

St Andrew's / All Saints' Church Macclesfield 100th Anniversary

1849 – Our story starts with the opening of Crompton Road School for 250 children “of the labouring manufacturing and other poorer classes” (and possibly the education also of adults) on what was then the edge of town. The initiative came from Reverend Charles O’Neil Pratt, a Curate of Christ Church. The land was donated and the building work funded largely by the people of Christ Church. From early days Sunday services were held in the present worship area, school desk tops being lifted to form back rests to the forms in front, giving a little comfort to worshippers. It is fitting that in 1872 a stained-glass window was installed at the east end of the church in memory of the debt owed to Reverend Pratt and when that window was replaced in 1955 the inscription to him was retained.

1854 – The Crompton Road area was transferred to St. Michael’s Parish, possibly because of the ill health of the Vicar of Christ Church and Reverend Smith, a Curate of St. Michael’s took responsibility for the school. Each day’s lessons were started with prayers and bible readings.

1890 – A Testimonial was presented to the Revd. L. F. Moran on the occasion of his retirement saying: “We, the

Sidesmen, Sunday and Day School Teachers and Members of the Crompton Road School Church desire to record our deep sense of affection and gratitude to you. For thirty-six years you have devoted your life and strength to the needs of the district and to the moral and spiritual welfare of the children in the school” His name is commemorated in Moran Road and Crescent. We would like to know more about this gentleman’s long ministry.

1901 – Our present car park was acquired as an additional school playground.

1921 – By now the school was controlled by the Diocesan Board of Education and new brick classrooms were built allowing the Church to take sole possession of the worship area and furnish it with a communion table, clergy seating, choir stalls and rush-bottomed seating for the congregation. The school took the name St. Andrews. We are not certain whether that name was already associated with the Sunday congregation, but we treat 1921 as the year in which the church acquired an identity independent of the school, but with a valued link to it; hence our 100th Birthday year.

The church and school were heated by a coke boiler, apparently requiring a climb down a twelve-foot ladder to stoke the fire. This service and many others were

performed by Jim Bethel, Caretaker from about 1939 and his Wife, Lillie, who continued as Caretaker after Jim's death until she retired in 1984.

1949 – Fluorescent lighting and an electric organ replaced gas lighting and a hand pumped organ previously in the gallery. By then oil fired central heating had replaced the coke boiler. It appears that, at about the same time, baptisms were first performed at St. Andrews; previously families had to go to St. Michael's as our Parish Church. The Church was served primarily by Curates who shared duties at St. Michael's with leading services at St. Andrews and perhaps had little opportunity to make a mark at St. Andrews. One at least developed a continuing affection for St. Andrews, namely Archie Sholto-Douglas, who arranged exchanged visits between congregations when he became Vicar of Siddington. Anne Kite (nee Evans) , who lived on Bedford Road and attended the school and Sunday School, remembers the Sunday School trips which he enthusiastically organised and his kindness to her disabled brother. She is now a member of St. Michaels.

1967 – For the first time St. Andrews had a Curate specifically responsible for the church. The first Curate in charge was Ken Gardiner and his Wife Sheila and he were responsible for many new initiatives, not least The Living Room (see separate sheet). New housing was

being built between Ivy Road and Ivy Lane and Ken visited families as they moved in, some joining the church family and numbers greatly increased. By a strange turn of events, before long, a new parish was created to serve the area west of Oxford Road, including the new estates which Ken had so conscientiously visited. The newly built church took the name St. Johns, formerly borne by a closed town centre church near to the present site of B&Q (which was by then part of St. Michaels parish). Many families visited by Ken remained with St. Andrews and, over the years, have contributed greatly to our church life.

1970 – Government policy was to close schools built in the Victorian era and the day school closed to be replaced by the building of a new modern church school on Ivy Road in St. Johns parish. St. Andrews' congregation took the opportunity to acquire the whole site though were somewhat taken aback to learn they had to pay for the worship area which they assumed St. Michael's PCC already owned. However, reasonably generous terms were agreed with the Diocesan Board of Education and the money was raised, a significant achievement for St. Andrews people.

Walter Snook and his wife, Jenny, succeeded the Gardiners and Wally reorganised the children's work into

Climbers, Explorers and Pathfinders to accommodate all ages.

Richard More came next after a first curacy at St. Michaels and before moving on as Chaplain to Lee Abbey, Devon. He was the first curate to benefit from a small detached house bought in Regent Avenue to replace the prefabricated bungalow occupied by his predecessors. Philip Bryan and his wife, Rosemary, also spent some time at St. Andrews after Philip's time at St. Michaels and while awaiting an appointment to be Vicar and School Chaplain at St. Bees in Cumbria.

John Claydon and his wife, Christine, came to St. Andrews for his second curacy; before ordination he had worked with CMS as a school Science Teacher in Nigeria. They were both tireless workers and encouraged family picnics on The Hollins, swimming at Gradbach on the River Dane, bonfire parties, home groups and regular bible study to which John gave priority. John worked with the Vicar of St. Michaels, Frank Haslam, to introduce the Thanksgiving and Pastoral Link Scheme into St. Michaels and St. Andrews. We think it is fair to say that, when Christine and John moved on they left St. Andrews in a very healthy state. They also asked the PCC to provide a modern central heating system in the curacy house for the next incumbent to replace the kitchen back-boiler which was very old fashioned and inconvenient!

John Coyne and his wife, Alison, continued the Claydon's initiatives and John also introduced Men's Meetings.

Lay Readers also made notable contributions, particularly Ron Sutton and John and Margaret Owens. Worship became less formal; the robed choir was replaced by a singing group and Maureen and Ron Sutton even learnt to play guitars.

In 1972 Gordon Strutt, the Bishop of Stockport, had invited five town centre churches, St. Michaels, St. Andrews, St. Peters, St. Pauls and Christ Church, to form a Group Ministry – five churches, four parishes and with one common task. A Group chapter of clergy of the parishes and a Group Council of delegates from the churches would be formed to agree joint areas of co-operation. St. Pauls and Christ Church declined to join (as was their right) and the Group Ministry was formed by the remaining three churches. After a couple of years the Vicar of St. Peters resigned to form an independent church (the Good News Church) taking with him many from St. Peters congregation. St. Peters continued to hold services largely lay led with some support from St. Michaels and St. Andrews clergy and, in due course, became, again, a vibrant church family within the Group Ministry, once more with its own clergyman.

1982 – In spite of the disappointing beginning of the Group Ministry, the concept of town centre churches working together remained dear to many people's hearts. On the initiative, again, of Gordon Strutt, still the Bishop of Stockport, a Team Parish was formed consisting of St. Michael's, Christ Church and St. Peter's, later joined by St. Barnabas (formerly a daughter church of St. Georges Church which had, by then, closed).

The Vicar of St. Michael's, Reverend Michael Gear, became Team Rector and was joined by John Staley as Team Vicar who was intended to be based at Christ Church. However, it soon became apparent that Christ Church did not have a future and after it closed in 1983 was taken into the care of the Redundant Churches Commission because of its architectural merit. John Coyne generously agreed to move to St. Peter's and later became an RAF Chaplain. This created a place for John Staley at St. Andrews and he moved into a newly acquired Vicarage on Oxford Road with Janie and their two children. A number of Christ Church people also joined St. Andrew's and the joint congregation agreed to mark the change with a new name; hence All Saints was born.

1986 – All Saints was extended with a new entrance hall, kitchen and meeting room above. After the work was completed, Lillie Bethell, the Caretaker for over forty

years, cut the ribbons with two of the youngest members of the church and was presented with a bouquet; as Maureen Sutton wrote “a truly fitting honour to a great lady”.

1991 – Mary-Rose Woodburn and Robert Marshall joined us as Lay Readers; Ron Sutton and Margaret Owens had moved on to ordination as had one of our children’s leaders, Peter Nunn.

November 6, 1994 – All Saints became a Parish Church within the Team Parish. On Palm Sunday the following year All Saints was consecrated by Geoff Turner, the Bishop of Stockport, with the words “I consecrate this building declaring it to be set apart from all things profane for the work of, and in the name of, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit” and the congregation rededicated itself to God’s service. This was marked by a poem composed by Kath Bradley; see separate sheets of poems and songs. Katy Hallatt recalled that there was “lots of food in the hall”.

John Staley was a great innovator and life with him as Vicar was never dull. We had a full church every Sunday and we well remember streams of children coming into church after their classes for blessing during Holy Communion. The 1993 Annual Report “regretted” that John ‘only’ baptised fifteen children and one adult,

half the number of children as in the previous year! Numbers at the evening service had declined so in 1996 we experimented briefly with a mid-week evening meeting instead ("Sunday on Thursday at All Saints" – SONTAS). This initiative did not affect the trend away from evening activities and was not continued.

John became involved with chaplaincy at Astra Zeneca, where a number of church members worked, and also at the Cheshire Building Society. Eventually he decided to accept a position of Human Resources Director at AZ.

1999 – After a relatively short interregnum Rod Doulton joined us as Vicar with his Wife, Lynne, and family and is remembered for his pastoral care, encouraging young families to bring babies for baptism. He also visited the sick and was a loyal member of the clergy team.

2007 – When Rod moved on it proved difficult to find a successor. All Saints coped well with the Interregnum led by our Wardens and Lay Readers and supported by the Team Rector, Graham Turner and the other Team Vicar, Dave Mock. Eventually it was decided that Graham should have responsibility for St. Michael's and St. Peter's and Dave, All Saints and St. Barnabas.

December 8, 2009 – A re-organisation of the Team came into force by which each of the areas served by the four

churches would become separate parishes within a Team Benefice. All Saints now had its own Parochial Church Council, but we still work together with the other churches in the Team.

2011 – New upholstered chairs were bought for the Church and arrived in time for the marriage of our Warden, Chris Campbell-Kelly to Ron Sherwin – a great day in our church and not just because of the chairs!

2012 – New toilets were created to replace those inherited from the school and the kitchen was upgraded.

2017 – Dave Mock moved to another parish in Cheshire. During his time All Saints embraced a monthly Saturday afternoon Messy Church on the initiative of Margaret Marsh to reach out to young families with games, teaching and a meal afterwards. Dot Phillips formed a group to visit schools (Open the Book) and Dave also experimented with a monthly Sunday morning Café Church allowing discussion as well as the usual hymns and prayers. He also introduced Gentlemen's Evensong, a monthly informal gathering in a pub at which it was guaranteed that no hymns or psalms would be sung. We have been well served by our Lay Readers, Chris Gleaves, Liz Varney and Robert Marshall as well as other members of the church who lead services namely Chris Campbell-Kelly, Dot Phillips, Carol

Fieldhouse, Joy Kewney and Anna Cerval-Pena, until she trained for ordination and is now serving in the Sutton group of parishes.

March 19, 2018 – Andy Williams was licensed as Team Vicar in place of Dave Mock and Louise and Andy joined us for their first service on Palm Sunday. They quickly settled in and experimented with a monthly Prayer & Praise Sunday Evening Service until Covid intervened. We have survived two periods of closure due to Covid thanks to no small extent to Andy's mastery of IT, enabling services and meetings to be zoomed on line, while he has not neglected mailings to those who do not have computers.

November 2021 – As soon as we considered it safe to do so we put into action long held plans for Welcome Café twice a month in order to reach out to people living around the Church, and to provide a venue for parents, grandparents and others caring for pre-school children.

At the same time we have made our Church more welcoming by extending our porch and installing interior glass doors, work planned by our resident architect, Malcolm Maginn. Tony Hallatt, our Church Warden, has been much involved in maintaining the fabric of the building with help from Malcolm and Ron Sherwin.

Our finances continue to be well managed by our able Treasurer, Phil Marsh. Our Vicar, Andy, has just returned from a three-month sabbatical and, in his absence, we have been well served by our Wardens, Chris and Tony and our own service leaders with visits from The Bishop of Chester, the Archdeacon and old friends Margaret and John Owens and, of course, Barry Langman, a retired clergyman who frequently joins us at our services with his wife Pat.

In preparing these notes we have been greatly helped by memories collected in 1994 by Maureen Sutton in a booklet entitled "I Remember When" These memories included contributions by former members of Christ Church who had joined us and are a fitting tribute to the initiative taken by the people of that Church in the nineteenth century which gave us our much-loved church building. Maureen, sadly, died in 2020 and, because of Coronavirus we were not able to celebrate her life by the Memorial Service she so deserved.

We look forward to the next chapter in our rather complicated history. As the banner hanging in our church proclaims

"One more step along the way we go. From the old we travel to the new. Keep us travelling along with You".

This banner was created with pieces of material provided by church members, the idea of Sylvia

Rutishauser-James, who, with her partner, Sigrid, now lives in Cornwall.

We pray that we will know God's will for our future as we have received His blessing in the past.