

History of the Parish of the Anglican Church of the Ascension, East Burwood

The formation of the new congregation was the result of a May, 1964 public meeting of Anglicans in the district, within the octave of the Feast of the Ascension.

The first service of the church was held in June 1964 at the East Burwood State School, and in July of that year, permission was granted by the Archbishop to name the church "The Church of the Ascension, East Burwood."

Services were held weekly in the school by the Vicar of Bennettswood, until March 1966, when the parish was declared a "New Area" parish. It was then separated from the parish of Saint Michael and All Angels, Bennettswood. At a special service, held in the East Burwood Methodist Church, the late Father Ian Herring was commissioned as the "Priest-in-Charge" of the Church of the Ascension.

The Parish erected a new vicarage in April 1967, and the church and hall early in 1969, with the church building being dedicated on May 15th of that year.

The church interior was an empty shell, with only the barest essentials. Gradually, the Parish furnished and equipped the church so that now we have a beautiful church, created by the work and worship of the people over the years. Of special significance to us all are the splendid timber figure "Christus Rex" carved by Herman Hohaus, and the stained glass crucifixion scene by the artist John Orval, both of which were presented at the time of the dedication.

The rectangular Besser brick hall was built at the same time as the church. At the time, there was no covered way between the church and the hall. The hall extension comprised the front meeting room, offices and the main entrance, the roofing over the narthex, a kitchen, a store room, the rear meeting room and the toilets. The faculty for a memorial garden was obtained and the area was landscaped.

Our church building was consecrated in May 1992. We recall a poem composed by one of our people in 1969:

*Stone upon stone the builders raise the church
To cage within its walls a thousand prayers
And-make these tangible, intangibles:
Firm, conquering faith and hope unquenchable.
Perchance in time, its moulded bricks may fall,
Its splendours one day rot in tarnished shame.
Yet still shall stand beyond its unseen twin
The Temple indestructible He builds
With stones of flesh, to cage within its frame.*