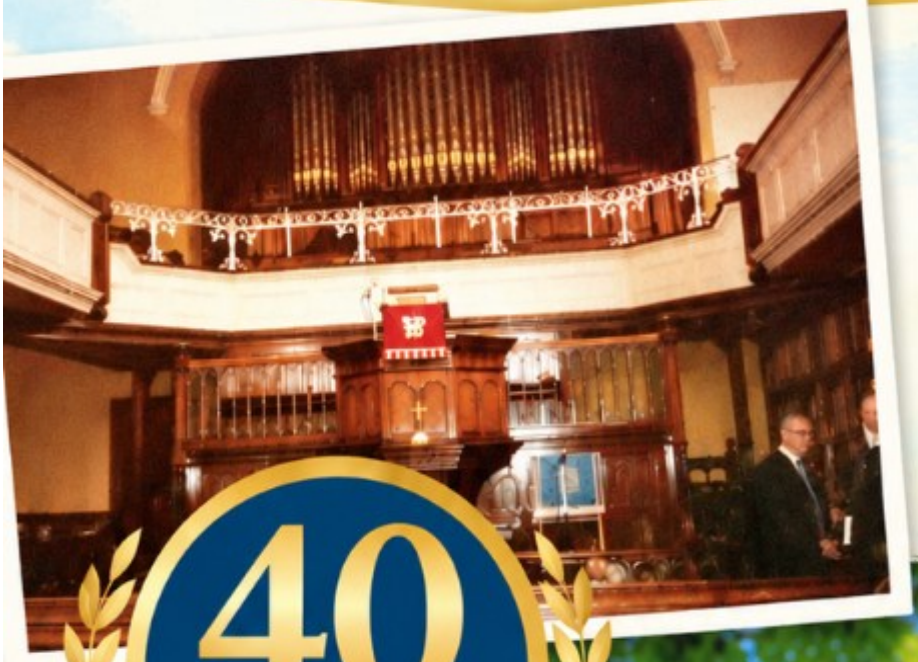
Issue 11. Special Edition
November 2026

FAITH MATTERS

NEWS • REFLECTION • COMMUNITY



From Wesley Chapel to a modern Uniting Church

40 YEARS
1986 – 2026



A journey of faith, people and community

Whaley Bridge Uniting Church

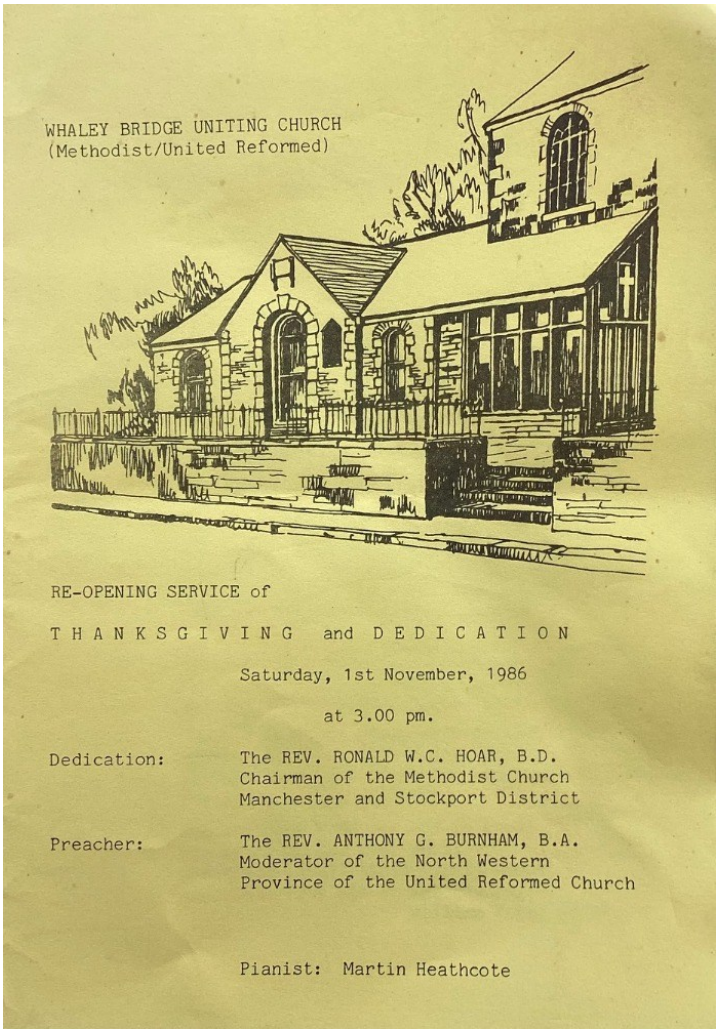
Remembering our past • Celebrating our present • Looking to the future

Celebrating 40 years

1986 saw the reopening of our church, and this November we celebrate 40 years since that important chapter in its history began.

As we look back in this issue, we remember with gratitude the many people who helped make it happen, and the families who attended and supported the church during those early years.

It was a time of big change and modernisation. The old Wesley Chapel was transformed into a modern, welcoming and fit-for-purpose Uniting Church, ready to serve the community for many years to come.



WHALEY BRIDGE UNITING CHURCH
(Methodist/United Reformed)

RE-OPENING SERVICE of

THANKSGIVING and DEDICATION

Saturday, 1st November, 1986

at 3.00 pm.

Dedication: The REV. RONALD W.C. HOAR, B.D.
Chairman of the Methodist Church
Manchester and Stockport District

Preacher: The REV. ANTHONY G. BURNHAM, B.A.
Moderator of the North Western
Province of the United Reformed Church

Pianist: Martin Heathcote

The Methodist story in Whaley Bridge goes back to the early nineteenth century. Before having their own building the local Wesleyan Methodist Society and Sunday school met in the old corn mill on Bridge Street.

In 1821 a new building was opened on Buxton Road to provide a permanent home for the church and its Sunday school. The 1821 building still stands today, albeit much altered in 1986.

As the Methodist congregation grew, a much larger Wesleyan chapel was added in the 1860's with the chapel opening on September 17th 1868.This included a gallery which greatly increased the seating capacity. It was also associated with a day school which served the local community for many years.

In 1867 Whaley Bridge became the centre of its own Wesleyan Methodist Circuit. The circuit included several surrounding Methodist churches and chapels.
The building has continued to change with the needs of the community with the reconstruction in 1986 and further modernisation in 2011. In 1983 it formed part of an ecumenical partnership with the local United Reformed Church ,and later in 2004 with a small group of Baptists to form the new Whaley Bridge Uniting Church. A new name and new beginning.

At the reopening ceremony in 1986 the Minister said 'We have built this church not for our own glory but for the worship of God and the service of His world.

Peace be to this house and to all who worship here, and to those who go out from here. Peace be to those who love it, and who love the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The hymn All people that on earth do dwell followed.

After prayers Richard Rigby read Genesis 28 v 10-22 and Jonathan Reeves Luke Chapter 5 v 1-11





Some photographs of the work in progress. Started in 1985 the work was completed in 1986.

A grant of £9,000 came from the Joseph Rank Trust, £46,000 came from fund raising in church,£3,500 from the church property division and gifts from other circuits in Alderley Edge, Macclesfield, Manchester and Oldham £9,000.Also local shops and businesses, friends past and present and Mrs Livesley donated the baby grand piano.











Above, one of the many many meetings to discuss the new church needs. Meetings to discuss plans, check on progress, project manage, adhere to safety issues—huge when working on demolition so near to the main road, or to seek permissions and comply with all the regulations and requirements that went with such a huge project.





Over the Road was a new venture for the church. Our little charity shop opened during the mid 1980's. Its mission was specifically to raise money for the reconstruction project. Ever since it has continued with its charitable work in the community.

Each year the shop profits are used by the church for its work within the community as well as donating to many local groups .



After the hymn ‘That mighty resurrected word ‘, the building was dedicated by Derek Winfield as the Secretary of the Building committee, the Chairman Francis Dixon, and local preacher Alan Sproson . Wendy Tasker then dedicated the font with cradle roll children. John Morten, the Communion steward, dedicated the communion table and Mrs Wigley followed with a dedication to the hall, kitchen and fellowship room.

The next hymn was ‘Eternal Father, thou hast said. ‘ And after the offertory ‘Now thank we all our God.’

Everyone stayed afterwards for refreshments where Bill Sidebotham had mounted a photographic display .



One of the dedications used these words

‘Grant that the faith of your people here may lead to an imaginative use of these premises.’

I think it is safe to say that we certainly have from bazaars, pantos, shows, church musicals, lunch club, oasis, worship groups, community groups, training and so much more.

Can you spot anyone you know in the following photos. I am sure you have stories to tell and memories to share.

I can see Mr Wigley, Chris Mellor, Alan Bowker, Anne Reeves, Joyce Clayton? Ann Smith here on the left

Below I can spot so many individuals and families from the past including The Baileys, the Bartons, the Bowkers, the Claytons, the Cromptons,the Dixons, the Goodalls, the Griffins, 2 Hill families, the Hulmes, the Kumars, the Mellors, the Melluishes, the Mortens, the Peckhams, the Reeves,the Scoffins, the Sidebothams, the Taskers, the Thornhills,the Timothys,the Wigleys,and the Winfields.

And so many more so forgive me if I haven't listed them all. There were so many families back in the 1980’s.

The reading on the day was from Genesis 28. and included v 16

‘When Jacob awoke from his sleep he thought “Surely the Lord is in this place. And I was not aware of it”.

He was afraid and said “ How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, this is the gate of heaven”

What a fitting verse on such a day of celebration.













Finished at last,
October 1986



Arthur Jackson, Miss Clayton and Rev. Tyerman



Mrs Jackson, Miss Galpin and Miss Stiles



Mrs Hulme with Rev. Bob Tyerman



And at last in November 1986 our service of rededication

-with refreshments of course

Do you recognise old friends?







Some familiar faces, all grown up now, so lovely to see such a happy group

Our next issue will be a bumper Christmas edition. Until then we say Happy birthday in November to

Michael Thompson on the 14th, John Morten on the 21st,and Joyce Winfield on the 27th.

We hold all our friends in our prayers, particularly those who have been in hospital or poorly.

Next month there will be pictures of the community outing to the Piece Hall, Christmas stories, quizzes, crafts, the final part of our Abecedary ,Christmas songs and poems and some very happy memories. If you have any stories or pictures you would like to contribute please contact Chris



Answers to the hymns quiz in our last issue. 1.Crown him with many crowns
2.The church's one foundation
3. I need thee every hour.
4. Be thou my vision
5.We cannot measure how you heal
6.Be still and know
7.Fight the good fight
8.Tell out my soul
9. Shine Jesus shine
10. Ye servants of God
11 All creatures of our God and King
12 Abide with me
13. Will your anchor hold
14. Blessed assurance
15. All things bright and beautiful
16. Angel voices ever singing
17.I cannot tell
18. How shall I sing
19. Lead kindly light
20. Lord of the boundless curves
21. Summer suns are glowing
22. Come down O love divine
23. While shepherds watched their flocks
24. Hark the glad sound
25.Spirit of the living God
26.There is a book whose runs may read
27. We plough the fields and scatter
28.For the healing of the nations
29.Your will for us and others Lord
30. Forth in the name O Lord I go
31. Oh what a gift a wonderful gift
32. There's a spirit in the air
33.Tell me the old old story
34.Unto us a boy is born
35.Now let us from this table rise
36. How gracious are thy feet
37.The right hand of God is writing in our land
38. Now thank we all our God !

A prayer for our Church 40 years on

Bless those who worship here, those who serve here ,and all who come through these doors.

Give us courage to face the future, wisdom to make good decisions, and generous hearts to serve our community.

As we remember those who have gone before us, help us to honour their faith and commitment by continuing the work they began.

May this church continue to be a place of welcome, worship, friendship and hope, today. tomorrow and for generations to come.

