

South Lowestoft Methodist Church

Celebrating 60 Years 1963-2023



Dear Friends,

This year South Lowestoft Methodist Church is celebrating 60 years. The church has been here for 60 years. The church of Jesus Christ has been here for 2,000 years, but South Lowestoft Methodist Church is a youngster in comparison.

There have been many changes in society in those 60 years. We are in a New Millennium.

There have been many changes in the Church in those 60 years. But Jesus hasn't changed. He is *the same yesterday, today and forever*. In a world of constant change it is good to have some stability. That doesn't mean we do things in the same way, or, in the words of that hymn: "nothing changes here". We move with the times in our styles of worship; we maintain the good old hymns and we sing the new worship songs. We dress in a more colourful way than people did 60 years ago. But the message of Jesus is constant. It hasn't changed in 60 years and it hasn't changed in 2,000 years.

There is hope! Jesus told his disciples that He had come to bring *life in all its fullness*. That is something to desire. Many people live by existence and subsistence; Jesus offers fullness.

Jesus also makes the offer: *Come to me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest*. That is a relevant message for today as well. So as we celebrate 60 years of the Methodist Church in South Lowestoft why not join us and experience life in all its fullness and maybe have a rest from the troubles of today!

Martin Keenan (Rev)

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On 7th April 1962 a stone laying ceremony took place on a site at the corner of Carlton Road and London Road South - the first stone of the building which was to become South Lowestoft Methodist Church. A year later on 16th. March 1963, the new Church was opened. On 16th March 2023 we celebrate our sixtieth anniversary.

South Lowestoft Methodist Church replaced the old Lorne Park Road church which had been built in 1904 and which, owing to limited space and being in a state of disrepair, was no longer suitable for worship. With the help of generous grants and a great deal of generosity from members and friends, plus fundraising, the project was completed.

When attempting to write a history of any church it is difficult to know what to include and what to omit. There have obviously been many changes during the past sixty years. When we opened we had a number of members from the previous church but we soon welcomed new ones to worship with us and more children joined our Sunday School, or Junior Church as it was better known. Over the years we have celebrated infant baptisms, weddings and held funeral services. Looking at our Book of Remembrance we can see the names of many men and women who have served this church faithfully and well.

We have welcomed and said farewell to several ministers and these have all brought to us their varying gifts. Reverend E. Ronald Kemp was our minister when the church was built and he was followed by: David Caink, Leslie Richards, David Pittock, Brian Cooke, John Fenner, Eric Potts, Patricia Olivent -Hayes, Robert Soanes, Jane Craske, Peter Rayson and Martin Keenan from September 2022.

So what are some of the highlights of the past sixty years? Music has always played an important part in our Church. We have had a church choir who used to sing regularly in worship and many will remember the Easter oratorios of Stainer's 'Crucifixion' and Maunder's 'Olivet to Calvary'. A successful Men's Choir led worship from time to time and a Junior Choir took part in Sunday worship and introduced us to the musical 'Joseph and His Technicolour Dreamcoat'. Perhaps one of the most memorable occasions was when both adult and junior choirs combined to give a staged production of the musical 'Oliver' (entitled 'A Twist of Oliver' for copyright purposes). Over the years we have invited choirs and musicians to perform at South Lowestoft. Particularly memorable was a concert given by choral scholars from Kings College, Cambridge.

In recent years our organ came to the end of its useful life and has been replaced by a fine new instrument. Worship has also been enriched by the use of projection facilities and the renewal of our amplification system.

During the past sixty years, many children and young people have been associated with us through Junior Church, Youth Clubs, Girl Guides and Boys' Brigade. Most of them are now not so young and, having moved away for university and work, are now parents and even grandparents. Some, however, remain in the town and it is good to meet them occasionally and catch up with their news. We are very pleased that both Rainbows and Brownies are still part of our church family and share in our worship on special occasions.

We welcome you to Worship on Sundays at 10.30am

We have members who have been part of the church fellowship for sixty years and who can look back the farthest but we rejoice that we have many members who have joined us over the years. Some have come from the neighbourhood and some from other areas of Great Britain. In joining us they have made a huge contribution to the life of this church.

We have brought you up to date with some of the history of the church but that's not the end of the story. In the booklet for the Opening Service of Dedication for our church Rev. Ronald Kemp wrote: "We do not propose to live on past tradition alone because human life is constantly the creation of the new. Life is renewal. Our need, therefore, is for a living tradition in which life is renewed daily."

During the Pandemic Lockdown we were excited to keep in touch with our members each week, some as distant as New Zealand via internet zoom. At present in addition to regular weekly worship our current church programme includes: Ladies Group, Indoor Bowls and a monthly Friday Coffee Morning. All of these activities are open to everyone to attend.

Looking beyond our own church, some of our members have regular contact with Estherene Care Home whose residents also regularly share in our monthly Coffee Morning. On the ecumenical scene our church is a member of Churches Together in Lowestoft.

As we look to the future may we continually renew our commitment to God in the worship and service we offer to Him.

Our Minister: Rev. Martin Keenan Tel: 01502 560178

Church Website: www.southlowestoftmethodistchurch.org.uk