



St Paul's, Newport

PRESS RELEASE – Monday 20 July, 2015

HISTORIC CHURCH BUILDING IN COMMERCIAL STREET, NEWPORT TO CLOSE

St Paul's Church in Newport City Centre will close on **31st January** due to major structural defects.

This Great and Historic church built in 1836, three years before the Newport Rising, is only deemed safe at present due to internal scaffolding towers, structural surveys have shown.

The building in Commercial Street has great historic significance with connections to the Morgan/Tredegar family that lived at Tredegar House, with inspirational and committed leadership by clergy who led both church and community through almost two centuries.

The Church Council has carefully weighed up all the reports and findings of surveys and inspections carried out by recognised experts. These show significant deterioration in the ceiling trusses, internal gutters, parapets, roof structure, external stone work and spire and estimate that the cost of repair would exceed £500,000. This cost, plus future maintenance and development requirements, has led the church council to make the difficult decision to close the building.

Although the current building will need to close St Paul's congregation and its leaders are committed to growth through continued worship and outreach activities in the community.

St Paul's vicar, the Reverend Justin Groves said: "Over the next few months, the church is committed to finding a suitable place in Newport City Centre for worship services and our many community projects, including a foodbank, a night shelter run in partnership with the Eden Gate charity, a toddler group and a 'messy church' for children and their parents. As important as this building has been, we are excited and optimistic to explore once again new ways of being and sharing the Good News of Jesus in our community. The people of St Paul's have always been brave and adaptable in their pursuit of serving this amazing City Centre."

Mrs Antonia Edwards, a church parishioner said: "Two years ago I was married in this church, and it has been the setting for many weddings, christenings and funerals over the years, touching many families in this community. However the building has served its purpose and it is time for us as a church to move on. This is a bold step but God is with us; St Paul's lives on wherever we settle, because it is the people, not the building which is the Church. We are still committed to reaching out to the local community with Jesus' love and aim to continue serving the people of Newport."

NOTES TO EDITORS

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- It was decided in 1834 that St Paul's should be built.
- Foundation stone was laid 19th September 1835.
- Consecrated on 3rd November 1836 as a Missional church (an outreach to the community).
- The Bishop viewed the parish as one in need of a separate church for the people of the area.
- Built by the famous T H Wyatt at the age of 21 years old (later Sir T H Wyatt).
- The church was built to accommodate 1600 people!
- It cost £508,786.36 to build the church in 1836 (excluding interior furnishings).
- In 1873 the Reverend J T Wrenford publicised the well-known hymn "Take My Life and Let it Be Consecrated Lord to Thee" written by renowned hymn writer Frances Ridley Havergal.
- The church was remodelled/extended/re-ordered four times before 1900!

In the past, St Paul's has been the hub for...

- A soup kitchen
- A coffee shop for the poor, which served 12,429 rations of bread and coffee during its lifetime.
- Numerous "missions" across the city especially within the parish and docklands.
- The designated church for HM Forces at Barrack Hill.
- A union called "All for Jesus Disciples" which St Paul's started.
- A school (educating over 25,000 children).
- The Wrenford Memorial Hall.
- No. 6 Hill Street mission plant.
- Sending missionaries to build hospitals in Peshawar and Mombassa and across the globe.
- Many Church plants including St Thomas' Maesglas, St Barnabas', Holy Trinity and St James' Dock Street.

Diary entry from Reverend J Tinson Wrenford circa 1903 (the history of the Church 1836-1936: "Being a brief history of St Paul's Parish, Newport" by The Reverend T Parry Pryce.)

"On Tuesday night, nearly or quite two thousand persons were crowded into St Paul's, while hundreds thronged the approaches unable to obtain admission. A spirit of deep solemnity characterised the services, which were prolonged to a very late hour, in consequence of the large number of anxious ones seeking direction.

The result of this second mission was that three hundred souls were brought to the Lord, in connection with St Paul's alone. Surely no one can speak of an aggregate of one thousand conversions in a single parish within four months, without feelings of fervent gratitude to Him who alone can turn one sinner 'from darkness into light; and from the power of Satan unto God.'

Still more intense becomes the heart's thanksgiving when the fact is contemplated, that many hundreds besides were converted and led to Jesus, in connection with other Communion, in the same period of time, and that, the work of the Lord rapidly spread to several parishes adjacent."

For more information on the church log on to www.stpaulsnewport.org.uk

The website includes a copy of this history. <http://stpaulsnewport.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/stpaulsbook.pdf>

Photographs:

Sunday Worship 2015



Bishop & Confirmees 2014



Black & White of Church building C 1900?



Scaffold Towers supporting ceiling



Adult Baptism 2011

