

There are many memorials to past ministers and members around the church, including to John Westcott, a local 'serge maker' (Taunton was known for cloth making).



Also to George Sheppard, possessor of a 'handsome fortune' who became a benefactor of the local hospital (see the memorial to the left of the pulpit as you stand in the congregation).

It's worth climbing the stairs to the impressive gallery, for some of the best views of the church.



The church also has a tranquil garden at the rear of the building, where further grave stones can be found, and where you can see the Memorial Hall (now used by CICCIC) and Chapel House (a former caretaker's cottage).

The present congregation continues to follow Jesus Christ, celebrating religious freedom, supporting movements and charities working for justice and peace, seeking unity with other Christians and working for the common good.

Taunton United Reformed Church



Congregation founded in 1662
Present building - 1797

Paul Street in Taunton
Next to CICCIC



tauntonurc.org.uk



Taunton United Reformed Church is part of the world-wide community of the Christian church; 'united' because we bring together several different strands of church life, 'reformed' because our roots are in the period of turbulence, change and reform that is referred to as the Reformation (spanning the 16th and 17th centuries), 'church' because we are a community that follows Jesus Christ and believe that, through him, we meet with God.

Our particular story goes back to 1662, when George Newton, Vicar of St Mary Magdalene Parish Church, and his curate Joseph Alleine (pictured), were ejected from the Church of England. They could not, in conscience, submit to the Act of Uniformity (imposed on the church by Charles II), and so were named 'dissenters' and had to leave the national, established church.

They continued to meet with other dissenters in the local area until Alleine's death in 1669.



In 1672 it became possible for what became known as 'nonconformist' churches to meet in England and so the present site was bought and a building erected. It was known as 'Paul's Meeting', and George Newton was the first minister.

This early building was attacked by some townspeople (including the

Mayor) and pews and other furniture ripped out, carried to the Market Square and burned!

The present building was built in 1797 and is a wonderful example of an 18th century Meeting House, designed so that people could hear the preacher and gather as a community.

It was modified by the Victorians (the present porches and the large pulpit). In 2019 it was remodeled. The original windows at the front of the sanctuary have been re-opened and the Victorian panels that covered them removed to the gallery. New seating, lighting and heating provide comfort and colour.

