

Case Study: Epsom Methodist Church

THE BRIEF

The Methodist Church in Epsom is a clear favourite, with no racing involved. Centrally located it is a busy and lively, family and community orientated church with a number of clubs and activities for children, young people, adults and families, both during the daytime and in the evenings.

With money raised through individuals pledging generous donations over the years, together with grants, the design and rebuild to transform the Church and its facilities was made possible. The origin of a major share of the money for the refit came from the community. For this reason the design had the local community in mind, giving them as much back as possible in the form of an amazing worship space and a community feel.

The original Victorian building was long, narrow, quite dark, and filled with pews, so a new light and welcoming feel was needed. The transformation has seen a bright new worship area, with community meeting rooms and coffee facilities, offering different groups a place to meet informally, chat together and feel welcome as part of the Church.

THE END RESULT

The new square worship space has a central raised area with communion rails, the congregation can now kneel on all four sides of the area, all receiving communion, which is an important aspect to people, adding further to the community feel.

The raised area is built from Q-build with decks, communion rails and steps, finished with carpet to one side and birch plywood to the reverse. Mainly set for Sunday worship, this can be easily reconfigured to be used for many other events. Musical performances, the Church nursery nativity, the church drama group and a variety of external concerts and shows can now be accommodated. When the Church was re-vamped, it was also re-fitted with lighting bars and spot lights for such productions.

Unusually for a Methodist Church, Epsom has a Baptistry, hidden most of the time beneath the staging. Besides the English speaking services on Sunday mornings, the church has a Chinese congregation on Sunday afternoons, worshipping in Mandarin and Cantonese, and a Brazilian fellowship meets on Saturday evening worshipping in Portuguese, both which Baptise by immersion.



WHAT THEY SAID:

A versatile Church in its services, activities and facilities, Epsom's resources have been created by the community for the community. The focal point of the church is the worship area, which, in the words of the Rev David Winwood "creates a community feeling" for receiving communion as well as offering a varied platform for worship, performance and a sense of belonging.

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