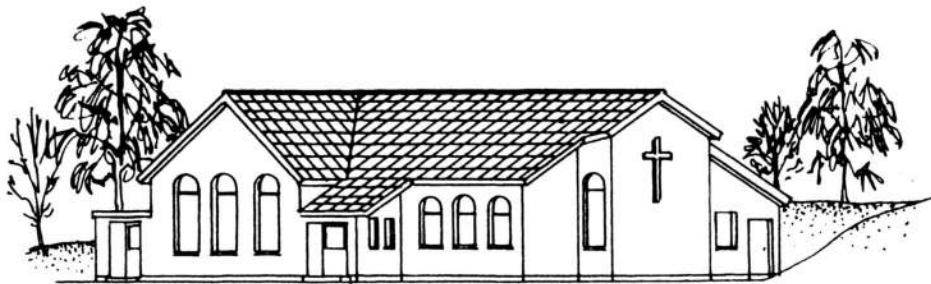


ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Michael Beggs

108: Belvoir Methodist Church

Text: Ian H Beggs



It was in the late 1950s, due to the massive population shift from inner Belfast and the building of many houses in the Belvoir area, that the Methodists in the estate got together to hold regular meetings in the homes of the families. A Sunday School was set up under the guidance of Jean Walpole in the primary school in May 1971 with 50 children.

Door-to-door contacts and early fund-raising led to a Methodist cause in Belvoir

gradually taking shape. Following many meetings involving the Ballynafeigh circuit, the first official Leaders' Meeting was held in January 1976, and the centre was opened later in that year, on 11 June.

Sunday services were held in the Church of Ireland church, and this continued until early in 1983, when a decision was taken to move these to our own centre, where the first service was held on 1 April. With

a view to adding a church building, major fund-raising was undertaken and grants explored. The church was opened and dedicated on 16 September 1989 by the President of the Methodist Church, the Rev George R Morrison.

The church was only three years old when, on 23 September 1992, it was completely wrecked, as were others in the area, by a massive terrorist bomb at the nearby forensic laboratory. All the churches in the estate united to keep services and other activities going as best as possible.

The rebuilt church was rededicated by the then President, the Rev J Derek H Ritchie, on 13 March 1993, and the halls a year later on 1 March 1994. Since those days all of the Churches in Belvoir have worked closely together in the Association of Belvoir Churches to promote Christian activities and youth outreach in the estate.