

June 1971. However, a short time later, Mrs. Limb, wife of the Minister at that time, saw a continuing need and the Myalla Ladies Club was formed in November 1971. "Myalla" being a native word meaning 'much talk', one can readily see that the name was carefully chosen. Membership is still only an average of 15, but the closeness and friendship of members towards each other is strong and the Christian content is very evident. In 1972, the Myalla ladies arranged a Christmas Carol service for the patients of Rockingham and Shoalwater Nursing Home, following which a series of concerts have been arranged each year. Husbands of the ladies joined in to help and became known as the Myfellas (our "fellas"). Eventually, a separate group became the Concert Group and each year have written and produced a Pantomime, successfully entertaining Nursing Home patients, pensioners, members of the Church and friends. The Myalla Club continues in its aim to offer fellowship and to interest younger women in the work and witness of the Church.

During this period, the Rev. R. Limb, made every effort to get the Parish on to a proper financial footing with members committed to giving on a stewardship basis. An envelope system, which was earlier introduced by the Rev. Don Pederick, was re-organized. It was then that the Ladies Guilds, who have always worked raising funds to keep Parishes alive, gave consideration to the opening of an Opportunity Shop. With a committee consisting of Mesdames E. Stone, A. Lee, G. Reynolds, B. Weigold, E. Waddell, P. McKinnon and D. Earnshaw, the first shop opened ten years ago on August 29th 1970, in a small cottage on the Rockingham waterfront, the rent of \$4.00 per week being donated for the first seven weeks. After only six weeks the shop moved to a Bank of New South Wales house in Railway Terrace, now the site of the ANZ bank. This building was soon to be pulled down, so on June 16th 1971 the Opportunity Shop moved once again into its present position at Kent Street behind the Travel Bureau. In the nine years there, the rent has risen from \$25.00 to \$47.00. For a time the money made went into the Guild account, but in 1971 the Quarterly Meeting agreed to a separate account being opened. All helpers are voluntary, twenty ladies being rostered at first, the number later increasing to twenty-nine. Three of the first helpers have passed away and five others have left the district. Messrs. W. Stone, Wyatt and G. Baker have helped the ladies in moving donated furniture. Mr. & Mrs. Stone's home was often a storeroom for large items. The work of the Shop has grown considerably, assisting many people throughout the district, and has certainly fulfilled its aim to assist the Parish Funds and is now giving \$2,400 annually. An amazing total of \$28,500 has been given to the Parish over the ten years, including \$11,000 towards the purchase of new land for future Parish needs. No report of the Opportunity Shop could be given without a sincere word of appreciation to all who have worked so hard, and special mention must be made of the tremendous work of Mrs. E. Stone and Mrs. G. Reynolds who have given so much of themselves in their 'retirement' years. With the passing of Mr. W. Stone, Mrs. Stone has recently moved from the district and a new committee has been formed, first with Mrs. Dawn Cowdell and more

recently with Mrs. Brenda Pulley as President, Mrs. May Small as Secretary and Mrs. Peg Thomas as Treasurer. Valuable work has been done by senior Church members and helpers and we pay sincere tribute to each one of them. Younger members have now shown their willingness to relieve some of the older and long serving members.

What a vital part in the Church women have played! Christ lifted the status of women and it is His standard by which we endeavour to live and work. Women have special talents to offer in the work of the Lord and a great value for the fellowship they have while using their talents in the best possible way to the glory of God and to support the continuing life of the Church.

JUNIOR CHURCH AND YOUTH WORK

It was this same kind of concern for the maintenance and continuance of the Christian faith and ideals that led Mrs. Morrison, in April of 1932, to hold the first Methodist Sunday School in her home in Rockingham. Just as Tom Smirke had realised over sixty years before in East Rockingham the importance of instructing children as soon as possible in the principles and practice of Christianity, and making them aware of the love of Christ and of the beauties and satisfactions of a spiritual life, so Mrs. Morrison also recognised the same need in the children of her day. It is a continuing need, that week by week and year by year has been met by the men and women who have given their time, their thought, their love and devotion to teaching in the Sunday Schools. They are the usung heroes and heroines. Their work is unspectacular and often wearisome. Their names are seldom inscribed on Rolls of Honour. Only in the hearts of some of their pupils are most of them remembered. Yet without their unflagging efforts, Christ's Church would surely dwindle. In tracing the history of the Methodist Church in Rockingham, it has been very difficult to discover the names of more than a mere handful of all those who have helped in the Sunday Schools. These are recorded in the following paragraphs, but it is realised that there are many, more whose only reward must be the satisfaction of 'duty nobly done'.

As has been mentioned, a Sunday School was first started in 1932 by Mrs. Morrison, and the work of the Junior Church and Youth Groups have gone on with fluctuating fortunes since. Memorable amongst the men and women who have carried the work forward is Mr. Arthur Pickles, whose work ended in an untimely and tragic fatal industrial accident in 1965. The late Mrs. Valma Alexander is another teacher who will never be forgotten: up to 100 children in Rockingham have benefitted by her loving care. Frequently whole families are completely involved in this work. An example of this is that of Mrs. Stella Whaley, her daughters Helen (now Mrs. Lyall Duncan), Rhonda and Joan, and her son John, all of whom have devoted much time to the work of Christian Education. The families of Mr. J. Michielson, Neil Miller, Reg Lincoln and Dawn Cowdell are also further examples.

Miss Janet Reeves, Mr. & Mrs. Richard Boniface and Mr. & Mrs. Lyall Duncan have led youth groups with success in recent years. A youth group formed in 1973 grew to a membership of 50, but since leaders are scarce, numbers fell off. At present Mr. Ray Harwood leads the Rockingham Junior Church with the help of Mrs. Zena Walawski, Mr. George Bennallick and Mrs. Joan Tippet. Several years ago Miss Zoe Reeves (Janet's sister) accepted the responsibility of caring for the kindergarten age children, and this section is now in the hands of Mrs. Norma Walker and Mrs. Mary Deeming assisted by a number of teenage girls. Mr. & Mrs. Michael Vines lead the Youth Group now, and follow the footsteps of others too numerous to mention.

At Safety Bay the Sunday School was commenced by Mrs. Jones, whose husband was the Minister at the time. Services were held in the Progress Hall and Mrs. Jones took the children apart for their "school" during part of the service, as well as being the organist. The work was carried on by Mrs. Molly Rea, followed by Mrs. Peg Shillcock, Mrs. Ena Steele and Mr. Jack Rowe. After the Church hall in Frederick Street was opened numbers grew until at one time under the leadership of Mr. Harry Roberts there were up to 90 children meeting in the small room. To ease this congestion a movable partition was erected which took ten feet from the church portion of the hall. Records, unfortunately, do not show all who have helped here but in recent years the children have benefitted from the willing assistance of Misses Marion Steele, Sandy Provan, Dannielle van der Swaagh, Peta Cooper, Pam Crosse, Jan Turner, Andrea Reeves, Sue Cooper, Angela Cull and Mrs. Wendy Tee. Mrs. Margaret Moylett succeeded Mr. Roberts as Superintendent in 1970. About this time a craft club was started by Mrs. Nan Parker for Sunday School girls after school on Friday afternoons. Here Mrs. Parker patiently taught the girls to sew and make many useful items. Illness forced Mrs. Moylett to relinquish the position of Superintendent for a number of years, and the position was filled by Mrs. Mavis Cooper. During that time, however, Mrs. Moylett retained her interest in the children and was a class teacher whenever possible. She is once again the Superintendent, assisted by Mrs. Joan Connell and Miss Colleen Tee, with Mrs. Nancy Rutherford providing the music, as she has done for many years.

Throughout the 40 and more years there have been many joys and pleasures, in the work of the Lord, but there have also been times of frustration, problems and difficulties which with God's help have been overcome. So many have worked and worshipped within the Parish Churches and though it is impossible to name all, among those not already mentioned but never to be forgotten are, Messrs: E. Burkin, R. Tucker, R. Lee and D. Small and Mesdames: M. Sharpe, and P. Reynolds. These with many others un-named, but equally dedicated people have carried forward the work of Christ's Kingdom. In 1979, a beautiful stained glass window was placed in the Rockingham Church to the memory of Mr. & Mrs. Ken Cowdell and the plaques and furniture dedicated to the memory of others are a testimonial but the real memorial is that which is made throughout one's life and whose influence goes on forever.

It was during the years of great change, that stability came at last with the ministry of the Rev. R.W. Hawker, whose appointment to the Parish began in November 1972 and who is still the resident Minister here nearly eight years later.

THE UNITING CHURCH

The years have certainly seen great development and change which is reflected not only in our society but in our Church. Congregations are struggling with problems caused by new ways and new life styles. Slowly we are seeing our way through as God continues to guide us.

Though many were sad to lose their identity as Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists, we are one as Christians whose belief is in One God, Lord and Saviour. So it was that in June 1977, the Rockingham - Safety Bay Methodist Circuit became part of the Uniting Church in Australia and locally named the Rockingham - Safety Bay Uniting Church Parish. Since there had never been a Presbyterian or Congregational Church here, members of those Churches had always had the privilege of associate membership and so we became one in name also.

ITS ORGANISATION

The Uniting Church brought fresh changes and opportunities. The Quarterly Meeting became the Parish Council and its elected members a much smaller body. The first secretary of this Council for a brief period was Mrs. E. Cowdell whose illness forced her withdrawal. The position was then taken by Mrs. Brenda Pulley for two years and the present secretary is a Naval Officer, Austin Crothers. The Parish Council is in effect, a Managing Committee having particular regard to the spiritual well being of the members and the advancement of the mission of the Church. There are sub-committees of Land and Development and a Worship and Education Committee, whose work must be sanctioned by the Parish Council and where necessary by the Peel Presbytery of which the Parish is a part. A Council of Elders was also nominated and elected with Mr. John Whaley as Secretary. This Council must also make its recommendations through the Parish Council but its task is to give its support to the Minister and to help maintain and build up the spiritual life of the congregation. Though their work is extra to daily employment and family commitments and all admit to a feeling of inadequacy, it has been of tremendous benefit. This year, after months of work and planning by the Minister and Elders, a week of Mission was held in a marquee on the Rockingham Sports Oval. "Our Mission to the 80's" was part of the World Mission. The associate director in Australia, the Rev. Alan Jackson of Sydney, was our speaker and guest for the week. Special services of worship were held with activities for all ages. A Parish Dinner, Wednesday Conference, a Youth Night and a Family Fun Night, were held with special singers and music groups. The whole Parish worked as never before with a resulting re-commitment to God's work.

With the Uniting Church came the introduction of the Australian Hymn Book. While it is regretted that some of the best loved hymns are omitted, new hymns are being learned and sung with appreciation. The Parish recently purchased sixty copies of the Good News Bible for use in the pews.

During the past four years local Churches have combined to organize a Christmas Festival with combined Church Choirs. Four to five hundred people have filled Flinders Hall for the occasion, and have found together, a good Christian spirit. Combined Churches have also joined in a Christmas Service at the Rockingham - Kwinana Hospital. Regular monthly services at Shoalwater Nursing Home are led by the Minister, the Rev. R.W. Hawker, supported by several Church members. Mrs. N. Rutherford and Mrs. M. Smith also lead a sing-a-long for patients there every week.

Recently, a Men's Fellowship has begun with a group of fifteen enthusiastic men meeting to share tea and Christian fellowship. The convenors are Mr. W. Beynon and Mr. L. Duncan who anticipate a varied programme of a spiritual nature.

Today, there is much more congregational participation in worship than there was in the past and an informal type evening worship is enjoyed. The numbers attending at the morning congregation have grown to 70 - 80 and at Safety Bay to an average of 30. Although the evening congregation remains small, the late Mrs. Edith Cowdell, faithful servant of many years, who fought to keep the evening service open, would rejoice to see the worth of her endeavours. Four members are now studying to become Lay Preachers, one of whom, Mr. Michael Vines, thanks be to God, has now applied for training to become a Minister of the Word and Sacraments. Regular weekly Bible Study Groups meet with the Minister and there are two Prayer Groups in action seeking God's grace and guidance in all that is done.

During Mr. Hawker's ministry, since November 1972, the town has grown way beyond recognition. The latest population figures are 17,693 for the town and 22,000 in the Shire increasing to 26,000 in the summer months. Industry has expanded, shopping complexes have multiplied and a second High School built at Safety Bay. There are now five pre-primary schools, six primary and others already on the planning board, whilst a comprehensive Technical College has been built in the last year. These in turn have brought yet more people to newly opened residential districts. Further amenities have been provided for the town and places of worship have increased to ten with the coming of other than older established Churches.

In 1978, the Uniting Church Synod asked all Parishes to look into their future needs for land and buildings and encouraged Rockingham to study the expanding corridor planning. At this time, Garden Island was being established as a Naval Base and HMAS STIRLING is growing daily, enlarging the town population

still further. Four navy families are already worshipping with us and we begin to see yet another avenue of necessary service. As the centre of population density shifts, so must the focus of our efforts, so in 1979, one and a quarter acres of land was purchased at a cost of \$51,400 in the suburb of Cooloongup. This is central to the whole area and a district where many more houses will be built. Synod is assisting the Parish in this purchase by reducing the interest on a bank loan.

THE FUTURE YEARS

Truly times have changed and in the changes are opportunities which must not be feared but welcomed. As we face a new technological age, our concern is still to maintain a vital Christian life for young and old, sharing our faith and coming closer to the ideal as presented by Jesus Christ, making certain that the Spirit of God remains and that the labour of love is never lost, for - "Man looketh on the outer appearance but the Lord looketh upon the heart" (1 Sam.16:7). There is always the quiet and unsung worker of whom only God is aware, who continues the Church's work and witness. Ours is a great responsibility to advance the Kingdom of God and to remember that our mission is to be His ambassadors wherever we are.

This 40th Ruby Anniversary is a reminder of the blood sacrificed for us. As the years move on to 50 golden years, to 100 and yet more years of Christian witness, may all who serve never forget to give in service and sacrifice to others. We praise God for all that is past and trust Him for all that is yet to come. Let this be our tribute to Him and to those who have led us to this time and place. Let it also be our challenge for the future, that all may come to know Him whom we worship.

We pray today for the unswerving resolution to face the future, its known demands and its unspoken challenges with undiminished courage, faith and hope and love.

"Into the faithful hands of God, we commit ourselves and our loved ones now and always. Father, let us be Yours and remain Yours for ever; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

AMEN.