

ST. LUKE'S METHODIST CHURCH, WESTOWN

1961 The Foundation Stone of this building was laid by the President of the Conference on May 27th, the festival of Trinity, during an impressive service. The church is a combined building serving as a church and hall for the Westown Society. Its name is taken under the patronage and example of St. Luke, the beloved physician and, in Dante's unforgettable phrase, "the writer of the compassion of Jesus."

The building is 70 feet long, 30 feet wide and 23 feet high to the apex of the roof. It is of timber construction with a roof of decramastic tiles. Over the front porch there is the symbol of the square cross set in the circle. This signifies in the Cross, the sacrifice of our Lord for all men, and in the circle, that His love like the circle has no beginning and no end. So that the whole symbol stands for the Eternal Sacrifice of our Lord under which all true worshippers can alone be worthy to enter the Holy Place.

Off the entrance there are two cloakrooms. Both these have doorways giving access to the main hall as well as to the entrance hall. From the ladies' cloakroom it is possible to view the service and hear it relayed through a loudspeaker. Thus the room can be used by mothers of young babies who can both see and hear the service whilst their babies are freed from the constraints of full congregational worship. It is also intended that this room shall be available for brides prior to their entrance into church on their wedding day.

At the side of the main hall there is a fully equipped kitchen with a serving hatch opening into the main hall. The Minister's vestry is on the right of the Sanctuary and has a separate entrance from the side of the building. It is designed as a place of prayer prior to services as well as for interviews and pastoral counselling. On the opposite side of the Sanctuary is a store room which will include a locked cupboard for each of the groups in the church.

The Sanctuary will be the only consecrated part of the building. When not in use it will be entirely sealed off from the remainder of the building by substantial sliding doors, beautifully panelled in native wood. When opened, the Sanctuary has to alter the character of the whole building. It is designed, planned and furnished for this purpose. The lighting is from two full length windows concealed from the view of the worshippers and bordered by two fluorescent tubes for artificial lighting at night. The illusion of depth in the

Sanctuary is created by placing all the furnishings at different levels and depths. Above the Holy Table a square Cross hangs suspended; it is square because the long Cross would accentuate the height of the Sanctuary at the expense of its width and thus cause it to appear disproportionate in comparison with the remainder of the building. The Holy Table which is beneath the Cross is a plain table completely covered by a cloth of rich brocade, green for ordinary Sundays and gold for festive Sundays, as befits the regal Table of our Lord. Two candles with their candlesticks symbolise the light of the revelation of God. "Let there be light!" "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet!" "I am the light of the world!" They will remind worshippers of the two lampstands in the Temple, which at feast times were brought out to the Temple entrance and lit so that their glow shone out through the night guiding pilgrims to the Holy City and reminding them of the pillar of fire which led their fathers in the exodus. It was between these lamps, it will be remembered, that Jesus stood when He declared, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

No flowers will be placed on the Holy Table but to create another level of depth, two flower stands will be provided within the Sanctuary upon which flowers will be placed. At the entrance of the Sanctuary is the communion rail at which communicants will kneel.

The pulpit, prayer desk and other furnishings are in plain oak.

The estimated cost of the building will be just over £7500 with the furnishings included. It has been built by Mr. Royce Wood, of New Plymouth. It was designed by the Rev. Farrar Middlebrook, from plans readily made available by the Venerable Archdeacon K. Liggett.

During the erection of the new building, our Church has received asylum, offered with characteristic generosity and kindness, in the St. Andrew's Hall on Sanders Avenue, New Plymouth. Morning worship and mid-week meetings have been held there for the past four months. Heartfelt thanks are expressed to the Reverend S. C. Read and the Elders and Managers for their thoughtful invitation and courteous hospitality.

St. Luke's was opened and consecrated with due reverence and joy by the Reverend Dr. J. J. Lewis as a witness to the Glory of God and the faithful devotion of His People. Amen—so be it always.