

Towards the end of 1971, only **Mr T Staples** of Coram Tower and a few ladies were meeting at the Gospel Hall. His sickness and frailty made it impossible to continue and the premises were closed.

Despite this, with the building renamed Bethany Chapel, it reopened on Sunday 15th October 1972, with just 3 people keeping the Lord's Supper. There was a baptism on 29th October, and the numbers forming the church meeting in the Chapel increased significantly over the next couple of months.

Over the next 4 years there is a record of lots of children and young people coming to Sunday morning "Adventurers", with Bibles and other books being given at the annual prizegiving, Christmas parties, and visits to places such as Portland. Also, there was the "Women's Hour" with their annual strawberry teas and visits to places such as the Grand Western Canal at Tiverton.

On a number of occasions there was a series of services open to everybody, every day for 1 or 2 weeks, conducted by visiting evangelists. These were mostly in the Chapel, but one in 1976 was held in a marquee pitched on land kindly offered by **Mr Froom** of Middle Mill Farm.

For quite a while during this period there were monthly film nights, showing films with a wide variety of Christian themes.

It was at this time the men of the United Beach Mission's Beach Team started using the chapel for their accommodation during their August visit to the town each year. This is still a highlight of the church's annual calendar.

Over the past 30-35 years people have come and gone, mostly because of moving into and out of the area. While there are no longer separate services dedicated to young people or ladies, we have tried to arrange that those we do hold cater for everybody.

Present Day

It is interesting to see that "tea meetings" are again a very popular feature of our programme, on the last Sunday afternoon of each month. They are now in our own building and tickets aren't needed, but there is still no admission fee or collection.

The visiting speakers at these are often people involved in some form of Christian outreach, which can be anywhere in the world, and their messages combine a report of that work plus a Bible message. Though we say it ourselves, the feedback [no pun intended!] from our regular visitors, is that the tea is a slap up meal!

All our Sunday afternoon meetings are specifically family affairs, with a slot for the children, after which they move to their own table at the side of the hall to illustrate what they have heard. We have visiting speakers on the second Sunday of each month, and conduct the meetings ourselves on the other Sundays.

Please join with Us



A brief history of

Bethany Chapel Lyme Regis

1860 - Present Day
2007 Edition

The Beginning

The opening meeting seems to have been on Whit Sunday 21st May, apparently in 1911, but that was by no means the beginning. From a photograph taken about that time, the building looks almost exactly the same as in 2006, even to a bush outside the right hand window! The photo poses a question arising from the other meeting advertised, on June 1st, because that was a Monday in 1914, not 1911!

The building and the presence of a bush might not change, but people obviously do. Things that do NOT change are the God that is worshipped there.

I am the LORD, I change not
Malachi 3:6

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever
Hebrews 13:8

and the Bible which teaches the basis of the worship and service that is practiced there.

The word of God, which liveth And abideth for ever
1 Peter 1:23

We think it was some time between 1860 and 1900 that Christians started meeting in homes and rented buildings in Lyme, in a manner that if they were to attend Bethany today, the services would seem pretty familiar to them. That does NOT mean that Bethany's services today are old fashioned - far from it - but as indicated, the basic ingredients cannot change.

Those who met in this fashion came from various Christian backgrounds in the locality, including Anglican and Baptist, because they felt the Bible indicated there should be more to Church services than what they were experiencing.

They had already put simple faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ For the forgiveness of sins and God's free gift of eternal life. They now wanted to declare that publicly by baptism by total immersion in water, and remember the Lord Jesus in the Lord's Supper on the first day of every week.

they that gladly received his word were baptised: ...And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayers.
Acts 2:41-2

As they could not do this elsewhere, they met independently of other churches so that they could obey the Scriptures fully.

The Locals

The first name we can quote is a stationer named **Daniel Dunster**, and the first meeting place was Monmouth House in Broad St. He died or, as Christians say, was called Home to be with the Lord, while those meetings were in their infancy. **Mr F Wheadon** was prominent in the meetings at that time.

An Irish lady called **Miss Prosser** then provided a room in her Monmouth Street home for Sunday morning and evening services, while a **Miss Board** who had attended similar gatherings in Welbeck St, London, opened her Silver St house for Bible studies on Sunday afternoons and Monday evenings.

Other names known from those days were **Mr H Miller, Miss Hallett, John Randall** and **Mr C Miller**. Some things in Lyme that are the same today as then, is that lots of young people were then leaving Lyme to find work elsewhere, which left very few to sustain the services. That did not prevent a Sunday School being started, even with only 2 or 3 children.

The next known meeting place rented was the Baths, later the Drill Hall, where seats and lamps were installed and a baptistry built. At the same time, the British School in Mill Green was rented for tea meetings addressed by visiting speakers. Those services were so well attended free entrance tickets had to be obtained in advance. We have the names of **Mr & Mrs Sansom** joining the worshippers about this time.

The meetings then moved to Victoria Hall and numbers again increased. One Whitsun preacher from those days was the **Earl of Cavan**. Another move was to Coombe House, and a **Mrs Hallett** and a **Mr Osborne** were among those attending.



Also unknown is how it came about that the present building was planned, or who was involved, but the Gospel Hall as it was then known was built in Coombe Street in 1911 or 1914 on the site of a terrace of cottages that was end on to the road.

We presently know almost nothing of the next 60 years, except that the Trustees of the building in 1928 included **William Caddy**, a builder and **Robert Hallett**, a farmer, and among those in 1943 were **Frank Hallett**, a tailor, **Eddie Lovering**, a schoolmaster, and **John Harris**, a hotelier.

We know that Mr Lovering moved to Ilfracombe, and was a well respected Bible teacher, both preaching and writing