



*West Tamworth  
Uniting Church*

**Centenary Celebrations  
1888 - 1988**



## WEST TAMWORTH CHURCH - A CENTURY OF SERVICE

The members of the Methodist Church, Tamworth Circuit, were active in West Tamworth from 1884 and a Sunday School was established in 1887.

Just 16 years after the Wesley Church was completed in Tamworth in 1872, steps were taken to build a Church in West Tamworth. In 1888 with Rev. J.G. Middleton as Superintendent Minister, the President of the NSW - Queensland Wesleyan Conference, Rev. George Lane, set the foundation stone of a brick Church in Denison Street on 28th August.

Total cost of the building was £ 305. and it included purchase of the land, building, organ, gas fittings for lighting, furnishings and painting.

The building was of traditional design with exposed front and rear doors. A front porch was added in 1920 as a Victory Porch, following World War 1. This porch was subsequently enlarged into an entrance porch with renovations associated with the establishment of the Children's Centre in 1978.

The Order of Knights was formed in 1921. After a recess during World War 1 it was revived as a junior group in the early 1950's, then transferred to South Tamworth following its establishment in 1962.

A Ladies' Church Aid was formed in 1922 for a few years. It was reformed in 1940 during the ministry of Rev. Frederick H. McGowan and is active to the present time.

A Youth Centre was built in 1954 and opened in 1955 during the ministry of Rev. Martin Layton. The building was constructed adjacent to the Church by voluntary labour to plans prepared by Mr. Ray Knight. The foundations were set out and supervised by Tamworth City Engineer and church member, Mr. John Andrews. The cost was £ 3,600. The centre was opened by Mrs. K. McGowan, widow of Rev. Frederick McGowan who died in 1952.

In September 1960 the G.H. Dunn Play Centre at the rear of the Youth Centre was opened and dedicated by Rev. Henry J. Wilbur. Mr. George Dunn had for many years been secretary of the West Tamworth Trustees.

Following the inauguration of the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977, former Superintendent Methodist Minister, Rev. Richard Wrightson became a member of the Ministerial Team of the Tamworth Parish with Rev. Jan Alblas and Rev. James Rawson-Smith. He formulated a plan to care for the children of the city and district by proposing a redevelopment of the West Tamworth property to provide accommodation for a Child Care Centre. His plans were quickly approved through Church and Government agencies and the centre was opened in August 1978.

This centre compliments the former Presbyterian plan to care for the aged in the city and district with the establishment of the St. Andrew's Retirement Village and later the MacKay Nursing Home.

The care of the young and the care of the aged are administered by committees within the Uniting Church Tamworth Parish.

A recent move to further the outreach activity of the church was the purchase of the brick home next door, to be used as a Family Day Care Centre. The Women's Fellowship room was used initially but soon outgrew its usefulness.

As we celebrate the Centenary of the Church in West Tamworth a further branch of the Child Care Centre is taking shape. It is the Rainbow Cottage Occasional Day Care Centre and is being built in Marius Street, near Darling Street, just down the road from Wesley Church, the Jubilee Hall and the Parish Office.

In earlier years the West Tamworth Congregation had a clear desire to establish its own circuit and have its own Minister housed in its own parsonage.

In 1921 a cottage in Gipps Street, number 28 was purchased.

In 1936 it was sold to reduce the circuit debt.

In 1945 a block of land at 92 Denison Street, opposite the Church was purchased.

In 1960 an old cottage adjacent to the Church was offered for sale. Through sale of the 1945 block and a gift of £ 1,000. from Francis Ridd, the cottage was purchased.

With the development of South Tamworth and the influx of young families the circuit decided that a Church-Hall (1961) and Parsonage (1964) should be built in South Tamworth and within the Tamworth Circuit.

The old cottage, 1960, was demolished in 1976 to make way for a playground for the Child Care Centre.

The Sanctuary of the Church underwent extensive alterations during 1965, Rev. Chaseling Minister. The work was carried out by Mr. Ray Knight and resulted in a new platform, Communion Rail, Communion Table, Lectern, Pulpit Chair, Palm Stand, Visitors' Book Shelf and Collection Plate. These items were all designed and made by Mr. Ray Knight and were presented to the Church by his wife Betty and himself.

Despite various vicissitudes, usually financial associated with our early Churches, the West Tamworth Property Management Committee has been most successful in its operation for many years. Refer to Youth Centre of 1954, the extensions 1960 and 1964, renovations 1966, and the Child Care Project of 1978.

A feature of the West Tamworth Church has been the energetic Sunday School staffed by a group of dedicated members who have played a part in the development of succeeding generations of children

Many members recall the Sunday School Anniversaries, arranged and conducted by Superintendent Mr. Harry Rowe, with 70 to 80 children taking part.

Among others who gave dedicated service to the Sunday School were Mrs. L. Geddys, Dorothy Garnsey, Lorraine Hill, Heather Budden, Rosemary Jeffrey, Betty Knight, Laurie Lattimer, Noreen Dobby, Ray Frisken, May Laylor and June Greer

On March 30th, 1964, Rev. Wilbur Chaseling Minister, Harry Rowe opened the Kindergarten Hall, built at the rear and adjoined onto the Church. Cost of this extension was £ 2,290. This room is now the venue for various important meetings within the life of the Parish.

During the conversion of the complex to the Children's Centre, a roof planned by Public Works Department Architect and Church member Brian Mowbray, was erected to cover the space between the 1988 Church and the 1964 Kindergarten Room and 1954 Youth Centre. A newcomer could be pardoned for thinking that what one sees now, was originally one building.



Another feature of the West Tamworth Church, is the congregational singing, ably led by organist Laurie Lattimer for over 35 years, firstly on an Estey pedal organ and then for the last 12 years on a Conn electronic organ. A sing-a-long is usually a start to 11.00 am. Sunday Morning Services.

A further feature of the Church is its accessibility. There are no steps from the footpath or car park to the comfortable theatre style seats. Ideal for wheelchairs and those who find steps difficult.

For many years the Church was made available for Presbyterians in West Tamworth as a place of worship, until St. Stephen's Hall was built in Mathews Street. At present, it provides a place of worship for the members of the Lutheran Church.

The Future ... is centered on the young.

The Rainbow Cottage, funded by the Federal Government will cater for 28 children from babies to 5 year olds. President of the Steering Committee guiding the project, Peter Briggs expects the centre to be operational by February 1989.

AND ... in February 1989 the West Tamworth Sunday School will re-open for the children of West Tamworth.

After a century of time, we look back and reflect on the devotion and contribution of Ministers, Assistants, Lay people and the people in the pews, all of whom have made an impact of some kind and we give thanks for what has been achieved and we are grateful for the opportunities of continuing the examples of the past amid the sounds of little feet and childrens laughter.

*"Suffer Little Children to Come Unto Me ... and Forbid Them Not"*

#### **Memorials**

Harry Rowe	The Cross on the wall of the Sanctuary
Noeline Brewer	The Communion Table
James Gleave	The Pulpit and Two Silver Vases
Lizzie Geddes	Two Brass Vases
Bethel Finch and Noel Tutt	The Baptismal Font
George Dunn	The G.H. Dunn Pay Centre (1960)
Leitha Mortimer and Chris Cummins	The Lecturn Bible
Ruby Taafe	Bookshelves
Ray and Betty Knight and family	Porch chair and table

## Superintendent Ministers of the Tamworth Methodist Circuit

Joseph Hopkins	1868-71
James E. Caruthers	1871-72
Maurice Gray	1872-75
Henry Yougman	1875-78
James Phillips	1878-81
James W. Dowson	1881-84
W <sup>M</sup> Wools Rutledge	1884-87
James G. Middleton	1887-89
Gustavus R. Glasson	1889-92
Charles W. Graham	1892-95
Henry Wiles	1895-98
Joseph Beale	1898-1901
John Hulme	1901-04
Benjamin Dinning	1904-07
William Pearson	1907-09
James Colwell	1909-12
James B. Penman	1912-15
W. Mills Robson	1915-17
W. Butler (supply)	1917-18
T. Manning Taylor B.A.	1918-21
Samule W. Bonner	1921-25
Percy L. Black	1925-28
William H. Cox	1928-30
Leonard M. K. Mills	1930-33
N. Hedley Parr	1933-36
Samuel McKibbin	1936-39
Frederick H. McGowan	1939-43
Richard C. Barlow B.A.	1943-47
Alfred A.T. Robens, Lth.	1947-51
Martin T. Layton	1951-56
Arthur I. Buxton B.A., Lth.	1956-59
Henry J. Wilton, Lth.	1960-63
Wilbur S. Chaseling	1964-66
Harry T. Graves, Lth.	1967-72
Richard W. Wrightson	1973-77

## Assistant Ministers of the Tamworth Methodist Circuit

Gould Taylor	1884-85
Robert Stewart	1885-87
Joseph Bryant	1887-88
A.T. Hanton	1888-89
Ernest A. Eusor	1889-90
Colin Bleazard	1890-92
Alexander Stephen	1892-93
T. Manning Taylor B.A. Circuit Missionary	1901-02
W.W. Danks, Circuit Missionary	1902-03
Howard Glass, Circuit Missionary	1903-04
Rupert Williams, Circuit Missionary	1904-05
P.C. Nye, Circuit Missionary	1905-07
D.P. McDonald, Circuit Missionary	1905-07
H. Parkinson Piper, Circuit Missionary	1907-08
G. Walker, Circuit Missionary	1908-09
Wesley Stocks, Circuit Missionary	1909-10
Harley Jones, Circuit Missionary	1910-11
Trevor Hughes, Circuit Missionary	1911-12
Percy Westbrook	1912-13
Claude L. Connor	1913-14
Harold Walkden-Brown, Circuit Missionary	1914-18
Ray Clark, Circuit Missionary	1918-25
L. E. Saville, Circuit Missionary	1924-25
R. G. White, Circuit Missionary	1924
S. T. Thompson, Circuit Missionary	1925-27
Lawrence E. Brooks, Circuit Missionary	1927
W. H. Buttsworth, Circuit Assistant	1928-30
Bruce Gentle, Circuit Assistant	1931-32
A.T. Wagstaff, Circuit Assistant	1932-33
Norman Bradshaw, Circuit Assistant	1933-34
Colin C. Dane, Circuit Assistant	1934-35
H. Squires Dean, Circuit Assistant	1935-36
Jack Leonard	1949-50
Leslie B. Herbert, Circuit Assistant	1954-55
Robert W. Leayr, Single Probationer	1955-58
Robert J. Hillman, Single Probationer	1958-59
John McDowell, B.A., Single Probatioer	1959
Roy S. Addison, Single Probationer	1960-62
Allen Taylor, Single Probationer	1963
N.A. (Tony) Winter, Married Probationer	1964-66
W. Raymond Longmuir	1967-71
Deaconess Kay Kneale	1969-71
Neville R. White	1971-75
James Rawson-Smith	1976-77

### **Ministers of the Presbyterian Church**

Rev. Andrew A. Armstrong, M.A. - Ordained Missionary	1896 - 73
Rev. Anrew A. Armstrong M.A.	1873 - June 30, 1903
Rev. James B. Rentoul	December 9, 1903 - August 26, 1908
Rev. James Cosh, B.A.	Januray 27, 1909 - January 7, 1913
Rev. Thomas J. Williams	July 15, 1913 - May 3, 1916
Rev. William Beck	August 15, 1916 - November 19, 1919
Rev. David J. Flockhart	February 12, 1920 - March 28, 1923
Rev. Joseph Faulkner	September 11, 1923 - March 16, 1932
Rev. Charles F.D. McAlpine	July 27, 1932 - November 12, 1950
Rev. Alan L. Hewitt	February 1, 1951 - November 26, 1955
Rev. Ian W. Ross	February 1, 1956 - August 1, 1963
Rev. Brian K. Burton, B.A.	December 18, 1963 - July 31, 1967
Rev. Jan Alblas	February 8, 1967 - 1977

### **Ministers of the Uniting Church**

Richard W. Wrightson	1977-79
James Rawson-Smith, Lth, Dip. R.E.	1977-78
Jan Alblas	1977 - Januray 1982
John Pearson, Dip. Theol.	1979 - 84
Bruce Westbrook, Lth. Dip. R.E.	1980 - July 1986
Eric Drury, Lth.	1982 -
Authur Pearce, B.A., B. Th., Dip. Ed.	1985 -
David Brown, M.A., B. Th.	1987 -

### **Acknowledgements**

Mrs. Betty Knight  
Mrs. Laurie Lattimer  
Mr. Lyall Green  
The West Tamworth Property Committee  
George Nethery