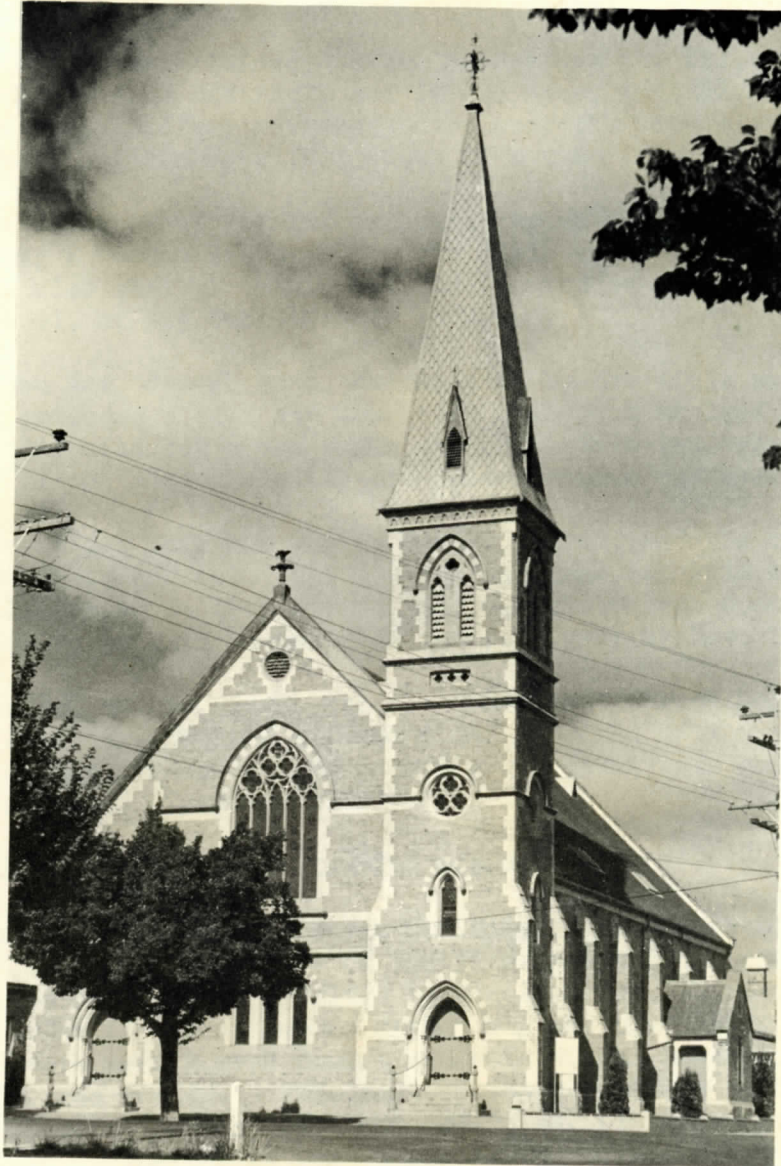


Praise GOD from whom ALL blessings flow. . . .



**GOLDEN SQUARE METHODIST CHURCH
1872 - 1972**

In the year 1852, Rev. J. Chapman, who was stationed at Forest Creek, near Castlemaine, purchased for 130 pounds, land and a weatherboard building in Golden Square which may be regarded as the first Methodist Church at Sandhurst, as Bendigo was then called.

As far as can be ascertained, Golden Square was the first preaching place in the Bendigo district, and it was here, in 1852, that the well-known Jimmy Jeffrey preached on or near the site of the present Sunday School buildings, with a stump of a tree for his pulpit.

In 1859, a replacement for the existing church was required, this church being a wooden building "of the plain type" having attached to the rear a slab vestry. This building served as either Church, Sunday School, or Day School until 1872.

In 1859, the Rev. Joseph Dare, accompanied by Mr. Lisle and other brethren, attended a sale and bought an allotment of land for 30 pounds as the site for a new stone church. This land was an extension of the site where the old wooden church was erected.

The architect for this new church was Mr. Smith, and the contractors, Messrs. Crowford and Co. The foundation stone was laid by the Rev. Daniel Draper on 19th April, 1859 and the Church opened for public worship on 11th December of the same year by Rev. Dare.

An old member, Mr. F. Clark, writes: *"When this Church was opened, the Rev. Dare, Mr. Richard Allingham and Mr. John Hilson stood up together within its walls, and heartily and thankfully sang 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow'"*.

The opening collection totalled 262 pounds.

Turning now to the present church building. Mr. Abraham Harkness wrote: *"The foundation stone of the first part of the present brick church was laid on 5/1/1870 by the late Mr. R. Allingham, the Rev. W. Taylor (later to become Bishop Taylor) also being present. The architects were Messrs Crouch and Wilson, the contractors Messrs. Johns Bros. and Hinley. This part of the church was opened for Divine Service on Sunday, 11th May, 1870, the preacher being the late Rev. J. Dare. The Church was completed in 1873. Donations for the completion of this church were as follows:- Mr. R. Allingham 700 pounds; Mr. C. Moore 500 pounds, Mr. R. Jones 85 pounds, Mr.*

Job Goddard 52 pounds; Mr. Lisle 50 pounds and many others."

Mr. F. Clark said "The Church possesses a fine, powerful pipe-organ of good tone, of which Mr. Robert Harkness is organist. A fine choir and lead all render valuable service with sweet melody and praise. The church has seating accomodation for some 1,500 persons, and is unparalleled for its beauty of design and structure. The church was of a larger size and greater architectural pretentions than any other Wesleyan Church in the district. Liberal givers for the initial constructions of the church were Mr. Allingham and a group of claim-holders who held the Union claim, namely Messrs. Lisle, Nevinson, Porter, Tongue and Henny. This church was known as 'The Cathedral of Methodism'".

The ministers who have served at Golden Square are as follows: Rev. Symons, Chapman, Raston, Draper, Shaw, Hart (the first resident minister), James, Worth, Lane, Watkin, Blamires, Harcourt, Williams, Edgar, Usher, Green, Copperthwaite, Tuckfield, Marsland, Thompson, Nicholson, Adamson, Shaw, Prior, Worrall, Bradbury, Knight, Hodge, Ham, Enticknap, Rankin, Collins, Lawton, McConchie, Lancaster, Woodford, Hay, Horton, McLaughlin, Oldfield, Bampton, Phillips, Marshall, Winn, Gamble, Harvey and the present minister Rev. Murray John.

Sunday School operations were commenced in the year 1852, in the weatherboard and slab building already referred to, and have continued ever since. The school now comprises a fine set of buildings and a membership of nearly 175 teachers, officers and scholars.

Owing to a rapid increase in the population, it was not long before the old building became too small to accomodate the number of scholars, and it was enlarged by the addition of a weatherboard portion which satisfied all requirements for many years.

However, in 1865, a contract was let to Mr. W. Johns for the erection of additions in the shape of a T piece in front of the weatherboard school. In 1880 the school became so crowded, that it was absolutely necessary to do something to again increase the accomodation, and the Trustees of the

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Church granted the use of the Church galleries for a number of years to accomodate the junior scholars.

Superintendents of Sunday School who acted as such between 1852 and 1902 were as follows: Messrs. Wm. Tongue, R. Noble, B. Booth, A. Harkness, R. Lisle, C. Moore, Goddard, Alderson, Roberts, H. Cock, R. Rowe, C. Winter, H. Ralph, M. Cock, W. James, J. Harvey, Brimacombe and R. Saunders.

At this point, it is interesting to note that in 1902, the Sunday School teaching staff numbered 54, including one sick visitor, and scholars on the roll numbered 568.

Mr. J. H. Crump, secretary of the Sunday School, reported, *"The period 1852 to 1902 had been a record one in every sense of the word, and it was doubtful if, in the whole 50 years of the school's existence, there had been a single year where so many conversions had been known."*

From 1902 to 1972 many faithful servants have laboured to fulfil the purposes of the Sunday School. Times have not always been easy of late, as many outside interests are now offered to children which were never contemplated 50 years ago.

Great changes have taken place in education and in the particular emphasis in the Christian faith to cope with modern day attitudes

Our Sunday School has altered its methods to cope with these changes and remains a vital part of Church life.

Superintendents who have served lately are as follows: Messrs. C. Warne, L. White, H. Jones, R. Warne, J. Little and F. Kinsman.

Mention must now be made of the choir, as it is one of the oldest and largest Methodist Church choirs in Bendigo, having rendered service for over 100 years.

The choir has been under the direction of the following choirmasters

Messrs. Brewer (1870), Crump, Andrews (1908), Dunstan, Howkey (1909), J. Harkness, Prideaux, Dennis (1914), Brimacombe, E.C. Warne, Sleeman (1915), Francis, E.C. Warne (1923), C. Warne (1923), J. Chamney (1939), E. Thomas, C. Warne, (1939), R. Warne (1968).

From available records, past organists include Messrs. H. Whitford, R. Harkness, Miss Gertie James, Mr. Hampton, Mr. J. Allingham, Miss M. Akehurst, Miss A. Saunders, Mr. I. R. Carne, Mr. F. Pettigrove, Mrs. E. Chamney, Messrs. H. Jones and R. Warne.

From the date of commencement of the choir to 1908, 73 anthems were purchased. These anthems ranged in difficulty from easy to very difficult, were mostly of the Victorian era, and featured composers such as Arthur Crook, John Stainer, Arthur Sullivan, Caleb Simper, J. Varley Roberts, Geo. Garrett, and Walter Spinney.

Since 1908, a further 130 anthems have been purchased.

Many wonderful contributions have been made by the choir to our morning and evening services, by way of anthems and hymn singing.

Perhaps the choir's highest moments came whilst under the direction of Mr. Cyril Warne, a gifted musician. Not only were difficult anthems sung well, but greater works were rendered with great success. These works include, Hymn of Praise by Mendelssohn, Song of Thanksgiving, Olivet to Calvary by Maunder, Crucifixion by Stainer, Creation by Haydn and with additional voices, Elijah - Mendelssohn, Messiah - Handel, and Mozart's Requiem Mass.

Since the passing of Mr. Warne, the choir has changed, in that many anthems being sung are much simpler and yet most meaningful; emphasis is being given to leading the congregation in the spoken parts of the service as well as the musical side; junior members have been recruited, probably for the first time in the history of the choir;

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and mainly because of the choir's prominence (being placed at the front of the Church), gowns are now being worn by choir-members.

The present choir is enrolled with the Royal School of Church Music and makes every effort to follow the principles laid down by that body. There are 26 members in the choir, namely Mesdames Arnold, Kinsman, Warne, Little, Misses Perrin, Perry, Windsor, Mrs. Mamouney, Misses Graham, Mauger, Field, Gillies, Cowling, Kinsman, and K. Woodman. These members comprise the soprano section, the last three named being junior members. The alto section comprises Mesdames Vapp, H. Warne, N. Woodman, Jenkin, Misses Hill and Freeman. Gentlemen of the choir are Messrs. M. Warne, F. Mamouney, L. White, J. Knipe (all bass and N. Thirlwell (tenor).

The choir represents a cross-section of the church, its members being involved in the Sunday School (either as teachers or scholars), Together Club, Ladies Guild, Trustees, Fellowship Group and the Young Adult Group.

Due mainly to the wisdom and foresight of the Church Trustees, the choir has an excellent pipe organ to accompany their singing. The organ, which is over 100 years old is attended to by Messrs. Hill, Norman and Beard, organ builders of Melbourne, at least four times a year, thereby ensuring that this great instrument does not fall into disrepair.

The choir is now under the direction of the organist Rodney Warne, who is the third generation of the Warne family to have undertaken this position.

The choir, which is probably the oldest and largest Church Choir in the history of Methodism in Bendigo, has a great heritage, and one that the church can be very proud of.

Turning now to the present churches week day activities, we find that all sections of the congregation have been considered.

There is the weekly Fellowship meeting, the Ladies Guild, W.A.O.M., the Together Club, the Young Adult Group, the Ladies Indoor Carpet Bowls and the Badminton Club and Youth Club. Perhaps one criticism which can be levelled at our present week-day activity is the lack of united effort between all bodies of the Church.

One such effort conducted in the past which commanded great public interest was the Augustonian Fair.

On 26/8/1933 Mr. J.H. Crump wrote "the Augustonian Fair has become quite a local institution and the year would not seem complete without it. From a social point of view it has no equal".

I lately heard of a bazaar or sale of gifts which had been held, where a number of young ladies were discussing the event. One of them enquired "How did the affair go off?" "Oh splendid" said another. "Did you make much profit?" The answer was "I do not know about the profit, but three of us got engaged!" Well that was the way they looked at it, and no doubt they were well satisfied.

Something like that of course may happen at the Augustonian Fair, but the treasurers of the several organisations and the stall holders, view the matter from a financial aspect.

In looking through some old Church books, the first sale of gifts I can find anything definite about was styled a GRAND JUBILEE FESTIVAL AND SALE OF GIFTS in October 1902. It was opened by Cr. Curnow, Mayor of Bendigo, Messrs. Saunders and Brimacombe were the Supts. and Messrs. Crump and Vigus the secretaries. Many other well known names, workers of the times, are still with us including several ladies, however I dare not mention them as I have been politely informed I will get my hair pulled if I do so, and cannot risk such a catastrophe.

Later on similar efforts were held in different months under different names such as May Fair, Butterfly Fair, Rainbow Fair, Japanese Fair etc.

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In compiling Church, thank offering news J.H. Crump & cover.

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In the years 1918 and 1919, after much discussion and many meetings, it was finally decided to hold a fair in August 1921, which proved to be most successful and has been held ever since under the name of Augustonian Fair.

Despite depression, bad times etc., its success has been wonderful and has returned to Church, Sunday School and Parsonage Funds the sum of over 2,500 pounds and this is a record which we can well be proud of.

Of course the old adage that many hands make light work and the general good fellowship displayed throughout the whole of the preparations has at all times been one of the principal factors of success.

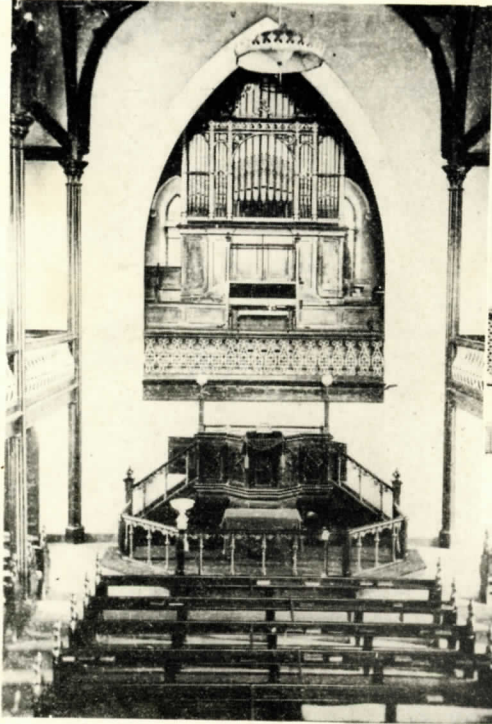
In closing this study of the Church at Golden Square, it is clear that a great Christian witness has been effected in many different ways. A witness which we can be proud of, but one which places a great responsibility on the present congregation. May each one of us who are privileged to worship God in this Church see this responsibility not as a duty, but a privilege.

In compiling this short history of the Golden Square Methodist Church, thanks must be given to Mr. Frank Mamouney for offering newspaper cuttings etc. collected by the late Mr. J.H. Crump & Mr. John Newton for photograph and design of the cover.

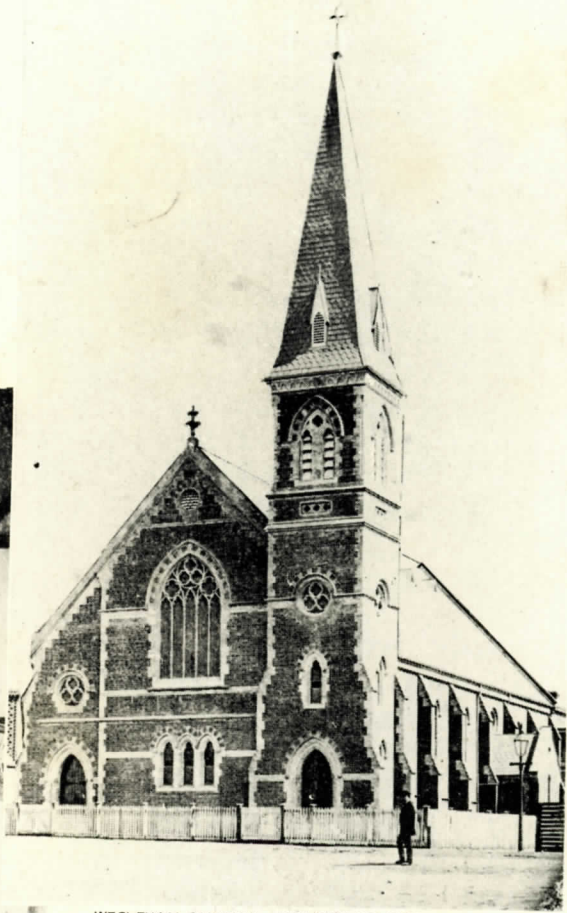
Apologies are also extended for any inaccuracies or omissions which may have occurred in compiling this article.

R. WARNE.

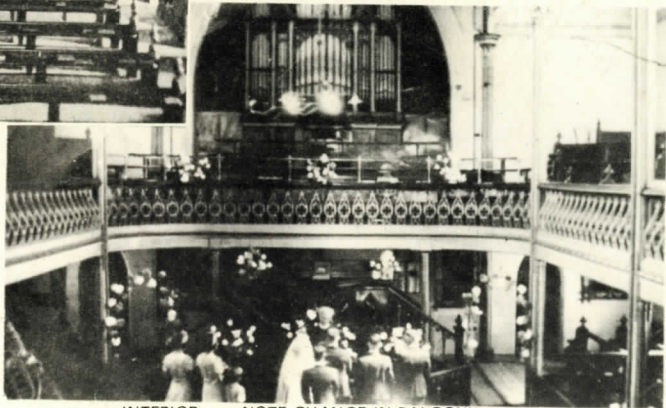
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