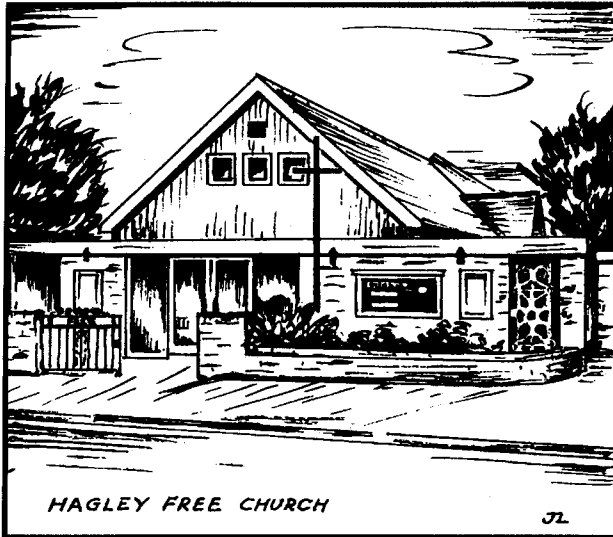


HAGLEY FREE CHURCH



In January 1905 five men from Baptist, Congregational and Methodist backgrounds, all interested in non-conformity, decided that steps should be taken to consider forming a "union church" in Lower Hagley. A public meeting was convened and subsequently the land on which the church now stands was bought and a contract placed for the erection of a building on the site. The church, the second "union church" in the country, was opened on 16th September 1905 by Mr. Ambrose. Those assembled entered the building to the Hallelujah Chorus played by Mr. G. F. Davies on an American organ, which had been half paid for by Mr. Andrew Carnegie. A sermon was preached by Rev. E. D. Braimbridge on the text "The Unity of the Spirit."

A Sunday School was started in 1907 but it declined in numbers and subsequently it was reopened in 1920 under the leadership of Mr. Jabez Round and a new Sunday School hall was built in 1925. Until after the second world war the only significant addition to the premises was the dedication of a new organ in April 1922.

The church has no formal connections with any other non-conformist church, although it has traditionally given financial support to the Baptist, Methodist and URC (formerly Congregational) Churches as these reflect the origins of the Free Church. It has never had its own minister or pastor. Sunday Services are conducted by visiting preachers who come from various christian denominations, some will be ordained ministers others will be recognised by lay preachers or readers.

The responsibility for the running of the Church, in line with its constitution, rests with a Committee, elected annually by a meeting of the members.

Significant additions were made to the premises in 1964 with the building of an entrance porch and major extensions in 1970 and 1974 linked the Church and Sunday School Hall. Land at the rear of the site was bought to provide a car park and the youth of the Church raised money for the provision of a tennis court.

Inside the Church are six beautiful memorial windows, four being designed and installed by the world-renowned Thomas William Camm. These recognise the contribution made to the Church by founder members and others who have served the Church with distinction.

The Church looks forward to celebrating its centenary in 2005.

The midweek meetings include Bible Study, Prayer and House Groups. There is a weekly Fellowship during the Winter months and the local community is served through the Hand of Friendship Centre, the Friday Coffee Morning and Senior Citizens' Club and the Mothers' and Toddlers' Group.

The premises are used by other organisations including Badminton, Chess and Bridge Clubs, Keep Fit, Hagley Orchestra and Clent Hills Singers not forgetting the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides. The Church is happy to share its premises for the good of the community in Hagley.

The Church for many years has published a Quarterly Newsletter which goes to every house in Hagley. See what is going on and join us. You will be assured of a warm welcome.

Look backwards with thanksgiving

Look upwards with confidence

Look forwards with hope.

Don Moss