

The Congregation

Proposals to establish a colony on the southern shores of Australia gained attention in England in the early 1830s. The promoters were influenced by the theories of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, and so they aimed for a colony that would operate with a minimum of government interference. There would be prosperous new lives for the colonists and handsome returns for English investors.

Religion, it was understood, was an important component in the creation of this new society in South Australia. Many Protestant Dissenters (or Nonconformists) hoped that religious arrangements in the colony would not be fettered by the chains of the established Church of England, as they believed to be the case in England. But there were, too, members of the Church of England eager to settle in or support the new colony. A South Australian Church Committee led by Raikes Currie and Pascoe St Leger Grenfell began soliciting for funds in 1834. They gained the support of the bishop of London and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) and collected about £800. They were greatly aided by the decision of the government that there would be a Colonial Chaplain to provide formal religious services to the colonists. He was to be a member of the established church and would be paid £250 a year. After some difficulties in finding a suitable candidate, the Revd Charles Beaumont Howard was appointed. He was an Irishman who had studied at Trinity College Dublin and who was currently occupying a modest curacy in the diocese of Chester.

The Church Committee bought and shipped to the colony a prefabricated building intended to serve as a church for the new congregation (and another as a residence). They executed an agreement with three leading colonists, JH Fisher (Resident Commissioner), Osmond Gilles (Colonial Treasurer), and Charles Mann (Advocate General) by which they and their successors would hold in trust the funds and more importantly the real property of the congregation. That land would be acquired with the gift from Grenfell of a land order for a city acre and forty country acres under the procedures set down by the South Australian Land Commissioners. They would also be responsible for nominating the clergyman to the incumbency of the church.

The congregation began when Charles Howard joined the official party accompanying Governor Hindmarsh to the colony on HMS *Buffalo*. Despite many personal difficulties aboard ship, Howard conducted Sunday services, marriages and baptisms, all of which he recorded in his parish register. This still survives and is held along with most other Trinity records in the State Library of South Australia, SRG 94/2. Some objected to this Irish Anglican clergyman because he was a symbol of an unwanted Church of England privilege. Others aboard ship and then ashore valued his dedicated pastoral concern.

While laymen such as George Kingston had been conducting services from the *Book of Common Prayer* among the arriving colonists for some time, Charles Howard conducted his first service in the colony in the sandhills at Glenelg on 1 January 1837. But providing a permanent home in which his congregation might worship was fraught with many difficulties. The portable church proved useless. Materials and tradesmen were scarce and expensive. The Surveyor General, Colonel William Light, selected Acre Nine on North Terrace as the church site in return for the city acre land order. Light believed this site would be at the centre of affairs, sitting beside the river crossing and the road to the port. Subsequent developments proved him wrong.

The foundation stone of the permanent building was laid by Governor Hindmarsh on 26 January 1838, and services began in the building soon afterwards. Unfortunately, the structure was poorly constructed, and needed a major rebuilding in 1845 to secure it.

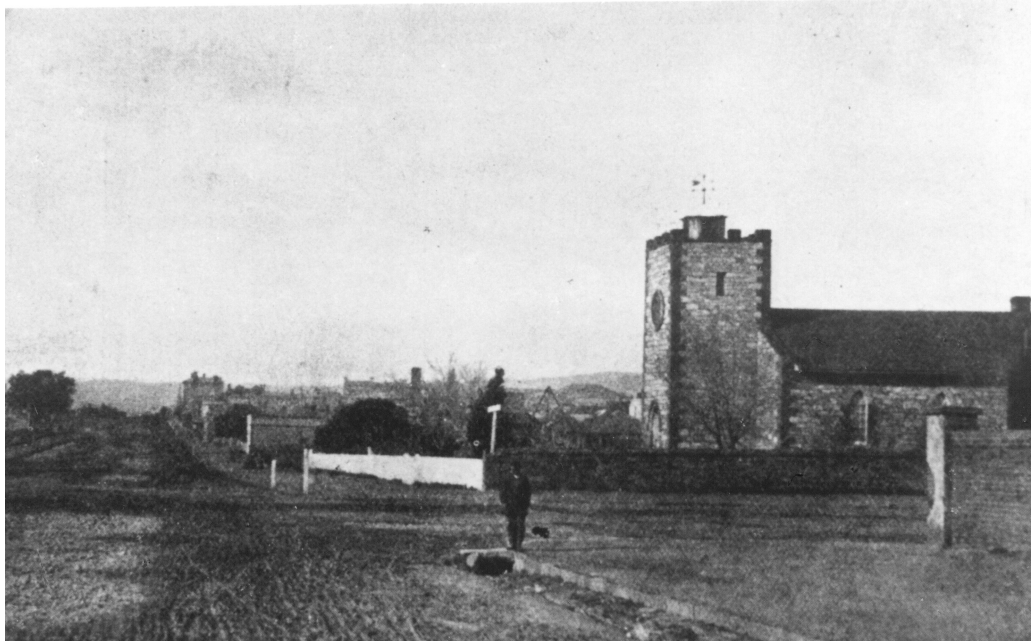
Howard, under the nominal oversight of the bishop of Australia in Sydney, ministered diligently to the colonists wherever he could find them, travelling on foot or by horse to meet with families in the bush and town. The burden of repaying the loans on the church building was great, but he gradually built up his congregation, establishing a Sunday school with the help of Governor George Gawler and his wife Maria, and introducing a new hymn book and music for the services played by Mr Platt on a seraphine (an early form of harmonium). He maintained his emphasis on 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified as the only source of salvation', a view sustained steadily by all his successors. This was a congregation nurtured in the evangelical tradition.

Economic depression engulfed the colony in 1841 when the British government cut its spending. When the banks threatened to foreclose on Howard and the trustees for the funds borrowed to build the church, he offered the church for sale to the government to recoup the £2000 owing, but Governor Grey declined the offer.

Again in mid-1843 it seemed the banks were about to close the church down. In the midst of the crisis Howard died, probably of pneumonia. His successor as incumbent, James Farrell, was also a Trinity College Dublin graduate. He grappled with the debt (even offering the site for sale to the Roman Catholic community, who still lacked a church building) and the re-building to ensure the church did not fall down. He welcomed the arrival of the first bishop of Adelaide, Augustus Short, in 1847, who soon after appointed him Dean of the new diocese and named Trinity as his temporary cathedral.

A short period of state aid for churches (1846-51) saw the temporary rectory replaced with the present two-storied building. Farrell's congregation grew more prosperous along with everyone else on the colony as copper, wool and wheat yielded dividends. He was joined by Charles Marryat then Richardson Reid in succession as curates.

When Farrell died in 1869, the Trinity congregation was one of a growing number of Anglican churches in the diocese of Adelaide scattered through the colony, with clergy supervised by the bishop. Under Farrell's successor, Richardson Reid, the first locally-trained clergyman, the congregation contracted as people moved into the suburbs or were attracted to more colorful high church services being introduced at St Paul's, Pulteney Street, or St Andrew's, Walkerville.



A view, taken before the 1888 rebuild, of the church in North Terrace looking east, with Morphett Street running to the right, showing especially the original tower, roofline and stone work.

The support of generous members of the Trinity congregation, notably Dr George Mayo and Miss Da Costa, funded the erection of the parish hall in 1886 and the extensive rebuilding of the church itself in 1888-9. The Young Men's Literary Society, choir, Sunday school and various fund-raising tea meetings marked this period of more settled parish life.

Frederick Webb came from Melbourne to serve as rector in 1895. He began evangelistic meetings in Light Square, haunt of destitute people, drunkards and prostitutes, along with several other rescue agencies. He introduced an eight am communion service, and a robed choir. A branch of the Mothers' Union was established by Mrs Emma Webb in 1898. The congregation was active in supporting the Church Missionary Association of Victoria and in the creation of the SA branch of CMS in 1917. Sister Rhoda Watkins left for medical service in China in 1922, the first of many missionaries sent by the congregation for service overseas or elsewhere in Australia.



The church interior looking towards the chancel between c1927 (when the sanctuary paneling in memory of the Webbs was installed), and 1930 (when the nave pews were altered to provide a centre aisle). The choir stalls run athwart the church (centre). The organ shown was replaced in 1958.

Webb challenged the trustees to fulfil their responsibility under the trust deed to pay his salary, so in 1922 they gained a private act of parliament to permit the sale of the forty acres held since 1838. The land became the suburb of Trinity Gardens yielding about £6000 at the sale.

During the incumbency of Reginald Fulford, who came from working with Bush Church Aid at Broken Hill in 1925, the congregation grappled with the impact of the continuing flight of members to the suburbs, the impact of the Great Depression and the disruption of World War Two. Income shrank seriously, and the childless Reg and Iris Fulford probably survived on fees for marriages. Nonetheless Fulford eagerly engaged young men and women in his 'Reveille' (revival) fellowship meetings, aimed at encouraging revival. Several responded to become missionaries with CMS, notably Max and Marjorie Hart, who proceeded to Kenya in 1939. They later served in the Northern Territory before returning to Adelaide, where Max Hart established the teaching of Aboriginal languages at the University of South Australia.

Fulford and Rowe rebuilt the pews in the nave to create the present single aisle layout. Fulford also encouraged the celebration of the church's centenary in 1936-7 with the installation of the large east window, a children's window, and the creation of a set of gold-plated communion vessels crafted from gold given by members of the congregation.

The war saw Fulford often conducting marriages between departing servicemen and their girlfriends, as well as serving as chaplain to a RAAF training

school. He was remembered as ‘a real friend’ who would ‘do anything for anybody’. But the congregation had contracted even more, despite his forthright ministry.

Under the ministry of the next two rectors (as they were now called), FHB Dillon and Graham Delbridge, the congregation, along with the whole community, experienced the post-war boom in population and economic opportunity. Dillon (another former Bush Church Aid missionary) brought in 1946 an urgency to preach the gospel under the threat of the last days and encouraged new families to join. Delbridge, who came from Sydney in 1952, pursued the same goals with an open-handed urgency and an attractive personality. He gained access to press and radio outlets for his sermons, and exploited the increasing mobility of the suburban population, attracting hundreds to services in the venerable church on North Terrace.

Delbridge’s ministry saw the rejuvenation of the Trinity congregation and the reiteration of its evangelical tradition. Once more funds permitted the employment of a curate or assistant clergyman, who was now housed in a cottage built behind the church. The congregation included growing hordes of children of the many young families who joined in the 1950s. Youth groups and week-night meetings flowed naturally. Invitations to accept Christ as saviour were regularly made in all these gatherings as Delbridge maintained the tradition set by Charles Howard.

Lance Shilton came from Melbourne in 1957, bringing an urgent desire to see people accept Christ as saviour. He was a well-organised and immensely energetic man who had a clear view of the importance of the church’s evangelical heritage. Shilton had no hesitation in making these views plain in public. This sometimes led to tensions with Bishop TT Reed, who accepted the growing number of curates appointed to assist Shilton but insisted they leave the diocese at the end of their time at Trinity. In a number of ways Trinity drifted apart from the High Church outlook of most of the rest of the diocese of Adelaide. Many were able for that reason to join the Trinity congregation from other Protestant denominations, while others again joined from the general public.

Shilton was indefatigable in conducting special services on behalf of community groups such as the Red Cross, the Naval Association, and the Army. He wanted to make the church part of the community of Adelaide and so create opportunities to preach the gospel. His church was now recognized throughout metropolitan Adelaide, reaching out by press and radio and attracting many new members who came in from the suburbs by car.

He encouraged his members to give generously for the buildings extensions designed to meet the needs of his expanding congregation. A small hall, a residential flat, offices, a crèche, and additional galleries in the church were all added. A myriad of committees supported the many activities conducted within the congregation. These included Sunday school, youth work, adult education, catering, public relations, the production of pamphlets (often Shilton’s sermons), home Bible studies, women’s work, pastoral visiting, music, special services, evangelism, building and maintenance.

Many joined the congregation as a result of the Billy Graham Crusade of 1959, in which Shilton acted as chairman of the South Australian organizing committee. Close links were established with the Evangelical Union (EU) of the University of Adelaide, so that the evening service became focused on the interests of that young adult sector and attracted a large membership.

Shilton also introduced a monthly weekday service for the ‘aged and infirm’ (now the Friendship Service) who needed assistance to attend (cars and buses with

volunteer drivers), and who enjoyed a fellowship meal afterwards. So large were the numbers attending the Sunday morning services at 8am and 11 am, another service was begun at 9.30 am.

Shilton himself became something of a Christian spokesman in Adelaide, skilfully developing links with the media and commenting on many moral and public issues. His remarks were always forthright, traditional in character and hostile to the perceived trend towards a more permissive lifestyle. He left social reform to others.

The appointment of Paul Barnett from Sydney as Lance Shilton's successor in 1973 reflected the desire of the trustees and the congregation for a time of consolidation and reflection after the hectic and highly exposed years under Shilton. Barnett, who came from Sydney, was researching a doctoral thesis on the historical background to the New Testament. He emphasized the importance of maintaining strong personal relationships among the members of the congregation, and strongly promoted participation in home groups for Bible study. He reduced the focus upon the personality of the rector and encouraged increased congregational participation.

Further resources were invested in youth work, so that the number of camps for teenagers grew, along with weeknight and Sunday activities. Likewise support for the Evangelical Union on the university campus expanded, especially with the arrival of Robert Forsyth as a curate in 1978, who in addition gained a popular following for his late night interactive radio programs. Barnett also insisted that there be a full-time woman pastoral worker, rejecting the notion that the rector's wife was an unpaid servant of the congregation. Sue Lewis was appointed in 1976, followed by Jill Phillips in 1978 (still serving in 2007), and later Lyn Sarah, (who served until her untimely death in 2007). Caroline Litchfield joined the team in 2008.

Barnett was intent on ensuring that his congregation was well instructed and able to cope with life's challenges. Day-length and weekend parish conferences were introduced, with senior interstate clergymen as speakers. He also ensured that the Sunday sermon program was based on systematic expositions of the Bible, usually in sets of four or more on a particular book. Special group services disappeared, as did participation in the Festival of Arts. In 1979 the congregation (except at 8 am) adopted *An Australian Prayer Book*, with its encouragement to design services that were more contemporary and accessible, and in which more members could participate.

Reg Piper came from Kiama on the south coast of New South Wales in 1980 with a dedication to effective preaching and a determination to build on the strong evangelical traditions at Trinity. Sunday sermons were supported by study booklets for personal or group use, usually prepared by one of the clergy staff. Amidst the growing appeal in the Adelaide community of the charismatic movement, Piper insisted on the universal reception of the Holy Spirit by all believers. But he joined this with a strong emphasis on building good personal relationships, setting the pace with a friendly, outgoing and accessible style. Training programs were introduced to assist members of the congregation fulfill their tasks as home group leaders and in other ways. A great deal of effort was put into attracting new members, through special evangelistic services and the encouragement of one-on-one conversations. The congregation used a succession of planned programs of evangelism, notably 'Evangelism Explosion'. Piper completed a Doctor of Ministry degree at Fuller Seminary, California on church growth while at Trinity. He then began to explore the possibility of rehousing his congregation in a large purpose-built auditorium, perhaps

on the adjoining and now vacant carpark site, perhaps in conjunction with a commercial development.

By whatever means, the congregation grew steadily through the 1980s, roughly doubling to perhaps 800 adult members by the early 1990s. This meant appointing three assistant clergy and providing residences for them. Moreover, the retention rate of members was good, as even more attention was given to strengthening the bonds of fellowship, explaining the meaning of membership formally and informally. A series of family camps, inaugurated in Barnett's time, continued with great effect. The annual meeting ('vestry meeting') was supported by pulpit sermons setting out goals and exhorting the congregation to yet greater dedication.

A notable new venture was the establishment of 'Terrace Studies', a weekly women's fellowship aimed at younger women with families. Women gave most of the series of talks. The flow of entrants to full-time Christian employment rose during the decade. Some went overseas with missionary agencies such as CMS, the Far East Broadcasting Association or Christian Blind Mission International. Others engaged with local organizations such as Scripture Union, or proceeded to ordination training.

Piper left in 1993 to become an assistant bishop in the diocese of Sydney. There he joined Paul Barnett and later Robert Forsyth in that role, with another former Trinity clergyman, Boak Jobbins as Dean of Sydney. The trustees once more cast about for a successor and, after a lengthy search, appointed Paul Harrington, one of Trinity's curates, at the end of 1993. So instead of yet another 'import' a local man once more led the Trinity congregation.

Harrington, who graduated in law at the University of Adelaide before studying at Moore College in Sydney, proved to be a thoughtful leader who planned his moves carefully. Less troubled by pressure from the charismatic movement, he regretted the obvious decline in strength among many Anglican churches in Adelaide. He was less convinced than Piper of the necessity of moving towards one big congregational gathering, and came to see the importance of creating new congregations around Adelaide. Nevertheless, when the opportunity arose, he encouraged the Trustees and the congregation to purchase the adjacent vacant land for \$750,000 and convert it into a carpark. This made services and many weekday activities much more viable because of the more secure access the carpark guaranteed.

Harrington forged strong links with other evangelical church leaders and strengthened Trinity's links with the campus ministry of the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students. Warwick de Jersey worked for some years virtually full-time in that area, and other staff assisted, at the University of Adelaide and in a series of efforts to develop a Christian presence on the new University of South Australia City West campus further along North Terrace.

Most significantly, Harrington moved to recognize the separate identities of the Sunday worship 'gatherings' by naming specific clergy to the direct pastoral and teaching care of each of them. They in turn set about developing supporting leadership teams and activities to strengthen the identity of their particular group. Together they then led a complex scheme by which the morning service gatherings were reconstructed to meet at new times: at 8.30 am (instead of 8 am), 10 am (formerly 9.30 am), and 10.30 am replacing Matins at 11am. Further, the 10am gathering moved to the refurbished parish hall. It would be a self-consciously family-

friendly service, using up-to-date communication systems including data projection Power Point presentations.

The Sunday school/crèche system, which had been duplicated during the 1980s to support both the 9.30 and 11am services, was concentrated once more to support this gathering. When the parish hall, even when enlarged by removing the stage, quickly proved inadequate, the bold decision was made to hire a theatre in the Greater Union cinema complex next door. Despite the logistical difficulties, the 10 am gathering flourished in its unconventional new setting.

The redistribution between the other meeting times went well, with both 8.30 and 10.30 regularly attracting increased attendances. Meanwhile, a similar process occurred in the evening where, by Easter 1999, a new 5 pm congregation was spun off from the 7 pm gathering, aimed at young employed people perhaps with families. It was something of a repeat of 10 am service. The later service concentrated on young singles: students, workers, and youth group members.

But this was not enough. Harrington kept up the pressure for growth by committing resources from 1999 to the 'planting' of a branch congregation in the Adelaide Hills. He appointed Chris Edwards as inaugural pastor of this new venture, which was launched in the Aldgate Community Hall in February 2001. It quickly attracted substantial support, with an evening youth service and a cluster of weektime activities soon following.

This church planting was conducted amidst some difficult exchanges with Archbishop Ian George (discussed more fully in my essay ' "We wanted the first one to be a winner": urban church planting and the origin of "Trinity Adelaide: Hills" ', available on the Trinity web site or as a pamphlet.). Harrington and his leadership kept their nerve and were rewarded with a strengthened resolve among members of the congregation to support these new ventures. Another, led by John Warner, was inaugurated in 2006, based in the Holdfast Bay Community Centre at Hove. In 2010 two further congregations were inaugurated under the Trinity banner, one at Modbury, the other in the Littlehampton School to serve the Mt Barker region.

Harrington's dispersed model of growth saw him encourage a variety of ministries as he and the congregation responded to new opportunities and challenges. The staff team grew rapidly. It soon included six assistant clergy as well as additional pastoral and administrative personnel. A project to appoint trainees who could learn on the job and aid their senior colleagues grew to number five or six. Ministry with youth, women and students all received additional support. Renewed attention to pastoral concerns led to the inauguration of a service for prayer and encouragement convened every six weeks. The congregation responded generously to these many initiatives so that the trustees and wardens disposed of a combined income of well over two million dollars each year.

Trinity was, by the end of the first decade of the twenty first century, the centre of a vigorous metropolitan ministry, its North Terrace buildings straining at the joints, its eight Sunday gatherings meeting in a variety of locations, with two other weekday services during the month. To these were added its complex range of ministries conducted by a large number of skilled volunteers and staff. Consideration was still being given to redeveloping the North Terrace site and creating a major new worship venue along with office and other ministry space. But amidst such practical schemes, the Bible remains the central point of reference, Christ and Him crucified the key proclamation, the invitation to engage in a whole of life worship of God in fellowship with other believers at Trinity the outcome.



The city site in 2005, with Morphet Street at the top. It shows the church, cottage (red roof) used for meetings, offices and small hall (flat roof), former rectory now offices and meeting space, car park and parish hall (lower right). The crèche is shadowed lower left. The additional venue in the adjacent former picture theatre block is to the left. The yard and lawns work hard on Sundays.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CHURCH

Based on notes provided by Ian P. Berriman M.A. B.E.

The main buildings on the Holy Trinity site are arranged in the form of a square with the open end facing North Terrace. The hollow of the square is filled with lawn and trees and some asphalted space, which give a breathing space between the traffic of North Terrace and the church group. The parish hall, a building of the Victorian Gothic period, forms the eastern side of the square. The former rectory and the C.B. Howard Building, including offices and a small hall, complete the south side. The church, the western side of the square, is a colonial Gothic building.

The church building as we know it today dates from the years 1888-9, when the original 1838-45 building was extensively altered to a plan by the architect EJ Woods. The nave walls were raised about two metres, the gables about five metres and the ridges correspondingly. The tower was also raised about six metres and surmounted by four spirets and a vane. The chancel and transepts were enlarged and the corners of the tower, nave and transepts strongly buttressed. The lower portions of the walls which were constructed of white stone from the quarries behind Parliament House are easily distinguishable from the darker slate stone which was used for the additions.

The church has a conventional cruciform plan with the tower at the ecclesiastical west end. The main entrance is through this tower into a well-proportioned nave lit by slender pointed windows. The ceiling is of timber, culminating at the crossing with some fine work featuring massive exposed beams. The 1888-9 pewing was in enclosed sets with two aisles. These were removed and rebuilt in the present central aisle form in the early 1930s by Harry Rowe, who for many years was Sunday school superintendent. Other instances of the skill of Harry Rowe as a wood carver may be seen in the church, especially the ornamental doors. He was aided by Reg. Fulford.

The choir was positioned in 1888-9 facing inwards under the crossing on either side of the wide central aisle which leads directly from the west entrance door to the Holy Table. In 1993 this was replaced by a raised extension to the chancel. Removable communion rails and a movable Holy Table and prayer desk permit the conduct of services from this area. Both transepts match the nave in height, which gives a pleasant and spacious effect at the crossing. The Grenfell Memorial Organ has been built in the upper section of the north transept. It is a fine instrument of 23 stops and 1,299 pipes, named in memory of Pascoe St Leger Grenfell. The instrument was dedicated on 2 February 1958.

The sanctuary, though not large, derives dignity from the plain oak-panelled reredos at the back of the Holy Table, replacing the three original marble tablets, which are now on the wall at the opposite end of the Church. The Manchurian oak-panelled reredos and communion rail commemorate the ministry and work of Frederick and Emma Webb and were designed by Harry Rowe.

The three-light centenary window in the chancel above the Holy Table represents the thoughtful concept of Reg Fulford as a result of his extensive visit to England and the Holy Land in 1935 and his experience at St. Paul's in Bendigo, Victoria. The work was carried out by Mathieson and Gibson of Melbourne.

The large Victorian Gothic font was a gift from Lady Young, wife of the Governor, Sir Henry Fox-Young (1848-54) as a thank offering for the baptism of her children in the church. The ornate carved wooden cover is a memorial and is the work of Mr Rowe. The font has been removed from the end of the nave and is now located in an unusual position in a niche on the western side of the nave. A moveable font is now used at baptisms.

The growth of the congregation from the 1960s taxed the accommodation of the church beyond its capacity of about 350, so two galleries were added to provide additional seating. The large gallery, known as the Hardy Gallery after a well-loved organist David Hardy who served for forty years to 1957, provided originally 100 seats and was completed in 1958. The Hardy Gallery was further extended in 1967 to accommodate an additional 60 people. The Dillon Gallery is in the western transept. This was dedicated in 1962. It seats approximately sixty. Additional clergy vestries were added to the old vestry in 1970. These are now used for storage.

The original brick and stone schoolroom located behind the chancel end of the church was erected in 1846-7. It was extended in 1855, and continued in use till 1932. A cottage on this site was completed in 1952 and originally provided accommodation for one of the assistant curates, later for the vergers, and now serves as meeting rooms and offices. It was made possible by a bequest from Miss E Basham.

Meanwhile, a fine schoolroom hall, now known as the Parish Hall, was erected in 1886-7 on the eastern side of the site facing North Terrace to a plan by Edmund Wright. A kitchen and kindergarten room were added in 1891-2 and classrooms added in 1902 along the eastern side. The hall's original stage was removed in 2003 to enlarge the meeting space and the kitchen was brought to commercial standards, funded by the generous bequest of Miss Nancy Webb, a granddaughter of Frederick Webb.

The CB Howard building, completed in 1960, filled an urgent need in providing office space for clergy and office staff, a medium-sized hall seating 120 people, and at first floor level, a flat now used for offices. The James Farrell Building (1966) provides crèche facilities for babies and young children during Sunday services and other meetings.

The clock set in the tower became the Town Clock. It was built in 1836 by Vulliamy, clockmaker to King William IV. On a brass plate is the inscription, 'Made to the order of the Honourable Ordnance of South Australia, 1836.' Refurbished in the 1990s, it keeps good time and still chimes the hour. The tower also contains a single tolling bell.

References: Brian Dickey, *Holy Trinity Adelaide 1836-1988: The history of a city church*, Adelaide, 1988.

A full list of clergy who have served at Holy Trinity may be found on the church web site. www.trinityadelaide.org.au