

There is not, strictly speaking, a foundation date for the parish. A district supervised by deacon James Brennan was in existence from Brennan's ordination at Christmas 1853, including what is now Toorak and Prahran. A building committee was formed early in 1854, and formal trustees appointed at the end of March 1854. The first vicar was licensed and it appears that the church was designated 'Christ Church' in late December 1855 or early January 1856.

The most significant occasion which got the ball rolling, however, is the first service, when it could be said an actual congregation of people was formed. The building is not a helpful focus; while land was reserved as early as 1852, and vested in the trustees (grant of land title) in August 1854, the building was not begun until April 1856 (see foundation stone) and not finished in a useable form until April 1857.



FAMILY.



"He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,

Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."



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Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."



On 7 August 1854 Bishop Perry informed the trustees of South Yarra church that they were now the trustees of the land reserved for the church on the corner of Gardiners Creek and Richmond Punt Roads (the present site). This land had been allotted to the Church of England by Crown grant in 1854. Governor LaTrobe had given £20 (equivalent to about \$2,700 today) towards the project before leaving the colony.

On 17 August 1854 a public meeting was held at the Ayres Arms Hotel (corner of Chapel Street and Toorak Road) and resolved 'that a place of worship in connection with the established Church of England is urgently required to meet the wants of the rapidly increasing population of South Melbourne'.

On 5 December 1855 a meeting was held between the Vicar-General, the Very Revd Hussey Burgh Macartney, and the South Yarra trustees with a promise to appoint a clergyman if the trustees can guarantee a stipend.

On 16 December 1855 the first service was held at the Free Presbyterian school room in Punt road, and William Newton Guinness was licensed shortly thereafter.

On 17 December 1855 a meeting held in the South Yarra Club Hotel (now the Arcadia Hotel opposite Christ Church) raised the money necessary for the parish to apply for government grants in aid.

On 26 April 1856 the foundation stone was laid by Major General Edward Macarthur, Administrator of the Government of Victoria and son of John Macarthur.

In April 1857 the first portion of the church consisting of the nave and the base of a tower were erected at a cost of £2850, and the church was open for divine service.

In 1859 the vicarage was built at a cost of £4000 and a school house was commenced. South Yarra grew rapidly and increased church accommodation was urgently needed. This was provided by the addition of transepts and chancel at a cost of £6327. The new enlarged church was first used for public worship on December 8 1859.

In the early 1860's, with the new Government House at Toorak, a group of leading Melbourne families felt they should have a church of their own. It was felt by the trustees of Christ Church South Yarra that it could not agree to have the eastern end of the parish being annexed while there was still a debt for the building of the church. An agreement was reached when the trustees of the new church of Toorak paid £300 towards the liquidation of the debt due for the building of Christ Church. By the 31 December 1862 £300 was received and the new parish of St John's Toorak was established.

On 21 December 1875 Christ Church South Yarra was consecrated by Doctor Thornton, Bishop of Ballarat.

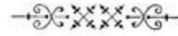
In September 1880 the Reverend W.N. Guinness, after almost 25 years, resigned as incumbent and returned to County Sligo, Ireland.

On 11 November 1880 (St Martin's Day and also the day Ned Kelly was hanged) the Reverend Horace Finn Tucker was inducted as incumbent. The second vicar took up his ministry at a most favourable moment in the history of the parish. His predecessor had seen the church safely through all its anxious and difficult earliest years and left it free of debt.



REV. CANON TUCKER.

I.—Early Years.



“WELL and truly laid,” as the former paper shows, were the foundations of the parish. The following are some interesting dates and notes:—

December 1, 1854.—The Crown grant issued for the site of a church, at the corner of “Gardener’s Creek Road” and Punt Road. Application was made later to have substituted a site on the crown of the hill, opposite Mr. T. B. Payne’s property. It was objected that the vacant land in question was intended to be reserved as a park.

December, 1855.—The Rev. Wm. Newton Guinness M.A. was appointed first incumbent of Christ Church, South Yarra.

April, 1856.—The foundation stone of the church was laid.

April, 1857.—The Nave, with portion of tower, erected at a cost of £2850 13s. was opened for Divine service.

June 18, 1858.—South Yarra constituted a Parish, and boundaries defined.

December 8, 1859.—The Transepts and Chancel, erected at a cost of £6327 15 11d, were used for the first time. Subsequently the School-house and Vicarage were built at a cost of some £4000.

December 21, 1875.—The Church was consecrated by the Bishop of Ballarat.

September, 1880.—Rev. J. N. Guinness resigned his Cure.

October, 1880.—Rev. H. F. Tucker, Superintending Clergyman of the Campaspe District, was appointed by the Diocesan Board of Nominators to the vacant Incumbency.

November 11, 1880.—Festival of S. Martin. The new Incumbent was inducted to the living by Ven. Archdeacon Stretch.

Alterations and repairs to the church costing £1602 were undertaken during the first year of Canon Tucker’s ministry. On 29 October, 1881, the foundation stone of the tower and spire was laid by Sir Henry Brougham Loch, Governor of Victoria. Mr Thomas Budds Payne gave £2000 for the erection of the spire as a memorial to his daughter Rosa. The portion of the tower already erected was not calculated to be sufficiently strong to bear the contemplated superstructure, so at considerable cost the tower was removed, and a further expenditure of £2000 incurred in rebuilding the base. In July 1886 the spire and south aisle were completed at a total cost of £4500. The north aisle was completed in 1889. The total cost of the entire building was about £17,000 (equivalent to about \$2,750,000 today).

The church is built of the local bluestone, quarried for most of the principal public buildings in Melbourne at that period. Built in early English style architecture, it is 150 feet (46 metres) in length, the width across the nave and aisles is 64 feet (19 metres), the widths at the crossing and transepts is 90 feet (27 metres). The spire to the top of the cross is 176 feet (54 metres); it is modelled on Salisbury Cathedral, and is regarded as “one of the most chaste and imposing” neo-gothic structures in Australia.



Christ Church, South Yarra.

SERVICES:

Holy Communion—Sundays, 8 a.m.; First and Third Sunday in each month. Mid-day; First Thursday in each month, 11 a.m.; Saints' Days, 7.30.
Mattins—Sundays, 11 a.m.; Week Days, 7.30 a.m. (save Tuesday and Thursday 9.5.)
Evensong—Sunday, 7.m.; Week Days, 7.30 (save Tuesday, 5 o'clock)
Holy Baptism and Churching—Thursday, 12 noon; Last Sunday in the month, 4 p.m.

MEETINGS:

Sunday School - 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.
Teachers' Meeting - Friday, after Evensong
Communicants' Guild—First Thursday in month, 8 p.m.
Ladies' Sewing Guild—Tuesday, 2 p.m.
Guild of Holy Sacrament—Third Thursday in month.
Girls' Friendly Society—Alternate Tuesdays, 8 p.m.
Ministering Children's League—First Saturday, 3 p.m.
District Visitors—First Tuesday, 5 p.m.
Mothers' Union—Last Thursday, 8 p.m.
Men's Club—Alternate Thursdays, 8 p.m.
Literary Society—Monday, 8 p.m.
Athletic Club—Tuesday and Friday, 8 p.m.
Vestry—First Tuesday, 8 p.m.
Choir Practice—Boys: Monday, Wednesday, Friday; All: Friday, 8 p.m.

Clergy seen at Vestry Thursday, noon; Friday, 8.30 p.m.; after Services, and by special appointment.



GROUP OF ATHLETIC CLUB MEMBERS.

*May faith, deep rooted in the soul,
Subdue our flesh, our minds control,
May strife depart and discord cease,
And all within be truth and peace.*