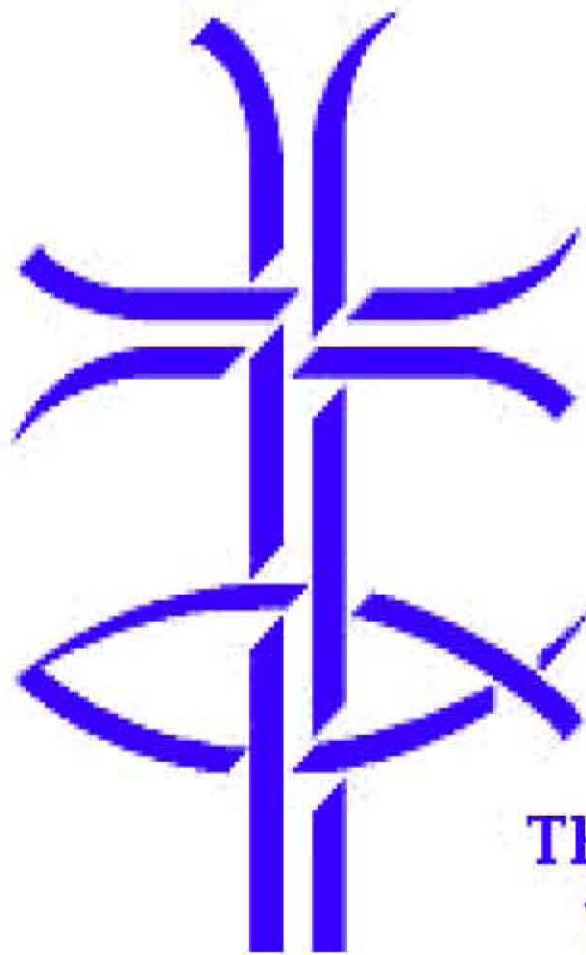


THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
OF ST ANDREW AND ST GEORGE  
ITS ORIGINS AND HISTORY



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United

ITS ORIGINS AND HISTORY

# The United Reformed Church of St Andrew and St George

## Its origins and history

### Presbyterians

Dukes Alley Independent Chapel  
1754 to 1838



Little Bolton Town Hall  
1838 to 1846



St Andrews Presbyterian Church 1846



St. Andrews  
United Reformed Church  
1972



DUKE'S ALLEY CHAPEL.

One Faith

Different Names

Changing Buildings



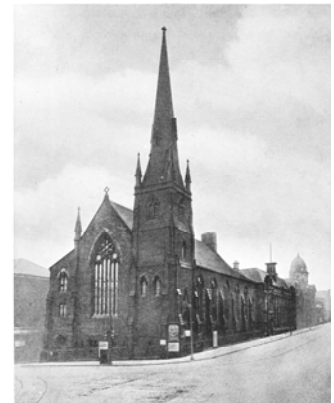
The United Reformed Church  
of St. Andrew and St. George  
1979

### Congregationalists

Dukes Alley Independent Chapel  
1754—1863



St Georges Rd. Congregational Church  
1863



St Georges Rd. Congregational Church  
with school , which was added in 1915



St Georges Rd.  
United Reformed Church  
1972

# From whence we came

The United Reformed Church of St Andrew & St. George, Bolton, is an amalgamation of two churches, St Andrews Presbyterian Church and St Georges Road Congregational Church. Both Nonconformist churches, which had the same beginning 256 years ago in 1754 in Dukes Alley Chapel in Ridgeway Gates. After 84 years of worshipping together as an Independent Congregation in the same building, a number of members, mainly Scottish Immigrants, left in 1838 to form St Andrews Presbyterian Church and 25 years after that, in 1863, other members moved out of Dukes Alley to form St. Georges Road Congregational Church. 116 years later The United Reformed Church of St Andrew & St. George was formed. So, how did they start in Dukes Alley and how did they get back together worshipping in the same building?

From 1646 to 1662 Presbyterianism was the established religion in Lancashire. During that period the only two churches in the area, were the parishes of Deane and Bolton, both Presbyterian. The Uniformity Act of 1662 put an end to that, and both churches became Anglican and the incumbent ministers ejected. Shortly afterwards, at the corner of Mealhouse Lane the first nonconformist place of worship in Bolton was opened. The ejected minister of the Parish Church, Revd Richard Goodwin preached there until his death in 1685. His remains were interred in the Parish Church. His church in Mealhouse Lane, being then the only place of public worship in Bolton, besides the Parish Church, had been well attended, the people generally sympathising with their old minister.

In 1696 the congregation moved to the recently built, Bank St Chapel. Over a period of about 50 years the preaching at Bank St turned more towards Unitarianism, and orthodox Presbyterians unable to resist the spread and advocacy of Unitarianism, seceded in 1754 and joined the Independent Church which had just opened in Dukes Alley.

For many years the Presbyterians of Bolton felt themselves at home in Dukes Alley Independent Chapel, however as time passed many wished to re-establish Presbyterianism in Bolton and in 1803 under the auspices of the Secession Church of Scotland, built St Andrews Chapel in Moor Lane. Unfortunately, this endeavour failed and in 1818, they returned to Dukes Alley, (ironically the building they had left was bought by Unitarians). .

However, in 1838, with the support of The Church of Scotland, they opened a preaching station in Little Bolton Town Hall and then, in 1846, succeeded in building a permanent church in Bowkers Row as St Andrews Presbyterian Church

By 1852 the congregation at Dukes Alley was down to no more than 80 persons but it was in that year that their fortunes changed with the appointment, as minister, of the Revd. William Hope Davison. Such were Mr Davison's preaching powers, his pastoral care, his leadership in public affairs, that within seven years it was obvious that larger premises were needed. A site was bought at the junction of St Georges Rd. and Knowsley St and the foundation stone for the new church was laid in 1862.

The majority of the congregation of Dukes Alley moved in 1863 to the new building to become St. Georges Rd. Congregational Church. It is worth noting that it was Mr Davison who assisted W.F. Tillotson to found The Bolton Evening News. The title of the paper was actually decided between them in a talk in the new church vestry, and Mr. Davison became the first Leader writer, for the paper, and for several years he assisted the young proprietor with friendly encouragement and sound advice. A memorial to Mr Davison can be seen in the foyer of the building.

In 1972 the Congregational Union of England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England reformed and united as the United Reformed Church. St Andrews Presbyterian Church became St Andrews United Reformed Church and St Georges Road Congregational Church became St Georges Road United Reformed Church. 7 years later when the minister moved on from St Andrews, it was decided that there was no need for two URC churches in the town centre and they were finally brought together in October 1979 in the premises on St Georges Rd. as The United Reformed Church of St. Andrew and St. George.

## Architecture

**The United Reformed Church of St. Andrew and St. George** has seen changes made to the building from time to time, to meet the religious and social needs of the community, until the present-day layout was established.

In **1863** the original **St. George's Road Congregational Church, Bolton** was opened, having been built in the remarkably short time of twelve months, at a cost of £9,000.00. Designed to seat 1200, it was constructed with solid walls faced with rough cut ashlar blocks, and finely dressed and carved stone to the windows and doors. Stepped buttresses strengthened the outer face, with soaring pinnacles on the east gable. A square tower dominated the north-east corner, topped with a spire, then a rarity on nonconformist churches, and nicknamed 'Mr Davison's Toothpick' after the then minister. The architectural style was Gothic in character. The pitched roof was finished with slates.

Internally the walls and ceilings were plastered, with deep splayed jambs to the windows and doorways. Two lines of cast iron pillars supported the timber roof trusses over the nave and pitched rafters over the aisles. The floors were of suspended timber supported on wrought iron beams. The areas of pews were slightly raised above the floor level. At high level, a balcony was located at the east end and additional seating was provided by continuous galleries on the long north and south walls, while the choir was established above the chancel and behind the pulpit. The vestries were set behind the chancel. In the basement, schoolrooms were formed for education purposes.

In **1870** some improvements took place, with the relocation of the organ to the north wall (where it is still located, but undoubtedly much improved in quality over the original), while an ornately carved Caen stone pulpit was centrally placed in the chancel.

To provide more accommodation, it was decided to acquire land adjacent to the west church gable at the chancel end and to build new school premises, the foundation stone of which was laid in **1914**. This extension was designed with solid stone walls and an internal cast iron and wrought steel grid to live comfortably with the architectural character of the church.

The church continued with only minor changes until **1936** when, thanks to generous a donation from the second Viscount Leverhulme, the west end choir gallery and vestries below were removed and a new, wider chancel was created with choir stalls, communion table, pulpit and other furniture.

This chancel had a new floor of marble, while the communion dais was raised by two steps and finished with polished Hopton Wood stone. The reredos, adjacent chancel walls and the organ gallery were lined with carved Austrian oak panelling. At the same time, the galleries over the aisles were reduced in length, allowing the exposed windows to be seen in all their glory. Viscount Leverhulme also provided for two new stained glass windows illustrating the 'Parable of the Talents' in memory of his father, the first Viscount Leverhulme, and

'The Resurrection Morning' in memory his mother. His parents were married in the church in 1874. Members of the family had been faithful members of the church for many years. Shortly afterwards, in **1938**, the Tillotson family donated moneys to rearrange the entrance vestibule area with new oak panelled screens and doorways (this work was carried out by the well-known firm of Waring and Gillow whose name can be seen on the floor springs on the new doors) and commissioned commemorative stained glass windows in memory of the founder of the Bolton Evening News and other members of the Tillotson family. St. George and St. Patrick are depicted in two of the aisle windows, and St. Andrew in the welcome area. The three windows were installed in St Andrews Presbyterian Church in memory of Samuel Hodgkinson who died in 1914. St. David is commemorated in the circular window above the main entrance doors. There are two large six-light rose windows, one above the chancel and one above the balcony.

Sadly, because of structural problems, the spire had to be demolished, leaving the tower with a new flat roof

In **1995**, the last alterations took place when it was decided to make the church less austere by removing the pews and carpeting the floor, whilst remodeling the main entrance with new steps and new glass doors, forming a new entrance vestibule with a Welcome Area and also forming a Meeting Room with kitchen and server facilities. What had been the oak screen forming the previous vestibule was modified into a sliding/folding screen which can be opened up to allow the Meeting Room to be joined with church, giving flexibility in the use of the two spaces. With the rigidity of the pews removed, the church space is now used for many social functions, conferences and meetings as well as worship.

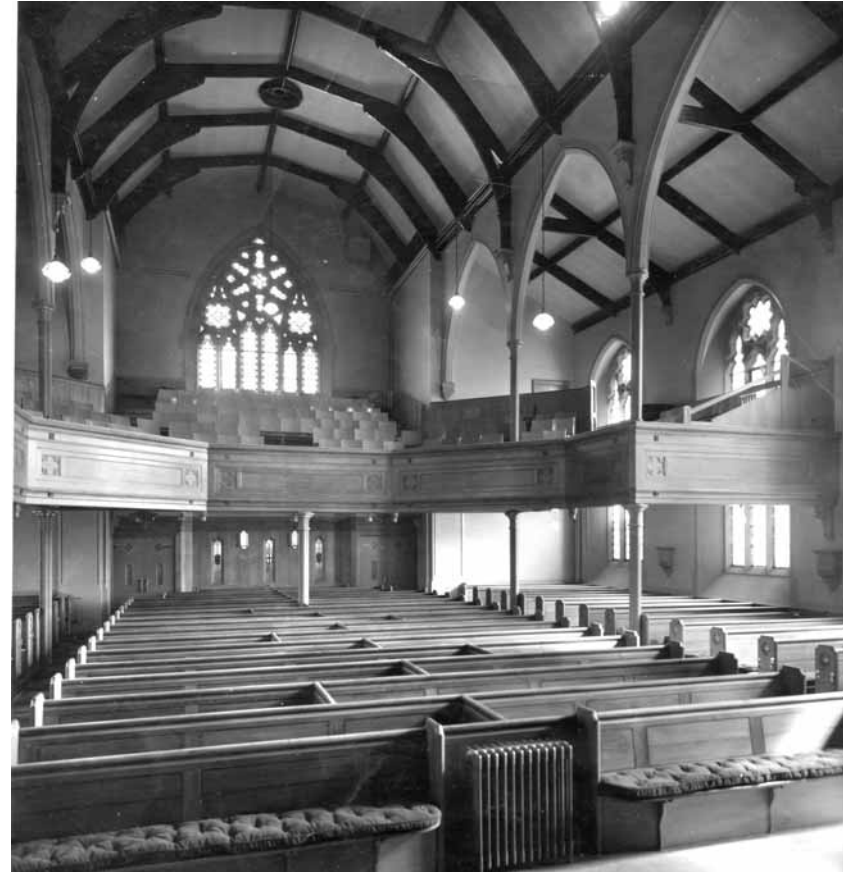


### **Architecture continued**

At the other end of the church, the chancel was remodelled, being made less deep, with new accommodation behind a screen which has been faced with the oak paneling from the 1938 alterations. The church carpeting has been continued into the chancel, giving the church a warm, welcoming atmosphere. The new carpet and soft upholstered chairs have given better acoustic qualities when, for example, invited groups play during concerts which are held regularly. The upper floor of the old school building has been turned into flats by a housing association, but the ground floor continues to be used by many organizations with the main use being the provision of support, in St. George's Centre, for people with mental health problems. The rooms underneath the church, originally the old church school, have been converted into New Horizons, offices used by various charitable organizations, and at the front of the church, in Knowsley St., is Justicia, Bolton's Fair Trade Shop.



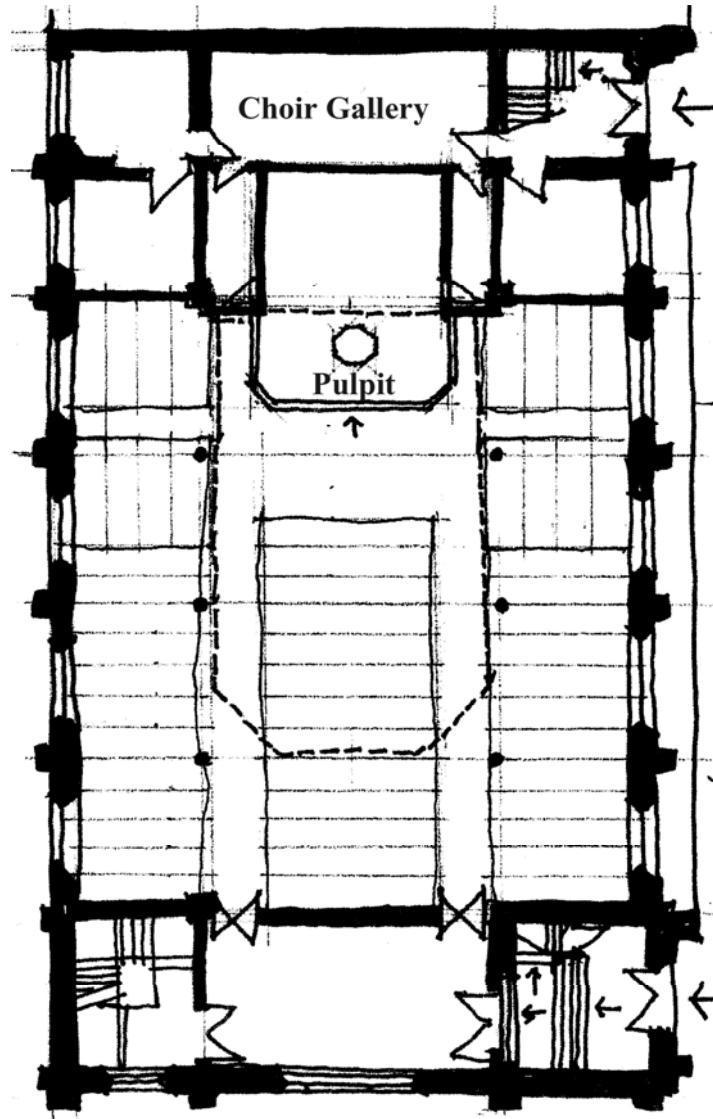
**The same view after 1995 refurbishment**



**Interior in 1938 showing view from chancel**

Location of future school building

Vestries behind chancel with choir  
accommodated above chancel



Knowsley Street

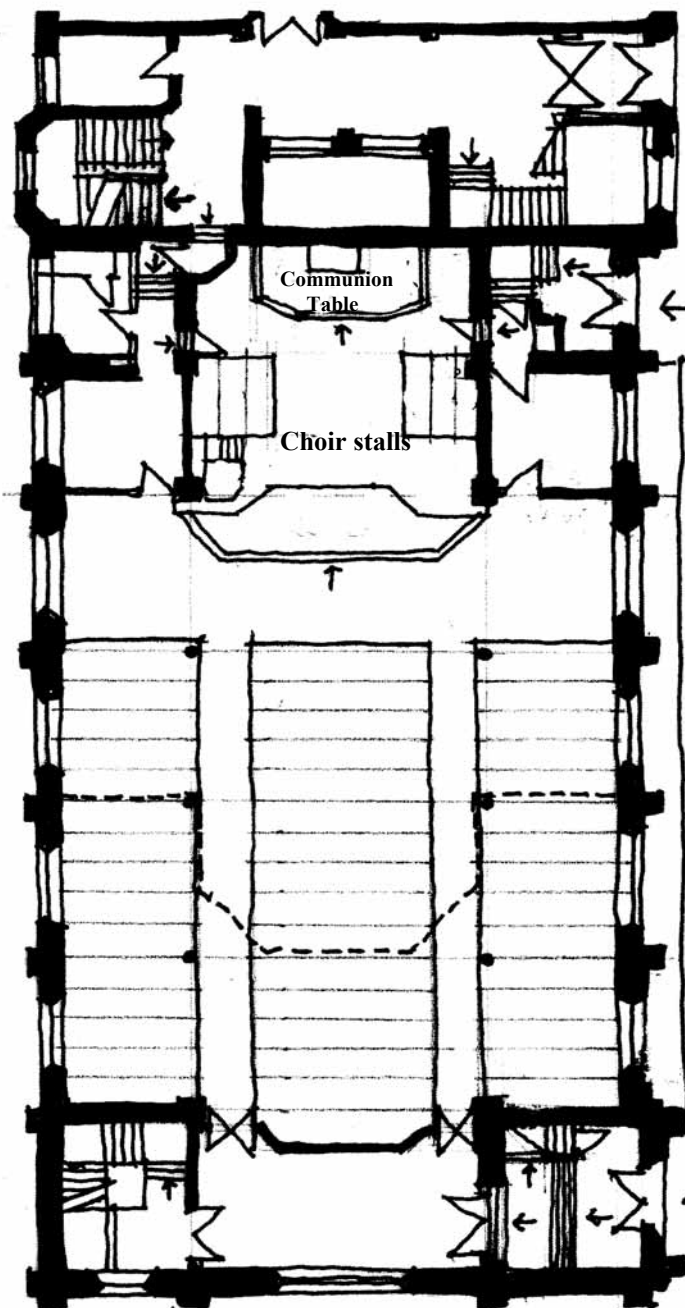
Central stone pulpit

Balcony and galleries above aisles  
shown with dotted lines

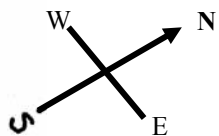
St. Georges Road

Interior in 1870





← Entrance area to school



← New chancel with choir stalls.  
Choir gallery removed from  
above chancel.  
Reredos and chancel walls  
redesigned with carved  
oak panelling

Gallery over aisles reduced  
and some pews removed

Commemorative windows  
installed

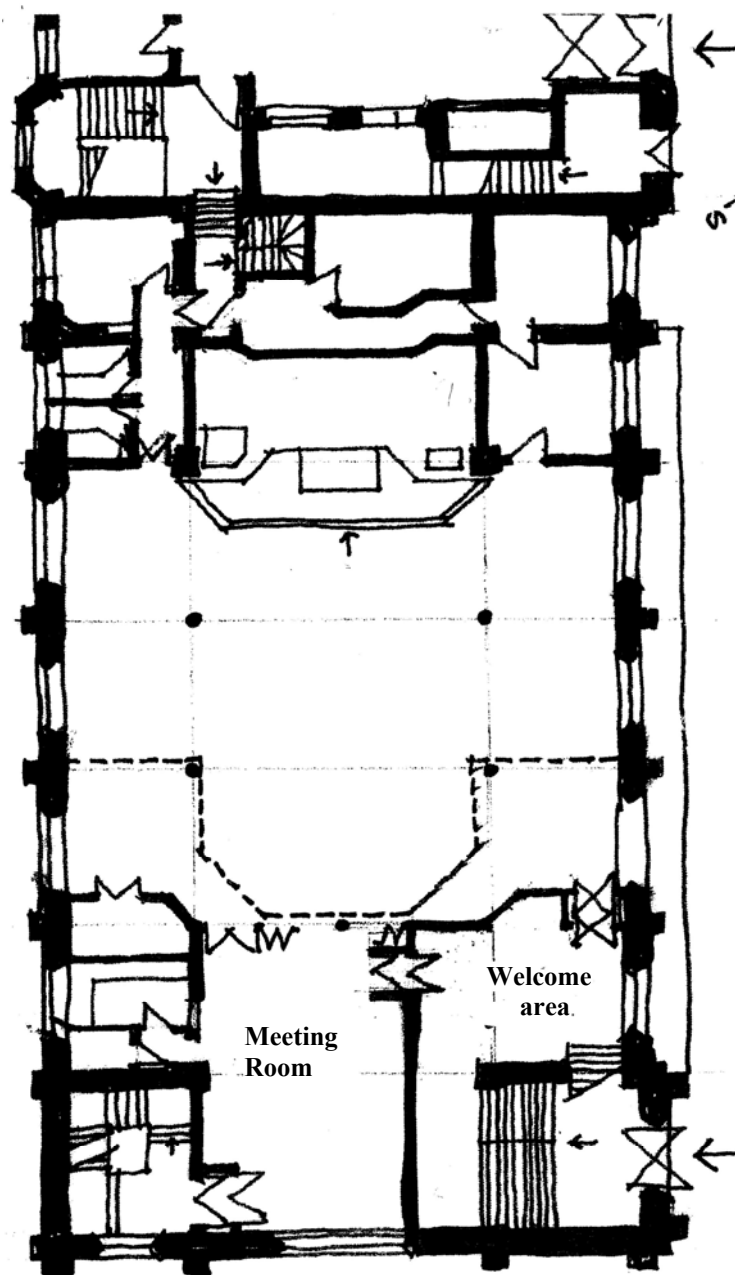
Balcony retained.

← New entrance vestibule  
and screen of carved oak panelling



**Interior in 1936**





← Entrance to Church Office and Day Centre

Chancel remodelled and new screen built with existing carved panelling re-used on reredos and side walls. New storage area and new access to organ loft

All pews removed and raised areas of floor removed, with new carpet throughout,

Balcony and side galleries retained

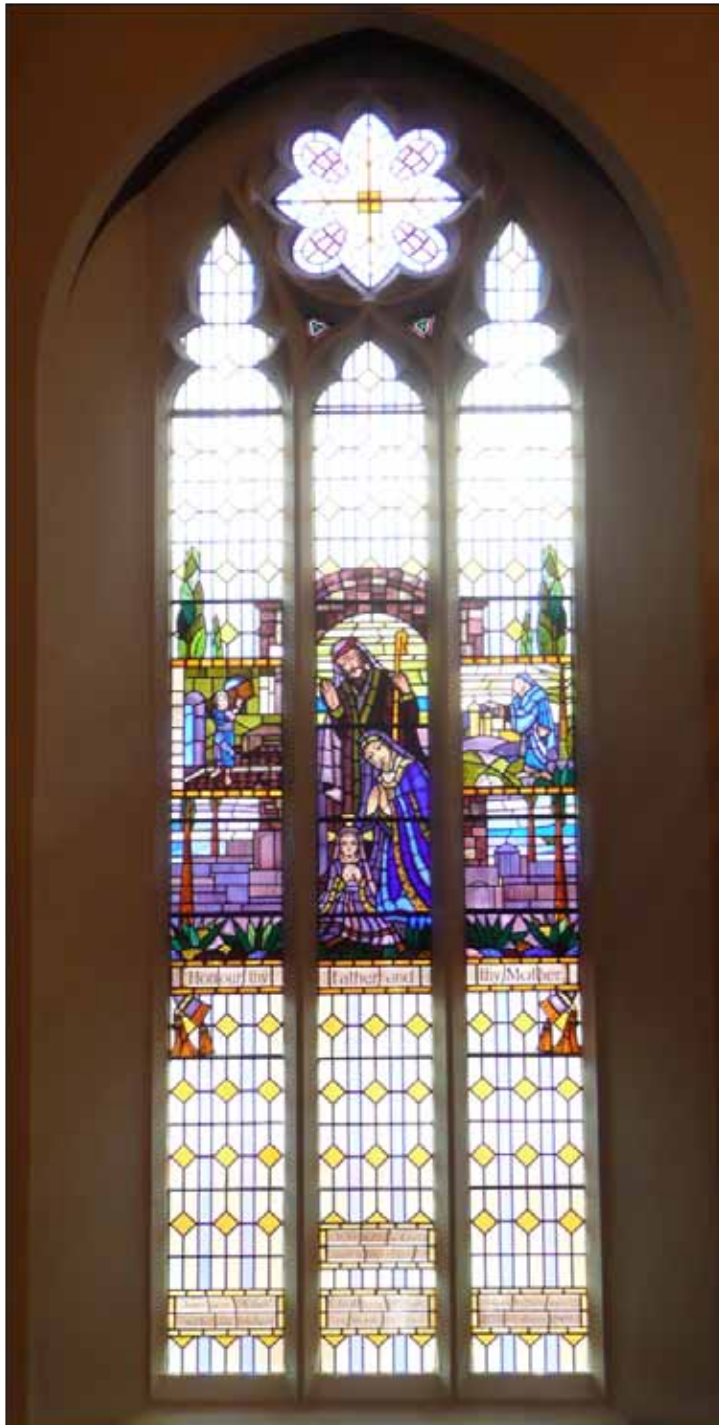
New Meeting Room with toilet, kitchen and servery. Original 1938 oak partition reconstructed to provide new sliding/folding screen giving flexibility of use with church. All areas carpeted.

← New entrance formed with glazed entrance doors and re-arranged steps, leading to Welcome Area



**Interior as at 1995**





## “Honour Thy Father and Thy Mother”

This window is in memory of James Lever Tillotson and Frederick Lever Tillotson and their wives.

Both James and Frederick were still at school when their father W.F. Tillotson (founder of The Bolton Evening News) died at the age of 44 years in 1889. Eventually James ran the Tillotson printing business whilst Fred guided the Company both as Chairman and Director from 1901 until he retired in 1956.

The window, donated by their families in 1969, is the most colourful in the Church, being a traditional representation of Joseph, Mary and the child Jesus, surrounded by Biblical scenes but using modern stained glass techniques.



## “Suffer the little children to come unto me”

This window is in memory of William Frederic Tillotson and Mary his wife  
 In 1834, a young Bolton man called John Tillotson became apprenticed to Robert Marsden Holden who was a printer with premises in Mealhouse Lane. John married Holden's daughter and took over the printing business in 1850. His son William Frederick Tillotson became apprenticed to his father. William married Mary Lever (sister to William Hesketh Lever)  
 In 1867 William Frederick Tillotson was instrumental in helping his father, John, launch the first edition of The Bolton Evening News – the first ½d evening paper in the country.  
 He died importunately in 1889 at the age of 44 years leaving a young family. His oldest son, John Lever Tillotson, still in his teens was an apprentice in the firm at that time.

This window depicts Jesus, in a rural setting, with a group of five children including a partially hidden baby being carried by its mother. Jesus gently holds one of the young children in his arms.



## “Well done thou good and faithful servant”

This window is in memory of William Hesketh Lever, who was born in Bolton in 1851. He founded “Lever Bros” with his brother James Darcy Lever in 1885 with the introduction of the first branded soap ‘Sunlight’. His success, consolidated by ‘Lifebuoy’ and ‘Lux’, was enormous. In 1888 the brothers started a model village for their employees called “Port Sunlight” on the Wirral and instituted such social benefits as unemployment pay, medical care and a share of the company’s profits. He became Viscount Leverhulme in 1922 but died in 1925.

He was nowhere more respected than in this Church to which he belonged and to whose work he gave liberally of his ability and substance. He was married in this Church in 1874 to Elizabeth Ellen (daughter of Crompton Hulme of Bolton)

This window depicts The Parable of the Talents in which a master commends a faithful servant who has put his five talents to good use. The master stands before the vine-covered entrance to his house. In the background is a view of the countryside and in the foreground stand the three servants giving an account of their stewardship. At the base of the centre light is the arms of Viscount Leverhulme, a cockerel above two elephants.

The window was a gift of his son William Hulme Lever in 1936. It was made and fitted by Messrs Humphries, Jackson and Ambler Ltd of Manchester



“ In Christ shall all be made alive ”

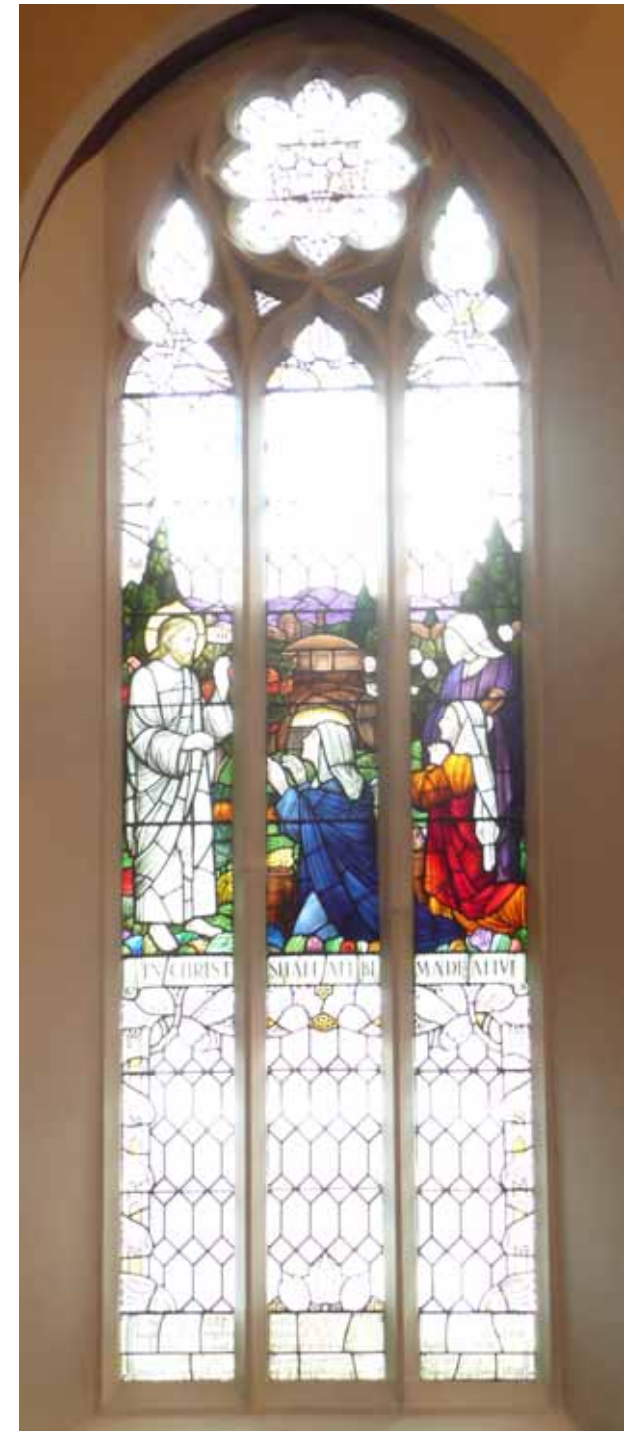
This window is in memory of Elizabeth Ellen ( daughter of Crompton Hulme of Bolton) who became the wife of William Hesketh Lever, later the 1st Viscount Leverhulme. They were married in this Church on April 15<sup>th</sup> 1874

The window depicts The Resurrection Morning.

In the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, the women (Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary , mother of James) have brought spices to the tomb but, finding it empty, are returning when the risen Jesus meets them and they worship Him. The empty tomb with the stone rolled away is seen in the centre light. Above and behind it are the buildings of Jerusalem: Calvary stands out against the rising sun.

The window was donated in 1936 by her son William Hulme Lever, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Leverhulme .

It was made and fitted by Messrs Humphries, Jackson and Ambler, Ltd of Manchester







**The windows showing St Andrew, St. Patrick and St. George were transferred from St Andrews United Reformed Church in 1979**

## ORGAN

The original organ, a Foster and Andrews, has three complete manuals and independent pedal and was installed in the mid 1890s. It was substantially rebuilt in 1931 by Messrs Hill, Norman and Beard with a gift from Mrs James Bromley and in 1992 was completely overhauled and modified to electric action by the firm of David Wells, Liverpool. Above the console are plaques commemorating three long serving choir masters.

### SPECIFICATION

Great Organ		Compass CC to G		Ft. Pipes	
	Ft. Pipes				
1. Double Diapason	16 56	6. Harmonic Flute		4	56
2. Large Open Diapason	8 56	7. Fifteenth		2	56
3. Small Open Diapason	8 56	8. Mixture	4 ranks	224	
4. Hohl Flöte	8 56	9. Trumpet	8	56	
5. Principal	4 56				

Swell Organ		Compass CC to G		Ft. Pipes	
	Ft. Pipes				
1. Lieblich Bourdon	16 56	8. Mixture	3 ranks	168	
2. Open Diapason	8 56	9. Contra Fagotto	16	56	
3. Viole de Gamba	8 56	10. Cornopean	8	56	
4. Voix Celeste	8 44	11. Oboe	8	56	
5. Stopped Diapason	8 56	12. Clarion	4	56	
6. Principal	4 56	13. Tremulant			
7. Fifteenth	2 56				

Choir Organ		Compass CC to G		Ft. Pipes	
	Ft. Pipes				
1. Gambia	8 56	5. Flautina	2	56	
2. Dulciana	8 56	6. Clarinet	8	56	
3. Lieblich Gedeckt	8 56	7. Tremulant			
4. Flute	4 56				

Pedal Organ		Compass CCC to F		Ft. Pipes	
	Ft. Pipes				
1. Harmonic Bass	32 30	4. Violoncello	8	30	
2. Open Diapason	16 30	5. Bass Flute	8	30	
3. Bourdon	16 30	6. Contra Fagotto	16	30	

### COUPLERS

- |                     |                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Swell to Great   | 8. Choir Octave              |
| 2. Swell to Choir   | 9. Choir Sub Octave to Great |
| 3. Choir to Great   | 10. Choir Unison Off         |
| 4. Swell Sub Octave | 11. Choir to Pedal           |

5. Swell Octave
6. Swell Unison Off
7. Choir Sub Octave

12. Swell to Pedal
13. Great to Pedal
14. Great Pistons to Pedal Pistons

### ACCESSORY MOVEMENTS

Four Combination Thumb Pistons to Great and Pedal Organs  
 Four Combination Thumb Pistons to Swell Organ  
 Three Combination Thumb Pistons to Choir Organ  
 One Thumb Piston to Swell to Great Coupler  
 One Thumb Piston to Great to Pedal Coupler  
 Four Toe Piston to Great and Pedal Organs  
 One Toe Piston to Great to Pedal Coupler  
 Balanced Crescendo Pedal to Swell Organ  
 Balanced Crescendo Pedal to Choir Organ  
 Drawstop Knobs fixed at an angle of 45 degrees  
 Radiating and Concave Pedal Board  
 Tubular Pneumatic Action to Manuals, Pedals, and Drawstop Action

The Wind is generated by a "Duplex" Electric Blower

