





**The Anglican Church of  
St Peter by the Lake  
Paynesville**



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Paynesville**

***Jubilee***  
**1961 - 2011**





St Peter's by the Lake church building in Paynesville is without a doubt a unique building. It is one of the treasures of the Diocese of Gippsland and a landmark in the local community.

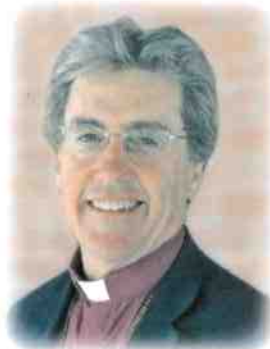
The publishing of this booklet, which celebrates the development of this remarkable building, marks the Jubilee of its dedication in 1961.

The church building symbolises both the faith of the church that gather to worship in it and the local culture of the town, originally established as a fishing village. In its form and features, the building bears witness to the ministry and mission of the local Anglican people of God. It points to their commitment to proclaim with a local and contemporary voice the timeless Gospel of Jesus Christ to their neighbours and all who come as visitors to this beautiful part of God's world.

As you read this volume, be inspired by the faith of those from the past who have left us this heritage and those who today continue in their footsteps.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John McIntyre' with a stylized flourish at the end.

**John McIntyre**  
Bishop of Gippsland





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## Beginnings

The land upon which the Anglican Church of St Peter by the Lake, Paynesville is built was made available by a Crown Grant in 1892 for the Diocese of Melbourne, which at that time included all of Gippsland. Later the title was transferred to the newly created Diocese of Gippsland following its formation in 1902.

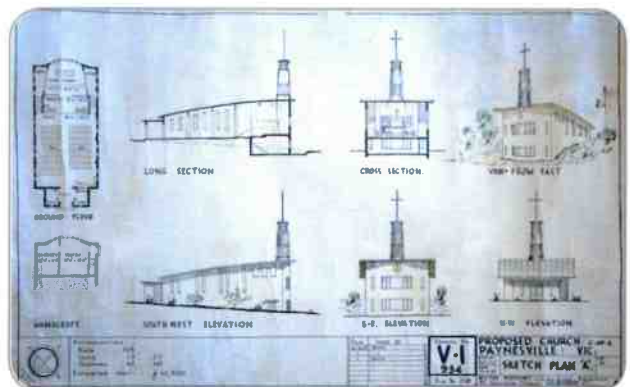
Later generations have benefited from the foresight of those responsible for this Crown Grant. In the late 19th century, Paynesville (formerly Toonalook) was a small fishing village, but the potential for future development, based on the surrounding Gippsland Lakes, was already evident.

The first recorded Anglican service held in Paynesville was on 30 November 1879 by the Reverend Ernest Hartmann, Rector of Bairnsdale and, although not declared part of the Bairnsdale Parish until 1937, Paynesville was served principally until that time by a succession of lay or clerical missionaries responsible for outlying communities, operating under the oversight of the rector of Bairnsdale. Services in Paynesville were held in the local Methodist Church.

## Building

The Reverend (later Canon) Douglas Smith, appointed as Rector of the Parish of Bairnsdale in 1950, challenged the Anglicans of Paynesville to build their own church. It was his idea to build a church with nautical features, similar to one he had seen in England at the Church of St Leonards-on-Sea in Surrey.

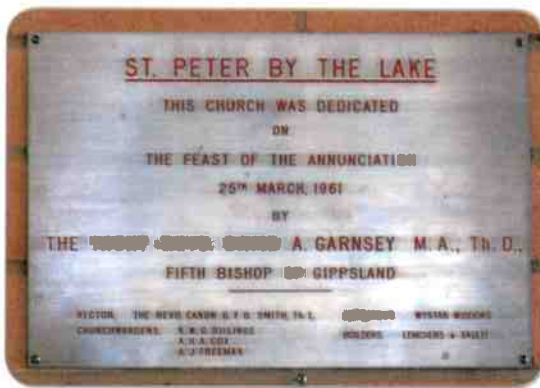
However, it was not until 1958 that an architect was appointed, Wytan Widdows, a leader in ecclesiastical architecture in Victoria. The tender for construction of the building was let to a Gippsland firm, Lemchens & Skulte.







Construction work began in April 1960 and the Foundation Stone was laid by the Right Reverend David Garnsey, Bishop of Gippsland on 31 July of the same year. The architect took advantage of the sloping nature of the site to incorporate a meeting room underneath the sanctuary.

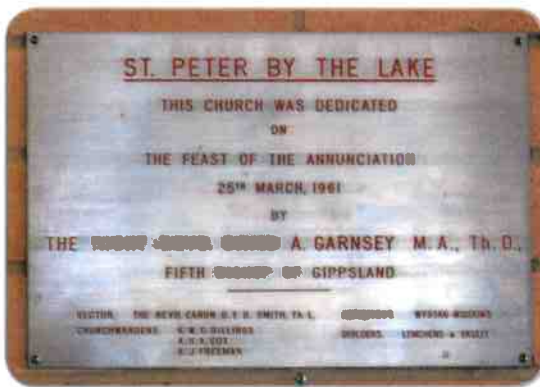


The dedication of the completed church, named after St Peter, patron saint of the sea, was undertaken by Bishop Garnsey on 25 March 1961.

In keeping with Anglican tradition, the consecration of the church was not held until the project was debt-free and, thanks to generous support across the parish, this was able to be undertaken by the Right Reverend Graham Delbridge, Bishop of Gippsland on 4 July 1976.



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## Nautical features

In keeping with the suggestion of Canon Smith the following nautical features were incorporated in the church:



- The pulpit built by a local boat-builder, Mr Joe Bull, is a replica of the prow of a fishing boat, even to the copper nails.

- The font is in the shape of a bollard holding an upturned bell, the bell of the steamer 'SS Dargo', the last of the trading steamers on the Gippsland Lakes.



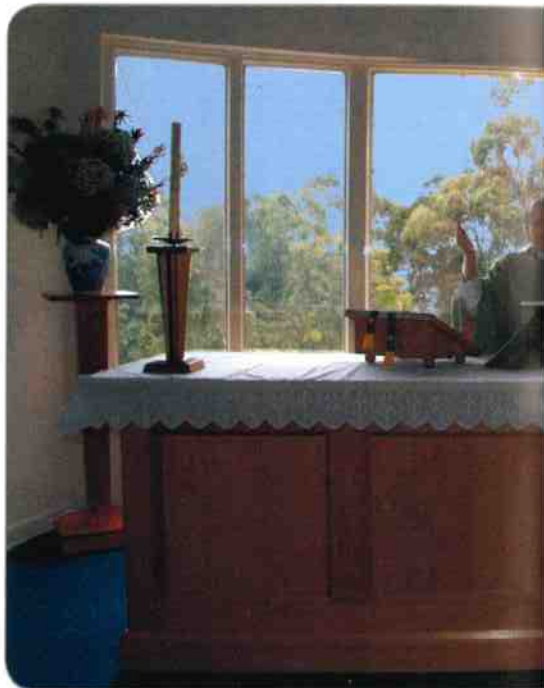
- In the front of the church is a flagpole made from the boom of the 'Boomerang' as a memorial to a former parishioner, Martha Hamilton.





- The imposing tower that soars above the roof resembles a lighthouse with a cross and light which can be seen far out on the lakes, a feature much appreciated by the boating community.

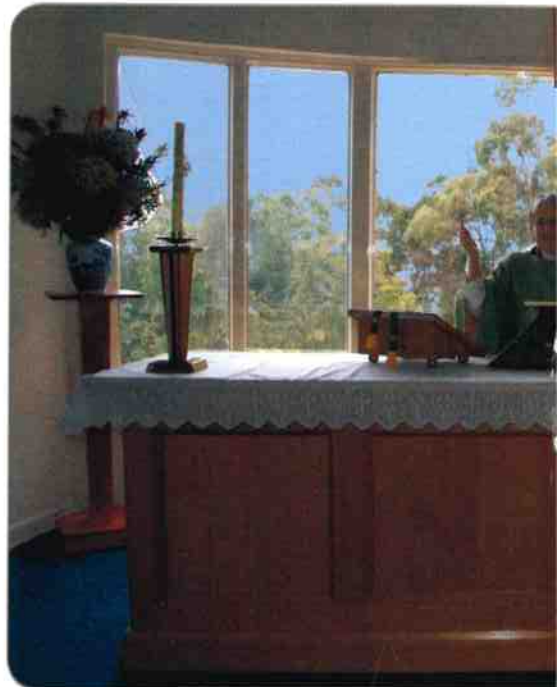
- The large clear windows behind the altar overlook the picturesque waters of Lake Victoria and present a panorama of sea and sky through the tracery of the branches of the gum trees.





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- A tile mosaic of fish, an early Christian symbol, is set on the exterior of the building, high above the sanctuary windows.

- Above the blue carpet of the sanctuary glows the sanctuary lamp, fashioned from a ship's riding light.







# Separation

From the 1980s, there had been significant growth of both resident population and visitors across much of East Gippsland, including the communities of both Bairnsdale and Paynesville and in 1987, the first resident clergyman, Canon Percy Moore, was appointed to Paynesville, with a residence built adjacent to the church the following year.

Arising from considerable discussion within the Parish as to how ministry could best be developed, the Paynesville congregation resolved in 2000 to request the then Bishop of Gippsland, the Right Reverend Arthur Jones, for Paynesville to be separated from Bairnsdale with its own Priest-in-charge.

The Bishop responded positively to the proposal and declared Paynesville (also incorporating the adjacent areas of Raymond Island, Eagle Point and Newlands Arm) severed from the Parish of Bairnsdale with effect from 1 May 2000, with the Reverend Caroline Nancarrow appointed as Priest-in-charge.

The church community at Paynesville continued to grow and, following the appointment of the Reverend Nancarrow elsewhere in the Diocese, the Reverend Edie Ashley succeeded her and was inducted on 21 March 2007.

On 21 October 2010, the official status of the church in Paynesville was changed by the Diocese from an episcopal district to a parish.



Since becoming a separate entity, a range of new initiatives have been pursued with an embracing theme of enhancing the church building and grounds as a sacred space.

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## Quiet Garden

Early in her incumbency at Paynesville, Reverend Nancarrow encouraged parishioners to develop the extensive grounds behind the church down to the Lake as a 'Quiet Garden,' a place for peace and contemplation.

The 'Quiet Garden' continues to be progressively developed, incorporating a labyrinth, garden beds, open spaces and a Memorial Garden for the ashes of past parishioners.



The 'Quiet Garden' is widely used and valued, not only by parishioners and visitors to the church, but also by the many people using the walking trails along the lakeside.





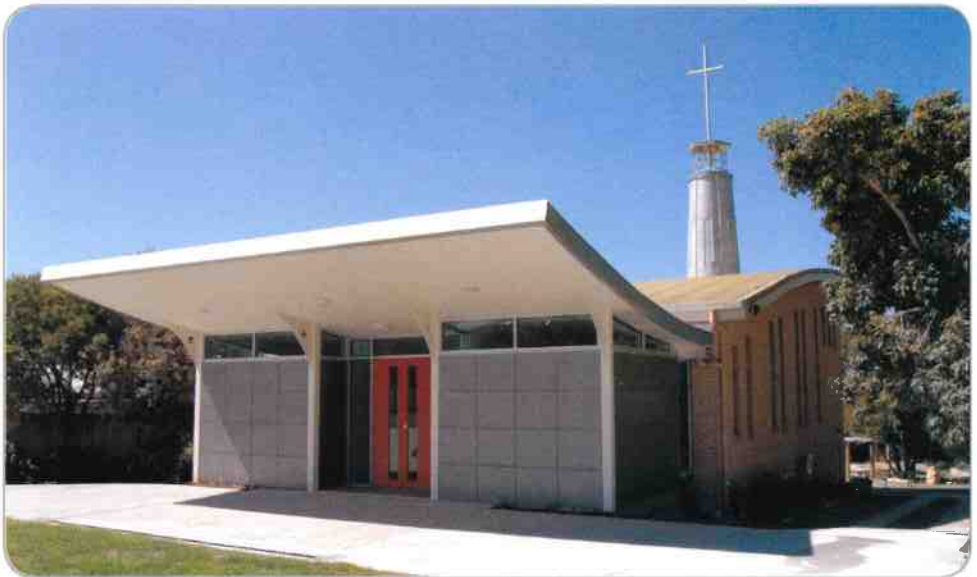
## Building extension

In 2003, planning commenced to reshape and extend the front of the church building to provide for a robing room, a kitchenette with a congregating and fellowship space, together with a portico and a sealed driveway.



The design for these works was undertaken by SLAP Architects in Bairnsdale, who were careful to preserve the integrity of the form of the original building with the new façade picking up the zinc colour and texture of the church tower.

The parish determined that the project would not commence until all the necessary funds were raised and when this was completed in 2007 the building contract was let to Peter Down, a local builder with an extensive portfolio of church building across Gippsland. The building renovations and extensions were dedicated by the Right Reverend John McIntyre, Bishop of Gippsland on 5 February 2008.



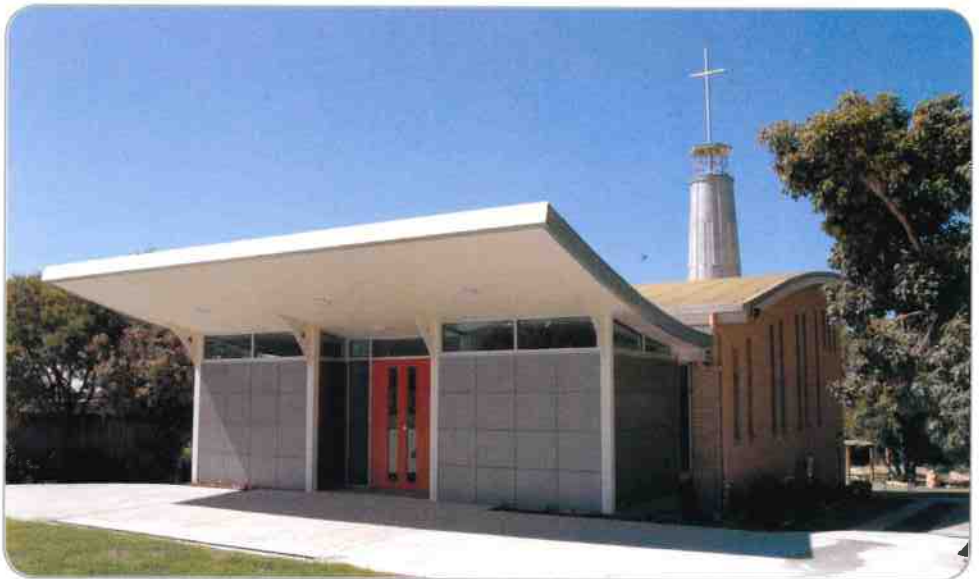
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# Windows

In 2009, the parish embarked on a project to replace the plain glass windows in the nave of the church with windows of lead light and stained glass, telling the story of St Peter in the context of the Gospel story.



The twelve replacement windows each contain a traditionally styled motif of St Peter's Christian journey within a background expanse of modern glasswork representational of earth, sky and sea.

The 'Peter Windows' were designed by Gippsland Glass Artist Bruce Hutton, in conjunction with the bishop and members of the parish. The windows were dedicated by Bishop McIntyre on 9 May 2010.







## Other initiatives

A number of other smaller but significant projects were also undertaken during this period:

- In 2004, an aumbry was built in the church sanctuary to provide a place for the reservation of the sacrament. The door of the aumbry features a carving of 'The Tree of Life', a traditional celtic symbol.



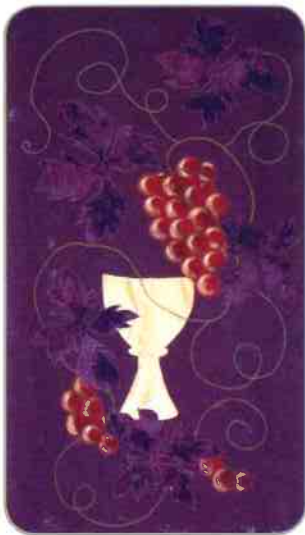
- A series of large banners for each of the seasons of the church's year sewn by parishioners and featuring biblical themes was completed in 2008 and now hangs in the chancel.
- Thanks to the generosity of parishioners a much needed new church organ was installed in 2009.

No doubt, future generations of Anglicans will maintain this commitment of the past fifty years to provide a place for prayer and worship at St Peter's by the Lake, Paynesville.

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# Acknowledgements

This publication is the third edition of a brochure first issued to mark the dedication of the building of the Church of St Peter by the Lake at Paynesville in 1961, with a second and significantly expanded edition issued following the consecration of the church in 1976. The prime focus of the successive editions has been to chronicle the background to the building of the church and to highlight some of its distinctive features.

In this new edition, published to coincide with the Jubilee of the opening of the church, I have outlined more recent initiatives to enhance the church building and surrounds as well as governance changes that have led to Paynesville becoming a parish in its own right.

The parish is indebted to Anne Freeman for preparation of the previous editions, to John Rigg for the photographs taken for this new publication, to Lesley Sleeth for preparing the layout and to Tim Gibson the Diocesan Archivist together with Archdeacon Emeritus Ted Gibson for their assistance in locating historical material concerning the development of the church in Paynesville

**Robert Fordham**  
Churchwarden

*June 2011*





