

Beach Haven Methodist Church



60th



**Anniversary of the
Building of the Church
1939 -1999**

The Building of Beach Haven Methodist Church



The Opening of the Beach Haven Methodist Church 20th May 1939
(Photo from the NZ Methodist Times)

To celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the building of the Beach Haven Methodist Church, this booklet tells the story of the early endeavours made to build this church. It is not a history of the 60 years but only of the first few years.

The Planning and Building of the Church

On the 6th July 1936 the Rev Gatman spoke enthusiastically about the work being done in the Beach Haven part of the circuit, and the need to have land and buildings of our own. At that time afternoon services were being conducted every 1st and 3rd Sunday in the Cabaret behind the General Store near what is now known as the Beach Haven wharf. These had commenced in 1934. The decor of the cabaret with its huge pictures showing the lighter moments of life in the trenches during World War I was entertaining for dance patrons, but hardly conducive to worship. This gave an urgency to get a church built. At the meeting of the 6th July 1936, a committee was appointed to select and purchase a suitable site. The members of the committee were the Rev Gatman, the Circuit Stewards, Miss Giles, Mr Rowlands and Mr Sapworth.

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At the Quarterly Meeting of the 5th August 1936, Mr Sapworth asked permission to launch a campaign to raise “3000 shillings” towards a fund for the future church.

At the Birkenhead Trustees meeting of 12th October 1936, Mr Wilson moved, seconded by the Rev Gatman, that £30 from the sale of Circuit land to Mr F C Utting be devoted to the purchase of land at Beach Haven. There was one dissenting vote.

On the 21st October 1936 at the home of Mr and Mrs Rowlands in Puriri Avenue (now Beach Haven Road), a meeting chaired by the Rev. Gatman appointed Len Hayman, Albert Hadfield, Mr Rainford, A.B.Rowlands(Secretary/Treasurer) and Reg Sapworth as Beach Haven Church Trustees.



First Methodist Christmas Party at Reg and Elie Sapworths home in 1936.

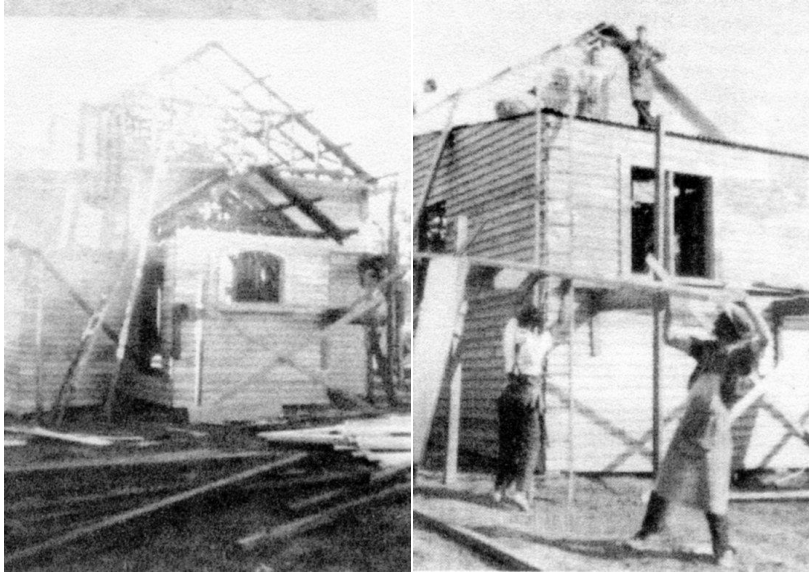
The Trust decided to raise £50 towards the building of a church and the Rev Gatman and Mr Rowlands visited many homes in the area soliciting funds and support. Mrs Gatman and the local ladies organised Hostel afternoons with Sales of Work, trading tables and other money raising ventures. One fund raising scheme invited people to send in a favourite bible verse or quotation, and on the payment of a shilling this was included in an inspirational calendar for 1937. When these were printed and ready they sold for one shilling and sixpence.

From this point onwards, the need for a Church at Beach Haven was regularly discussed at the Quarterly Meetings. The significance of holidays must have been rather less in those days than it is now, because the Quarterly meeting met on the 4th January 1937 and discussed at length, the £4/9/0d cost of the transfer of the Beach Haven site to the Beach Haven Church Trustees.

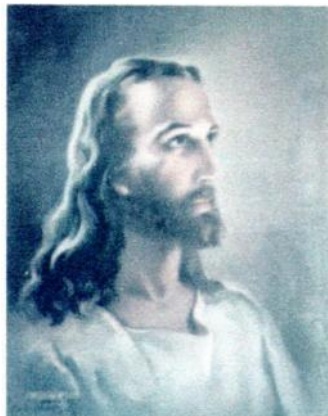
It wasn't until April 1939 that a loan was approved by the Connexional Office in Christchurch, and with this plus an interest free loan of £150 from Mrs Rowlands, as

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well as donations and other money raised, the Trustees felt that a church should be built. Within a month, on Saturday the 6th May 1939, local men and women, reinforced by helpers from Northcote and Highbury, laid the foundations. The ladies provided tea, scones and encouragement from a hired tent, and also helped in every way possible in such tasks as painting weatherboards



The following Saturday, the workers, both male and female, arrived early again and literally built the church in one day on 13th May. During the following week volunteers worked in the evenings, finishing and painting the interior and tidying the grounds in readiness for the opening on the following Saturday.



Framed picture of Jesus Given by the Bible Class.

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**The Pulpit and Communion Table (now used as a table at the back of the church)
Made and donated by Mr O Clark at the dedication of the Church in 1939.**



Picture made by Tess Franklin

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Rimu cross and Baptismal font
Made and donated by Mr. Stead of Birkenhead.



Communion Table
Given in memory of Mrs Dickson by her daughter Rae Thomas.



Framed photograph of John Wesley
Donated by Mr and Mrs Rowlands at the dedication of the Church in 1939.

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**Challis and Paten.
Given by the Rev Don Mence.**



Chairs donated by Jane Watson

Pelmets and red velvet curtains that were in the front of the Church.

Pelmets were made by Sid Stone and the curtains were made and donated by the Women's Fellowship

Hymn books, heaters and new ceiling were made possible from donations from the Women's Fellowship

OPENING OF BEACH HAVEN METHODIST CHURCH

(as reported in the NZ Methodist Times 29/7/39)

On May 20th the result of much work and prayer was brought to fruition with the official opening of the new church at Beach Haven, Birkenhead Circuit. The pioneering of this cause was undertaken by the Rev. Wm. Gatman with considerable success. A Sunday School and services were commenced and maintained in the local cabaret. A willing band of local friends, ably led by Mi. A.B.Rowlands, secretary of the trustees, and his equally enthusiastic wife, raised the major part of the finance required. Under the supervision of Mr. John Hall, and his "foreman" Mr Harold Chappell, the first "working-bee" was held on the day the new Mission Bay Church was opened. Some 40 men rallied to the cause, and hospitality was provided by the

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Beach Haven ladies, assisted by the Circuit Ladies' Guild. A second "working-bee" was held the following Saturday and the task was practically completed apart from the finishing of the painting.

The Chairman of the District, Rev. Fred Copeland, was present for the official opening on the following Saturday. The building was officially opened by Mr. E.J.Osbourne, Mayor of Birkenhead. An inspiring service was presided over by the circuit minister Mr. H.H.Jeffreys. An offertory of approximately £35 was received, making possible the payment of all costs, including a piano, with no liability other than £150 to the Church Building and Loan Fund.

Mr. and Mrs. Rowlands presented to the church an enlarged and framed photograph of John Wesley, as a personal token of thanksgiving for the fulfilment of their prayers with the completion of the church. The chairman addressed the assembly and congratulated all concerned on the excellent result of their devotion to the ideal of a place of worship for the Beach Haven community. Mr. Alan Wilson, senior Circuit Steward, briefly conveyed the congratulations of the circuit to the trustees, members and friends at Beach Haven on the happy attainment of their objective.

The following Sunday the Rev. H.H. Jeffrey's conducted a young people's service, and in the evening, Rev. G.I.Laurenson occupied the pulpit. The church was packed to capacity for both services and at each service since, 60 persons at least have been in attendance. The hope of all associated with this enterprise is that the new church will be a spiritual "oasis" in this district and that some day it will be an important suburban area of the city of Auckland. The trustees desire to place on record their indebtedness to all who have contributed to the realisation of this worthy project.

With just 60 pounds, the plot was bought;
through hard work and loans, the money was sought.
In May '39, foundations were laid, refreshments
provided and work duly praised.
In a day - 1 week later - the shell was completed
Inside - 1 week later - all present were seated.
Mayor Osbourne officiated, the doors opened wide,
Reverend Copeland was there, among those inside.
Reverend Jeffreys presiding, 'inspired' preaching, the proof,
the congregation now happy beneath their new roof.
With generous offerings, most costs were defrayed,
Those gathered sang joyously, and then humbly prayed.
We thank them for the vision, we remember them still,
We continue the work of doing God's will.
We endeavour to spread the 'Good News' to all,
We invite you to Worship, and respond to Christ's call.

Judy Cooper(1998)

This booklet was compiled by Alec Utting, May 1999.