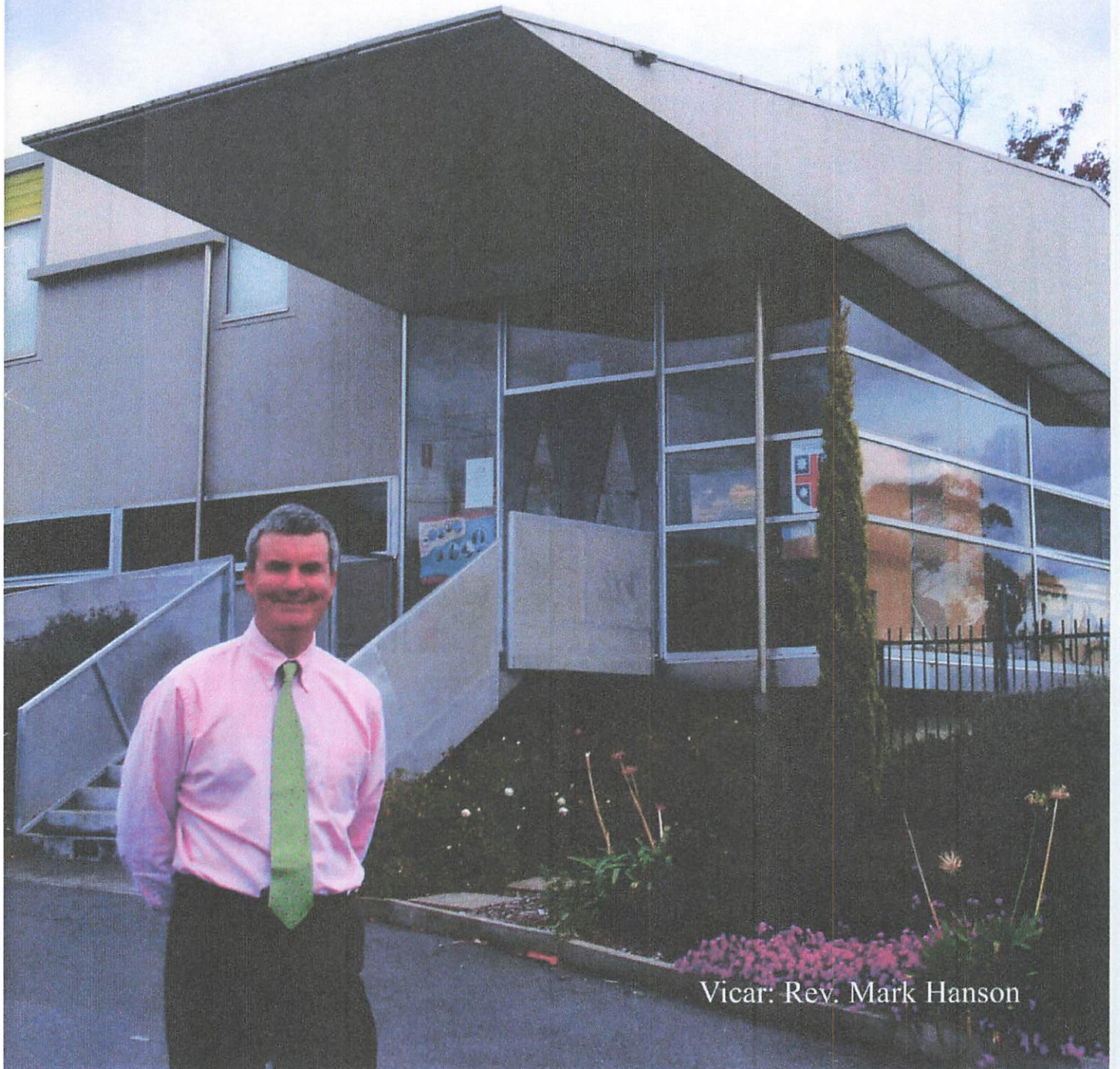


**ST JAMES
ANGLICAN CHURCH
CROYDON HILLS**

A brief History
collated by Alwyn and Dorothy Hind



Vicar: Rev. Mark Hanson

ST JAMES ANGLICAN CHURCH CROYDON HILLS

A SURVEY OF THE FIRST 25 YEARS

Croydon Hills in 1983 was an area of new development. What had been a rural area was fast becoming suburban with families settling into their new homes. The nearest Anglican Church was St. John the Divine at Croydon.

On 5th June 1983 four families from that church attended the inaugural Eucharist Service at the newly established Community of St. James. This was conducted by the Reverend Alan Baxter, Vicar of St John the Divine. In attendance were Margaret Lewis, Reverend Adrian Scott, his wife Dianne and family, Anne and Ian Wild, Gillian and Eric Gowers with their family, followed by the Harrison's, Michael and Lee with two sons.

The church building was a rather uninviting asbestos cement-sheet cottage, set well back on a four acre block of land which fronted Bemboka Road and finished in a gully at the rear. A large liquid-amber tree grew in front of the cottage, further concealing the building. The history of the building is not clear. It was thought to have been either a bequest to the Diocese or purchased and used as a refuge for women in need. Proof of either of these suggestions has been difficult to ascertain. Apart from the cottage there was a dilapidated galvanized iron shed with an extension once used for hay storage. Next to this was a single septic toilet which housed unwelcome mosquitoes and spiders.

The cottage was far from comfortable, but rain, hail or shine, over two decades, a loyal congregation attended. Parishioners became accustomed to the resident possum that occasionally left his mark on the old organ or made strange sounds during a sermon. On one occasion the intruder was even found quite snug in a kitchen cupboard. It was also necessary to keep items tamper-proof as mice were regular visitors. The smoke alarm was wont to go off if the urn emitted too much steam as happened at one Deanery Meeting, causing much flapping of tea towels until the steam dispersed. Winter provided its own problems. On the occasions when heaters plus urn and stove were in use, a fuse would blow; no additional power input could be requested as the whole of the ancient wiring system would need to be replaced.

Many details of early events and organization are not available as, unfortunately, some early church records have been lost due to rodents and damp. With such an old building, maintenance was an on-going affair. During one working bee, the small annex used for the children was found to have some rotten floor-boards; these were quickly repaired. The exterior of the cottage was later painted cream with green trim, a big improvement on the grey of the asbestos cement sheet. Gradually walls were removed to provide more room for the growing congregation

The grounds of the church also needed energetic Working Bees to get rid of a variety of rubbish - including an old car chassis. More than one large bonfire was held to reduce the huge amount of rubbish to ash. One fire even caused concern to the local C.F.A, but all ended well. In winter time, parking could be hazardous for the unwary: the grass would conceal the condition of the ground resulting in a car being bogged.

The services in early years were conducted at 10.00 am each Sunday by Reverends Adrian Scott, Andrew Schreuder or Alan Baxter. Other guest preachers took occasional services. Slowly the church attracted more attention. At the first Christmas Eucharist, conducted by Bishop James Grant, twenty people attended. The first Baptism took place on Easter Day 22nd April 1984 with thirty-seven people attending. The name, The Community of St James, was changed to St. James Anglican Church.

In April 1985 Reverend Colin Coish, a recently retired Vicar, now deceased was appointed on a part time basis as the Parish Priest. Having a regular minister was a great advantage and attendance slowly grew. A children's talk became a regular part of the service. The first Carol Service was held that year; both that and the Christmas Day Eucharist were well attended.

As the congregation grew more space was needed so down came a wall. The laundry was converted to the Vicar's robing room, vestry or general store room - a rather crowded arrangement for one small room. The old bathroom held a donated mower and various other bits and pieces.

The first Confirmation Service, conducted by Bishop Robert Butters was held on Monday the 23rd June 1986. Frank Woods, retired Archbishop of Melbourne, conducted a service on March 8th 1987. The Parish Picnic that year was held at his property at Beaconsfield.

In 1987, St James regrettably farewelled Reverend Colin Coish at his final service in December. Colin left a larger congregation and a pattern for children's worship that gave a firm foundation for the future.

For a short time the church services were taken by visiting ministers as in the early years. This ended on the 21st August 1988 when Bishop Robert Butters conducted the second confirmation service. At this service, the Reverend Jim Reynolds, now deceased, was commissioned as the new part time Minister at St James. Jim and his wife Dorothy stayed for sixteen months, and became valued members of St. James.

AN INTER-REGNUM

During 1989 discussions took place canvassing the viability of combining Anglican and Uniting Church services in a shared venue.

This trial of a shared parish administration was commenced on the 7th of February, 1990 when the Reverend Amy Turner was commissioned as Anglican Minister in charge of St James. The service was held at the Luther College Chapel, Croydon Hills, as St James could not hold the large congregation attending the service. On the following Sunday, the 9th of February 1990, the Reverend William Gillard, a Uniting Church Minister, was commissioned by the Uniting Church to be part of the shared ministry. Both appointments were part-time.

Partnership Pastors: the Uniting Church

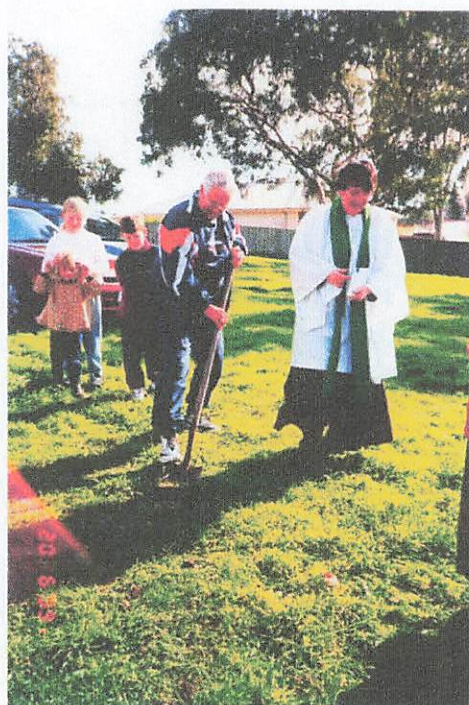
Rev. Reynold Waters 1993-4 and parishioners



The Anglican Pastor of the Partnership period

Rev. Amy Turner 1990 – 2000

(and a few spadefuls later we had the edifice displayed on our front cover)



With larger congregations, space once again became a problem. This resulted in the removal of another wall in the cottage. Because this was a supporting internal wall, a beam and post were erected to save any sagging. This work was ably carried out by Colin Sparham who later became a member and vestryman at St. James. The congregation soon became adept at dodging the green painted post.

On Palm Sunday 1990, the Inaugural Service of the Anglican and Uniting Church of St. James, was conducted with ninety-eight attending. In such a small building it was a very crowded service, with many people left standing both inside and outside the building. Fortunately the day was fine.

Attendance at first rose slightly and it appeared that a combined church would succeed. However the use of an alternative liturgy on alternating Sundays during 1991 resulted in declining attendances and dissatisfaction was apparent. During 1992 two services were tried, 8.30am. and 10.00am. This continued for one year until the parish reverted to a single Sunday service at 9.30 am.

For a time, there was hope that the new Parish that could survive with the building of a new worship centre. This hope was short lived due to conflicting responsibilities of the two participating denominations; the Anglican Church owned the land and The Uniting Church was the denomination with more funds. This trial of a shared parish took place before the ordination of women priests: this meant Reverend Amy Turner had to arrange for an ordained Minister to administer communion for when Anglican services were scheduled, a far from ideal situation.

On the 13th December 1992 the first women in the Diocese of Melbourne were Ordained as Priests, Amy Turner of this parish was one of the first group of women ordained. Several members of St James attended the service at St. Paul's Cathedral and the following celebrations at Parliament House. Archbishop Keith Rainer presided. On the 15th December, a Thanksgiving Service for the Ordination to the Priesthood of the Reverend Amy Inez Turner was held at St James. Amy conducted the service with 69 in attendance. It was a very joyful occasion.

On the 13th February 1993, the Reverend Bill Gillard finished his term and was replaced by Reverend Reynolds Waters whose induction took place on the 14th February 1993. However, on May 29th 1994 the last Uniting Church Service was held and the cottage once again reverted to being the Anglican Church of St. James.

During November 1993, Reverend Amy started a 10.00am Tuesday Service attended by between ten and fifteen parishioners. Discussion of the day's Bible readings instead of a sermon was a feature of this popular service and the format continued until 17th December 2002.

On the 23rd July 1995 the Archbishop of Melbourne, Keith Rainer preached on St James day. Sixty-five attended and many stayed to enjoy the luncheon, including the Archbishop and his wife. The luncheon was held in the enclosed old carport attached to the church. Being July, it was a very cold and damp day but soup, casseroles and other good food helped keep everyone warm. Later St James Day Services were then always followed by a celebratory luncheon.

A CONTRAST IN CONSTRUCTION



On Maunday Thursday in 1996, a Passover Seder service was conducted by musician and parishioner Graham Lee and became a very memorable. On that particular night there was a power black-out in the district. Instead of electric lighting, the service was held using the worn down old church candles thus creating a wonderful ambience. The service ended with the Eucharist of The Last Supper. A very moving night!

A NEW WORSHIP CENTRE

The use of the cottage as a viable worship service was obviously of limited tenure. Besides the dilapidated condition of the building, parishioners had to hurry out through the kitchen and trot down the concrete path to a loo attached to the outside shed. Fortunately progress had been made and the service was at least of the septic variety.

A visitor coming to St James could have been surprised to find a large white plastic pipe standing in a prominent position in the church. The purpose of this was to encourage donations to assist in the cost of toilet repairs. Unusual but effective! Although the kitchen was small and dank, it was the source of some wonderful hospitality. B.B.Q.s in the summer, soup and rolls in the winter and on special occasions, casseroles and salads, were a regular feature of St James life. The parish was fortunate to have amongst its parishioners, Ralph and Cynthia Collins who were experienced caterers who help and guide in the production of many tasty meals. Despite the cramped conditions, many festive occasions had been enjoyed – trivia nights, puzzle nights and curry nights were memorable events in the small building.

However, planning for progress had been quietly proceeding. 1999 was an exciting time: St James was informed that they had been selected as one of four Parishes to receive a grant of \$350,000 for a new building. The four new buildings were to be of the same design but this caused problems for two of the four Parishes. Finally Croydon Hills and Rowville were the only two Parishes who accepted this offer. With a truncated Diocesan development, the hope for a large grant was short lived and did not eventuate. Time passed and the Parish wondered if a new building would ever be started. Finally, plans were approved by Town Planning Department and the Municipal Council.

On the 20th June 1999 a Ceremony to turn the First Sod of the New Building was conducted by Reverend Amy Turner. It was quite a long time before the next sod was turned, thus another winter would be spent in the cottage. There was much speculation from passers by as to what was happening as the rising structure had no resemblance to the traditional church. It was hard to envisage the final appearance. Eventually it was finished, looking very different. Doors were of Episcopal purple, one wall was nearly all glass (and on the northern end too!) and the cloistral windows fitted with yellow glass- architectural features which were not popular with everyone. The yellow glass was apt to cause much merriment when white or grey haired people turned startlingly blonde.

Much liaison work was done by Keith Ondarchie, one of the Wardens who was constantly in contact with the Architect and Builder once a week, even when he was on business overseas. Amy also worked tirelessly as unofficial Clerk of Works.

The last Service in the Cottage was held on 19th of December 1999.

A CONTRAST IN COMMUNION



The first Service in the new church was planned for Christmas Eve, 1999. During the intervening week, Amy and her husband Trevor worked hard, moving chairs, altar, filing cabinets, crockery, hymn books, prayer books and anything else needed from the Cottage for the new building. A large Hammond Organ which had earlier been donated was not moved for some time due to its weight. The first service in the new church took place as planned on Christmas Eve 24th December 1999. We had a very tired Vicar.

Admittedly the move to the new, magnificent venue was the source of much regret for a number of parishioners who had greatly appreciated the close family atmosphere of the old cottage. The convenience, comfort and space of the new St James worship centre soon over-rode any lingering dissatisfaction with the architectural style.

AVE ATQUE VALE

On 20.02.2000, the new Worship Centre at Saint James the Great, Croydon Hills/Warranwood was dedicated and Consecrated to the Glory of God by Bishop John Stewart.

The church was designed with a capacity for one hundred and twenty people but on dedication day a congregation of two hundred and two managed to fit inside the worship area. Following the service the congregation moved to the grounds where a lavish afternoon tea was served from the shelter of large tents. The ladies from St. James were able to enjoy this time as St John's, Croydon and St. Paul's, North Ringwood Anglican churches kindly supplied additional crockery and served the afternoon tea.

In March of that year, a church Fair was held in the grounds with St Paul's and St John's parishioners again participating to assist the furnishing of the new building. St. James was now able to use the new building for an Alpha Course which was attended by thirty- two people. This course proved so successful that three parishioners subsequently held Courses in their homes.

Later that year, at a service on the 13th of August 2000, Reverend Amy Turner announced that she would be moving to Beaumaris Parish as a full time Priest. The congregation was stunned. Amy had been eleven years at St James and throughout that time she had worked cheerfully and hard. St. James had been her first appointment as a Priest in Charge, and her first Parish as a fully ordained Priest. She had weathered the highs and lows of The Anglican/United Joint parish venture and had never complained about the limitations of the old cottage church. She had been employed as a part time minister but worked many, many extra hours. Amy had introduced the Tuesday Morning Service and started a regular Bible Study Group. Amy's work was instrumental in giving St. James an identity in the area. Her Farewell Service was held on the 1st of October 2000. At the close of the service Alwyn Hind presented a 'This is Your Life' activity which caused many a laugh as highlights were remembered. As was the custom at St James, a fine luncheon was shared during which goodbyes and well wishes could be offered.

ANOTHER INTER-REGNUM

Over the next eighteen months, services at St James were led by three locum priests - the Reverends Kiel Maslen, (five months), David Townsend (four months) and Scott Bramley (eight months). A member of the Parish, the Reverend Ken Perry, also filled a four week vacancy. Each of these men contributed their own special talents and their service to the Parish was greatly appreciated.

While David Townsend was the locum service times were changed from 9.30am to 10.30am. This was done to allow time for David, who was also locum at St. Mark's Wonga Park to continue to conduct both services. It was during his time that a decision was made to combine both Parishes – one of the main reasons for his appointment as locum. In 2001 the church became part of The Anglican Parish of Croydon Hills and Wonga Park.

On St James Day 2001 (29th July) the Archbishop of Melbourne, Peter Watson attended as the celebrant. The invitation had been offered during Amy Turner's tenure. The Archbishop was driven by his aide Mark Hansen to his St James Day appointment and arrived in time for the 9.30 service, not having been notified of that the Service time had been changed to 10.30 am. However the Archbishop was very gracious in stating that it gave him opportunity to see the size of the Parish and surrounding area. This visit proved quite helpful to his Aide, Mark Hansen, for a later appointment

During this year of service by the locums, a number of Priests were considered for appointment to this Parish; some declined the appointment and others were considered unsuitable. There were another five Parish vacancies in the Region; all were searching for a Parish Priest and competition made the finalisation of an appointment rather difficult. The appointment to St James would be a Diocesan prerogative as at that time the Parish was supported by Diocesan grants.

A NEW ERA

At long last the welcome news was received that the Reverend Mark Hanson had been appointed as the new Parish Priest of St. James and St Mark's from the 13th May 2002.

A home in Peachwood Place was purchased by the Diocese but prior to Mark and his wife Lara moving in, a working bee was needed to tidy the overgrown garden. Neglected roses were in abundance so some of these were taken to the tip while others were transplanted to a quickly prepared area in the church grounds. These roses survived and can sometimes be seen in the church floral arrangements. Other unwanted plants and weeds were taken to the tip. While the men worked outside the women cleaned the house and soon everything was ready for the new occupants.

The Reverend Mark Hansen was inducted as Priest of St James and St Mark's on the Monday evening of 13th May 2002. Many friends and clergy attended this happy occasion. Supper followed. Mark's was the first full time appointment for the Parish.

CAN'T CONTRAST THE KIDS

(A chockie frog for those who can guess the word in the more recent photo)



The new building gave opportunity for greater use. Alpha programs were organised during his first year in the Parish. A children's worker, Dianne Moore, was appointed to a part time position, and a M.O.P.S. group was started. M.O.P.S. is an anagram for Mothers of Pre-Schoolers: mothers bring their children and enjoy a two hour activity. The children are looked after by some of the women of the congregations while the mothers hear an informative talk before being served morning tea by other parishioners. The mothers then spend time working on a particular craft. The church is transformed into a play room with toys, story telling or video. Diane left in April to further her studies and Ruth Newmarch accepted an appointment as the new Family and Children's Minister, including M.O.P.S. among her many duties in the Parish

In the early days of M.O.P.S, a young mother, Heather Powers, attempted to start a mid-week mothers' group. Unfortunately, due to lack of interest, this venture failed, but M.O.P.S has succeeded.

Children's Church, which is known as C.C's., occurs during Sunday Services. A team of able helpers assisted with this. A family Service is held on the first Sunday of each month, followed by either soup and rolls or a sausage sizzle. Work Shops are held for Advent and Easter with children from local schools invited. These have proved to be a great teaching and fun time.

A Youth Group commenced in 2007 with Kristina Mitchell in charge. This meets Sunday evening fortnightly and is attracting a growing number of young people.

Other Parish Activities:

Lighthouse is a Monday Night Prayer and Praise fellowship. Wednesday Morning Prayer fellowships have been introduced at St. James. A weekly home Bible Study continues to be held and is usually led by Dr .Colin Kruse, a Bible College Lecturer and member of St James together with his wife Rosemary.

New ventures for 2008 are "Introducing God" and "Discovery," two programs designed to help people who have no knowledge of God.

Missions

St James has always been interest in missions. The Parish supports C.M.S with prayer, letter writing and donations. A young lad in Malaysia is supported by the Parish through the organization Compassion.

St James has been blessed with learning much about mission work from ex-Missionaries who have been or are still members of the Parish. Barbara Spring spent forty years in Tanzania as principal of a Bible College but has now moved to Balwyn; Ken and Jay Perry spent many year sin Africa and were then parishioners for a while; Dr. Colin Kruse and his wife Rosemary at the Bible College in Lilydale, and Robert Lewis are continuing parishioners.

Easter Celebrations

Maunday Thursday 2008 was celebrated with a Seder Meal including traditional breads, bitter herbs and roast lamb. Readings were given and the significance of the Passover meal explained.

A CONTRAST IN KITCHENS



A moving portrayal of the Easter Story by the Backyard Poet was given before the night ended with the Eucharist.

Shrove Tuesday at St James has always been Pancake Night. The first ones were held at Rev Amy Turner's home, but with the advent of the new church they take place at St. James. These are a good family nights.

Reaching Out

In Leena Court there is a group of Public Housing where some twenty-six residents live. For some years a group of St James men and women visited monthly. Some entertainment in the form of games, a sing along or talks always finished with afternoon tea. The activities attracted a small number of occupants. Pauline Noble, as one of the parish organisers, remembers the opportunities to talk, laugh and pray with residents. Occasional picnics were also held. After three years, 1997/2000 interest waned with more visitors than residents in attendance. Two people did attend the first Alpha Sessions but did not join any congregation in spite of contact continuing.

Fund raising

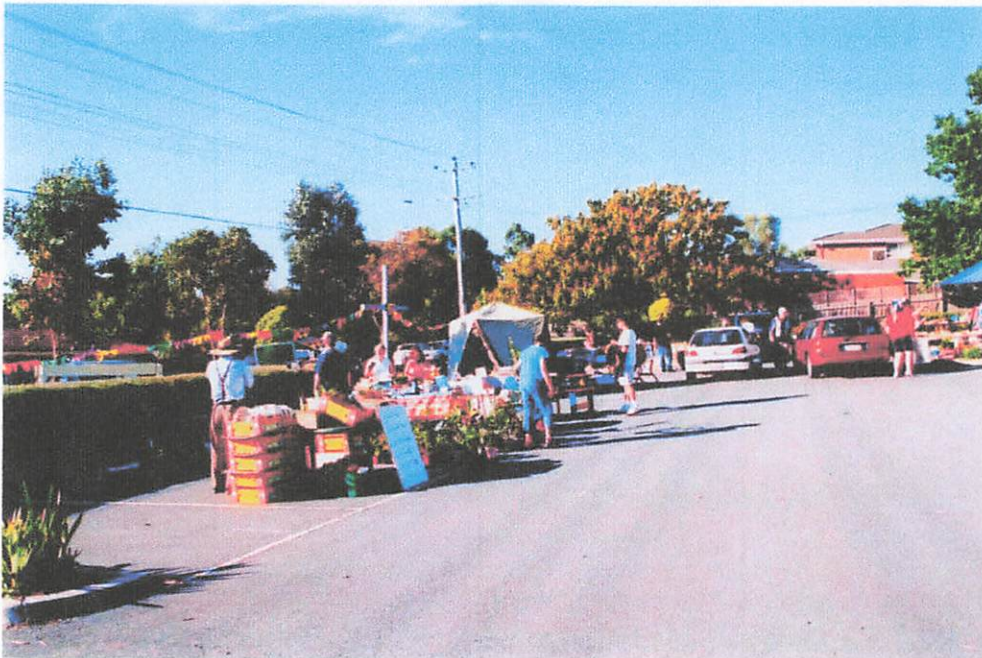
St James has had a number of groups involved in fund raising for a variety of services:

- The Craft group: A small group of ladies, led by Gill Gowers, met regularly and used their skills to create various items. The hive of activity and chatter has produced many cards, patchwork bags, cushions and other small items, which were then sold to eager parishioners and friends. These sales resulted in gifts of nearly \$1000 per year being shared between the Leprosy Mission, Mission for the Blind, and Anglicare. Whilst this group is no longer active some of these skills are now used for the enhancement of the worship area.
- A Fruitful Fellowship: At the back of the cottage, an ancient lemon tree grew. It was a true survivor. in spite of total neglect. This tree continued to produce much fruit. One enterprising parishioner, Lyn Hamer noticed the wasted lemons and decided they would make good marmalade. From this beginning a busy fellowship developed. Strawberry, Apricot, plum and Kiwi Fruit jams were produced with fruit being gathered from willing home owners. Eyes were kept open for special sales with tomato and plum chutneys as well as various pickles being added to the production line. The cooking was done either in a home or later in the new church kitchen. The Fruitful Fellowship resulted in well over \$3000 going towards furnishings for the new Church.
- The Seed Project was the idea of Lyn Hamer and Wendy Simpson, two members of the vestry. Each willing parishioner was given an envelope containing \$10 as a base for a profitable enterprise. After a few months the original outlay of \$600 resulted in a return of \$3600. This was applied towards furnishing the new Church. Many people were doubtful as to their ability to participate but surprised themselves by finding talents they had overlooked.
- Even a garage sale: This was held in the church grounds before the new worship centre was built. Parishioners provided many once loved goods and collected goods for sale

ERECTING THE EDIFICE



FUNDING THE FURNISHINGS



from other people. It also helped the Parish clear out the garage attached to the cottage (a converted carport which had over the years been the recipient of much no-longer wanted material). Fortunately the day was fine and the result satisfactory.

- The St James Fair took place shortly after the new church was built. Other local Anglican churches, two being St John the Divine Croydon, and St Paul's East Ringwood generously assisted. The car park was packed with stalls of all varieties, while the new church kitchen proved its worth by providing Devonshire Teas.
- A car-boot sale: The first day that was scheduled had to be cancelled as heavy rain prevailed. It was held two weeks later on a beautiful day. This variation on the Fair was a different spectacle with a sausage sizzle well patronized, and many people of the area coming to inspect and buy items from private stalls.
- Sausage Sizzles have been held at McAdam's Square, Croydon Hills and Bunning's at Chirnside Park. These have proved popular and have not only provided extra funds but helped to make the existence of our church known in the area
- Dances: There have been three Parish Dances and another is planned for October 2008. These have been held at The Hungarian Club, Boronia and organized by Ralph Collins with the help of Parishioners and marvelously patronized by the South African community. Not only have these been enjoyed but have resulted in much needed funds for the church.

Social Activates

- Picnics: Every church must have its Picnic; St James is no exception. The Picnics are held at either Lilydale Lake or Warriem Reserve and are well attended. B.B.Q's, games and fun are enjoyed by all. The weather has always been fine.
- The first dinner in the church was held to get to know the new Vicar and his wife Mark and Lara Hansen. It was the idea was the idea of Marge and David Cunningham. Lyn Hamer and two members of Marge's family assisted. After entertainment Mark spoke, giving all the opportunity to get to know him.
The next dinner held near Mothers Day was A Women's Dinner. The men of the Parish stayed in the kitchen where they happily looked after the serving and cleaning up. The women had cooked casseroles but the men were responsible for the rest of the evening - serving and clearing up. At one time a great crash was heard from the Narthex as one of the tables which had held the casseroles collapsed. Fortunately the food had been served and minimal damage resulted. The men were tired but the women had enjoyed a work free night while they listened to some entertainment and an excellent speaker.
The following year a Christmas in July Dinner was organized by Robyn Payne and Lara Hansen. It was of such a high standard that people clamoured for a repeat.
Over the next two years Robyn and Lara ran a Winter Wonderland Dinner followed by an Italian Harvest Dinner. These dinners were all a gastronomical delight and proved excellent social fellowship.

Music

The original very old large valve organ for the cottage was donated and played by Ray Moorhouse. Later it resided in pieces in the tin shed until the shed was pulled down. The first replacement was a small keyboard of limited ability and it was soon consigned to the garage and later the garage sale. The third instrument was a more versatile keyboard which has since been promoted to a position in the new worship centre

After Ray Moorhouse, Alwyn Hind and Graham Lee Recruited by the Rev Amy from South Croydon parish) served as organists at first in the cottage and later in the new building. A large theatre Hammond Organ was also donated by a Croydon parishioner and was in use for some years before it failed due to old age. It had been played by Alwyn and a newer member, Jan Mason. Jan kindly donated another organ.

At the monthly Family Service a younger group play drums, guitar and key board. Other musicians Angela White, Kate Mitchell and Catherine Beaufort have played on an occasional basis.

WONGA PARK

During 2001, St Mark's, Wonga Park was joined with St James, Croydon Hills to become the combined Parish of Croydon Hills and Wonga Park. It, like St. James, had started as an off-shoot of St. John the Divine, Croydon, and at one time faced the possibility of closure. The church was built in 1922 of weatherboard and is in the traditional Anglican Church style with its own unique history. Services in this part of the parish are mainly traditional, but with a children's service monthly.

A Parish Council consisting of wardens from both churches meet monthly to deal with finances of the parish.

Kristina Mitchell, leader of the Parish Youth Group Contact is a member of Wonga Park community. Social Functions run by either church are a shared occasion for members of both church communities.

The Present

The old Cottage still stands but for how long is unknown. The liquid-amber has not survived recent years of drought. From Bemboka Rd, St James has a new aspect: the garden and trees have grown; a fenced playground area at the side of the church has been added making it safe for children.

The Future

To implement our Mission Statement:

"We exist to worship our Lord Jesus Christ and to reach and teach in our Community."

Dorothy Hind
19/05/2008

VESTRIES Present and Past



Members of St James Vestries over the last 25 years:

Wilf Ackers, Kevin Albertus, Stefan Callow, Cynthia Collins Ralph Collins, Brian Grace, Lyn Hamer, Dennis Hare, Lee Harrison, Mike Harrison, Alwyn Hind (Treasurer 17 years), Rosemary Kruse, Graham Lee, Trevor Nankervis, Keith Ondarchie, Stephen Payne, Shirley Prior, Dianna (?) Scott, Wendy Simpson, Colin Sparham, Graham Starkey, Barbara Spring. Ian Wild, Penny ?
Please notify Dorothy Hind if other members of St James vestries have been omitted.