Word.  
Built of tears and cries and laughter,  
prayers of faith and songs of grace,  
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:  
*All are welcome,  
all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.*

**Mary Haugen**

CCLI:137044

**Foreword**

I am so proud of what this place has achieved. I remember the pews, the organ, the steeply raked gallery at the back, and apart from the ironwork on the choir gallery either side of the pulpit..... it was brown!. I remember too, the anguish and the fear of the unknown. Where would the money come from? Was it right to spend so much on a building? What would happen to the folks who loved the building as it was, and those who worshipped at Zion and were losing their chapel?

But now the place is flooded with light. The worship area has a calmness, but equally it can be filled with noise and laughter and song and it loses nothing of its special atmosphere.

I like to think that everyone entering this place, comes to feel that spirit in the welcome and friendship we can give, helped by our refurbished building.

*God is here! As we his people meet.. in an age of change and doubt, help us work your purpose out. StF no25*

**Janet Williams, Senior Steward  
April 2026**

*'Thy faithfulness, Lord, each moment we find'*

*Hymns and Psalms 805*

### **The Vision**

**Stephen Dalton, Steward 2006**

**T**he Methodist Church was raised up 'to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land,' and the service of our neighbour, based on Bible, hymn book and prayer, has been a key part of our understanding of what it is to be a Christian.

We believe God has been calling us to serve Him here, by serving the people and town of Ludlow and its neighbourhood, not just with time or money, but with how we use our building. We have redeveloped the Methodist Church building, mostly by changing the spaces within the walls, to make them accessible to people of all needs, abilities and ages, and any groups in the area who need a space to meet.

In offering this space we believe they will meet, not just with each other, but with God. The light that pours into the building and the peace we find here have always been here as signs of God's life in this town. Now they are seen more clearly and have somehow, become more real, more easily touched.

The walls will no longer echo only to prayer and praise twice each Sunday, one day each week, but in each day to listening and sharing, hearing and caring; a reflection of the ministry of Jesus and a small part of the Kingdom of God.

This is our vision, one shared with the whole local Christian community through CTAL (Churches Together around Ludlow), who have so generously supported us with prayer and time, commitment and money, to help create 'a Christian centre for Ludlow'

### **One day in Wesley's I saw a vision**

**L**ooking round I realised that what I was seeing was a vision of the kingdom of God.

There were a couple of tables of young mums with several children, one in a highchair, eating or playing with our toys, at another couple of tables there were visitors to the town, at another some 'regulars' and at yet another, a carer feeding someone in a wheelchair.

All relaxed, all 'at home', all made welcome.

Once in Broad Street I caught a glimpse of the Kingdom.

***A Wesley's volunteer.***

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*'The church of Christ, in every age  
beset by change, but Spirit-led'  
StF 415*

**Challenge and Change,  
Jean Brown, Church Secretary, 2006**

**B**uildings must change to meet the needs of their occupants, a fact which is supported by the architecture of Ludlow. In the fifteenth century the nobility created comfortable apartments in Ludlow Castle, rejecting the more basic amenities of the earlier buildings. As timber framing went out of fashion in the eighteenth century prosperous residents of houses in the town created new facades, making the symmetry of contemporary architecture fit the rather more awkward shape of their medieval houses.

Within the resources of Shropshire Archives are lodged the records of Ludlow Methodists which show that despite a certain innate conservatism the churches have accepted the challenge to change. Within two hundred years of Methodism in Ludlow there have been two Primitive Methodist chapels on one site, with two further chapels in the New Road area, plus two Wesleyan chapels. Of these six buildings, all of which still exist, only Broad Street chapel remains as a place of worship. What links the present to the past is the process

by which church congregations had to face the challenge of renewing and refurbishing their buildings, with all the complicated relationships with builders and architects and the ever pressing problem of raising the necessary funds to complete the work. In an article in 'The Methodist Recorder' of 1899 the writer records that in 1892 the Superintendent Minister had written 'Forlorn Hope' on the Plan before he left the manse. Within six years, the work of two ministers, Thomas Riley and E. Ashton-Jones, had led the fellowship of the church into complete repayment of their debts and the building of the new Sunday School. So, in a similar spirit of dedication and generosity, the recent refurbishment of Broad Street chapel has been accomplished.

When Broad Street chapel was built in 1879 it replaced a large house which had originally belonged to the Salwey family, and which had then become the Crown Inn, graced by a visit from the young Princess Victoria in 1832. James Jones, a local veterinary surgeon had made it his home and practice, selling it to the Methodists for £2,200. In 2005 the skeleton of a horse was found and its burial on the site may indicate that this was a favourite horse of James Jones. Both James and his son Adrian, who became an internationally renowned sculptor, were well known in local equestrian circles. Adrian Jones donated the plaster original of his war memorial sculpture for Adelaide in Australia to Ludlow and it remained in the Town Hall until 1986. In March 2006 the head of the horse, the only part of the sculpture to survive, was restored and donated to Ludlow College. Such incidents link the more recent history of the building with the past and provide glimpses into an earlier age. This is reinforced by the minutes of the Building Committee which met regularly to plan and oversee the building of the new chapel. The earlier place of worship in Lower Broad Street had been built in 1800 and had been refurbished in 1832 with the creation of galleries. But by the 1870s the building was too small for the congregation and a new church was planned. The architect was William Ranger of Finsbury Pavement in London, but unfortunately the minutes have not survived which might have explained how he came to be appointed. The builder appointed from the tenders offered was Nivetts of Ironbridge.

The Trustees then had over a decade of being involved with the responsibilities of various properties, having bought at least two in Old Street, including a large house for the Manse. An appeal leaflet from 1884 has survived, when the debt on Broad Street remained at £3,417 out of the original cost of £4,650. The list of donors contains some interesting local names, including Mr Bodenham who gave one guinea. An anonymous 'Friend in Need' had donated £100. Other chapels in the District contributed over £400 which had been raised through bazaars, lectures and local church organisations.

The challenge must have seemed daunting, but under the ministry of Thomas Riley from 1892 to 1895 the debt was paid off. The financial drain of owning all these properties caused many hours of discussion but finally in 1896, the manse was sold as a site for the new British School at a price of £800 and in 1897 the Lower Broad Street chapel was sold. The buyer was Gaius Smith, well known Ludlow Grocer, who in 1898 would become the first non-conformist mayor of Ludlow.

All through this period the Trustees were aware of the need to maintain and extend the practical use of the building. In 1889 it was "*resolved that two pews be taken away from the front of the Chapel downstairs and four cross pews made for the choir, in order that they may for the future come downstairs. Cost set at £2.0.0d*". So the choir had been sitting in the gallery until this date. In 1893 it was decided that the final debt should be paid and the chapel renovated within two years. Both these aims were achieved. While the renovations were being carried out it was decided that an application would be made to use the Town Hall for 'Sabbath Services'. The changes made in that year created the chapel furnishings that lasted until 2005. The minutes for May 1893 state - "*The Trustees also agreed to the proposal of the Superintendent to bring forward the rostrum and make a platform on which to place the organ, the choir seats also being removed from the floor of the chapel to the platform*". The two vestries in the body of the church were built in 1897. So in the process of removing all these in 2005 the worship area is actually closer in size and appearance to the original 1879 building.

Mention of the organ is a reminder of the important part music has played in Methodist worship. A harmonium was purchased for Lower Broad Street chapel in 1861 at a cost of £43.6s.3d to replace an old instrument, the sale of which raised £12.0.0d. It is interesting to note that Lord Clive and Beriah Botfield, the Ludlow M.P, had each given £5 towards this new organ. In 1893 a Mr John Pearson of 'Kennets' on Sheet Road had promised a two manual organ and the offer had been gratefully accepted. However, in February 1896 it was noted that the organ was still awaited and it was suggested that Mr. Pearson might be asked to 'indicate his purpose' before March. With no response forthcoming he was given a further six months to produce the organ but in October their patience ran out and it was agreed that the "*Trustees now take steps to erect an organ themselves.*" This was supplied by Alexander Young of Manchester for £155. To complete the organ story, in January 1898 it was agreed that that several organ recitals should be held to celebrate the new instrument and Mr Clift was appointed as organist with an honorarium of £5 per year.

Also it was minuted that "An organ blower be engaged at £1 a year and Edward Tomlinson be asked to fill the post". It is interesting to wonder what Mr Cliff and Edward Tomlinson would think of the digital technology of the latest organ.

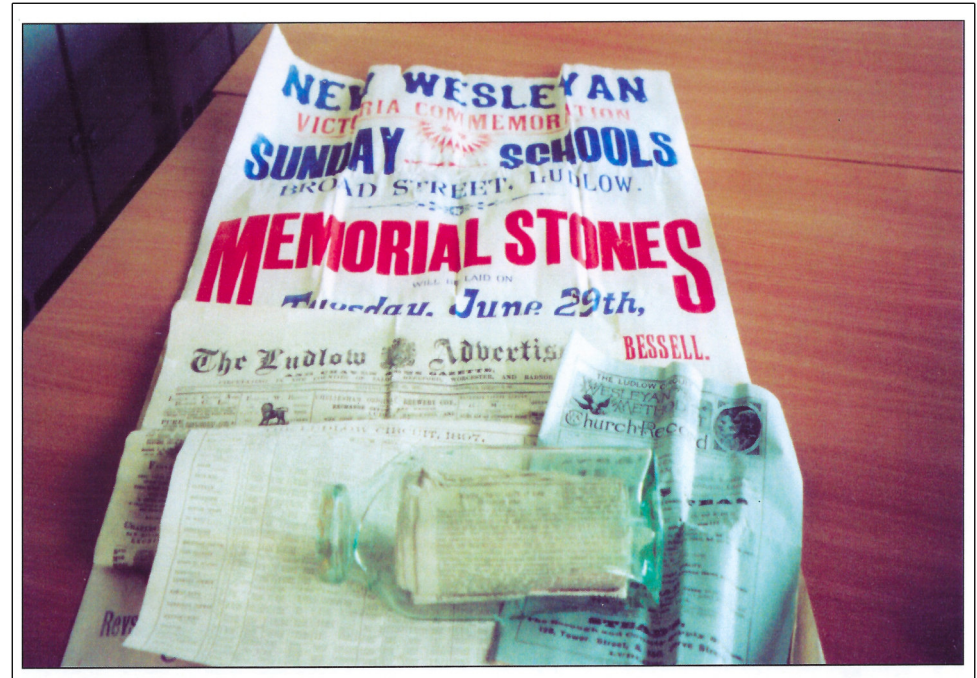


Freda Pugh, Project Chair

Having completed the refurbishments, the next challenge presented itself. The existing Sunday School premises at the back of the chapel, a converted hayloft, had been condemned as unsatisfactory, so it was agreed that to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee a new building should be provided specifically for this purpose. The minutes for the new extension show a large committee, meeting regularly. It was also an opportunity to deal with other problems that had persisted since the chapel had been built in

1879. Throughout the period there had been problems with the drains at the back of the building. A new heating system had been installed in the basement area. During the ensuing years there was a further cause for alarm as in heavy rain the seepage from the stables of a nearby property came into the basement. The stables were at the home of Henry Weyman, a prominent Ludlow lawyer and historian. He was even served with an injunction to remove this 'nuisance'!

The ceremony to commemorate the start of the new building work was performed a week after the official celebrations for the Diamond Jubilee in June 1897 and two stones were laid. One was for the Queen's Jubilee and the second was a memorial to Mr. Putman who had been Sunday School Superintendent. Children were encouraged to collect at least a guinea to have their initials carved on one of the bricks. It was noted in the official report in 'The Methodist Recorder' that a bottle with its contents had been 'buried'. 'The Ludlow Advertiser' reported the Jubilee celebrations in full, including the service at Broad Street. Later that week a United non-conformist service was held and a sermon was preached on the development of non-conformity in the reign of Queen Victoria, an important feature of their contemporary society. The Rev Needham was quoted as saying "He trusted the nonconformists of the country would always be loyal to the monarch, but at the same time true to religious liberty." As the celebrations are shared in 2006 it must be a source of thanksgiving that it is no longer 'us and them' but a truly ecumenical activity made possible by Churches Together Around Ludlow



The contents of the 1897 time capsule found in the schoolroom wall during repairs..

#### A Few Jottings from the Wesley's Visitors' Book:

- Superb friendly, clean and comfortable.
- Keep on creating lasting impressions in Ludlow.
- A vision beautifully realised. Peaceful and thoughtfully restored. A haven for refreshment!
- Thanks for a lovely welcome.
- Very impressed with your refurbishment. A modern look with the history still intact. What a joy to visit and an inspiration.
- A real spirit of community.
- A delightful town and most friendly and hospitable staff.

## The 'greening' of Ludlow Methodist Church over the past 20 years

### Worship and teaching

During Lent 2021 we studied the York 'Caring for Creation' course and were joined by members of other churches in the town. Following this we continued to meet monthly (on Zoom) as an ecumenical group, discussing environmental and climate justice issues at local, national and international level. We also had several meetings, open to all in our church, to discuss our Eco Church applications in the hope of getting more of our congregation interested and involved.

We hold themed 'Caring for Creation' services periodically. Our monthly magazine featured caring for God's earth articles for several years and we now have these 'Green Pages' each month.

Across the larger area of our Shropshire and Marches Circuit, we have been very involved in organising three annual 'Days Away' with the aim of having a time of fellowship and 'getting to know you' as well as learning more about environmental matters.

### Lifestyle

For the past few years we have had a large communal Christmas Card, to send greetings to each other and reduce the numbers of individual cards, and give an opportunity to donate to different Christmas charity appeals.

Through our church magazine we have encouraged the congregation to refuse, reduce, repair, re-use and recycle. We made good use of the local Terracycle collection point in Old Street, but unfortunately that is no longer functioning, but we recycle as much as we can using the local Tesco and Co-op collection bins.

Community collecting points at our church for Tetrapaks, tablet blister packs, stamps, pens and candles have all been tried, but only those for stamps and candles remain at the moment. (Blister packs can be recycled at larger Boots stores, e.g. Shrewsbury and Hereford.)

Ethical investments such as Shared Interest and Lend with Care have been promoted with leaflets and information available for these organisations.

In 2022 we achieved the A Rocha Eco Church silver award, and we are a Fair Trade church and use Fair Trade goods in church and Wesley's as much as possible.

### Community and global engagement

During Fair Trade week our church has organised events for school children, and for the past few years the congregation has supported an environmental charity in our annual giving.

Some church members open their gardens during the summer months as fundraisers, to enjoy fellowship and nature together.

Before Covid a group of us had a guided tour of Veolia's Energy Recovery Facility in Shrewsbury and had hoped to visit the recycling centre in Wolverhampton (so far we have not been able to arrange this but still hope to do so in the future).

### Building

Solar panels have been fitted on the roof of the rooms at the back of the church, and we use 75% renewables in our electricity supply. We are also replacing light bulbs with LED fittings as and when necessary, but as this necessitates scaffolding in the worship area it is not a simple procedure.

### Wesley's

Wesley's cafe uses local suppliers, such as Walton's, Broad Bean, Bikold and Rowlands. Our cakes, quiches and soups are home made. We also aim to use as many additive free products as possible, including environmentally friendly cleaning products and recycled kitchen towels and toilet paper.



The old....



and the new.

*'Ready for all they perfect will  
my acts of faith and love repeat'*

*StF 564*

### **The Redevelopment Story Adrian Willians 2006**

In the spring of 2001 the two Ludlow Methodist societies of Broad Street and Zion agreed to become one and renew their mission and service as a single church family.

This followed many years of anxious talk and prayer about various plans for the future of Methodism in Ludlow. Many activities were already shared; 'Manse Fellowship' had developed into Bible Study Groups, 'Alpha' and 'Disciple' courses. 'Wives and Friends', 'Luncheon Club', 'Open Door' and the Wednesday 'Drop In,' all drew members from both churches. The burden, both of ageing buildings and congregations, was recognised as sapping the energy and finances of the church - if not its enthusiasm.

A Task Force was set up to look at 'What is the Church about?' in Ludlow. It was made up of members from both societies and evolved, first into a 'Steering Group' and eventually 'the Executive'. This then met at least once a week throughout the whole redevelopment and building period. It began by considering the vision of the church's mission, then listing all its activities and then the accommodation that would be required. It was always the intention that any 'new' church would be a community facility, open all through the week as a 'Christian Centre for Ludlow'.

The preferred option was a completely new building, and various possible sites were explored. Nothing suitable was available at the time or seemed likely to come on the market in the near future. The Group then looked at what might be done with either of the existing buildings. Visits were made to other churches and ideas discussed about dividing the buildings horizontally or vertically, and even demolition and beginning again on one site or the other. Following various enquiries and good reports from Stourport Methodist Church, Alan Althorp, of Cleobury Associates, was engaged as architect and he worked up proposals both for the Zion and Broad Street buildings.

After much soul searching and with great generosity of spirit, it was agreed to close and sell Zion Chapel and develop the town centre site. Zion was packed for its final service of 'Songs of Praise and Thanksgiving' on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004. Many memories remain, and its work continues, both through those whose lives were affected by its worship, and also the Zion Luncheon Club which continued to meet at East Hamlet in St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church Hall.

Ambitious plans were drawn up for the Broad Street site. Harpers of Leominster, a local firm, were chosen as the principal contractors. The intention was for the work to progress in two stages, with the church family continuing to use the building for as long as possible. To achieve this, a temporary kitchen was constructed in the chapel itself. The schoolrooms were finally cleared on Easter Monday 2005 for the contractors to begin the next day. For some weeks afterwards the Sunday School met in the porch!

Although still in use, the chapel was gradually stripped. The last service in the 'old' building was conducted by the Chairman of the District on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2005, when the organ, pulpit and most of the pews had already gone. The organ had already been sold and re-assembled to serve a Roman Catholic church in Dijon, France, and the pews sold off to church members, family and friends. It was during these removals that a number of 'lost' coins from the collection were found, wedged against the pew in front, including a Victorian silver 3d piece. The congregation moved out and contractors moved in and took over the whole site.

Throughout the whole building period the church family continued to meet for worship and other activities; first, camping out in the chapel itself, then packed into a hall at The Mascall Centre and finally returning to squeeze into the new schoolroom upstairs. The back premises were actually brought into use for the first time at the Harvest Festival celebrations as part of the Ludlow Food Fair and 1500 people passed through the building to enjoy Pudding Tasting.

Throughout the redevelopment, various groups worked with the architect and contractors on fund-raising and grant applications, the choice of colour schemes and furnishings and the planning of the café. As many people as possible were involved in choices and decisions. Open meetings were held to which members of the other Ludlow churches were invited. Churches Together around Ludlow (CTAL) were supportive throughout, but their involvement became much more significant as plans for the café and 'drop in centre' developed. Church members were fully involved in the hard practical work of clearing the kitchen, completely re-decorating the schoolroom areas, moving furniture and fitting out the back kitchen.

The new church offers full disabled access from the front into Wesleys, (the ecumenical café and 'drop in' centre at the front of the building). This has small tables in the central section with an accessible toilet and fully fitted kitchen on one side and vestry on the other. There is also a Traidcraft stall. Stairs lead up to the Zion Room which looks down into the worship area.

The room contains the communion table and chairs from Zion and a model of Zion Chapel, made for their centenary in 1970 by George

## Wesleys in 2006 Jean Brown

Bytheway, who many years was a Class leader and Steward. The room can accommodate about 50 people. It has an audio link with the chapel and an independent hearing loop. There is an accessible toilet and washing up facilities will be fitted into one of the built-in cupboards. Glass doors lead to the two chapel side galleries.

On the ground floor, the chapel, which seats about 130, can be clearly seen through the folding glass screen at the back of Wesleys. There is a dais with removable communion rails, and furniture designed and made by Adam Bunning, a local craftsman working near Bridgnorth. Over it all is a large cross, made by the same craftsman. Hanging to one side is the first of a series of banners created by a group of church members. There is a new piano, an Allen organ, a sound system and audio loop

The rear schoolrooms have been transformed. A new porch leads into a corridor in which the stairs have been completely turned around. The former Guild Room, which is used by the Sunday School, has its own galley kitchen. There are two accessible toilets and a lift serving the upper floor and chapel gallery. Upstairs there are two rooms, the smaller of which has a sink and drinks-making facilities.

It was always intended that the building should be used by the church and the community throughout the week. Already there are regular meetings of various groups for Bible Study, the Prayer Group, the Church Fellowship, Alcoholics Anonymous, South Shropshire MIND Group, Options (the pregnancy crisis ecumenical centre), the drug management group, Methodist Wives and Friends, CTAL (Churches Together around Ludlow), Wesleys, The Ludlow Choral Society, tai chi, and, more occasionally Christian Aid, Traidcraft, The Bible Society,...

The chapel has already been used to seat almost 120 for a Thanksgiving Dinner and also became a theatre for a presentation of John's Gospel on Good Friday, 2006.

The chapel was first used for Sunday morning worship on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2006, following a Circuit Study Day on 'Holiness' on the previous day. The first hymn sung in the new sanctuary was Charles Wesley's 'What is our calling's glorious hope...' which ends with the words '*Come in, my Lord, Come in!*'

**W**esley's Café is a new vision at Ludlow Methodist Church. We opened to the public on Easter Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup> 2006, with a ceremony performed by Len Price, our oldest active member, who celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday that day.

We are open 6 days a week from 10am to 3pm.



The café serves hot and cold drinks, snacks and light lunches. The lunch menu includes fresh and toasted sandwiches, filled jacket potatoes, quiche and salad.

The big difference between *Wesley's* and other cafés is that at *Wesley's* you are welcomed and greeted by a friendly face; there is no attempt to move you on.

Should you wish to stay for a while, then there is space available where you can sit, read your newspaper or book, or sit and talk to someone who wants to listen to you.

The café is run by volunteers who come, not just from the Methodist Church, but from all the other churches in the town. It was decided by CTAL (Churches Together around Ludlow) that they would support a café in Broad Street, in the town centre, accessible to all.

It is our hope that those who feel disadvantaged, marginalised, lonely, or in any other need, will find at *Wesley's* a warmth and welcome, alongside the students, shoppers and visitors to Ludlow.



## Wesleys Project Fund

*Since 2006 your custom has enabled us to help:*

CTAL New Initiatives  
CTAL Food Bank and Fuel Poverty Fund  
CTAL Under Pressure  
Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy  
Lay Pastoral Worker  
Ludlow CE School  
Ludlow Town Junior Football Club  
Ludlow Amateur Boxing Club  
Ludlow Foyer  
Busy Bodies Childcare Centre  
1<sup>st</sup> Ludlow Ranger Guide Unit  
1<sup>st</sup> Ludlow Scouts  
1<sup>st</sup> Ludlow Guides  
2<sup>nd</sup> Ludlow Guides  
2<sup>nd</sup> Ludlow Rainbows  
Ludlow French Twinning Association  
Ludlow Area Youth Partnership  
Fresh Start New Beginnings  
Options Counselling Service  
Cleobury Mortmer Methodist Church  
Tenbury Wells Methodist Church  
Caynham Village Hall  
Ludlow Defib 4 You  
Barnabas Deaf and Community Services  
S Shropshire Disability Access Group  
Working Together Leintwardine and Bucknell Community First Responders  
Young Shropshire in Work

St Laurence's Vision Project  
St Laurence's PCC Young at Art  
Ludlow Elim Christian Fellowship  
Ludlow Hope Event  
'Bibles for Children' Charity  
Acts 2 'Life Exhibition'  
Shropshire Mind  
Ludlow 21 Green Festival  
Ludlow in Bloom  
Hands Together Ludlow  
S Shropshire Furniture Scheme  
S Shropshire Home Start  
S Shropshire Interfaith Forum  
S Shropshire Youth Forum  
S Staffs Mental Health  
Ludlow Cancer Support  
Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service  
Mortimer History Society  
Ludlow Air Training Corps  
Ludlow Women's Centre  
Ludlow Fairtrade Town sign  
Ludlow Royal Voluntary Service

**Amount donated: almost  
£88,000**

The Ludlow Methodist Church gratefully acknowledges the support of the following with the refurbishment in 2006:

All Churches Trust  
Beatrice Laing Trust  
CAPF  
Churches Together around Ludlow  
England Rural Development Programme by DEFRA and the European Agriculture Guidance Guarantee Fund  
Garfield Weston Foundation  
FP Standard  
Historic Churches Trust  
Ludlow Marches Partnership Community Chest  
Methodist Church Resourcing Mission Office  
Norwood and Newton Settlement  
Rank Trust  
Shropshire Historic Churches Trust  
Shropshire South Circuit of the Methodist Church  
South Shropshire Disabled Access Group  
South Shropshire District Council (European Community Building Fund)  
South Shropshire District Council Community Fund  
South Shropshire & Bridgnorth Sprout Fund (European Union Funding ERDF Objective 2)  
Zion Methodist Church Ludlow

Especially the architect Allan Althorp of Cleobury Associates, Architects and Planners, and the main contractors J. Harper and Sons (Leominster) and all the very many individuals who have helped and supported us in this work.



Alan Althorp

# CELEBRATING 20 years

2006 - 2026

Join us to celebrate  
20 years since the  
**Church  
Refurbishment**  
and the opening of  
**Wesley's Café**  
**10<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> May**

## WORSHIP

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May 10.30**  
Rev Dr Neil Richardson  
*(who led service of  
rededication in 2006)*

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 10.30**  
Rev Rachel Deigh  
*(Chair of West Midlands  
Methodist District)*

## Wesley's

For one week only,  
the prices in  
Wesley's Café will go  
back to 2006

## 'The story so far'

An exhibition of photos and  
memorabilia showing the  
refurbishment project.  
Also displays from groups  
who regularly use the  
building.

Open all week

Guided tours  
of the building  
available during  
café opening  
hours

## 'Chiefly Yourselves'

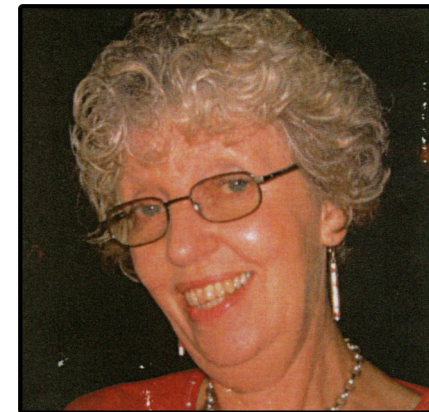
A variety concert  
featuring people associated  
with the church today  
**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May  
at 7.00pm**

**20** years  
2006 - 2026  
Wesley's Café

**Ludlow Methodist Church**  
Broad Street, Ludlow

## A tribute to Gill Hall

Gill was the inspiration and driving force behind the church re-development and much of the fund-raising. Her talent for design inspired the choice of green and gold for the church chairs and the light oak furnishings to reflect the green and yellow glass in the church windows and subsequently the green and yellow for café aprons and menus.



Gill arranged a meeting in the Whitefriars community hall for all who expressed an interest in volunteering for the café, they filled in forms indicating which days of the week they could help and which jobs they could do. She formed teams for each day of the week with a team leader each day, with two volunteers working in the kitchen and two serving in the café. Gill was the overall manager. After consultation it was agreed to call the café *Wesley's*.

*Wesley's* opened at Easter 2006 and for the first two years the surplus income went to paying off loans and debts for the whole re-development. Subsequent surplus and profit were put into a Projects Fund, which for 10 years gave grants to many local community groups, (see list on page 18), until Covid brought an end to this. Since re-opening the surplus has been much reduced, but we have still been able help Hands Together Ludlow and the Food Bank.

Over the years many volunteers have come and gone, all giving their time and talents to the café. The majority are retired folk, from all churches and none, but we have also had youngsters doing DoE service and work experience.

Sadly, Gill's health deteriorated over the early years of *Wesley's* café, and she died of cancer in October 2009.

*Wesley's* is Gill's legacy for the outreach of the church and the Ludlow community.

## Edith Blair.

(On Gill's death Edith took over the leadership of the café, and this is now in the hands of Elizabeth Wright. Edith continues as a team leader and volunteer.)

## What Do These Stones Mean?

‘**W**hat do these stones mean?’ The stones were a cairn beside the river Jordan where, according to the tradition in the Old Testament, God safely led the people of Israel into the promised land. If children in years to come asked what the stones meant, their parents were to tell them: they remind us of the God of Israel who had cared for his people in the past, and would go on doing so in the future.

‘What do these stones (of our church) mean?’ is a good question to ask on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the re-furbishing and re-opening of our premises. Every church should ask itself that question from time to time. The simple answer – and the correct one – is this: *these stones are a reminder of God.*

Do we – does anyone, or everyone – need a reminder of God?

The answer has to be a resounding ‘Yes!’ – especially these days. Life gets so busy – even for older people! And there is so much to distract and tempt us away from our Creator.

All of us who come to church have to find ways of remembering God. A chef in a monastic kitchen long ago, Brother Lawrence, used to ‘practise the presence of God’, as he called it. “Abide with me in the serving of the soup”; etc.

Practising the presence of God requires just that – practice. If one day we don’t do very well, start again tomorrow. Or if we think God seems to be having a day off, because He (or She) seems so far away, or just unreal, well – tell God so: file a complaint. The Old Testament psalms are full of prayers like that. So that’s the first thing for our anniversary: our church building is meant to remind us – and anyone at all who walks past it – of God our Creator.

There is another question for us – and not just for our anniversary this month. It’s a question for every month – for every day in fact, A Methodist evangelist used to tell congregations: “When you go to church, don’t look as if you’re on your way to the dentist, And when you come out, don’t look as if you’ve just been to the dentist”.

Of course, the joke is way out of date. There are far too few dentists these days, and certainly not enough for people who can’t afford one. But maybe the old joke still serves a purpose. Will people, in looking at us, realize that Christianity is a religion of happiness? Because it is.

Of course, all of us have to take life, with all its ups and downs, in our stride. But Christians, as we seek to do that, throw ourselves into the arms of God every step of the way. It’s another way of practising the presence of God – at least, as best as we can in all the hurly-burly of life.

The first Christians in Jerusalem, according to the New Testament, resembled a rather riotous street party. “....They shared their meals with unaffected joy...” (Acts 2.46). And remember how Peter started his first sermon, addressing onlookers: “These people aren’t drunk, as you suppose; it’s only nine in the morning!”

Maybe that’s a good note on which to end on a Methodist anniversary!

A happy anniversary to one and all – including the whole town,

**Neil Richardson**

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## Redevelopment Story: The Second Phase

**A**t the time of the re-development, one of our elderly church members ( and we were blessed with support from almost all our church family) said, ‘*I cant do much now, but you will be all right when I go!*’

We think he thought that a legacy in his will would help pay off the money owing on the scheme, but by the time of his death the debt had been paid through grants, fund raising and very generous giving. As a result the church received a very substantial gift.

This was used to do work we had not previously been able to afford: replacing the Victorian sash windows on the school rooms, improving lift access, fitting solar panels and improving the galleries with a raised floor and glass balustrade.

One of our members, David Harlington, also had the vision to create a whole new level above the Zion Room to provide a meeting and office space. This was the first home of Hands Together Ludlow and our part time administrator uses this space today. The opportunity was also taken to refit and upgrade the kitchen in Wesleys, and to install a modern projection and sound system.

Some money was also set aside for mission and outreach, contributing to the work of a Community Chaplain and the Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy.

**Adrian Williams**



20 years

2006 - 2026