

Waimea Methodist Parish

**170 Years
of
Methodism in Richmond
1843- 2013**



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It has been said that history is just one thing after another. It might also be said that history is one set of opportunities after another. The history of Methodism in Richmond shows how the people called Methodists have met each new opportunity with enterprise and resourcefulness, as well as courage and commitment. As we celebrate 170 years of Methodism in Richmond on 22-23 June 2013, it is noteworthy that the Wesleyan Methodists were the first Christian group to hold services in Richmond. These services were held in 1843 in the homes of Methodist folk.

These early Wesleyans made such an advance that under the influence of Rev John Aldred who at that time was minister in Nelson, they built the first church of any denomination in Richmond in **1844**. This was a small weather board chapel situated in Salisbury Road near the corner with Queen Street. The principal promoters of the building were Messrs Holdaway, Lightband Hewitt and Sutton. There was a strong well organised Sunday School and the Class Meetings were well attended.

During the first few years Wesleyan Methodist Ministers the Revs Ironside, Aldred and Warren spent alternate Sundays in Nelson City and country villages of the Waimea. In **1857** the growing importance of Methodism in the district from Nelson to Motueka led to the appointment of the Rev. W.J. Watkin, who resided in Richmond.

In **1866** additional land on the corner of Oxford St and Wensley Rd was purchased with a small cottage on it which became the parsonage. In the same year a new church was erected on the present site at a cost of £400. The original church in Salisbury Rd then became a vestry and school room.



In **1877** the cottage was replaced by a comfortable eight roomed Parsonage which was built at a cost of £350. These early developments in the life of the Methodist Church

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were made possible by 'quite a strong band of intelligent and warm-hearted members who were connected with Richmond in the early days' (a quote from Rev Morley).

About **1910 or 1911** the church was shifted further back on the property on rollers pulled by Mr Webby's traction engine. This enabled the construction of the third Richmond Methodist Church building.

On **22 June 1913** this new church was opened. It cost £965 including furnishings. The older church which had been shifted became the Sunday School.



The Nelson newspaper *The Colonist* on 24 June 1913 had this to report of the new church and its opening in it 'News of the Day'

Special services in connection with the opening of the new Methodist Church at Richmond were held on Sunday. The formal ceremony of declaring the new church open was performed by the Rev. S. Lawry, president of the Conference, who also conducted the opening service, preaching from the text drawn from 2 Timothy, 2-8, "Remember Jesus Christ,". In the afternoon a children's service was held, the preacher being the Rev. C. Eaton, and in the evening the Rev. S. Lawry again preached to a large congregation.

The new church, is built on the site of the old one, and the design cannot fail to attract attention. Besides the main building the dimensions of which are 45 by 30, there are also a gallery, vestry, two ante-rooms, belfry, and a front and side porch. Seating

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accommodation is provided/or about 180 people. The walls are of plaster, finished in rough cast; and the roof is of painted iron. The interior walls are also plastered, with a dado panelling, the furnishings being in stained wood, which gives a good effect against the plaster. Octagonal pillars support the roof. The building is well ventilated, and is at present lighted with kerosene lamps, but it is hoped shortly to install electricity. The whole building is finished in Gothic design and reflects credit alike both on the architect (Mr. A. R. Griffin) and the contractor (Mr. W. E. Wilkes). The plumbing was done by the Nelson Tinware Company, and the plastering by Mr Laird. The contract price was £810. A feature is the minister's vestry, which has been specially and neatly furnished by Mrs. Buttle.

From the Church Trust minutes of March 30th **1935** we read "*The Treasurer reported that the year's income was £20.6.11, and the expenditure was £18.16.9, which left a credit balance of £1.10.2. It was moved by Rev. Dudley and seconded by Mr Lawry that the Secretary appeal to the members of the church for donations.*" A newspaper cutting dated 16th November 1935 gives a glowing report of the Methodist Sunday School Concert and Prizegiving as part of the Sunday School Anniversary. The Sunday School was filled for the occasion, and many familiar names are listed amongst the prize-winners.

Centennial celebrations were held in May **1943**. The Trust minutes this as "*A splendid effort resulting in a credit balance of £14.0.6*". The trees at the front of the Church were planted to commemorate this event. During the 1940s the parsonage on the corner of Oxford St and Wensley Rd was sold and was replaced by a rough cast 2 storey building at 105 Queen St.

On 27th April **1952** the "Ernest Wilfred Wilson Loney Memorial Sunday School Hall" was opened. From the programme printed for that occasion we read, "... *When the time came for the present forward move, it was not without a tinge of regret that we demolished the old hall, then 85 years old, and especially the back portion, which was part of the original church, this being about 108 years old. These buildings were sacred for they symbolised the devotion, zeal and faith of our honoured pioneers. The same work that they planned will go better in the splendid new building now being opened.*

As a Church we are greatly indebted to the late Mrs Jane Loney who, upon the death of her son, Ernest Wilfred Wilson Loney, killed in action overseas, gave to us the splendid gift of about £3500. The hall stands a memorial to her son, and also to her own generosity and devotion, and above all to the glory of God who in Christ reigns in the hearts of His people ..."

It is with a spirit of thankfulness that we acknowledge that the church still receives monies annually from the Loney Trusts. This money was used to establish the first kindergarten in Richmond in the Loney Hall.

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On June 26 **1960** a new modern parsonage was dedicated and opened at 28 Oxford St Richmond by Rev MA McDowell and Rev Loyal Gibson, wife June, and their three children took up residence the next day. The building cost £4600, furnishings £600 and the section £1000!

By the late **1970's** concern was being expressed over the gradual deterioration of the church building. Due to the porous nature of the limestone plaster used in its construction, the Leader's Meeting realised that a serious attempt needed to be made to resolve this problem. In June **1987** it was noted that it was not economic to carry out major reconstruction, and that rezoning regulations did not permit this. In March **1988** it was resolved to obtain a report on the state of the building from a registered engineer. On receiving this report in December 1988 it was resolved that the committee recommend to the congregation that no further maintenance be carried out, and that a move to the Loney Hall be made as soon as possible. The Loney Memorial Hall and adjoining hall underwent extensive renovation and the whole complex was upgraded.



A new lounge was added and the building modified to contain a Worship Centre, a large Foyer, Sunday School room. Church office, kitchen and toilet facilities. Renamed the Wesley Centre, it presented itself as an attractive and useful asset, not only for church people, but also for the extensive use by a variety of community organisations.

On Saturday 6 April **1991** members and friends filled the church opened in 1913 for the final service within its walls. The minister acknowledged the mixed feelings of those gathered. In the closing act the children were asked to be guardians of the Cross, the Bible, the Paten and the Chalice, and to safely and carefully convey these symbols

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of our faith to our new place of worship. The District Superintendent, Rev. Norman West, the Parish Minister, Rev. Philip Did-dell, the Parish Stewards, Messrs Ian Holdaway, Graham Burton, and Dr Edward Bassett, followed by the children bearing the symbols, led the congregation out of the Church, the District Superintendent returning to close the doors for the last time. Rev. Philip Did-Dell officially opened the doors of the refurbished Wesley Centre, which was dedicated by the District Superintendent. The Guest Preacher at the opening service in the Wesley Worship Centre was the (late) Rev. Wallace Chapman of St. John's, Nelson. A commemorative cake made for the occasion was cut by Colin and Nancy Marshall, members of the parish for 50 years.

A memorial of the Church was retained in the bell tower and bell which were placed near the entrance to the Wesley Centre. The bell was quite historic. When the Spring Grove Church was demolished in the late 1950's the bell was given to the Richmond Church and installed in the bell tower where it called people to worship Sunday by Sunday. Other memorials that were preserved included the brass plaque dedicated to Mr Thomas Bell, an early lay preacher from Hope. Because he was regarded as one of the founders of the Murchison Methodist Church his memorial plaque was lovingly given to the Murchison congregation to be placed in the Church there. At the same time the Richmond Church organ was also gifted to the Murchison Methodist Church where it was much appreciated. We were able to do this through the generous gift of a Technic organ for our own Worship Centre.

Finally in February **1992** the church was dismantled. In its place the Wesley Garden was created, a major project commemorating the 150th anniversary of Methodism in 1993. The Wesley Garden has become a pleasant place for people to pause and rest as they visit the business area of Richmond.

The Celebration of 150 years of Methodism in Richmond was marked on 17-18 April **1993**. A Celebration Dinner and Concert was held in the Richmond Town Hall on the Saturday night, attended by Mrs Barbara Lawrence Vice President of the Methodist Church of NZ, District Superintendent Rev Jim Cropp, Richmond Mayor Kerry Marshall, and former clergy including Revs Loyal Gibson, David Stubbs, Beverley Pullar and Bruno Egli. A Service of Celebration and Communion was held in the Richmond Town Hall on the Sunday morning followed by a shared lunch and then the Dedication of the Wesley Garden and naming of the John Wesley Lane, a stretch of roadway between the church and the parsonage in Oxford Street on former church land.

The Richmond Church programme in 1993 was varied and worthwhile. The Wesley Walkers met weekly providing both exercise and good companionship. The prayer meeting attracted a group of committed people. The Prayer Link ministered through prayer as requested. Members of the congregation also served through supporting the

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Food Basket Ministry. Another worthwhile avenue of service was the Community Young Offenders Scheme run in conjunction with the Police through their Youth Aid Officer. The minister found work and supervised this activity. The Sunday School, now known as Noah's Ark, was a happy and expanding group under the leadership of Mr Paul Holdaway. Craft, Caring and Sharing an outreach commenced in 1978 continued to bring pleasure and satisfaction to all who attended, usually 15-18 ladies each week during winter. The Methodist Fellowship was a strong group within the church and supported the church in many ways. On March 21 1993 three members of the congregation were commissioned for service: Loretta Wilson as convenor of ministry at Oakwoods and Alexandra Home; Paul Holdaway as Sunday School Superintendent, and Anne Scott as Religion in Schools teacher.

Since the 150th anniversary in 1993 the Richmond Methodist Church has received ordained ministry from Revs Philip Did- Dell, (1990-1995), Jessie Kerr (1997-2006) and Paul Tregurtha (2007-). Sunday worship remains the high point of the weekly programme at Richmond Methodist Church. The 9.30 am service continues to bring together a faithful and friendly congregation who gather for shared worship and fellowship. With part time ministry, worship leadership is shared between minister, Paul Tregurtha, active retired ministers Revs Max Hornblow, Graham Kane and Ross Heyward, lay preacher Robin Hall, and the Richmond congregation. We are fortunate to have the services of Graham Reburn as our regular organist, and many others who week after week contribute their time and talents to enable the various aspects of worship to run smoothly.

Throughout January and on a fifth Sunday in any month we worship together with St David's Presbyterian Church in Richmond at alternating venues. These services have facilitated a close relationship with our neighbouring church. Combined parish services with our sister church, the Wakefield Methodist-Presbyterian Church, are also held 3 times a year to foster parish community. Parish services have been held on special days in our worship calendar eg Wesley Sunday and conclude with a shared lunch.

Sunday worship at Richmond is always followed by morning tea, a valued time for parishioners to socialise. For many years Ivy and Jim Short have been at the forefront of facilitating this service. Pauline Stott has now taken over as kitchen convenor, with the assistance of other parishioners.

In recent years a number of enjoyable social afternoons have been held with varied themes eg Music, The Letter 'P,' Cornwall Attendees have been encouraged to dress for these occasions and much fun has been had.

Many groups and activities continue to function and enrich the life of the Richmond Methodist Church and the community it serves. The Fellowship has grown in numbers recently with the addition of folk from the Wakefield Fellowship. The Prayer Circle

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meets quarterly under the leadership of Rev Beverley Pullar. Craft Caring and Sharing under the leadership of Pauline Stott meets each Monday morning May- September. A monthly Community Sing a Long attracts a regular following and donations from this activity go to supporting Nelson Hospital Chaplaincy. A Gold Coin donation collected at Sunday worship is given to a variety of community organisations eg Habitat For Humanity, St Johns Ambulance, Bible in Schools. The Waimea Methodist Parish now has access to monies from the sale of Camp Snowden to donate annually to worthy causes which benefit both youth and the elderly. In recent years financial assistance has been granted to families and schools for outdoor education, to Riding for the Disabled for specialist equipment, and to Pinnacle House, an organisation which cares for young people with severe intellectual disabilities. The annual Church Fair is another worthwhile outreach into the wider community.

On 17 March **2000** the Parsonage at 28 Oxford St was sold and a new one purchased at 26 Appaloosa Ave. Currently this parsonage is rented and provides the parish with a significant income. The Wesley Centre continues to be well maintained and in recent years has had new aluminium frame windows fitted, and the kitchen refurbished. The complex is used by a number of community organisations during the week who appreciate its central location in Richmond and the quality of the facility.

An important recent event in the life of the Richmond Methodist Church was the publication of 'Our Memories'. This was collated and edited by parishioner Beverley Pullar, herself a minister to the Richmond Church 1985-86. The book, a wonderful visual and written record of the life and worship of our church, was launched at a special ceremony attended by Richmond Mayor Richard Kempthorne on Sunday 2 November 2008.

Another special occasion for the Richmond Church was the dedication on Wesley Sunday May 22, 2011 of an extensive mural painted on the wall of a building facing the church carpark. The mural, was painted over many months by artist Rose Shepard, a member of our Wakefield sister church, and features the 1913 church and current members of the Richmond and Wakefield congregations set against a backdrop of our rural landscape.

The mural has attracted much interest from the public since it came to fruition and is a living witness to the community of our life as a worshipping and serving congregation in Richmond.

So as we celebrate the 170th Anniversary of Methodism in Richmond on the weekend 100 years since the opening of the 3rd church on 22 June 1913, we gratefully acknowledge the many people who have contributed to the rich and varied life of our congregations, and praise and thank God for the faith our creator has in our church to continue the ministry of Jesus into the future.



RICHMOND METHODIST CHURCH MINISTERS

The list of ministers may not contain the names of all who served here.

1845-49 John Aldred preached his first service in the church on 3rd May 1845. He became the first secretary of the Mechanics Institute in 1846.

R.S. Bunn 1865, R.L. Bickers 1867. J.A. Taylor 1871. W. Cannell 1872, W. Keal 1874, W.B; Marten 1876. T.F. Reeve 1877, W. Rowse 1878: J. Berry, W. Kirk, James Thomas 1885-1892 came from Tasmania, J Crump, J,S. Richworfh 1892, G.T. Marshall 1895-99, T.G. Carr from Rangiora, J.D. Jory 1903. S.H,P. Peryman 1906-10, C. Eaton 1910-14, A. Ashcroft 1915-18, Wills 1919-1921, J.R. Nelson .1924-24, H.L. Richards 1925, J.H. Haslam, R. Richards, B. Dudley, M. Ayrton 1938

John Grocott	1941-1944
Ralph Patchett	1945-1950
Charles Bell	1950-1955
Harry Moore	1955-1960
Loyal Gibson	1960-1967
Maxwell Bruce	1967-1968

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David Stubbs	1969-1975
Clive Smith	1975-1979
Bruno Egli	1980-1984
Beverley Pullar	1985-1986
Ludwig Felderhof	1987-1989
Philip Did Dell	1990-1995
Jessie Kerr	1997-2006
Paul Tregurtha	2007-

