THE HISTORY OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN GINNINDERRA

1821 - 1983

Margaret Ferrett
Jenifer Murdock
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You, too, are built upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus himself. He is the one who holds the whole building together and makes it grow into a sacred temple in the Lord. In union with Him you too are being built together with all the others into a house where God lives through his Spirit.

Ephesians 2: 20-22

FOREWORD

This work is offered, to the glory of God, as a celebration of ten years of the Church revived in the newly developed area of Ginninderra, A.C.T. It is presented as a first edition, using information available to the writers at the time. We are grateful to members of the Anglican and Uniting congregations, who were amongst the 1973 congregation and who were able to supply information and memories.

A meeting of some of these ‘pioneers’ was convened by Jeni Murdock in May, 1982, and it was at this meeting that Jeni Murdock and Margaret Ferrett agreed to attempt to write this history.

Those present at that meeting were:

Shirley Leane
Judy and Gordon Fisher
Marian and Laurie Russell
Jeni Murdock
Rev. Brian Carter
Margaret and Russell Ferrett
Glenda and Reg. Dykes
THE BEGINNINGS

The settlement of the Canberra district has been well documented, and it is not the intent of this work to chronicle the history of people such as Joshua McPherson, Robert Campbell and Joshua Moore. Suffice it to say that, following the discovery of the Limestone Plains by Dr. Charles Throsby in 1821, the settlement of the area followed during the 20’s and 30’s as part of the pastoral expansion in N.S.W. Initially the plains land was taken up by large landholders on either a grant or a squatting basis. These landholders then leased the alluvial flats to tenant farmers. Small freeholders came later, mainly in the 60’s and took up land in the mountainous country or on the remaining plains land.

During these early days there was a preponderance of men attempting to ‘clear the land and fence it’ and to carve out an existence in the new area. With the pioneers came ministers of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church. The Church of England ministered to all people in the Murrumbidgee area to Yass from its base in Sutton Forest (Moss Vale). The Sydney Monitor of 24th September, 1838, reported that Bishop Poulding (R.C.) visited Yass and then visited ‘settlers in their bark huts’ along the Murrumbidgee. He left two priests to carry on Church work which included a collection to build a Church of England. As well, the Sydney Morning Herald reported, in 1839, that the district (to Gundaroo Creek, including Hall) had Roman Catholic and Anglican clergy, but ‘the people had no religious differences.’

On 4th July, 1838, Rev. Edward Smith was licensed to officiate in the Queanbeyan district. His stipend was paid by 11 landholders, including Robert Campbell, who also provided the cottage and Glebe (Church land). Smith was responsible for bringing the gospel to all the pioneers of the area, and his monthly schedule included services in the living rooms of the homesteads at Ginninderra and Charnwood on the third Sunday of each month. His monthly itinerary was:

‘First Sunday – Waniaasa alternately and Mt. Campbell
Second Sunday – Pialigo and Canbury
Third Sunday – Ginninderra, Charnwood and Yeumbera
Fourth Sunday – Gundaroo.’

On 11th May, 1841, the foundation stone was laid, by Rev. Smith for the Church to be named St. John the Baptist. Land and money for the building of this church, which was completed in 1844, was donated by Robert Campbell. Bishop Broughton (Bishop of Australia) ordered the omission of Yeumbera and Gundaroo from Smith’s itinerary, but he continued to be responsible for Queanbeyan and Canberra churches, and for services at Ginninderra and Charnwood, until 1850.

Canberra’s first Anglican minister, licensed on 1st May, 1850, was described as ‘a muscular Christian of the clean-cut Victorian type.’ An original student of Australia’s first theological college, Gregory’s ministry was tragically brief. ‘On 20th August he was on his way back from a visit to the squatters on the south side of the Murrumbidgee. When he came to Klensendorff’s Farm, near the present Hotel Canberra, then occupied by S.M. Mowle, the Molongolo, flooded by heavy rains, cut him off from his rectory in the Acton homestead just across the river. After dining with the Mowles, in spite of their remonstrances and impatient to return to his work Gregory determined to swim the swollen stream. He had been a champion swimmer in his student days in Sydney and was confident of his ability to cross. The current, however, carried him downstream and then quite suddenly, under the eyes of Mr. Mowle, he sank, rose once and disappeared. The tragedy is heightened by the fact that

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1 A visit to the graveyard of St. John’s Church, Reid gives a fascinating insight into the early settlers’ belief in a God given right, or even duty, to perform this task.
2 Early spelling
Gregory was very shortly to have married (to Edward Smith’s sister). He was only 25 years and 10 months old.  

Rev. Thomas Hattam Wilkinson succeeded Gregory, until 1854, when he moved to Ashfield to take over the ministry of St. John’s. In June, 1855, Rev. Pierce Galliard Smith began his ministry to Canberra, which was to last for 51 years.

PIONEER CHURCH

Once described as ‘the perfect picture of Matthew Arnold’s “little grey church on the windy hill,”’ the original St. Paul’s Ginninderra stood atop the hill, not far from the present Rectory and Church site in Sharwood Crescent, Evatt. In 1841, Charles Campbell gave to the Church 200 acres of land in Ginninderra. Twenty years later the Church building was completed through the generosity of William Davis and his wife (nee Susan Adriana Palmer). Walls partly of slab and weatherboard, partly of lath and plaster were crowned with a shingle roof. An entrance porch and bell-loft added to the effect created by Gothic windows constructed in timber. Inside was a 5 ft. square fireplace for warmth in winter.

Services were held in this building for over 40 years, and worshippers would often overflow the building and stand to worship outside. While serving worshippers from the Ginninderra and Weetangera properties, St. Paul’s was used as a school during the week. Hugh McPhee and Francis McPhail taught here. In 1874 the school closed. At this time, the Ginninderra school-house, on the Barton Highway was operational, and children who had been served by St. Paul’s now travelled to Ginninderra on horseback.

St. Paul’s was surrounded by a graveyard, with the faithful buried close to the Church building, other Europeans further down the hill, and aboriginal people in the corner furthest from the church. One of the early burials was that of Ann Smith (Aunt of Marian Russell), who, having died in childbirth, was laid to rest on June 26, 1873, close to the Church building. The service was conducted by Rev. Pierce Galliard Smith, Rector of St. John’s Canberra. Pioneers known to be buried in the Churchyard of St. Paul’s Ginninderra are:

Ralph Edge who lived at Round Hill, Ginninderra, died on September 9th, 1872, buried September 11th, 1872, aged 80 years, ceremony performed by Rev. Pierce Galliard Smith.

Ann Smith who lived at Ginninderra Creek, died in childbirth on June 24th, 1873, buried June 25th, 1873, aged 27, ceremony performed by Rev. Pierce Galliard Smith.

Robert Grocott, labourer, of Charnwood, died July 14th, buried July 16th, 1874, aged 79 years, ceremony performed by Rev. Pierce Galliard Smith.

Hannah Grocott, who lived at Budellick, Ginninderra, died March 6th, buried March 7th, 1877, aged 91, ceremony performed by Rev. Pierce Galliard Smith.

Thomas Holligan, farmer, of Ginninderra, gored to death by a bull on 25th October 1887, buried October 27th, aged 74, ceremony performed by Rev. Pierce Galliard Smith.

Thomas Jones, sawyer of Ginninderra, died June 9th, buried June 11th, 1888, aged 79, ceremony performed by Rev. Pierce Galliard Smith.

Henry Morris, shoemaker, of Hall, died March 23rd, buried March 25th, 1894, aged 79, service read by A.M. Grant.

Lucy Ellen Morris who lived at Hall, died September 22nd, buried September 23rd, 1898,

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aged 29 years, service conducted by Rev. P. Presswell.

Charlotte Eliza Stear who lived at Majura, drowned in a well near her home on September 19th, 1900, buried September 21st, aged 2 years, ceremony conducted by Rev. Pierce Galliard Smith.

It is believed that there were others buried in the Churchyard for whom records are sketchy, if they exist at all:

An unnamed Ryan, father Michael Ryan, mother Margaret Warren, buried on September 4th 1865.

Hugh McPhee, schoolteacher, 1878.

Sandy Donald, 1884.


As well, it is believed that Jane Elizabeth MacPherson who died at Wallaroo on 8th July 1886, aged 7 years was buried in St. Paul’s graveyard. Research carried out by Mr. Keith Kilby indicated that there were three children in the MacPherson family who died about the same time – two were buried underneath a tree in the garden of their home and the other in the Ginninderra cemetery.

It appears that people buried in the cemetery were from a number of different denominations.

One of the campsites of the Ginninderra aborigines was along the North of Ginninderra Creek. as, when the creek failed in times of drought, there was apparently a source of water under the present site of the Melba shops. It is believed that two of these aborigines were buried in St. Paul’s cemetery, ‘down in the bottom corner.’

The last religious service was held in the Church in 1902. Soon after the Church and its land became the property of the Commonwealth, the graveyard was fenced and the Church building was used as a stable. The building fell into disrepair as did the graveyard and gravestones until, today, there is no trace of either.

The tenant farmers moved towards the Hall district in search of freehold land and William Davis himself, moved to Ganghaleen. The Ginninderra Hall on the Barton Highway was used for Church of England services until the opening of the Church of St. Michael and All Angels at Hall on 22nd May, 1948.

NEW PIONEER CHURCH

In 1916 the Church block and the 200 acres at Ginninderra belonging to the Church of England was purchased by the Commonwealth Government for 1,139 pounds. Interest from this capital is now paid to the rector of St. Paul’s Ginninderra. In the late 1960’s the land known as the Glebe property, farmed by the Gribble family for over 100 years, was resumed. The Glebe farmhouse and associated buildings were demolished and the development of the suburb of Melba began.

MELBA GROWS WITH A CHURCH

The orderly development of Canberra required that a primary school be amongst the first buildings in the area. Accordingly, Melba Primary School opened its doors in February, 1973, with Mr Harold Gordon Fisher as its Principal. Soon after the school began operation, Rev. Neil Edwards approached Mr. Fisher with a view to using the school for Church services on Sundays. Thus, on 4th March, 1973, the first service of the Co-operating Churches of

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Belconnen D took place, with the Anglican service in the hall and the Combined (Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist) service in the school library. After the services, the two congregations met to discuss co-operation. The two congregations represented not only many denominations of Christianity, but also many and varied backgrounds of worship and experience. Little did those few worshippers realise that they would be looked upon as pioneers of the Church revived in the Ginninderra area, and that, ten years later most of them would be still living in the area, still worshipping in a school and would be called upon to supply their memories of those early days of Canberra’s expansion into Ginninderra.

**KNOWN MEMBERS OF THE FIRST SERVICE OF THE CO-OPERATING CHURCHES OF BELCONNEN D.**


**Anglican Minister:** Rev. Don Turnbull, rector Belconnen A. (now Holy Covenant, Aranda).

**Leader of the Combined Service:** unknown.

**Worshippers:**

**Anglican:**
- Glenda and Reg. Dykes
- Darryl Dykes
- Mark Dykes
- Neil Dykes
- Margaret and Russell Ferrett
- Bruce Ferrett
- Scott Ferrett
- Lisa Ferrett
- Beverley Pope
- Michael Pope
- Meredith Pope

**Combined:**
- Judith and Gordon Fisher
- Phillip Fisher
- Lindsay Fisher
- Gregory Fisher
- Malcolm Fisher
- Heather Fisher
- Shirley and John Leane

These services were as a result of Bishop Warren’s approaching Rev. Turnbull to ask him to take Melba ‘under his wing with a view to forming a church at Belconnen D. In Don’s congregation were two clergy … who were in full time secular educational work and it was suggested that he might spare one of them to assist him in the Belconnen D. venture.’ The two clergy referred to were Rev. Neil Edwards, who was the head of the planning section of the (Commonwealth) Department of Education, and Rev. Harry Bates, who was a teacher at the Canberra College of Technical and Further Education. Harry Bates volunteered to assist with Melba, and his offer was accepted. Harry Bates writes:

“We had no difficulty in renting on Sundays the Melba Primary School for a nominal sum which secured the services of a caretaker (as well). The small rent also included heating in winter. From the beginning Anglican services were held in the main hall and (Combined) services in the comfortably furnished and carpeted library. The Presbyterian-Methodist-Congregational church at Belconnen A provided a roster of laymen to conduct the latter services… five adults were present (at the Anglican service).
We had no communion rails or kneelers and so we stood in a semi-circle around the improvised communion table to partake of the elements.

Within a few weeks our numbers rose to about twenty and one of those parishioners being a pianist our worship was enriched by singing. For this purpose we borrowed a few hymn books from Belconnen A.

With astonishing rapidity houses mushroomed in Melba which brought another problem. The writer’s time that he could spend on pastoral work was limited, yet, at this stage, if the church was to progress visitation was necessary. Providentially Rev. Alan Bosser, a retired Anglican clergyman came to reside in Belconnen and his assistance proved invaluable. Alan systematically visited all new residents, listed their family members and their denominational affiliations if any and at the same time extended a welcome to the Belconnen D services.

During those early days a need for confirmation classes became apparent. One for children was held after school during the week. (At Rev. Bates’ home in Cook) and one for adults at a home in the parish on a week night.”

The confirmees mentioned above were confirmed at All Saint’s, Ainslie by Bishop Arthur towards the end of 1973. The three young Belconnen D people confirmed were Mark Dykes, Bruce Ferrett and Beverley Kay. It wasn’t until late 1974, that the first Anglican confirmation service took place in Melba Primary School hall. It was an evening service, conducted by Bishop Chenowyth and incorporated a Baptismal service, Confirmation service and an induction of Belconnen D’s first two lay preachers, Russell Ferrett and Noel Matthews. Tamara Matthews was amongst the confirmees and the Bishop made mention of the significance of the three services as hierarchical steps in Christian growth.

Advertising of the services was a problem in the newly established suburb of Melba, especially as there was no local shopping centre. Gordon Fisher established a parent newsletter from the school and this was used as a vehicle for advertising, but Margaret and Russ Ferrett recall that they were at that first service as a result of information supplied by the Roman Catholic priest who visited their home in Hosking Place, Melba as part of his visits to all newly established homes in the area.

Gordon Fisher recalls the names of some of those who conducted services for the Combined Churches – Mr Daniells, Mr. Bedford and a young man who was completing his M.Ed. (Mr Birch?) at the Canberra College of Advanced Education. Occasionally the services were conducted by Rev. Peter Hoogendoorn.

From time to time the two congregations of Anglican and Combined Churches would meet together for a combined service which alternated between Anglican and the service of the Combined Church. The first visit of the Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, the Rt. Rev. Cecil Warren took place on 1st April, 1973, and a combined service took place following the Anglican form. Similarly, a visit from the Methodist Moderator, Rev. Keith Doust, was celebrated with a combined service following the Methodist format. These services continued, at first on the fourth Sunday and later on the fifth Sunday of the month until the Anglicans’ move to Copland College, in May, 1982. Although the services were mainly separate, the worshippers formed a close association and friendship, usually meeting after services in the school hall for coffee and tea.

As co-operation between the two congregations became a reality a governing body was formed comprising members from both congregations. Financing was under the auspices of a Common Grant which lasted for three years and supplemented the normal weekly collections which went into a ‘common purse.’ The Joint Committee administered the finances, with Gordon Fisher as its inaugural treasurer and Russ. Ferrett as Assistant Treasurer.

7 Funded by the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Churches of Christ.
Much support was given in those early days from established Canberra parishes. St. John’s Reid, donated $40. St. Alban’s, Lyons gave $50, communion vessels lent and kneelers donated by St. John’s parish while the Bishop’s wife, Mrs. Warren, embroidered and donated the linen. In a very short time, however, the Co-operating Churches of Belconnen D were able to take a considerable responsibility for their own finances although support was still required from the parent churches in the form of a stipend supplement and relief from rectory repayment.

“In October, 1973, the Bishop offered to Brian Carter, then in Leigh Creek, South Australia, with the Bush Church Aid Society, one of our ecumenical parishes in Canberra. This was accepted, and, in January, 1974, the Carter family moved to the house at 55 Heydon Crescent, Evatt which the diocese had acquired as a rectory. The first service conducted by Brian was on February 2nd, 1974, with 25 communicants. Russ. Ferrett introduced Brian to the congregation. The sermon was based on Matthew 8:23-34 (recognising Jesus as Lord) and Hebrews 4: 14-15 (having boldness to approach God). On Saturday February 23rd, at 8 p.m., the Bishop together with leaders from the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches in Canberra, conducted a commissioning service for Brian Carter and Geoff. Bridge (the Methodist Minister) and formally inaugurated the Co-operating parish of Belconnen ‘D’. On February 24th a combined service of the Anglican and Joint (Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational) congregations was conducted by Brian and Geoff. together.”

Brian Allan Carter was born in Mittagong, N.S.W. in 1939 and received his early education at Mittagong Public School. After graduating from Trinity Grammar School, he spent a year as a jackaroo on a property west of Nyngan before beginning study at Wagga Agricultural College from which he graduated in 1960. He then applied for theological training and from 1961-1964 trained at Moore Theological College, Newtown. In November 1964 he married Carolyn Healey. In February, 1965 he was ordained as a Deacon and took up a position as Curate at St. Mark’s South Hurstville where he remained until 1966, with his ordination as a priest taking place in February 1966. The Bush Church Aid Society gave him his first mission to the North West of South Australia based at Tarcoola. In 1969 he began his second mission with B.C.A. to the Flinders Ranges and the North of South Australia with his base at Leigh Creek. In January 1974 he moved to Canberra to take up his position as the Anglican priest in charge of the newly-formed special district of Belconnen D.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

For a number of weeks the congregations met for services with the children participating in the regular services. It was not long before discussion about future direction took place. A small group wanted to embark upon plans for a Church building, but the majority felt that the establishment of a Sunday School was the immediate priority and that it would be many years before the congregation would be financially able to support a Church building.

Russell and Margaret Ferrett had just returned to Australia from four years in Canada where the Church they had attended had conducted a Sunday School concurrently with a 9.30 family Communion Service. The children remained in the service for approximately 20 minutes, after which they processed from the Church to the adjacent parish rooms for Sunday School. The two congregations of Belconnen D wanted a Sunday School which would attempt to integrate the Church service with Sunday School instruction. Russ. was therefore requested to investigate different organisational methods. When he reported back some weeks later, it was decided that the Sunday School would be a joint venture of both congregations organised by adopting a combination of the method used by the Church of the Good Shepherd, Curtin, and the one described above. Thus, Sunday School teachers from both congregations were to form two teams, teaching for blocks of six weeks at a time. After a short period of time in their separate services, the children would leave, with their teachers, to join together for Sunday School classes. Russ. and Margaret took on the job of initial organisers and teachers.
of the Sunday School. The first lessons were given in Melba Primary School’s art/craft room to a group of children whose ages ranged from 6 to 12.

Throughout 1973, the Church’s congregation, and therefore the Sunday School, remained small. Towards the end of 1974 Doug Morgan took over as Sunday School Superintendent. Doug’s dedication to the task of consolidating the Sunday School, together with his considerable organisational capacities and teaching experience enabled him to hand over, twelve months later, an established Sunday School to Noel Vanzetti and Bob Raine. Doug’s untimely death, in 1982, was a great shock to all who knew him and an irreplaceable loss to both congregations.

The Sunday School grew in numbers, guided by Superintendents from both congregations, until separate Sunday Schools were set up as a result of the Anglican move to Copland College in 1982. At this time considerable thought was given, by the Anglicans, to the organisation of the Sunday School, resulting in greater incorporation of children’s activities into the 9.30 service.

GROWTH OF A COMMUNITY

During this early period and in such a newly built area, there was a proven need for fellowship. Jeni and Tom Murdock watched foxes and kangaroos give way to buildings along Scarlet Street and barren ground give way to newly laid turf around the school. They invited every new householder to a coffee morning, from which grew a coffee morning network that enabled new arrivals in Flynn and Melba to get to know each other. Discussion, gardening and other groups splintered and developed using, for meeting space, the Health Commission Centre when it was established late in 1973.

Church Ladies’ fellowship also began to meet once a month, in various homes. Hilda Vanzetti, for example, talked about her experiences of rearing premature babies whilst nursing in Malawi. Any available container, such as a box or a drawer, was used as a crib. Pat Bazely spoke at Glenda Dykes’ home about her Ph.D. research into infant play, and suggested forming a play group which could meet (mother and infant) at her home. The group was small at first, and met at Pat’s home in McEachern Crescent every week. Such was the effect and popularity of the group that it began to expand and, by necessity, divide. So groups were formed throughout the area, using local homes, until 400 families were involved. During the time that Kerry Brown and Jeni Murdock were organisers meetings were held with the N.S.W. Playgroup Association to incorporate a local Playgroup Association. Representations were made to N.C.D.C. through the Local Member of Parliament, Ken Fry, and as a result, Nellie Hall, adjacent to the Melba shops was established.

The Ladies’ Fellowship continued to meet monthly in different homes and for different functions ranging from craft evenings to talks by visiting speakers, from carol singing to historical evenings. The meeting at Marian and Laurie Russell’s home in McEachern Crescent, so close to the original site of the Glebe farmhouse where Marian’s aunt had lived, was very memorable and had long lasting effects. A number of Marian’s relatives were present, including Mrs. Nora Smith, Mrs. Elvina Russell (Aunty Wyn), Miss. Elva Russell, Mrs. Florrie Munday, Mrs. Merlie and Mr. Arthur Bryan and their son, John. Slides were shown of the Glebe property and the early development of the suburb of Melba, while memories were related of life in the area before and after the beginning of Canberra as the Federal seat of Parliament. From this evening an interest in pre-suburban Melba was stimulated. The local archives are now held at Melba Primary School as a result and through the work of Marian and Laurie Russell and of Margaret Ferrett.
THEMES OF THE CHURCH

That part of the special district of Belconnen D which called itself – and was advertised as – the Anglican Church of North Belconnen, existed from 1973 until Parish Life Sunday 1981. Then, on the 15th February, Bishop Warren announced the ‘new’ name of St. Paul’s Ginninderra. The name infers the work of pioneers and it still continues as such. Many meetings have been held to discuss the future direction of the church, and its work has prospered through many and varied prayerful meetings. This concern though has become a recurrent theme, and the ensuing thrusts forward have been bi-partite ones based on this. The two aspects are: - to organise Parish Life on the one hand; and to reach out to the community in Christian Fellowship, on the other.

PARISH LIFE ORGANISATION

During the period of formal co-operation between the Anglican Church and Uniting Church in North Belconnen, (1973 until 1982) all major decisions were made jointly by Group Council, which was constituted of representatives from both congregations. Until the separate establishment of a Parish Council, matters of a strictly Anglican nature (mainly to do with worship) were handled by the informal Anglican Committee and later by the properly-constituted Vestry.

The minutes of the 1974 meetings demonstrate the early organisational concerns of ‘Bread and wafers’8, traditional or modern services – and these were alternated for a period until the purchase of the new Prayer Book in 1978; the priorities of communion linen and amplifiers; it is on record that the congregation ‘will vigorously pursue the wearing of name tags’.9 Much discussion accompanied these earliest decisions, with regard to the place of Anglican tradition in a new suburban area. A comprehensive list of such traditions was compiled by lay-reader Margaret Hendry, and it included the assorted virtues of Matins, Simnel cake, Holy Flames, water and oil. Associated research by Noel Matthews for two years, into the importance of the robes worn by Anglican ministers was eventually abandoned through lack of definitive resource. It can be said perhaps, that this church has grown into its present form through a democratic process, even though the lack of a few traditional elements has been an important concern to some.

ROSTERS

Another and on-going organisational matter, has been the filling of rosters. Judy Fisher found that her 1982 kitchen still sported a copy of the 1974 Morning Tea roster (now in the Uniting Church Archives.) Janet Doherty has lately drawn up what must be nearly the fortieth edition! The tea rosters separated into Anglican and Uniting ones when tea-making facilities for the Anglicans were provided in the library instead of the Melba School canteen. ‘Welcoming’, ‘Creche’, ‘Setting up’, and ‘Sunday School’ (but never ‘Flower’) rosters are still current. Indeed the ‘setting up’ roster was responsible for implementing the change from the West-facing and elongated semi-circle of chairs, to a South-facing and wider semi-circle. The move from the Melba School Library to Copland College has allowed for a very shallow semi-circle of chairs, and this time North-facing. The seating of the congregation has certainly not followed the Anglican tradition of East-facing, although this has been due to the constraints of the location. The Church has a Parish Roll which is up-dated every year. Although the Parish Council voted against one originally, it came into being in 1979. It has carried many variations of names since then, but also and thankfully, A STABLE AND GROWING CORE OF COMMITTED MEMBERS.

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OFFERTORIES

The difficulties and blessings of organising the finances of a growing church has almost become a theme within a theme. Originally there was a common purse for joint Uniting and Anglican concerns, but this was split even before the church activities were separated. The Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn has given tremendous financial assistance and support over a protracted ten years, but the main source of income was always intended to be Parish giving. Group Council and later Parish Council has always supported the view that giving was a matter for individual conscience. There have been various methods of explaining this principle (including HOME by HOME), followed by the introduction of envelopes in 1977. The Treasurer’s reports (signed from 1978 to 1983 by Russ Ferrett) are filed in the Parish Records, and include the details of all the Parish financial commitments over the ten years. The latest report is one of the most exciting because it records the ‘risk’ that the church took in moving to Copland College in 1982, and the 40% increase in the level of operations above that of 1981. Still there is an outstanding capital debt to be reduced, and the consequent status of ‘drain on the Diocesan funds’ to be reversed, in this time of drought especially. The faithful example to be followed is surely clear.

MISSION

It has been a special anxiety of many, that the demands of the Parish did not always allow for adequate support of Missionaries-in-the-field. The proceeds of the annual combined church fete have been shared for this purpose. The Giving envelopes were eventually partitioned to allow for both Parish and Mission donations, and this system has been very successful. A Missionary Programme Committee was set up, and its work has been furthered by Rosemary and Tim Glanville, who have held many sociable ‘Dessert and Coffee’ evenings, thereby enabling Parish members to meet Missionaries from many locations.

Although the topic of Offertories was written above as ‘difficult and blessed’, it is a case of AS WE HAVE TRUSTED SO THE BLESSING HAS FOLLOWED: the venture to the Copland College venue increased the need for funding AND the RESPONSE to supply it, as the earlier decision to fund the Rectory also proved. Jenny and Richard Kemmis helped to organise a progressive dinner for the Parish. The money raised helped to fund and furnish the Parish Room which was being built onto the new Rectory in Sharwood Crescent, Evatt. This dinner welcomed the congregation to several homes, and brought Ron Cochrane to the medical assistance of a casserole-scalded co-organiser, Shirley Leane.

During 1981 a number of other fund-raising means were tried to help with Rectory establishment costs: these included the inevitable lamington drive; a wine bottling; theatre parties and a stall at the Evatt Community Day.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

Likewise, the Friendship Circle, which grew from a group of senior parishioners who were hosted at a Sunday afternoon tea by Hazel Pulham, has raised $406 through its trading tables and luncheons. Indeed the Building Fund was begun with money raised through an idea of Marjorie Baker’s, that of ‘Buying a Brick’. Wilf Baker has kept a financial record of the money raised. The amount has been augmented by St. Paul’s first Harvest Festival, which was convened by Edna and Alan Harding on March 12th, 1983. The morning tea which followed raised an additional $430.00 and an opportunity for both congregations (from 8.00 and 9.30 services) to mix.

OUTREACH

The second prong of the bipartite thrust has been on our Lord’s instruction to send workers into the harvest. Being of fundamental concern to all parish members, many efforts have been
made. Brian Carter has visited all Anglican contacts, many of which resulted from Hospital visits. It became evident that long-term Parish support was needed for him, in his work, and for new church contacts. An English idea of NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUPS was adopted, the Parish being divided into convenient geographic areas, which are still recorded on the Parish Roll. A convenor was required in each area to coordinate the activities which have become as varied as the groups. For example Geoff Bridge originally directed the South Melba Group towards Biblical discussion, but that changed to a bi-monthly luncheon group with each family bringing a ‘hot dish and a tart.’ The discussion centred instead around a Bible Study Group which met once a week at the home of Alice and Alan Bedford. Some neighbourhood groups met for barbecues and for dinner, whereas others had a bias towards family prayer groups and discussion. The themes of DISCUSSION and FRIENDSHIP intermingled to a lesser or greater degree and the groups were supportive as in the instance of illness amongst congregation members. Additional support groups also evolved, such as the one for morning coffee after the Sunday services. It often happened that one household could find itself host to a neighbourhood group of over forty adults and children, when the largest yard and rumpus room and pool were an advantage.

PARISH REPRESENTATIVES

The concept of the Parish Representative grew along with the neighbourhood groups. These individuals were to follow up any contacts made by Brian Carter, rather in the form of a friendship chain of support. A dedication service was held on the 30th July, 1978, to give blessing and support to each volunteer. The list of names was published in Link – the joint magazine – along with the Elders of the Uniting Church. Each representative was responsible for the geographic area in which he or she lived. The quarterly meetings of the Parish representatives often led to stimulating discussion about the role and the results, particularly when, as it emerged, a household could receive a ‘Rep.’ with everything from tea to ‘flu. And to the threat of a bucket of water! The most common difficulty was simply that most households were empty at the time of the visit, indeed several visits. The value of Rosemary Hutchinson as coordinator between Brian Carter and the ‘reps.’ was soon appreciated. Care cards also expedited Parish-wide contacts.

STEWARDSHIP

As in the case of the first friendship group of 1974, so in the needs of Parish participants, there was a change which led to new social organisation. The population in the parish area also changed from about a hundred in 1972 to over twenty thousand in 1982. As the map on pages 26, 27 indicates two suburbs expanded to six (and seven in 1984).

Initially many neighbourhood contacts involved the baptism of new infants: a system of counselling for baptism was set up with a team of lay-visitors including Jeff Mason, Ian Pratt, Andy Stackpool, Clem Watts and Steve Simkus. THE PARISH STILL FELT THE NEED FOR GREATER OUTREACH. An evangelism seminar entitled ‘Good News is For Sharing’ was convened for the whole congregation during a weekend in June 1980. The debate then, was based on Christian stewardship, and this in turn led to a five week course in counselling initiated and hosted by Hellyne and Ron Cochrane. Ron, Brian Carter and Jaqueline Hogan visited the active parish of Christchurch, St. Ives, Sydney. As a result a new word came into the vocabulary of Parish life – that of CO-WORKER. The co-worker courses have run for two years, with a break in 1983 and are intended to give instruction and direction to a team of prayerful volunteers. Some of the co-workers are now on the new neighbourhood ‘reps.’ lists – but each, this time, is to care for five families instead of a whole neighbourhood group.

SERVICES

The bipartite thrust of St. Paul’s Parish life has always combined during the Sunday services. Many visitors have joined hands during services and commented on the friendly and informal
atmosphere. Not only has the format alternated from the Old Prayer Book to the New, until 1978 that is, but a vote was taken in that year to alternate Holy Communion with Morning Service (Matins). The numbers present have varied too, from a ‘block-buster’ of two hundred (at the time, in the Melba Library) to a congregation of one in January 1980. Combined services with the Uniting Church were held once a month for several years, with Brian Carter preaching at the Uniting Service and Geoff Bridger at the Anglican Service.

Venues for services have ranged too, from Wattle Park Church, Hall, to the school oval for a carol service. Some Lent services have been held in the Parish Room. Initially, there was quite a strong resistance to the introduction of an 8.00 a.m. service, in addition to the regular 9.30 a.m. one; enough resistance in fact to delay its introduction until 1978. Since then the two services have been held regularly. The first service at 8.00 a.m. meets the more traditional needs of the congregation, and the 9.30 a.m. services, that of the families.

Lay participation in services has been encouraged.

“One of the traditions which has been fostered during the decade has been that of joint responsibility for the life of the Parish being shared between the Minister and the Parishioners. This has been most evident in the lay participation at the worship services. Participation has included leading the service, administering the Cup, preaching, leading the prayers and taking the Bible readings. All these activities have been organised on a continuing basis by roster secretaries, Noel Matthews and Graeme Oakley.”

There have been many special ministries and blessings in the Parish during the decade, including services of healing. In May 1975 a healing service was held for Russell Bielenberg. Helen, Russell’s wife, writes:

“In May, 1975, my husband Russell had a growth removed which later told us that he had two kinds of cancer, one curable by radiation and one sort so far incurable to medical science…we were sent to Brisbane by the Army for this radiation and found through further tests that Russell had a spread of this cancer…In August 1975 we had a healing service in our lounge-room…There were tears shed that night as Russell knelt in the middle of the room while all present laid hands on him and Brian anointed him. I myself, prayed out loud that the Lord would heal Russell for me and our two small boys who were then aged 4 and 2 years…In the beginning of 1976 an x-ray showed that the spread which was present in June 1975 was no longer present, and there has been no recurrence of this as I write 7½ years later. PRAISE GOD!”

Church services have been held continuously since the first in 1973. During Brian Carter’s infrequent absences other hands have rallied. Steven Williams was theological student attached to the Parish in 1974. Anglican clergymen Colin Clark and Dennis Johnson and Hospital Chaplain, Keith Wilson have each taken services, as have our lay-readers and other members of the congregation. All such details are recorded on the Sunday notice sheets, many of which are filed in the Parish records at the Parish Room. Ellen Whitty typed the Combined notices and Jocelyn Cannock, Jill Storey and Gill McLoughlin have typed the Anglican notices.

As well as the Parish Records being stored at the Parish Room, there is a growing library of Christian books, initiated by Jacqueline Hogan.

MUSIC

Though not for want of trying, an omission in the service life of the Parish has been a viable choir. It is in the minutes record of July 22nd, 1975, that ‘…hymn singing had ALREADY improved noticeably,’ and that we shall ‘praise God by not mumbling.’ Owen Williams, Chris Mason, Colin Clark and Graeme Oakley have all inspired the congregation, on the
piano and the electric organ most bravely. Betty and Brian Triglone and Helen and Russell Bielenberg are amongst those who have led the children in chorus-singing, using the guitar. Only once in the ten years has the Parish thrown its combined voices into a Musical Evening, on the 8th of July 1979. Several attempts have been made to start a choir, so far unsuccess fully. In 1982 $325.70 was spent on an amplification system. In 1981 $14.00 was spent on the repair of the redoubtable Melba school piano – for new wheels!

**FELLOWSHIP**

From the contacts made during the Church services, many other opportunities have occurred for fellowship. Family weekends at different locations, such as Burrill Lakes and Cooma, have increased family contact and a corporate feeling amongst congregation members. Often such weekends welcomed a visiting leader. John Maidment came to Bishopthorpe; John Chapman to Ranalagh House; and John Howard to Cooma.

Parish Life Sunday celebrates both the birthday and fellowship of St. Paul’s Ginninderra. Various fellowship groups have also aimed to achieve the growth of Christian fellowship. The newly formed Men’s Fellowship Group has as one of its themes – The Caring Community. The Youth Group began in the Melba School hall as an all-age group cooperating with the Uniting Church. Rod Whitty and Jenifer Murdock were two of the first leaders. It has grown over the years to a Senior and Junior Youth Group, with a varied programme of Christian discussion and social activities. These groups have provided continuity for the young members leaving Sunday School.

**THE NEW RECTORY**

When Brian Carter first took up his appointment to the Anglican Church of North Belconnen, he and Carolyn lived in Evatt. The next move with the family, was to a more central position in the expanding Parish – Tillyard Drive, Flynn. This was a move to a new house and another new garden! The record of this move in the minutes describes the teamwork involved in transporting the furniture. The piano with the help of Tommy Tortoise, was back in Evatt by January 1982, when the new Rectory with Parish Room was complete. The trees growing on the site have been retained and these are a landmark to encourage the establishment of yet another new garden. The site for the eventual church building is reserved on adjoining land at the junctions of Moynihan Street, Sharwood Crescent and Copland Drive.

**FRASER**

As the maps below indicate, barely half of the two suburbs of Melba and Evatt had been built when the special district of Belconnen D was established. Within eight years the district encompassed seven suburbs along the North of Ginninderra Creek. As the congregation grew with the expansion of the suburbs, it became apparent that a second minister would be needed to share the work. It was exciting to be part of the new Christian community which was growing within the suburb of Fraser. The formation of the Fraser committee composed of Sandy Lang, John Mordike, Michael Mulgrew and Andy Stackpool followed by the establishment of the new church in the Fraser School is a chapter in itself. Robin Long as the appointee to the new Parish of North-West Belconnen and Hall, was inducted in February 1979, and he and his wife Ruth and family moved into the Tillyard Drive Rectory in December. The inaugural service was held on Sunday 16th February, 1979.
INDEPENDENCE

Having established a congregation in Fraser, concurrent developments which included a search by each party of the joint congregation, for its own identity, caused a final severing of the formal ties between the Uniting Church and St. Paul’s Ginninderra. Such severances have incited much heart-searching because so much friendship and cooperation had been built up between individuals in the cooperating congregations, and everyone was reluctant to disturb this: yet there is challenge in new growth and in following where the Lord leads. Several factors were involved in the majority, prayerful decision to move the Anglican congregation to the Copland College venue. The congregation had grown beyond the size which Melba School library could accommodate. The Australian Capital Territory School’s Authority rationalisation of community use of public buildings provided a catalyst for St. Paul’s Ginninderra to move, expand and identify itself, although actually the Authority was mistaken in thinking that ‘The Combined Church’ was a small sect! The story of the move is a long one, and is closely related to the search for – and the acquisition of – land as near as possible to the site of the old pioneer church of St. Paul’s Ginninderra. The official Parish and Diocesan records held respectively by Brian Carter and Jameson House, contain the details of the saga which was complicated by the fact that Diocesan records were not compatible with the National Capital Development Commission’s plans for South-West Evatt. The present church land does not correspond exactly with the original Glebe. The Glebe Farmhouse, contemporary with the pioneer church, was nearby near the site of the present Copland College. The house was next to the twin elm trees.

Current church handouts read,

YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD ANGLICAN CHURCH, ST. PAUL’S GINNINDERRA...NOW MEETS AT COPLAND COLLEGE – ENTRY TO THE BUILDING FROM COPLAND DRIVE CAR PARK…”
The present congregation has to pass the gardens, chicken runs and cockatoo cage of the Science Faculty of the College. Perhaps this is not as incongruous as it seems because the first pioneer congregation would have had to pass the farmhouse killing yards and hanging room!

The Church Warden’s report to the Annual General Meeting 1983, summarises the results of the move. Graham Brown, Tim Glanville and Russ Ferrett write:

“…We wish to record with thanks the efforts of those people involved in the surprising amount of work required to make the move successful. The change of venue occurred at the same time as a noticeable increase in attendance at services and a substantial increase in giving. It is with satisfaction that we note these developments, thank God for them and trust that they will continue as an expression of our maturity and growth as a Parish. 1982 marks the first full year of occupation and operation of the building.11 We note that the residential area is now well established and are thankful for the work Brian and Carolyn have put in for the third time, and for others who did such a great job. Considerable use has been made of the Parish Room which is pleasing in view of the extra investment needed to establish it. We trust that the use of it will continue to grow. Again we are thankful for those people who have helped in various ways to make the Parish Room more comfortable and workable…”

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Parish of St. Paul’s Ginninderra still has a ‘too hard basket’ waiting for the direction of the Lord and helpers to gather in the harvest.12 There is still then, the need to lead the Church into new ways of corporate Christian life on the one hand, and outreach in Christian fellowship on the other: the bipartite themes have further to grow. These ten years have seen many changes in the Anglican field. In Belconnen there has been the establishment of the Churches’ Centre; Calvary Hospital where Anglicans join with other denominations to greet patients, and to hold services on roster; the new Anglican Church of Christ Church, Central Belconnen; and plans to build Radford Anglican College – the building of which was foreshadowed in our minutes of 1974! How far has Anglican Belconnen come since the establishment of the special district of Belconnen A at Aranda?

St. Paul’s Ginninderra has to look to the further outreach to the children in the schools of the Parish; to expand to the still untapped parts of the Parish; to contact the expanding areas such as Mckellar; and to nurture its committed members.

DEDICATION

As the tenth anniversary approached we were encouraged to write some account of St. Paul’s. The overwhelming feeling which came to us from all available records which we were able to research, was one of SINCERE DEDICATION on the part of every active member. We give thanks indeed for this share of the living Gospel, and for the revival of a pioneer (in all senses of the word) Church in this place of North Belconnen. May this account only relate to the early history of an enduring and growing St. Paul’s Ginninderra amongst a community of people who ‘love to have Christ in common.’13

Margaret Ferrett
June 1983

“In our Church we celebrate the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. By his sacrificial death and victorious resurrection Jesus Christ is able to restore all who trust in him to a new life of love, joy and peace in friendship with God.

WE WARMLY INVITE YOU TO SHARE WITH US THIS NEW LIFE.”

14 Pamphlet. Local Church moves/About our Church.
REFERENCES


9. Pamphlet. Local Church moves/About our Church.

[The original text used the numbered references above in the text to indicate information sources – these have been edited in as footnotes in this copy]

CREDITS

Margaret Ferrett and Jenifer Murdock wish to thank everyone who has given of their time and encouragement to complete this history. Whilst realising that there are many more recollections than ours, we would like to thank especially Rev. Brian Carter, Marian and Laurie Russell, Graham Brown, Gordon Fisher, Russ. Ferrett, Helen Bielenberg, Rev. Harry Bates, Dale Williams, Tim Glanville and Tom Murdock for their support and assistance.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Fitzhardinge, L.F. St. John’s Church and Canberra. Canberra, St. John’s Parish Council, 1941.


Smith, Leon R. Memories of Hall.
APPENDIX

ST. PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
GINNINDERRA

PARISH ROLL 1983

EVATT

BERRIS, Alan and Christine: Michelle, Daniel, Nicole
BERRYMAN, Doss
BOYDEN, Ronald and Shirley
CARTER, Brian and Carolyn: Michael, Philip, Matthew, Elizabeth
CARTWRIGHT, Peter and Chris: Joanne, Craig, Daniel, Robert
CHESTER, Graeme and Heather: Brett, Kim
FOOT, Rae and Lindsay: Adam, Gareth
GRIFFITH, Lindsay and Carmel: Jeremy, Tammy Ryan, Rochelle
LATIMORE, Leon and Janice: James, Andrew, Mark
LEWIS, Janine: Simon
MEREDITH, Alma and Eric
MILLER, Geoff and Jan: Larissa
MULHALL, Christopher and Patricia
OAKLEY, Kerrie and Graeme: James, Gavin, Cecily, Philip
PACKHAM, Rodney and Jennifer: Cindy, Angela, Timothy
ROSCOE, Peter and Margaret: Simon, Darryl
SHOEMARK, Ann: Calista, Kate, Luke
SIMKUS, Stephen and Robyn: Christopher, Andrew
TURNER, Dennis and Susan
VANZETTI, Noel and Hilda: Stephen, Kathryn, Michael
WRIGHT, Tim: Adrian, Edwina
WYNTON, Robert and Christine: Michael, Sean, Amy

MELBA (NORTH)

BRAY, Bruce and Elizabeth: Fiona, John, Richard
CANNING, Robert and Winifred
CANNOCK, Ian and Jocelyn: Heidi, Todd, Nathan
CLARK, Colin and Jenny: Penelope, Timothy
COCHRANE, Ronald and Hellyne: Sally, Daniel
FLYNN, Dawn: Megan, Vanessa
GLANVILLE, Tim and Rosemary: Emma, Tamara, Naomi
GRETTON, Paul and Gloria: Arthur, Elsie, Charles
HAIGH, Donald and Ruth: Kathryn, Sarah, Elizabeth, Jennifer
HEARN, Denise: Bradley, Darren
INGRAM, Kathleen
ISAACSON, Paul and Robyn: Kent, Warwick, Lloyd
KEMMIS, Richard and Jenny: Jane, Lyn
MAPLEY, Barbara: Julie, Stephen
MARCHANT, Trevor and Janet: Duncan, Jamie
OKILL, William and Margaret: Stephen
PARSONS, Anne: Bronwyn, Melissa, Stephen
PENGELLY, Nora
SMITH, John and Merle
THORNTON, Gary and Denise: Paul, Christopher, Cassandra
SULLIVAN, Rod and Nettie: Rachel, Michael
WILLIAMS, Janet and Dale: Kylie, Ian
MELBA (South)

BAKER, Wilfred and Marjorie
BARRETT, Kim and Shirley: Craig, Michelle
BIELENBERG, Russell and Helen: Thomas, Adrian
DIENER, Christopher and Robyn: Stuart, Scott
DUTTON, Thomas and Marjorie: Rohan, Emma
DYKES, Reg and Glenda: Mark, Darrol, Neil
GIRDLESTONE, John: Megan, Scott
HARDING, Alan and Edna
HORSBURGH, Alexander and Elaine: Amanda, Glenn
LEWINGTON, Leonie: Iain, Alex, Claire
MATTHEWS, Noel and Betty: Ivan, Rohan
MURDOCK, Thomas and Jenifer: Trevor, Bruce
MCLOUGHLIN, Gordon and Gillian: Alanna, Ross
PULHAM, Hazel
PURCHASE, Shirley: Robin
SPRATT, Judy
STOREY, Colin and Jill: Krishna, Brian
THOMPSON, Kathy and Andrew: Emma, Elissa
VAN BERKEL, Regina
WATTS, Clem and Kate: Joshua, Alison, Adrian
WILSON, Graeme and Helen: Rod, Karen

SPENCE

BANFIELD, Suzanne: Glen, Brett
BASHFORD, Beryl: Angela, Tracy
BROADWAY, Teresa
CARBERRY, Glenda: Donna, Robert
CARNEY, Michael and Lesley: Andrew, Michelle
CARROLL, David and Robyn: Beth, Matthew
CORNISH, Richard and Frances: Michelle, Tanya, Russell, Sara
DOOREY, Michelle
EDWARDS, Michael and Lynne: Lisa, Claire
GATHERCOLE, Neville and Beverley: Stephen, Belinda
GLANVILLE, Bruce and Deanne: Peter, Luke, Kate
GOYEN, Allan and Judy: Michelle, Robert, Phillip
HOWARD, Graham and Keri
HULBERT, John and June: Tracey, Steven
HUTCHISON, Rosemary
JIGGINS, Lesley: Kelly, Erin, Christopher
MASON, Jeff and Chris: Freda, Michael, Anastasia
MITCHELL, Alan and Sue: Timothy, James
NAPPER, Greg and Elaine: David, Richard, Robert
PAGAN, Adrian and Janet: Rebecca, Amanda
PEARSON, Garry and Lynne: David, Cathryn, Michael
PEPPINCK, Winfred and Judith: Adam, Braddley
ROBSON, Derek and Cheryl: Jodie, Kylie
TOMS, John and Lynda: Letitia, Damian
TURNER, Peter and Wendy: Adrian, Brian
VENESS, Maureen: Jane, Sally
WEBSTER, Katherine

FLYNN

BARTLETT, Bruce and Carol: Andrew
BROWN, Graham and Barbara: Matthew, Anna, David
DAVIS, Timothy and Maryanne: Michael, Patrick
DOHERTY, Gordon and Janet
FAULKs, Howard and Anita: Robert, Nicholas
FERRETT, Russell and Margaret: Bruce, Scott, Lisa
GEOGHEGAN, Ross and Regina: Sean, Adam, Wendy
GRAHAM, David and Margaret: Marcus, Andrew
HEAZLETT, Una and John
HOGAN, Robert and Jacqueline: David, Jenny
HUGHES, Jane: Anthony, Jenny
HURLEY, Adrian and Carolyn: Deanne, Megan, Mark
JOHNSTON, Ian and Mary-Jill: Rachel, Todd, Brooke, Chantel
LAWRENCE, Trevor and Carole: Robyn, Heather, Martin
MASON, Loralee and Jim: Matthew, Karen, Lisa
STALKER, Susan: Kim, Paul
STREETING, Rae: Mark, Katherine
WALSH, Adrian and Meredith: Sara, Matthew, Kirsten, Stephanie

OTHER AREAS

BABBAGE, Ross and Lynne: Stuart, Stephen
HALDANE, Bill and Dianne: Deborah, Donald, Daniel
HALDANE, Bruce, Dorothy and Lindella
HAMMOND, Rupert and Cheryl: Andrew
JONES, Paula: Lucianne, Carolyn
MARTIN, Ray and Anne: Tiffany, Pippa
OSHMAN, Harry
STERGIOU, George: Christina
WILKINS, Caroline: Jonathan
PARISH COUNCIL
Records are incomplete, but it appears that the following people have served on Anglican Committee, Vestry or Parish Council:

1974. **Anglican Committee:**
Mrs.R.Williams, Rev.B.Carter, Messrs.G.Brown, R.Ferrett, N.Matthews, N.Vanzetti, S.Williams, Mrs.K.Cousins was a member during the first half of the year.


1976. **Anglican Vestry:**


1981. **St.Paul’s, Ginninderra Parish Council:**
