

The Chronological order of the dates since the commencement of the **Enfield Evangelical Free Church** formerly, Enfield Town Christian Mission

- January 1867** Ebenezer Gibbons was worshipping at Christ Church (Congregational) in Chase Side, Enfield. This man, with others, met C.H.Spurgeon and decided to begin a Baptist cause in Enfield. These men met in the assembly rooms over the 'Rising Sun' in Church Street, Enfield and prayed and discussed which way they should go. In due course they moved forward and an 'Iron Chapel' was erected in London Road, to be replaced in 1872 by the magnificent Baptist Tabernacle where they stayed until 1925 when they moved to their present building in Cecil Road.
- January 1897** Thirty years later this same Ebenezer Gibbons had new thoughts and met again in the meeting room of the 'Rising Sun' hostelry in Church Street, Enfield to consider starting an independent evangelical church in Enfield Town.
- March 1897** And so a group of men, with their wives and families, together with others, met in Lancaster Hall in Silver Street, Enfield and started Sunday morning and evening worship together with Bible teaching. At this time a weekly prayer meeting was initiated. Also at this time the work was given the name ' Enfield Town Christian Mission', the name it held for the next 60 years. Some thirty people moved out with Ebenezer including his extensive family and like minded friends. This family had a very positive influence for good in the church and in the local area for the next seventy years or so.
- July 1897** The Lancaster Hall venue soon became too small for the attending numbers, and the decision was taken to build a church large enough to accommodate the hopeful increase in numbers. In the interim, worship moved to the 'Enfield Palace', a hunting lodge of Elizabethan times. This was in Church Street, Enfield, where now stands Pearsons Department Store.
- February 1898** Less than a year after the decision to build, the main church was up and ready. The church was in Cecil Road, Enfield and the words 'Cecil Hall' were carved in stone, high on the front gable. These words became the colloquial title to adherents and the general public alike, and generally more easy to use than the longer name. At the new church, Sunday ministry was conducted by visiting preachers, mainly men of business or professional ability, including many tutors from Christian colleges. This Christian church continued to grow and prosper, although set back like others by the two wars which took many young men to an early death.
- March 1917** The work was in decline, the President of the church, (*where did that title come from ?*) a Mr. Walter Durrant proposed that they seek for a man to carry the oversight of the church and the Rev. Dr. William C. Minifie, D.D., D.Litt., D.O. was appointed. He had an impeccable pedigree including being secretary to the great C. H. Spurgeon himself! However very early the appointment went wrong and the church did not venture into this field again for another 46 years.
- November 1940** Serious damage was caused to the building by bomb blast and it was feared that total demolition might be inevitable, but with essential repairs and timber buttresses, worship was resumed in a few weeks, with great thankfulness and praise to God. However, eventually a new church would have to be built.

- May 1957** After many months of negotiations with the local council and claims for war damage compensation, the new church was built and opened as 'Enfield Evangelical Free Church'. There was no change to the church oversight, or doctrine within the church by this change of name. Also about this time the church joined the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (F.I.E.C.)
- October 1965** After some ten years of debate on leadership, the church that had existed for nearly 70 years (*if one discounts the blip of 1917*) appointed the Rev. Tom Macbeth Patterson as their first pastor, a position he held for seven years, from whence he retired from active leadership of a church. He was ably assisted for a year or two by the Rev. Tony Sargent. Under Mr Patterson's leadership the work grew considerably, the church was full and any thought of going back to the old regime was out of the question. Following Mr Patterson's retirement, the Rev. John Martin was appointed and served the church well.
- Sept 1980** Following some three and a half years of interregnum, when the church was without a pastor, yet grew together in a remarkable way, it was ready for a new pastor. The church appointed the Rev. Colin Smith who was just 22 years of age when he started, and he led for 16 years, together for a while with the Rev. Andrew Docherty as assistant pastor.
- 1980s** During the 1980s much time was spent in thought, prayer and discussion as to how the now larger numbers attending the services could be accommodated. The immediate problem was partially settled by the introduction of two (almost) identical morning services, which continued until 2003. However a re-build on a larger site seemed the way to solve this long-term problem.
- February 1989** The Emmanuel Baptist church in Baker Street, Enfield had closed and was for sale. The opportunity to purchase it was taken in faith, for this could be the answer to accommodation whilst we might be without a building, and still pursuing the vision of a new church building.
- June 1990** With essential alterations and much needed decorations completed, the building re-opened as the Emmanuel Centre in June 1990, the church not really knowing at the time what a boon and blessing this facility was going to be.
- June 1996** Following some years as assistant pastor, the Rev. Jonathan Prime was appointed pastor, a post he still holds. Assistant pastors include the Revs. David Williams, Peter Maclure and Nathan Howard. The Rev. Jonathan Allcock also served as an assistant before taking leadership of Bush Hill Park Community Church.
- December 2003** Saw the last Sunday services in the church in Cecil Road, the services are now being held in the Enfield County School, whilst most other meetings and functions are at the Emmanuel Centre.
- October 2004** The last meeting in the old building was the Tuesday prayer meeting, and soon afterwards the church buildings that had stood as a beacon of Christian witness in Enfield for over one hundred years fell at the local council decision, as they had purchased the site by a 'Compulsory Purchase Order'.
- November 2009** The church is still flourishing despite some restriction and God is still blessing as the history of this church still unfolds.