

Baptist Historical Society: Local Church History Review

Bethany Baptist Church 1855-2005: 150 years of service to Risca with a foreword by the Rev. Ian M.A. Waugh, ppxi + 13.

Marjorie and Brian Barnes,

Bethany Baptist Church, Risca, was founded by Mrs Margaret Davies, who arrived in the district from Cardiff and found that there was no English nonconformist church in the area. The first service was held on 21 October 1855 in the British School room and the first baptism took place that December. The work grew rapidly and the church called its first pastor, Mr T. Reeves, from Pontypool College in 1857. A chapel was erected in 1858 and enlarged in 1867. Under his ministry the membership grew to 153, but after he resigned in 1873 it dropped to about 80. The fortunes of the church revived when the Revd Thomas Thomas was called to the pastorate in 1874. When he retired in 1922 he had baptized between 1200 and 1300 people and he left a church of 535 members. In 1882 the church sent thirty members to help form the church in Hope Crosskeys, while in 1923 the church opened the Ty Isaf Mission. Thirteen members have entered full-time ministry, including the first pastor at Ty Isaf. The church was founded shortly after the beginnings of photography and the history is illustrated, the earliest photograph being of the first baptism in 1855.

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