

CHAPTER 7

THE OPENING AND CONSECRATION CEREMONY - 9th DECEMBER 1933

Not much more than a year after the foundation stone had been laid, the new church was ready for consecration and dedication. The day was bitterly cold. The Walsall Observer reports:-

With due ceremony and in the presence of a crowded congregation (numbers of people being unable to gain admission) the Bishop of Lichfield (Dr J.A. Kempthorne) consecrated Essington's handsome new Church of St. John the Evangelist, on Saturday afternoon.



**THE BISHOP
KNOCKS** at the
door of Essington
Parish Church to
demand admission
before dedicating
the new building
on Saturday
afternoon.

Photo : Express and Star

Robing in nearby cottages, the clergy walked in procession, headed by Cross Bearer and surpliced choir, to the Churchyard. The procession filed slowly round the confines of the Churchyard, repeating the 90th psalm and then halted at an appropriate spot where special prayers and scriptural sentences were said and the ground consecrated "as a burial place for the parishioners of this parish."

Thence the procession went to the West Door of the Church which was closed against them. With his chaplain, the Bishop made his way between the choir and clergy and taking his pastoral staff, knocked thrice on the door, repeating "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors and the King of Glory shall come in."

He was answered from within "Who is the King of Glory?" "It is the Lord, strong and mighty; it is the Lord, mighty in battle, even the Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory," replied the Bishop.

The doors were opened wide for him to pass. Halting at the West End, he pronounced the salutation, "Peace be to this house". following which the congregation sang "All people that on earth do dwell."

The procession went on from the entrance to the chancel where, after the Bishop's exhortation to private prayer had been observed, the Veni Creator was sung. After further prayers the procession reformed and proceeded to the West, singing the 84th Psalm, "O how amiable are thy dwellings". Thence, the Bishop went in turn to the Font, Lectern, Pulpit, Chancel and Altar, at each of which short lessons were read.

Seated in his chair, the Bishop heard, read by the Registrar, the deed of consecration, which he signed, and then standing with his staff in his hand, the Bishop said, "By virtue of our sacred office, we now declare this church to be duly consecrated and for ever set apart from all unhallowed uses, in the dedication of St. John the Evangelist, and in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen."

In the Bishop's sermon he said, "One of the first things to remember was the memory of one who would not choose that his name should be mentioned, but who was a great friend to the district and who cared intensely about its spiritual life. Due largely to his inspiration and generosity the work began. There were others who gave generous help and from first to last the people of the district had taken great interest in the work. The Vicar of Bushbury had always taken a warm interest in that part of his enormous and vastly growing parish.

Essington had grown and its spiritual needs had manifestly become greater so that there was a real need of that church. In the interval, excellent work had been going forward in the old Mission Church and tribute was due to Mr. Eveson for his labours there."

His Lordship concluded, "I hope that this House of God may be worthily used and may be a true centre of light and life for the people of this district."



G. John the Evangelist,
ESSINGTON.



ORDER OF SERVICE

FOR THE

CONSECRATION

OF THE

NEW CHURCH

AND

CHURCHYARD.



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9th, 1933,
at 3-0 p.m.,

AND

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10th, at 7-30 a.m.

—
Bischoffs:

LODGE'S SUCCESSORS, THE "JOHNSON'S HEAD."

Order of Procession.



CHOIR.

VISITING CLERGY.

THE ARCHITECT. THE BUILDER.

MR. J. EVESON (Lay Reader). VISITING LAY READERS.

THE REV. S. A. HOWARD THE REV. R. P. CAVENDISH
(VICAR OF WEDNESFIELD). (VICAR DESIGNATE)

THE VICAR.

THE PRO-WARDENS OF ESSINGTON.

THE CHURCHWARDENS OF BUSHBURY.

THE REGISTRAR OF THE DIOCESE.

THE ARCHDEACON OF STAFFORD.

CHAPLAIN WITH PASTORAL STAFF.

THE BISHOP.

THE RURAL DEAN.