

# ROUND THE CHURCHES 64: Glengormley Methodist Church

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The establishing of a Methodist church in the Glengormley area had long been a vision of the Rev John Glass who was minister of Ligoniel and Hydepark, during the late 1920-30s. But it was to be 1935 before his vision became a reality. Through dedication and determination Mr Glass secured land on the corner of Glencairn Drive/Ballyclare Road, that was to become the spiritual home for the Methodist family in the Glengormley area.

On 2 November 1935 Glengormley Methodist Church was officially opened by Sir Samuel Kelly, after which

the then President, the Rev Dr J T Irwin addressed the congregation, thus establishing Methodism in Glengormley. It was a momentous occasion for the ten families who had up until this time worshipped in the Scout Hall on Church Road.

Within three years of opening, the congregation doubled from 10-20 families. It was at this time Glengormley became part of the North Belfast Mission Circuit whose superintendent minister was the Rev J W Stutt. These were financially difficult times for the church, in the interim the Mission

generously covered the church accounts until it became independent.

During these early years the 1939-45 World War was in progress and, as a result, many families fled Belfast to the relative safety of Glengormley. This, in turn, led to a further increase in the congregation, with 70 families now on the register. To accommodate an ever-growing congregation, it was decided to extend the premises. In 1947 a Nissen hut temporarily eased the situation.

As the church continued to expand and grew stronger financially, it was decided in 1961 to build a manse in Glengormley Park which became home to the Rev and Mrs E A Edwards and family. As fortunes changed, so did the church. By 1999 the Nissen hut was replaced by a main hall, small chapel and classrooms. Then in 1977 a larger chapel was added, after which, in 1989, a new church was built and opened by the President, the Rev George Morrison. This major development allowed the existing suite of halls to be used more effectively by the many groups and organisations that meet throughout the week.

Two years later a decision

was taken to replace the manse in Glengormley Park as the maintenance was proving very expensive. This resulted in 'Wesley House' being built in Dalewood, with the Rev and Mrs Ivan McIlhinney being the first occupants.

The next change came in 1992 when a room was dedicated and named, 'The Cunningham Room'. This was in recognition of the major contribution to the life of the church made by the Cunningham family. From the beginning the Cunninghams were actively involved and the present Drusilla Cunningham, former organist and choir mistress, continues to play an active part in the life of the church.

Much has changed since 1933. There are now approximately 750 members registered, three Sunday services and a variety of groups and organisations. Over the past 68 years successive ministers have ensured that Glengormley Methodist Church has been a positive influence in the community. This continues under our present minister, the Rev Peter Murray. It is the hope of all connected to the church that there will be many more years to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.