

Faith
in
Action



Melville Methodist Church
« Hamilton »
25th Anniversary - February 1984

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS:

It has been physically impossible to record everything and we have merely skimmed the tip of the iceberg. Others may have different versions of our history, seeing these matters from a different perspective. We regret any errors and omissions — there will be many. We may have researched more thoroughly had not the Christmas and holiday season taken up the greater part of the time we had available (see John 21:25)

Greetings - From Rev W.R. Francis **Ex-superintendent, Hamilton Circuit**

The city of Hamilton and the Methodist Church have a long history of sharing fortunes and setting future goals — so as the city expanded southward it was only natural that Methodism would soon follow.

Thus it was, with the generous help of the Hamilton Trust, the circuit decided to establish a cause in the general direction of the Melville area where a Presbyterian cause was the only other denomination represented there at the time. Settling the site posed problems as the extent of the expansion could only be guessed and land was in demand. The corner site finally selected was chosen as past it flowed nearly all the Melville traffic of the development thus far — and its pleasant aspect amidst the population seemed fitting. History may have proved the choice conservative in view of the subsequent spread — but at the time the situation appealed.

But a church is not only a building and a notice board. From the congregation of St Paul's, families were approached who had moved into the area to see if they would consent to the transfer of their membership to the new cause. The result was a band of folk already known to each other and experienced in Methodist ways who moved from their old church home to the challenge of an infant congregation. This was achieved with mutual goodwill and thus ties were forged of gratitude and memory — and the new arrival was welcomed in to the family of Methodism with ancestral ties, plus the vision of forging a new fellowship.

Of what has occurred since those early days you will learn more, both from the Booklet and from personal contacts renewed. The 25th Anniversary offers a fitting opportunity to assess the past, critically and sympathetically — then to set such goals for the future as approve themselves to the people.

May God continue to direct and bless your efforts on behalf of Methodism and the community of which you are a valued part.

Yours in His service,

W.R. FRANCIS

MINISTRY:

1959-60 Rev Ian Ramage

1961-62 Rev Les Brooks

1963 Rev John Bailey

1964-69 Rev Dr Phyllis Guthardt

1970-73 Rev Roy Alexander

1974-79 Rev Stan West

1980-82 Rev Lindsay Cumberpatch

1983 + Rev Sifa Hingano

MELVILLE METHODIST CHURCH



Melville Methodist Church Interior
Bader Street, Melville , HAMILTON.

*Let me come into the church of God
to meet the Spirit of God:
not to give religion an hour,
but to live in the eternal;
not to maintain a decorous habit,
but to bow in the holy place before the Holy One;
not to judge the words of a teacher,
but to draw life from the Word & Truth everlasting;
not to be moved or soothed by music,
but to sing from the heart divine praises;
not that mine eyes roam over architecture or congregation
but that my soul look up to the King in his beauty,
and my heart plead the needs of thy children;
not that my thoughts escape out into the world,
but that they be still, and know that thou art God.
Let me go, and go again, into the house of the Lord,
and be glad, and give thanks,
and adore my King and my God*

- E. Milner-White

THE MORRISON FAMILY

Mrs Morrison (formerly Muriel Melville) is a regular member of our church and is our oldest member. She has lived all her life in the area - which was named after her family. She loves to tell of the early days of the Melville district and many children have heard her tell its story. She is an honorary “pupil” of Melville High School and was given this “title” on her 85th birthday.

Her family’s history is well recorded and its links with the district trace back to 1881-82 when her mother Miss Alice Farr came as a nurse in charge of the Peacocke children en route to New Zealand. Her brother was already here — and her main reason for coming was to check on his welfare so that their mother would stop worrying!

In 1892 Alice Farr married Mr James D Melville and they eventually moved to their own property opposite the present Melville Primary School - they being one of a number of early settlers who purchased part of 20,000 acres owned at one time by a Mr Cox. (The Jones Block — on which our present church and parsonage stand — were originally part of this 20,000 acres).

Mr W.T. Morrison worked for Mr Melville and married his daughter Muriel - and later they became the owners of the farm. The Melville High and Intermediate schools stand on the ground of their original farm property.

For many years the Morrisons attended St Paul’s church, but when Melville church opened 25 years ago, they - along with others - transferred their membership. One of their sons, Bill Morrison, became a Methodist minister and in 1974 was President of the Methodist Conference - a great thrill for the Morrison family. Mr W.T. Morrison passed on in June 1977 at the age of 96.

BEGINNINGS: A Stewardship of Money - Time - Talents

Our Lord Jesus himself, whose mission took place in the open air, on the mountain, at the lakeside and in the synagogues of Galilee and in the Temple at Jerusalem — instructed his disciples to spread the Gospel into the whole world - “OIKOUMENE”. St Paul spoke of the fact that we are trustees of the Gospel. This is a clear description of how we have our Melville property. Many partners have taken part in the project.

Pre-beginnings: Hamilton Methodists

Imperial and Colonial troops, under General Sir Duncan Cameron, moved southward from Auckland into the Waikato in 1863. These Waikato militia later settled in Hamilton, Cambridge, Kihikihi, Pirongia and Ngaruawahia. There were many Methodist laymen and some local preachers in the militia and these men formed into Methodist Societies.

Outstanding among the Methodists who landed at Hamilton (August 1864) was army doctor, Assistant Surgeon William Rayner, the son of an English Methodist minister.

When the 4th Waikato Regiment was allocated land in Hamilton he received an acre of land on the corner of what is now Victoria and Collingwood Streets (April 16, 1868). Immediately on receiving title he transferred half of it as a free gift “FOR THE USE OF THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS AND FOR NO OTHER USE WHATSOEVER”. The land was vested in the Hamilton Methodist Trust. In 1872 Dr Rayner moved from Hamilton. He offered his other half section for the sum of Twenty pounds. The trustees did not have the money and received a loan from the minister, Mr Simmonds who later went to Fiji and wrote to the trustees requesting repayment of the loan. It was ultimately paid to him in small amounts over a period of time.

The Collingwood/Victoria Street site has had shops on it since 1880 and is now the site of Wesley Chambers (and the Farmer’s Trading Company) and has been a major source of revenue to the Trust.

The original church building (1st Trinity Church) was later sold to the Hamilton East circuit, and in 1913 when the Primitive and Wesleyan branches of Methodism amalgamated, the London Street Primitive Church became the centre of Methodism in west Hamilton. The old Wesleyan Church in Collingwood Street was moved to London Street and used as a hail and centre until 1962 when the present Methodist Centre was built. A plaque in the Centre foyer reminds us of our heritage.

The Hamilton Trust has used the income from the valuable Collingwood/Victoria Street site to supply funds to assist church extension work in Hamilton and throughout the Waikato - not only funds - but also the wisdom and “know-how”. Thus Melville became one of its projects.

Beginnings: Melville Methodists

A monthly afternoon service for all Melville folk was already operating at St Stephens and the plan to establish a Methodist church in Melville started in 1953. The initiative came from St Paul's and the circuit superintendent, the Rev. Howard Matthews. They advised that it was desirable to acquire land for church and school purposes and the Hamilton Trustees met with the Land Department officials on 20th April, 1953.

Subsequently (11.8.53) three sections of the Jones Block on the corner of Bader Street and Normandy Ave were offered to the Trust for £1370 - on the basis that rent of £61.13.0d be paid for one year and that at the end of that time it either became freehold, paid by deferred payment, or else a Renewable Lease taken. Deferred payment was the option chosen. (10.10.55) Nothing was done to the site except for clearance of long grass and other growth – which in February 1957 was regarded as a fire hazard by the Hamilton City Council!

Buildings:

In February 1957 talks about suitable buildings began. In July 1957 sketch plans were submitted by Mr W.B. Young - and a sign stating that this was to be the site of a Methodist Church-Hall was erected. The sketch plan of hall, kitchen, vestibule, meeting room and conveniences was submitted to the City Council after the hall was enlarged to 40' x 28'. The offer by Mr Young to build at half the normal overhead cost was accepted with gratitude.

Plans were submitted to the Connexional Office in Christchurch and they recommended that a Worship Centre be incorporated in the building. This the Trust agreed to do.

The Worship Centre

The Worship Centre was designed by Rev Ian Ramage, Mr David Baker (St Paul's) and Mr Don Hunt(St Luke's). They were largely responsible for its construction. It was planned so that it could all be removed when the hail was required for other purposes.

Centre-piece in the Worship Centre is the communion table with its symbolic design sandblasted by the late Mr Peter Luckie from Mr Ramage's ideas. It incorporates the wheat and the tares, the fishermen's net, the five barley loaves and two fishes, the wood and the nails, and the crown of thorns. The front cover of this booklet shows the design.

At this stage it was planned that the hail would only be temporarily used for worship and that a church would be built on the adjoining section. The church hall was built at a cost of £4380.8.11d.

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When the project was first started there were people already experienced enough from St Paul's and Frankton to launch the various organizations and to take leadership responsibility. Although Rev Ian Ramage was resident in Maeroa he was able and willing to adapt to the new situation. There was also the Circuit to give backing and share problems, and the Hamilton Methodist Trust to supply financial backing, but on 7 March, 1960 a separate Melville Trust was suggested by the District Chairman. The Melville Trust negotiated the addition of the Primary Department and two classrooms at a cost of £2350 — and this was opened on 11 February, 1962. Mr Ray Knight was Trust Secretary at this time.

Later Mr Neil Marquand became Trust Secretary and under his leadership the Trust planned the parsonage.

In 1961-62 Rev Les Brooks was appointed as Hospital Chaplain and was also asked to “supply” at Melville. When Mr Brooks became ill, Rev John Bailey, a retired minister, agreed to “supply”. At this time the Hamilton Circuit planned to have a minister based at Melville who could do halftime Waikato Hospital Chaplaincy and thus it was necessary to have a parsonage.

The back section behind the hall was originally purchased for this purpose. But at a Trust meeting chaired by the Rev Ashleigh Petch in 1963, it was learned that the Salvation Army had an option on the section at 31 Beatty Street. The meeting adjourned and walked up to Beatty Street in the moonlight and examined the property which would mean the minister would not need to be on the site of his/her labours.

The parsonage section was purchased by the Trust with finance provided by the Hamilton Methodist Trust. The parsonage was designed by Mr Rodney Smith to provide privacy for a minister's family - hence the courtyard. It's unique design has provoked a wide range of emotions. The more negative ones provoked by its tendency to flood, but it is hoped this has now been remedied. The parsonage was dedicated in 1965 by Rev. V. Roy Jamieson, District Chairman. The cost was £9962 and the contractors Spooner & Jones.

When the time of morning worship was changed to 10 am pressure on buildings led the Trustees to secure a Keith Hay moveable classroom, generally known as “The Prefab”. This building was purchased by the Melville Trust as classrooms, but became the home of Myad.

BEGINNINGS: People

Miss Ann Sharp - a niece of the Rev Francis, responded to the challenge to give a year's work without salary to the Methodist Church under the Order of St. Stephen. After a period in children's homes in Auckland, she was appointed to do pastoral work in the Melville area and to call on Methodist families to bring the news that a Church Hall was being built.

Circuit Staffing –

At this period there were three ministers in the Hamilton Circuit. Rev W.R. Francis was Superintendent at St Paul's. Rev. S.J. Werren was at St James', Frankton who was also Methodist Hospital Chaplain. Rev Ian Ramage was the minister of St Luke's, Maeroa and also Wesley Church in Fairfield.



Rev Bill Francis



Rev Ian Ramage



Rev Sam Werren

At the 1958 Conference in Christchurch, Roger Nuttall who had been at Pahiatua and who was looking for a new appointment was approached by Rev Francis and asked to consider Fairfield and Rototuna. This would release Ian Ramage to be free to launch a new church at Melville. Conference made the appointment.

A meeting was convened at the home of Neil and Gwyneth Marquand of people interested, and the Melville congregation came into being. It is significant to note that the first written minutes of the congregation date 1st March, 1959, but there is a pencil correction showing these as the second meeting - apparently referring back to the meeting at the Marquands.

From this point onwards we have full formal records of congregational meetings, Leaders' meetings, Trust meetings, Local Education meetings and Women's Fellowship meetings. They tell the stories of the joys, sorrows, aspirations and disappointments of a Christian congregation. People have not always agreed - but the work of the congregation has been carried on by consensus. People came together from many different places — some born and bred in Hamilton, others part of that ever changing flow of population as people have moved into Hamilton on promotion in the Public Service or in private enterprise.

When the church was opened it stood at the end of the road going nowhere. On the death of Dame Hilda Ross (MP) a by- election was held and the Government offered a whole new deal for Hamilton consisting of the lowering of the railway line through

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the city - and a new motorway to the city called Cobham Drive to connect with State Highway 4 at Normandy Avenue.

This had a significant effect on our church as every car, truck and motor cycle going towards Te Awamutu, passed by our doors. Not only this, but traffic up Bader Street joining the stream, ground to a halt just outside our doors. We became a busy thoroughfare and every preacher has had to contend with both normal and intentional revving up of engines and grinding of brakes - something the Melville congregation still finds frustrating.

Opening and Dedication Service - 14th February, 1959

Opening day dawned with Ian Ramage and Don Hunt still hard at work completing the Worship Centre. Ian was still there when the first folk began to gather. Like lightning he motored home and shaved, showered and was ready to participate in time. As Rev Bill Francis was on exchange in Melbourne, Rev Charlie Oldfield unlocked the door and preached the first sermon. He has given us his written notes. In his address, Mr Oldfield reflected that this was the latest church to be built in New Zealand and so set aside for the worship of God. He linked his address with the first church to be built in NZ by Rev Henry Williams at Paihia in 1823. He said that both the Melville church and the Paihia church had the same sense of purpose, the same gospel was preached, the same scripture was read and the same intentions were there — which indicated truth is ever relevant, that only “outward” things are different.

At first it was the policy of the church to keep its buildings for its own exclusive use, but this was challenged by some members when were approached by the Melville Playcentre who needed a base. Since then a variety of organisations have used the buildings. At first Neil Marquand, Trust Secretary, made the upkeep his labour of love. Later, when he left for Auckland, Les Missen took over. In partnership with the Trust Treasurer, Mrs May Smith, they have given dedicated team service keeping the church property up to standard. Mr Peter Williams has been the lawn—mowing convenor - a chore that has been faithfully undertaken.

Church cleaning and arranging of flowers has been the responsibility of the Women’s Fellowship, and Mrs Zena Brooks has been organist for many years and has always made herself available for all musical needs within the life of the church.

In 1980 we were approached by the Rev. Vaiao Eteuati of the Samoan Methodist Congregation for the use of our church buildings. These folk with their own minister, local preachers, Sunday School and Prayer meetings have made a home with us. Two combined services are held each year as their own services are in the Samoan language and idiom. They have willingly helped us with the cleaning and flower roster, at concerts and other functions by providing Samoan items which have a different approach and usually incorporate some feature of the Gospel and the arrangement has proved to be an amicable one for all.

THE FIRST YEAR.

Extracts from *THE HAMILTON METHODIST*

February, 1959

“Sunday activities commenced March 1st with Sunday School at 10 am and an evening service at 8 pm — in winter 6 pm — to enable Rev Ian Ramage to work between Maeroa and Melville The circuit was asked to look out for a good second hand piano at reasonable price St Paul’s Youth Fellowship undertook the construction of a portable “Worship Centre” - David Baker on behalf of the Fellowship put in several days’ work during his annual holidays Melville is the first new cause in the circuit for 30 years.’

.....Baptisms 15.3.59 - Peter Hosking/Ian Williams

August, 1959

“By this time members of the congregation were beginning to get to know one another by sight, if not by name, and a social hour after evening service was held to get to know one another better Membership roll 40.

Ladies Fellowship invited sister churches in Melville area to a social evening. In August Rev Jack Penman of the Home Mission Dept. was invited to show films of the extension work of our church Les Missen was Sunday School Superintendent Mrs Joyce Price supervised the Primary Dept Bible Classes met Wednesdays for study, games and social activities and cut firewood to sell to church people and raised £11.7.6d (\$22.75) towards the purchase of a motor mower to cut church lawns. They also made a table tennis table, joined with Maeroa for a trip to Matamata Hot Springs, held a social and dance, went to the Chateau...

Melville notes 1960 – QUOTE

“Good news! The Rev L.A. & Mrs Z. Brooks of Te Awamutu church are coming to Melville in February. Mr Brooks has had a long and very effective ministry and is brimful of vigour and enthusiasm to help in our work at Melville WE SHALL BE ABLE TO DO AWAY WITH OUR SUMMER AND WINTER TIMES AND HOLD 7PM SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, COMMENCING MARCH 6th”.

(Regular monthly morning Family Services were held until August 1962 when weekly morning services commenced. Seventeen people attended the first morning service and twentythree the second, with numbers gradually building up.)

Evening services were held until August 1973.

INTER CHURCH CO-OPERATION AND ECUMENICAL WORK

The present St Stephen's Church was built as a Melville district church. The Anglicans were within St Peter's Parish, Methodists within the Hamilton Circuit. The Presbyterians were the first to establish a parish of their own in Melville. Shortly after the Melville Methodist Church became established, a new Anglican Parish was established, with its base at St Luke's and with outlying services in Rukuhia and Ohaupo. A Baptist Church was established in Montgomery Street, and a Roman Catholic Parish with school took shape in Pine Avenue.

A variety of Ecumenical activities arose in a climate when five churches were negotiating a basis of Church Union. Some were city wide such as the Billy Graham Crusades, others with initiative coming from the local level. Joint Good Friday and Christmas Services began involving some of these five churches.

The impetus toward united worship occurred with the ministry of Rev. Phyllis Guthardt, Father Bradley of St Pius and Rev. Andrew Wardlaw of St Stephens. It took a number of forms, including a Bible Week Programme run in the Assembly Hall at Melville High School, and also Lenten Studies in 1967 initiated through the Hamilton Branch of the National Council of Churches.

At that time Roger Nuttall was the Secretary of the Hamilton Branch of the National Council of Churches and so was delegated the responsibility of organizing the local effort. A Joint Committee was called at the Methodist Church to establish if there would be support for the joint Studies. There came a warm hearted response from the Catholics due in large measure to Father Bradley's enthusiasm, as well as from some Presbyterians and Methodists. Meetings were held in homes to pursue the study. A liaison was thus established and continued in 1969 and which also included the Anglicans.

Joint Christmas and Easter Services were commenced in the Intermediate School Hall, it being neutral ground. The Christian people of Melville worshipped together on these occasions. During the Christmas holiday period joint services were held at 8 am at St Lukes, 10 am at St Stephens and 7 pm at the Methodist church.

With the arrival of Rev. Tom Sadlier at St Lukes, and the support of Mr Charles Prior his Choir-master, folk 'from neighbouring Melville churches were invited to join in a combined choir for an ecumenical Christmas Service of lessons and carols. This event is still a highlight for Melville people and is well supported - in 1983 the service being held in the new Hamilton South Baptist Church on Ohaupo Road.

With the negotiations for Church Union between the five churches — Church of Christ, Congregational, Church of England, Methodist and Presbyterian - there grew some confidence that the Union would be consummated. Elsewhere in the city at Hillcrest and Chartwell cooperating parishes appeared. Was it possible for us?

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At a Methodist Leader's Meeting held on 8th September 1970, Mr Geoff Dean moved "Arising from the combined services held in St Lukes, this Leaders Meeting commends the setting up of an interdenominational committee along the lines of a Parish Council to promote the work of the negotiating churches at Melville. Possible personnel to be the Ministers and three representatives of each church". Letters were sent to the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches in Melville.

This committee lasted until 1977 and a lot of valuable CO—operative work was commenced. Our three representatives were Geoff Dean, Don Armstrong and Noeline Nuttall.

For a period combined evening services were held in all the churches, including St Pius Catholic Church, when there was a fifth Sunday in each month. By October 1971 it was reported by the Parish Council that three Committees had been elected - Worship & Evangelism, Properties and Christian Education.

At this stage the Council had no authority in itself and was purely exploratory. A discussion ensued as to whether we would consider union in the New Zealand-wide scheme but did not succeed in securing the necessary majority to culminate.

During the period when the Parish Council was in existence Mr George Russell was Chairman, and one of the questions was — would the vicar, Rev. Tom Sadlier, be favourable to united work. Upon the assurance that he was favourable, for a period progress was made.

Combined Christmas Day services were held in St Stephens and in 1972 the service was held in the Presbyterian Church conducted by Mrs Noeline Nuttall (Methodist), and with Rev Stephen Turner (the new Baptist minister) as preacher during a very wet Christmas Day.

Other united functions were Progressive Inter-church Dinners, and the Easter and Christmas services which have always been of a positive character.

The Good Samaritan Society was an organization which was begun in Hamilton by Owen Bullot in the Claudelands area. Its aim was to provide free emergency aid for people in trouble - in sickness or domestic trouble, for the cutting of hedges, painting of roofs, doing housework etc. At first Dr and Mrs Davies of St Lukes were the telephone secretaries at Melville, then Don and Janet Armstrong took over. After their departure the work ceased.

The crunch came with the question of closer organic co—operation following the departure of Rev A. Wardlaw and with the failure of the General Synod of the Anglican Church to reach the necessary level of agreement. Melville Methodists have always believed in backing ecumenical initiatives. However in 1977 the Joint Council disbanded.

THE WAIKATO HOSPITAL

The Melville Methodist Church grew under the shadow of a large Public Hospital and has always been significant in the life of our congregation. As the hospital has grown and new services offered, two of our ministers (Rev. Phyllis Guthardt and Roy Alexander) became part-time hospital Chaplains — and the congregation soon became familiar with the bleeper” carried by them - which meant they had been called to answer an emergency.

Many of our members found employment there also, among them being May Dean, May Smith, Edith Vickers, Janet Armstrong, Margaret Parkinson, Mavis Hayes, Noeline Nuttall, Marj Williams, Dr David, John Gaze, Eddie & Betty Gowrie, Ruby Osborne, Marion Tibbotts and Judy Pope.

‘n 1974 Roy Alexander joined a team of full-time hospital Chaplains and currently Alan Leadley is the Methodist full- time chaplain. As he lives in Melville, he often joins our congregation or takes services in our church.

Another duty performed readily by the Melville congregation is in assisting patients to the services of worship in the Hospital Chapel, and the young people of Myad often join in this task. From time to time, members have assisted in services at the Chapel and this has always been a privilege or those who are asked.

As our members have found themselves in the care of the hospital, the assurance of a caring congregation has been seen in the way our people have been supported in illness, in childbirth and on occasions greatly comforted in the loss of loved ones.

OUR ORGAN - and other instruments

The story of musical instruments at Melville Methodist is somewhat intriguing.

In 1960 there was a tiny harmonium which, with the utmost persuasion, would still only squeeze out a very grudging accompaniment for the hymn singing.

The Tamahere Eventide Home was later bequeathed a small reed organ and as no— one was able to play it, negotiations were made for Melville to have it on loan. As long as the organist was prepared, even in the hottest of summers, to vigorously pump air into it, it produced some quite acceptable noises. The “brief loan” continued until the Maeroa Church closed.

We were most grateful to be donated their Electronic Baldwin along with other much appreciated gifts. The Baldwin gave us very good service until the very weekend of the Frankton—Maeroa Re-union in November 1982 when it decided to suddenly “pack up”, causing some disappointment and frustration. After several attempts to have it repaired it was decided that a new organ was an absolute necessity and in 1983 we set our sights on a replacement.

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Folk responded with contributions beyond our dreams and we were able to raise \$1700, making it necessary for the Hamilton Trust to provide less than they had so generously agreed to advance.

The Electronic Hammond which we finally decided upon, is very satisfying and makes a great difference — not only to the organist in playing it - but as a background to our worship in song.

The only other instruments are two very ancient and down-at-heel pianos - one purchased by the Guild in 1962 for 30 pounds - the other simply arrived from somewhere. Perhaps before too long let's hope there may be some better ones in their place.

A variety of guitarists and their much loved instruments have also come and gone — their guitars loved by some, both old and young - detested by a few. Well played guitars, especially accompanied by other instruments, have enhanced the singing of modern songs and hymns and have added a different quality to many worship services.

THE CHOIR

MELVILLE LADIES' CHOIR

The choir was brought together in the early 60s by Mrs Zena Brooks who remained our organiser and conductor for the 15 years we were together.

Numbers fluctuated over the years due to members leaving the district, positions of employment changing etc. but at full strength the choir had 24 singers.

The aim of the group was to bring joy to as many people as possible so we spent a considerable amount of time singing at elderly people's Homes, such as Tamahere, Trevellyn, Assisi and Fairholm. We participated often in our own services of worship.

On two occasions the choir competed in Choir Festival competitions gaining a 1st and 3rd placing.

We were most fortunate over the 15 years together to have had Gwyneth Marquand, Betty Brown and Dorothy Prior as our pianists. –

JUNIOR CHOIR

For approximately 3 years starting in 1961 we had a Junior Choir consisting of sixteen very keen children aged from ten to fourteen years. The Choir sang at numerous places including the hospital and performed very well at several concerts.

GIRLS' BRIGADE & BOYS' CLUB

Early in the life of the Melville Methodist Church, Girls' Brigade and a Boys' Club flourished. Rev Ian Ramage and Rev Les Brooks encouraged the formation of these groups. The Boys' Club eventually joined forces with the Boys' Brigade company attached to the Baptist Church.

The 10th Hamilton Girls' Brigade was held here for approximately 12 years when the Juniors went to the Baptist company (13th Hamilton) and the older girls joined with the Presbyterian group (11th Hamilton). Some officers and regular helpers were Norma Beck, Mavis Hayes, Marj Williams, Noeleen Nuttall, Joyce Price and Lyn Sturm.

Three young officers who helped with senior brigade were Merylyn Hae, Shirley Morrison and Marion Owsley. Some of the Boys' Club workers were Tom Rashleigh, Colin & Garry Hodgson and Neville King. There were several others as well but through lack of kept records we have been unable to recall them with any accuracy.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

This news item was published in the Waikato Times on 28th April 1959 —

NEW WOMEN'S GUILD AT MELVILLE

Women members of the Methodist Church in the Melville area now have their own organisation, the Melville Methodist Women's Guild Fellowship, which has been formed to foster the social and spiritual life of the church in that district among women living there.

The new guild is affiliated with the Waikato District Guild Fellowship and will be represented at its meetings. Apart from church work the guild intends to extend its interests and spend some time on outside activities. Meetings are to be held on the second Thursday of each month in the church hall. Officers elected were: President: Mrs C. Rashleigh Vice-presidents: Mrs N. Marguand & Mrs N. Screech Secretary: Mrs R.L. Knight

Twenty-five years later the Fellowship is still functional and very active. Numbers have fluctuated over the years but the high morale, deep friendliness and willingness to participate when required in any projects, have never faltered.

We are proud to have been the group which started the combined Melville church fellowship meetings, the first of which was held on July 13th, 1967 - as well as the combined churches Progressive Dinners. These two very successful activities have always been well attended by the people from the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist congregations. We value especially the fellowship attained through them.

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Within our own church we have undertaken many responsibilities. Some of these are keeping in touch with the sick and elderly, those who just need someone to talk to, sending of all cards for births, marriages, bereavements etc. We also provide suppers and morning teas whenever required, cater for synod, and maintain the cleaning and flowers for church each week. Many more small but important activities are also carried out by us. We still meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month and we pray that with God's blessing, we will continue for many more years to work for His church.

WORSHIP & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

A committee of about 12 people (which include Myad and Children's work representatives) is elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting to be responsible for the worship and educational side of our church's life. This committee always includes the minister, and is a very important Committee. It assists in the planning of Family Services and special services, as well as overseeing such groups as Bible study, Lenten programmes, prayer groups etc.

While for the past few years Worship & Education have become a joint committee, it was the Worship Committee of Rev Stan West's appointment which was particularly active for beginning the present tradition of regular family services. Many were the variety and experiments in family worship, and much was learned by trial and error, regarding the vast variety of themes chosen - and the ways of making those themes come alive - so that Sunday morning was a place of worship for people of all ages.

A dedicated Wednesday School staff contributed greatly to these services. The impetus has continued throughout both Lindsay Cumberpatch's and Sifa Hingano's ministries and it is a pity that we have not kept specific records of the committee's work. This committee is seldom short of ideas - along with a good deal of hard work and the ability to Plan effectively together - to meet the needs of the congregation of Melville Methodists.

CAMPING MEMORIES

Melville Methodists have become enthusiastic about live-in weekends. Since 1965/66 there has been a camping tradition. The first camp was held in 1966 (possibly 1965) at CYC, Ngaruawahia with Ron & Ann Kilgour (just back from Indonesia), Wattie Whittlestone and Ron Locker as resource people.

Not only do present members of the congregation attend Myad Camps, Over 60's Week Aways, Easter Camps, Leadership Retreats, Mid-Life Camps and a variety of other district events, but over many years have developed a tradition of Melville Church-. Family camping — at Camp Epworth, our own district site — or at CYC, Ngaruawahia.

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In planning Church-Family camps an ad-hoc committee of folk, usually from either Worship & Education committee or Pastoral committee and any others interested, have been responsible for many camps over recent years.

THESE ARE SOME OF OUR MEMORIES:

Frantic preparations to get to camp on time, after working all day..... the camp concert . . kids of all ages, 3 - 63 clowning on the raft on the dam at Ngaruawahia talking till all hours of the morning boating to the fantastic glow-worms at Epworth .. sitting by the fire toasting marshmallows and making hot toast and crumpets getting to know people enjoying the children and the Myad folk getting to know the Tongans.

Sharing through studies, discussions, prayer, worship late-night singing around the fire trying to get the ovens hot enough, quick enough creating through clay, collage — and messing around with finger paints skate-boarding, volleyball . playing cricket.

Pulling the sink plug when everyone has done their dishes going down the steps in the dark at 3 am in the morning when it's raining enjoying the moonlight and the stars and the clear country air hearing the morepork sharing a room with other people finding out who snores..... trying to make the camp budget balance - and knowing it won'tcanoeing and boating walking in the rain the silence and peace Communion by the lakeside The special sharing of end-of-camp servicestogetherness.

PASTORAL COMMITTEE

At one time the visiting of church families was mostly the prerogative of the minister and as women were usually at home, he/she was expected to call during the day. Later it became expedient for church members to participate - not only to lighten the minister's load, but to enable a different approach.

This Lay Visitation became a very worthwhile aspect of church life and provided a challenging avenue of service for those members who were prepared to tackle it - some with great trepidation.

Melville had its first Lay Visiting committee meeting in 1961 and it served the people well. At a later date it became better known as the Pastoral Committee which still functions and continues the concern of church members for its people, and those in the community, adding to visitation the responsibility for the organising of social functions.

Pastoral visitation has taken several forms over the years, often reported to the minister special concerns for him to follow up. In 1982 we experimented with a 'neighbourhood' scheme. Perhaps in 1984 we will try other ways of keeping regular contact with our people.

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Socials, Pot-luck meals, picnics and jointly with the Worship & Education committee, Church-Family camps —have all been part of the planning. Two years ago a Solo Group was formed which has proved of value to those attending. Twice the committee has organised a family 5 o'clock movie session with tea to follow at the Centre.

Through the years the personnel of the committee has changed, but the enthusiasm and willingness to serve our Lord in this sphere remains intact.

SOLO GROUP

For a couple of years now a group of people either living alone or going it alone temporarily, have been meeting at one of our homes once a month for tea, Pot—luck style. This meal is followed by a time of informal sharing. Numbers have varied from 4 to about 20 - depending on the weather, the time of year and other varying factors. We have varied our evenings a little by eating picnic-style beside the Hamilton Lake, or eating at the church - and once a year we “live it up” and go to a restaurant for a meal. Numbers are not the important thing as our times together are of great benefit regardless of how many folk are present.

CHILDREN:

SUNDAY SCHOOL/WEDNESDAY SCHOOL

We note from the records that by the 25th February 1960 - a year after the church commenced - there were 40 children in the main school and 30 in the Primary school. Joyce Price began the work in the Primary school and in 1960 this was taken over by Zena Brooks. From 1959 to 1969 Les Missen was the main school superintendent. In its 'heyday' the Sunday School boasted 100 children.

Each May children prepared work for the Waikato Winter Show Sunday Schools' section- models, texts, crafts - and many children and teachers gained places for their entries. A number of times the Sunday School won the Junior Shield. Many children also entered for the annual Auckland Sunday School Union Scripture exams and most did extremely well.

By 1973 Sunday School had reached a low point— shortage of staff, and few children - and it was felt that the time had come to look at other possibilities for the teaching of the faith to the children of the area. For 8 years a very active Monday (later changed to Wednesday School was held - and a dedicated group of church folk maintained a mostly thriving fortnightly mid—week event. Craft work, singing, games and lessons were looked forward to by most of the children - numbers usually reached around 35. Afternoon tea (homebaked by parents) was a welcome start after a long day at school and the children enjoyed contact with “their minister” who was often free to come along - or to take a class. End of year barbecues were heartily enjoyed by staff and children. Family services - usually 6 weekly, provided some challenging and

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interesting times of worship for people of all ages and linked the children's work with Sunday worship services.

In 1982 it was felt that it was time for a change back to Sunday School. To many people who have fond memories of enjoyable times at Sunday School, it has been disappointing that for two years we have barely maintained sufficient children. A Form I & 2 group has been meeting regularly at the church on Friday evenings - at first fortnightly but later weekly. Nicholas and Kathryn Jones, along with some of the congregation on alternate nights, have led this new group. Activities include games, lessons/discussion and outings.

We have also looked again at new possibilities and in the coming year have decided to incorporate the children's weekly lesson within the church service thus spending a time of "all age" learning and worship each Sunday. The Living Faith material will provide the basis for the year's programme and there will be opportunities for people of the congregation to use their teaching talents for the benefit of the whole congregation. A roster system will provide for activities for the children during the last half of the service.

YOUTH WORK

During the third term of 1971 (approx), Patsy Alexander asked Len Daniell to relieve her from the Melville Bible Class which was at that time being held at the parsonage. With the help of Hugh Baber, Helen McLeod and Bryan Clements (all from St Paul's Youth Fellowship) the Bible Class continued at the church.

In 1972 Len stayed on and leadership was drawn from within the Bible Class - Stuart Dean, Dennis Fenwick and Janet Bennett. The name M.Y.A.D. (Melville Young Adults Discussion Group) was formed.

MYAD was at first run as a typical Youth Group/Bible Class with the usual activities. On one particular games evening, the Melville "gang", who were hanging around outside, were invited to join in. From that night our programmes changed to suit the needs of the "gang" and so MYAD became more involved in outreach work. The kids in the "gang" came from varied backgrounds and some were often involved with Welfare, light drugs, police and even prison. Numbers attending at this time were about 40.

Weekend programmes included the running of disco's, bus trips to Auckland, river picnics and camps. Each Sunday night we read and discussed a portion of the Bible. Un-fortunately, because we could only skim the surface, our own church kids missed out on more in depth discussions.

During the latter time of outreach work with the group, a core of strong Christians developed. It became more and more difficult to provide programmes to suit both groups, so our programme changed to suit those with some interest in the "Christian

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walk”. This weeded out those with no interest at all in Christian things and who felt we had little more to offer them.

Under the leadership of Len and Janet Daniell, Stuart Dean and Daveclark, MYAD continued for some years with the group forming strong bonds of friendship. This core group left at the end of 1976, and a new and younger group came through, and in 1978 was taken over by Gregory Brown.

In 1979 Gregory teamed up with Paul Mason. The first meeting of the year was attended by only half a dozen members but by the end of the year membership had risen to almost 40. The group’s identity was strengthened through the adoption of a mascot - a pink hippo called Shym - (made by several members of the group) as well as in the project of painting the Prefab (where they met) inside and out. Several camps and many other recreational activities supplemented the strong spiritual base of the group.

Paul and Gregory continued their partnership as leaders into 1980, consolidating on the growth and enthusiasm shown in 1979. In 1981 Paul Mason continued leading the group with the assistance of Fiona Emery, and the group’s programme of regular Bible Studies and social events continued with much the same membership attending.

However in 1982 with an increasingly older membership the group divided into Junior and Senior, both still meeting on Sunday nights. The senior group soon branched off into two mid-week Cell Groups with some. Of these older members assisting with the leadership of the main MYAD group on Sunday nights. This meant that in 1983 a team of three - Annette and Neil Brown and Michelle Watt - was ready to take over. Sole responsibility eventually fell to Michelle and with her strong personal commitment to Christ and her caring concern for the group, and the work and faith of many others, God has continued to use the group to bring young people to know his Son Jesus Christ. Membership is regularly 15 - 20.

CHURCH COFFEE GROUP

Arising out of Lindsay Cumberpatch’s concern for keeping regular contact with people of our church, regular monthly “Coffee Mornings” (Usually tea and goodies homebaked by members) — were started. These have become special times for those able to come — there is a freedom to come and go and those who need transport are always offered a lift. The mornings are very informal with members sometimes being asked to share some of the interesting activities and moments of their lives and this has encouraged a strong loyalty to the group. We are amazed at the interesting life stories of some of our congregation — folk who were born or have lived for some time in Poland, Russia, Scotland, Wales, Australia, India, New Zealand, Tonga — and we have come to know and understand one another better.

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR MINISTERS - PAST & PRESENT

IAN RAMAGE writes: (1959—1960)

I remember with gratitude the foresight of the Hamilton Circuit in the opening of Melville — the way in which the complete plant was provided, and membership transferred, so that we certainly got away to a running start.

Ann Sharp, an Order of St Stephens gave us the last few weeks of her year to do some valuable preliminary visiting that helped considerably to recruit a Sunday School etc. And I remember Margaret Knight stomping round the district with typical enthusiasm to rouse up a Ladies' Guild.

In connection with the building of' the Worship Centre etc, there are two people in particular whom I remember with affection and gratitude. Don Hunt was an Englishman who had been a ship's carpenter and became woodwork instructor at Whitiora School. He was also a Bible Class leader at St Luke's, Maeroa, and we worked together on both churches. He did all the woodwork at the front — I only supplied the ideas and held the nails. He subsequently went down to the Training School at Levin, and died there a few years ago.

The other person was Peter Luckie who did that magnificent frontal on the Communion Table. He was a craftsman and an artist to the finger tips, and I believe put a great deal of himself into that frontal, as an act of faith expressed through God—given gifts that were uniquely his own. A few days after he placed the frontal on the table he was drowned while canoeing at Raglan. I was very glad for his sake, as well as for ours, that he completed it.

Please convey our love and warmest greetings to the folk who will meet at Melville and assure them of our prayers, not only for a happy anniversary, but also for many more years of God's grace and blessing in worship, fellowship and service.

A BRIEF NOTE FROM PHYLLIS GUTHARDT (1964-1969)

As I write, it is twenty years to the day since I began my six years in Melville. I had just returned from England and found myself warmly welcomed by the little congregation at Melville.

However what we lacked in numbers we made up for in enthusiasm - cheerful singing, lively discussions, family functions and good will. I particularly recall the willingness of people to explore the new thinking becoming current then. We read and discussed for instance, each new Geering article or book that appeared with keen interest. We were not always in agreement but it was searching and appreciative.

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Another of the emphases I valued was the way so many of the congregation took seriously the call to be involved in community action, social issues and education. For a smallish group of people we made some real impact. Long may it continues

REFLECTIONS — Roy Alexander (1970-73)

I came to the Melville Church with both excitement and trepidation. Here was I, in my second appointment — not only following in Phyllis Guithardt's footsteps (a daunting prospect) — but also having the responsibility of being the Methodist hospital chaplain. The church in its wisdom or faith (or perhaps something of both) had thrown me in at the deep end. I remain grateful for the church's faith in me. It took some years for me to accept this faith and to recognise and claim my own unique gifts.

From a family point of view N0lville will always remain a very important place to us, for this is where our two children spent their early years — along with our family pets who were also a part of our family.

The few though significant events I recall during our four years at Melville were the birth and growth of Myad (under the leadership and commitment of Len Daniell) Wednesday School; the resettlement of the Allibhai family from Uganda. Through these- and any other situations - there was a willingness on the part of the congregation to commit themselves to new ventures and not remain wedded to tradition.

But more than all these events, it is the lives of individuals and families that come to mind more easily. For me, there is no more sacred moment (or responsibility) than that of being involved in ministry with others at the point where they trust you with the pains and joys of their lives, with their ultimate concerns, with their feelings of celebration as well as hurt. The images of these people flash through my mind as I think back to those four years. While there was a lot of giving on our part, we were also recipients of a tremendous amount of love and care by many people. I recall Lee Missen's concern for us. There were stormy moments too and I recall the pain I felt when strong feelings were expressed around my style of ministry. We came through - hopefully wiser because of the experiences. Conflict, pain, anger, joy - they are all part of the human journey.

It became apparent to me during the four years that I wanted to move into full-time hospital chaplaincy and to use my skills in that area. Conference of 1973 made the decision to separate the hospital position from the parish and at that point I moved into ministry within the hospital. I remain grateful to the people at Melville who both encouraged and supported my desire to make that move.

The importance of pastoral ministry really came home to me during my time at Melville. Its importance has been reinforced in the years since then. In conclusion I want to say to all - ordained and lay people - value highly the pastoral work and

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never under estimate what it means to journey with and to share another person's pilgrimage.

FROM STAN & LYN WEST (1974—79)

Words never accurately convey all that you intend and to attempt to express adequately in a few words, our memories of Melville, is probably asking the impossible.

Our memories as a family, are of six years at Melville, which were very important to us. They were rich, fulfilling years, shared with a group of people who easily became our friends. We will never forget that period of our lives, and the friendships created.

Our memories are of a Christian community, that had a real sense of drive and purpose about it. There was an openness and willingness to try new things, and to explore new ways of worshipping. It was uplifting and fun to share with children and adults in some of those family services that were planned together.

We appreciated also, the willingness of people to be involved, to give time and effort to do the things that were considered important. We recall all those who enabled Wednesday School to continue in a significant and creative fashion, the twenty or so people who came and painted the parsonage in a morning, the family camps, the learning experiences, the many occasions of significant pastoral relationships — these were all part of our ministry together.

At the significant farewell occasion, we as a family expressed our thanks to the people for their kindness, help and understanding — we still find ourselves wanting to acknowledge our gratefulness for the time we spent among you all.

It is our hope that in celebrating 25 years, the years ahead for the Melville Church, will be as creative and fulfilling.

LINDSAY CUMBERPATCH (1980 — 1982)

January 1980 not only heralded the beginning of a new decade for us all but our moving to Hamilton meant two significant 'firsts' for me personally, namely, my first real break with 'hometown' Auckland — and my first appointment following 3 years of theological training at St John's. Lynley and I arrived in the Waikato (home territory for her), conscious of our age and inexperience but nevertheless, eager to settle into our new home and vocation.

My lasting memory of my Induction is of a certain woman, who shall remain anonymous, hedging on telling me her Christian name. I was keen to get to know my people and to learn their names, but she wasn't too sure regarding this first names bit. Besides, we'd only just met

We hadn't been around long until we had the pleasure of experiencing our first Melville Church social. Seeing 'baby' Lew Slade being wheeled around in a pram, made me realise we were among a congregation who were friends — people who

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knew each other and were able to laugh with each other. It soon became clear to me, that my primary role was to simply encourage the widening of that Melville 'family feeling', to take in those on the fringe and those outside the church. The monthly coffee mornings and the pastoral network were an attempt to do just that.

Although it wasn't a large congregation, I discovered Melville had a good age spread and I was concerned that we pay more than lip-service to the growing number of young people in our midst. Lynley and I, who were not too much older than some of these 'Myadites', were concerned that they find their place within the family of God and know themselves to be accepted and appreciated and that together, we create a worshipping environment that was friendly and relaxed and yet at the same time dignified — and which contained within it the traditional and the contemporary.

Our time at Melville has left us with many memories. To recall but a few — the night we had 4 bedrooms under water at the parsonage; Lindsay roaming the neighbourhood in the middle of the night in search of a T.V. to watch the rugby or soccer by; being visited at 2 am on Christmas morning by the Samoan congregation dressed as shepherds and singing carols; Sheila Sneddon's sumptuous spread that awaited us every year after carolling; and being told after the first Coffee morning that we had to be finished in time for people to get home to watch the 'Young and the Restless'

Looking back over 3 years of ministry at Melville and St David's, I'm very grateful for all that I learnt about myself, about parish ministry and about the joys and the frustrations of trying to cross the barriers of denominationalism and race. I'm extremely grateful for all the encouragement, constructive criticism, practical expressions of love and support I received — and most of all for the faith of those people of God that I was privileged to work amongst, who did so much to deepen and enrich my own faith.

REFLECTIONS FROJ1 SIFA HINGANO

MĀLŌ Ē LELE

It is my privilege and honour to write these reflections in this historical booklet. There is also a great joy in my family for the completion of our first year in ministry. Although I felt uncomfortable at the beginning because of our differences in language, culture and customs, there is a deep appreciation of the prayers and practical support of many people at Melville to our ministry. It is our differences which are our strengths which go to make up the life of the church — and are a clear illustration that our unity in Christ is greater than these differences.

There have been joys and a sense of fulfillment, in many of our activities in 1983, especially in the development of our relationships with the Maori, Samoan, Tongan and Vietnamese people. I am very grateful for the caring of our church to these people, especially to the refugee people from Asia and also from the Pacific Islands.

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There have also been some activities that have brought moments of stress and tension. I minister not only to the Palangi congregation at Melville but also to the Tongan people of the Waikato & Bay of Plenty. Tongan people feel the pressures of their new environment and have to make many adjustments to living in our NZ society. To re-interpret the Good News to my own people in a new country is not easy and I often feel the tension of being caught in the middle of two cultures. I guess that is how it is for most of us when we choose to become people who for Christ's sake, "get involved" in the affairs of church and community.

There is a great respect to all the ministers who were at Melville before me, to those people who were here at the beginning, and also at present — your faith in Christ and your working in the church became as a foundation to reflect on in our days.

OFA ATU,

Sifa, Mele, Moala & Peter Henelē HINGANO

From EDNA WEBSTER - Deacon

In 1978, after our family had been part of the Melville congregation for 6 years, I candidated and was accepted by the Methodist Church as a Deacon-in-training - home used, self supporting, and part time. In 1981 at Christchurch Conference, at the end of a 3 year training period, I was "ordained by prayer & the laying on of hands to the office and ministry of Deacon in the Christian church" (to quote my certificate) — at a time when the Methodist Church was not quite sure just what it expected its deacons to be and to do.

It seemed every minister of the wider church had a different idea as to what the new Diaconate was meant to be — and I often felt caught in the middle. It seems to me that one of the strengths of the Melville congregation is its ability to train and support, and to be caring and accepting of people who are feeling their way as ministry develops. I shall always be grateful for a great many local folk and in particular to Judy Pope and Lindsay Cumberpatch who were two of my official support group.

Thanks too for giving me the freedom and opportunity to continue to stay involved in district work, particularly the District Education Committee & through it the many and varied camping events I have enjoyed being involved with. We have both gained from that experience.

I am deeply aware of the friends we as a family have made at Melville, and who shall remain friends after our formal links are removed in a week or so, when we transfer our membership to the co-operating parish of Chartwell. It will be a time of endings and new beginnings - and after living in Chartwell for 24 years, we are looking forward to meeting regularly with the people here. Shalom to you all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Les Misson, one of the original Trustees (& a present member) was asked to contribute this last section.

*“I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the House of the Lord”*

Many hundreds of people throughout the years have been glad to enter the Melville Church to hear the Word of God, to pray, to learn more about God as revealed in Jesus Christ, to sing praises to our Lord, to have Christian Fellowship and to be continually renewed and strengthened to help obey the Commandment of Jesus “Love one another”.

Many have worked in our Church. Some in quiet unassuming ways almost unnoticed, some keeping on with the routine tasks in hand, others not seeking, but of necessity taking position of leadership and making decisions with others. To all of these we give our thanks.

We record our thanks to those who have put in so much time and work in the planning and organising of this Anniversary. Too many to mention all by name, except perhaps those who undertook specific tasks which required weeks of preparation and work to carry through.

Rev Sifa Hingano — for his ever ready encouragement and co-operation, his thoughtful and helpful devotions at meetings

May Smith, Convenor and Chairperson — for her patience, perseverance, correspondence and other tasks

Dorrie Hosking and Marj Williams - Catering arrangements

Judith Pope & Edna Webster - Editing, revising, typing and layout of this booklet and last, but not least

Roger Nuttall — for his enthusiasm, experience and weeks of gathering material and correlating same.

So we look back with thanksgiving and gratitude to the past, but do not let us dwell there. Let us in faith and confidence move into the future seeking to do God’s will, under his care and guidance.

**TO SERVE THE PRESENT AGE
OUR CALLING TO FULFIL
O MAY IT ALL OUR POWERS ENGAGE
TO DO OUR MASTER’S WILL.**