

# *FORMATION OF REDEEMER CONGREGATION AND LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE*

## *AN EARLY HISTORY*

Although Toowoomba was a prosperous and rapidly growing city in the early days, the growth of the sectional Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia here was slow. In 1898, Pastor G. Backen accepted a call to Highfields. In 1899, Pastor E Darsow from Victoria, on behalf of the Mission Board there, and with the help of Pastor Backen, made a survey of the spiritual needs of the settlers in the districts surrounding Toowoomba. The result was that a call was sent to Graduate O. Nichterlein, who arrived that same year, was ordained at Highfields and became the pioneer missionary of the E.L.C.A. Synod in Queensland.

Among those to whom **Pastor Nichterlein** ministered was a businessman, Carl Habel, who resided with his family in Herries Street on the ground where a Pet Store and an Asian Food store now operate and only a few steps from the church. Services were held periodically in this home. As Pastor Nichterlein also served the congregations at Boah Peak and Evergreen, as well as at Headington Hill and Mt Kent.

During the period when he preached in Toowoomba, Pastor Nichterlein tried to introduce English services in the Freemasons' Hall. After the services had been well-publicised, few attended the first service and none the second. That was in 1905-6. There is no record of services in Toowoomba until the arrival of Pastor A Appelt, who succeeded Pastor Nichterlein in 1909. Pastor Appelt conducted services in the home of Mr J Bruhn.

The next name associated with the E.L.C.A. in Toowoomba is that of **Pastor E Darsow** who had moved to Toowoomba in April 1918. His house was in Phillip Street, and it was here that services were held for a number of years. Other ministers also conducted services here. He attended to the spiritual needs of several Lutheran families living in Toowoomba, but being President of the District, he was often away and unable to minister regularly to his flock. Pastor Uebergang, a resident of Aubigny, was asked to conduct services in Toowoomba. He consented and commenced work in Toowoomba early in 1924.

## *THE NEED FOR A CHURCH BUILDING IN TOOWOOMBA*

The WISDOM OF HOLDING services in a more central place was proved by the increase in attendances at services. However, there were still a number of drawbacks. The Trades Hall was not available on Sunday mornings.

The Board of Control realised that the work of the church in Toowoomba was expanding. In 1928, Pastor R.H. Traeger was called by the Board to be an itinerant missionary for two years and he was to live in Toowoomba. Pastor Traeger was installed at Aubigny on the first Sunday in October 1928.

The first manse, acquired for Pastor Traeger and situated at 19 Gentle Street, was purchased by the Queensland District for 925 pounds in 1928. Some years later, in the time of Pastor Uebergang, the congregation bought it for 640 pounds from the District.

The first meeting of the Congregation was held on November 18th 1928. The first motion was that a congregation be organised. There were 65 souls in the congregation, but this number grew rapidly. There were 43 communicants and 15 voting members.



## *THE ACQUISITION OF A PROPERTY*

The Mission Board saw the urgent need for a church in Toowoomba. The attention of the Board was drawn to the Trades Hall. The price of this was 4,000 pounds, so it was not considered. In its search for a building, the Board heard that the Jews might sell their synagogue in Neil Street privately. This was a fine block near to the centre of the city. It had not been used for years by the Jews, with whom negotiations were opened.

Private negotiations with the Jews were conducted with the utmost caution for about two months. The price asked for the land (not quite half an acre) and the building on it, was 883 pounds 15 shillings. The building was considered to have solid foundations and the furniture was of cedar. When an architect had given the assurance that the walls were solid and would stand renovation, it was decided to purchase the property for the sum asked. The Jews at first demanded that the whole building be demolished, but they eventually insisted on demolition down only to the window sills.



## *EARLY DIFFICULTIES*

The purchase of the building had hardly been finalised when it was learned that someone wanted to purchase land at the rear of the church with a view to building a parking station there. Eventually it was decided to approach the owner of the land, Dr Horn, with a view to purchasing it and making it part of the church grounds. Pastor Darsow and Pastor Noack interviewed the owner, who refused to accept any less than, but still preferred to sell the land, at his price, to the Board rather than to the man who intended to build a parking station. The Board subsequently decided to purchase the property for the price of 274 pounds.

An architect drew up plans for the church and tenders were called for its construction. The tender of a Toowoomba contractor, Mr Sheridan, was accepted, and demolition began. The contractor realised that the walls were in a bad state and had cracked right down through the foundations. He refused to continue with the renovations for fear of eventual collapse. After the opinion of another architect had been obtained, it was decided that a new building would have to be erected. This would entail the expenditure of anything up to 3,000 pounds. It had spent the sum of 1,157 pounds 15 shillings, and a new church had still to be built. The Board had in its possession at the time most of the land which the congregation now owns.

With the help of voluntary labour from Headington Hill and Mt Kent, the synagogue was dismantled altogether, the bricks cleaned and some of the material sold for 85 pounds. A sale was held early in the winter to dispose of what could not be used in the new church building. The proceeds from the sale covered the cost of the foundations and dismantling the synagogue.

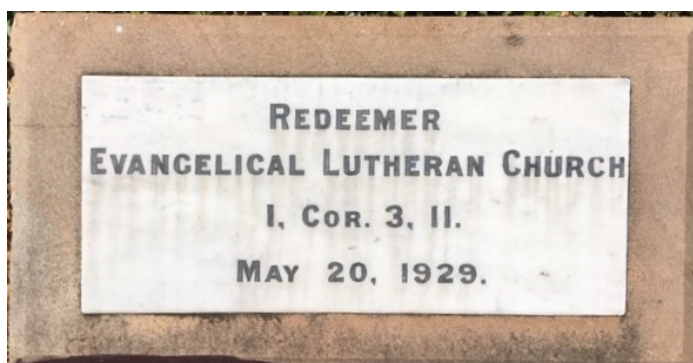
Tenders were called again for the construction of the new building. The lowest tender, that of Mr Sheridan, was accepted. In order to finance the building, a loan had to be sought from the bank. After some discussion, the manager agreed to advance the sum of 1,500 pounds, if guarantors could be found. Eventually, with God's help, guarantors came forward.

### *BUILDING OPERATIONS*

At the commencement of building operations, voluntary labour was called for, especially in the laying of the foundations. Pastor Noack organised the working bees held on the property. Volunteers came from Headington Hill, Mt Kent and Greenwood. The ladies provided luncheons for the men who were working on the job. It was about the middle of April when the foundations were begun. On May 20<sup>th</sup> 1929, the foundation stone was laid.

May 20<sup>th</sup> was Pentecost Monday, and a large crowd was present. There were representatives from the parishes of Greenwood, Aubigny, Headington Hill and Ropeley. The pastors present were Pastors Darsow, Traeger, Pietsch, Minge and Noack. Pastor Noack preached the sermon for the occasion on Is. The collection amounted to 54 pounds. The stone was presented by Mr Bruce, and Mr Kleimeyer presented the marble plate.

The contractor continued with the erection of the church, which was completed early in August, together with the necessary furnishings. The pews were made by Filshie and Broadfoot, of Toowoomba, at a cost of 6 shillings a foot. Many other needs of the church were presented by members and others.



*1 Corinthians 3: 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

# *BUILDING OF THE CHURCH AND BEYOND*

## *THE OPENING OF THE CHURCH*

The date originally set aside for the opening of the church was August 11th, 1929 but owing to Pastor Traeger being seriously ill and needing surgery it was postponed until August 18th.

In fine weather, the congregation and visitors from near and far assembled at the front entrance to the church, where Pastor Noack, as President of the Queensland District, conducted a short liturgical service. The door was unlocked and all present were invited to enter. The following pastors were present: E. Darsow, E. Pietsch, E. Eckert, G. Minge and F.H. Schulze. The Bible, the Cross, the candlesticks, the communion vessels and the font basin were handed over to the pastors.

The first minister to enter the pulpit was Pastor Darsow. He preached a sermon in the German language on Exodus 20: 24. This was a sermon of thanksgiving, and was followed by a short address in English on the history of the congregation and the building. Pastor Noack preached the dedication sermon, which was based on Psalm 87: 1-2. The dedication of the building and all its appurtenances was then performed, also by Pastor Noack.

In the afternoon, a mission rally was held in the church grounds. About five hundred people were present. The preachers were pastors F.H. Schulze and E. Eckert. The collections for the day amounted to 90 pounds, and were for the building fund and for missions. At the services, anthems were rendered by the combined Headington Hill-Mt. Kent Choir, under the baton of Justus Kessler, and by the Greenwood male choir conducted by Pastor D Annand.

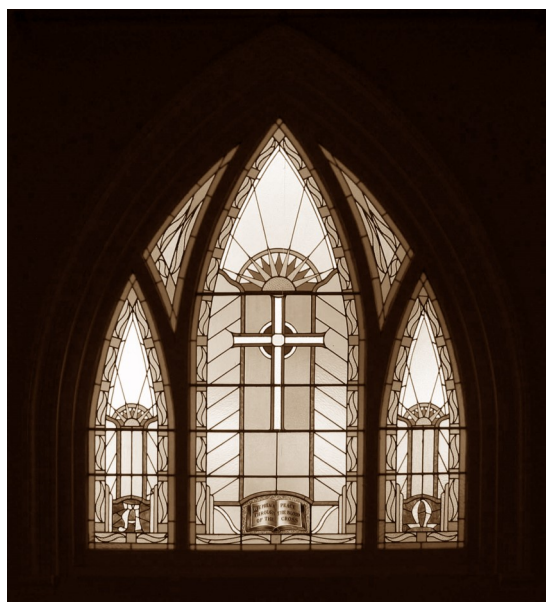
## *DESCRIPTION OF THE FIRST CHURCH BUILDING*

The *Toowoomba Chronicle* gave the following description of the building in 1928: 'The church is a particularly striking building, and though somewhat on the small side, is ample for present requirements. The edifice is of original design, being a combination of modern Gothic and Spanish styles, furnished externally with stucco walls and a mottled tile roof. The pretty modern interior was arrived at by means of cellotex-panelled walls, and a heavily rafted and covered ceiling, the whole being finished in pleasing shades of biscuit and cream, and lighted by means of mullioned leaded windows and antique wall lights. Appropriate electrical fittings are also included, and there is a belfry forty feet high.' The church could seat about 250 people. On the western end there was a chancel containing the altar made from Queensland red cedar, taken from the old Synagogue. The pulpit, modelled on Dr. Luther's pulpit at Wittenberg, and lectern were made of the red cedar.

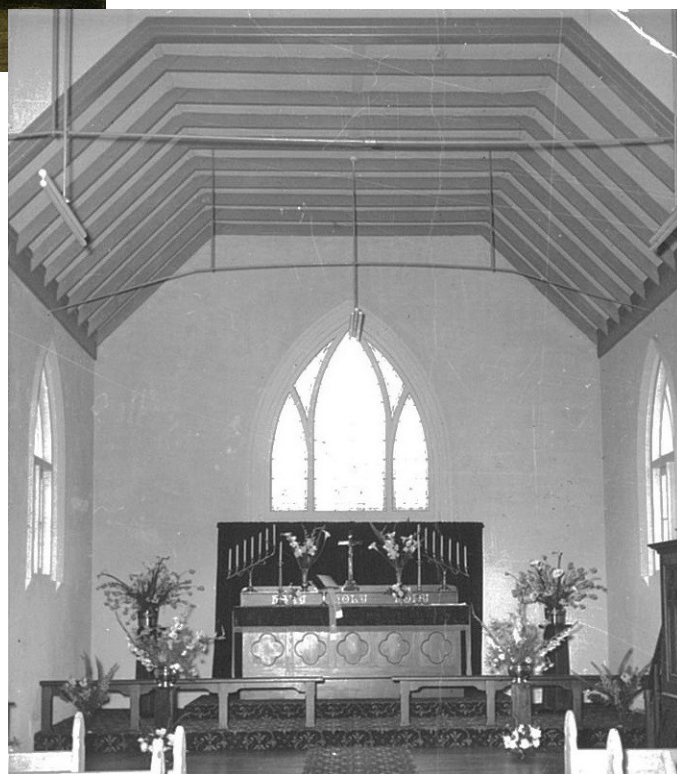




The following items were donated - Hymn Number Board, Cross, font, Holy Communion set, candlesticks, vases, Bible, altar and pulpit vestments, carpet, bulletin board, altar cloth, lace Holy Communion cover, organ and altar railing.



### *PROGRESS - 1929-1954*



From the opening of the church, the number of members continued to increase steadily. In 1929, at the time of the opening of the church, there were about one hundred members, whereas in 1924, the services had been attended by only about ten or twelve people. Still more gratifying increases took place after the opening of the building.

Year	Membership	Year	Membership
1924	12	1949	349
1927	30	1949 (end)	406
1928	65	1951	510
1929	100	1954	595
1936	154		

## *THE NEED FOR A LARGER CHURCH*

In the *Messenger* of June 9th 1929, the following statement appeared: 'Some day Toowoomba will be to our Queensland District what Adelaide is to the South Australian District.' The membership of the congregation outgrew the seating capacity of the church. In 1940, the Toowoomba parish, consisting of the congregations of Toowoomba and Helidon, was formed. This arrangement was in force until the parish went out of existence on August 1st 1949. Other arrangements had to be made for services at Helidon, as Toowoomba had grown so large that it required the services of a pastor every Sunday. The first move to enlarge the building was made in 1946. Discussions went on until 1952, but it was impossible to proceed with any scheme on account of the Government building restrictions.

## *BUILDING EXTENSIONS*

In 1952, when the building restrictions had been lifted, tenders for the enlarging of the church were called. The tender of W.O. Janetzki and his son Clem was accepted. This was much below the ruling price of contractors. Work began immediately and an appeal was made for further funds. Some of the money had already been subscribed in previous years, but much more was needed.

In the meantime, the District Church Council had offered to transfer the property to the Congregation. The latter had willingly contributed to the cost of the building since its completion. If the offer of the District Church Council were accepted, all that would be required of the congregation would be that it pay the costs of transfer. A special meeting was held on August 12, 1946 to consider the incorporation of the congregation which had accepted the offer of the property at a meeting in June. It was decided to proceed with the incorporating of the congregation and the necessary rules and by-laws were drawn up and adopted. When the matter had been finalised, the property was transferred from the trustees of the Queensland District to the congregation. Later the registration of the corporation was obtained.

## *INTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS*

At this time, some new articles of church furniture were acquired. Some were presented to the congregation by members and organisations within the church. New candlesticks, new soft furnishings for the sanctuary and vestry, a crucifix and a clock were some of the items given. The ladies of the congregation presented new carpets for the sanctuary and the aisles to the value of over 300 pounds. The Luther Society's contribution was a fine leadlight window valued at 120 pounds. There were memorial gifts given prior to this time - Bible stand for the altar, the vestry table, and a vestry wardrobe. Most of the above items, are still in use, and remnants of the carpet can be found in the choir loft.

## *DEDICATION OF THE ADDITIONS*

The dedication of the new church additions was held on Sunday, October 25th 1953. The church was filled to capacity for both the morning and afternoon services. The preacher in the morning was Pastor Noack, who had had so much to do with the building of the church in 1929. He also performed the act of dedication. In the afternoon, the preachers were pastors W.B. Uebergang and A.H. Koehler. The Reformation was the theme of the sermon preached by Pastor Koehler, and Pastor Uebergang preached a mission sermon.

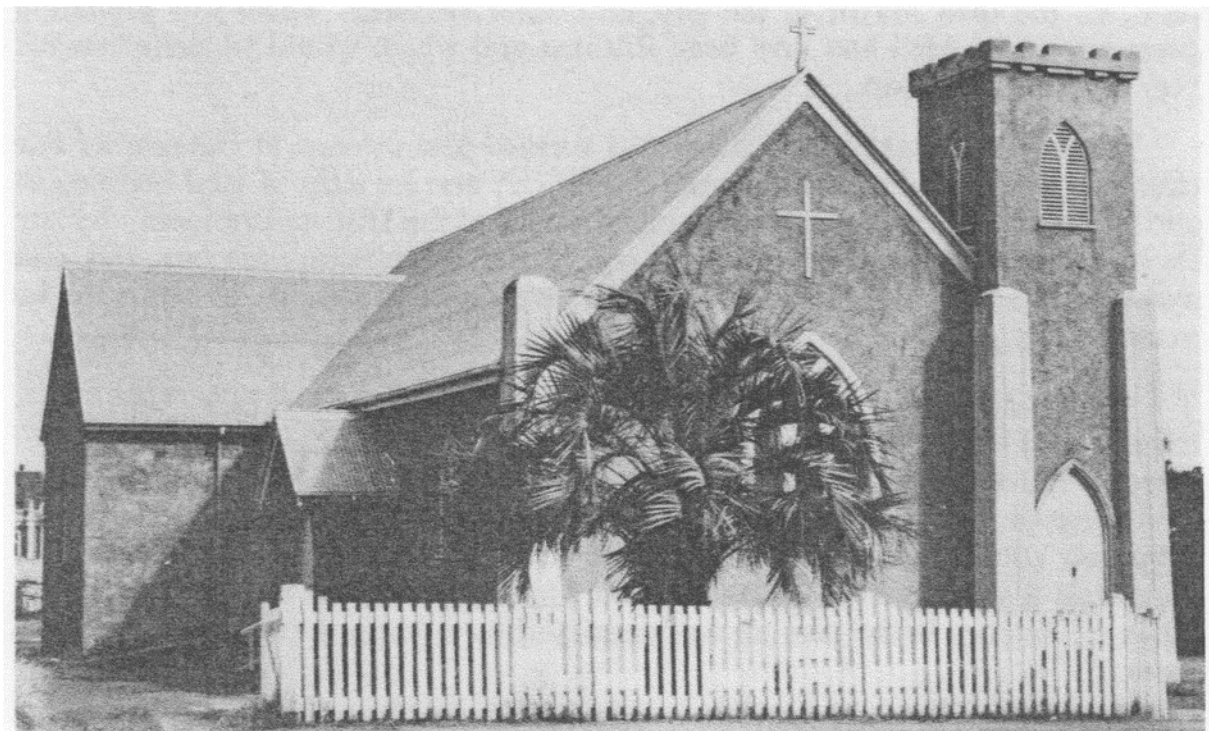


Pastor W.B. Uebergang



Pastor A. Koehler

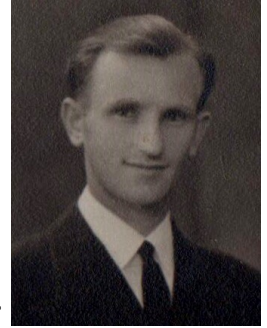
At both the morning and afternoon services the Toowoomba Church Choir, under the baton of Pastor Koehler, rendered appropriate anthems. In the evening, a sacred concert was held in the church. In spite of a wet night the attendance was good and a pleasing programme of sacred music was presented by the church choir, the Queensland Luther League Male Chorus, Mr Walter Emerson, conductor of the Toowoomba Philharmonic Choir, at the organ, and other artists. This was truly a day of thanksgiving in Toowoomba, and must have brought back many memories of the dedication of the original building.





## *THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY*

The dedication of the original church took place on the 18th August 1929. The 15th August, 1954 was the joyful occasion of the 25th anniversary of that opening. Services were held both in the morning and afternoon. The preachers were pastors W.B. Uebergang and E.W. Janetzki, who based their sermons unwittingly on the same text. Both pastors emphasised how, for a quarter of a century, God had permitted His blessed Gospel to be proclaimed in our midst, and that all praise and glory was to Him alone. The prayer was that He would continue to bless us in the future.



## *THE SECOND 25 YEARS - 1954-1979*

With an extended and more comfortable church, dedicated just ten months prior to the 25th Anniversary, there followed some years of quiet progress. In 1956, the Pastor's Report revealed that the congregation consisted of 668 souls with 418 confirmed members and 182 voters. In 1960, just prior to Pastor Koehler's departure to Ipswich, the corresponding figures were 775, 477 and 219.

The 24th August 1958 was a memorable Thanksgiving Day. This was the dedication of our new hall. The large gathering included Alderman Anderson, M.L.A., the then Mayor of the city, and other visitors. There was jubilation because a great need had now been fulfilled and would be sufficient for very many years ahead.

In the same year, a new street was formed and opened at the rear of our church property, Annand Street. A narrow strip of land between Redeemer's property and this street came up for sale. On the strong advice of the District President, Pastor Noack and Harry Kessler, and for obvious reasons, this was purchased. The price was 4,000 pounds, which was thought, by some, to be excessive.

1961 was an important year. Early, Pastor Marquart began his ministry. Then a bachelor, he took up residence at the Manse, 128A Herries Street. Later that year, the Redeemer Parish was formed. Back in 1958, our own Church Council had recommended that steps be taken to establish a suburban congregation. The move was initiated by establishing a Preaching Place and Sunday School in the Western Transport Hall in Anzac Avenue. In 1959, confidence in the venture was expressed by a decision to continue services there.

In 1960, it was resolved that no objections would be raised to the formation of a congregation in the Harristown area. So in May 1961, peaceful dismissals were granted to about 138 Redeemer members intending to form the new Good Shepherd Congregation. Subsequently, the Redeemer Parish was inaugurated and a constitution adopted on 6th August 1961. In this same year too, the new Parish hosted the District Jubilee Convention. Both congregations continued to grow, Good Shepherd rapidly. Expenses were shared by both congregations until their peaceful separation.

In 1964, a loft for organ and choir was built within the church, and the vacated northern wing provided additional seating space as well as better accommodation for both the organ and the choir.

In 1966, the last General Synod of the E.L.C.A. was hosted by the parish. Earlier, in 1950, the first ever to be held in Queensland was held here in Toowoomba. The decision to unite with the U.E.L.C.A. Synod and to form The Lutheran Church of Australia was made on the 1966 occasion. One result of this event was that for various reasons a number of families transferred to other congregations. Some members were also gained.

Gifts to the congregation in this second 25 years period included four pieces of land. Two of these were presented by members. Three were sold but one piece was exchanged for a more suitable site to place the Harlaxton Hall in 1957. In 1966, some members helped to furnish the new manse.

There were also some memorial gifts and legacies. In 1967, an electronic Carillon was installed in the church belfry as a memorial to the Mr and Mrs Otto Schloss. In 1975, a chancel light – originally over the font – to the memory of Harry Kessler, and in 1977 a lectern to the memory of Mr and Mrs A.W. Stehn were presented to the congregation. These were all made by relatives. Strip heaters and two chancel chairs were procured with legacy money from Albert Noller, C.A. Matuschka E. Gruenberger. In the Golden Jubilee year, a gift in memory of Rueben Huf, consisting of 60 beautifully embossed leather hymn book jackets was made.

From 1974, the Holy Cross Mission venture was discontinued. This had remained the responsibility of the Redeemer congregation, but it had become increasingly clear that it was more practical to make 77 Neil Street the one centre for instruction and worship.

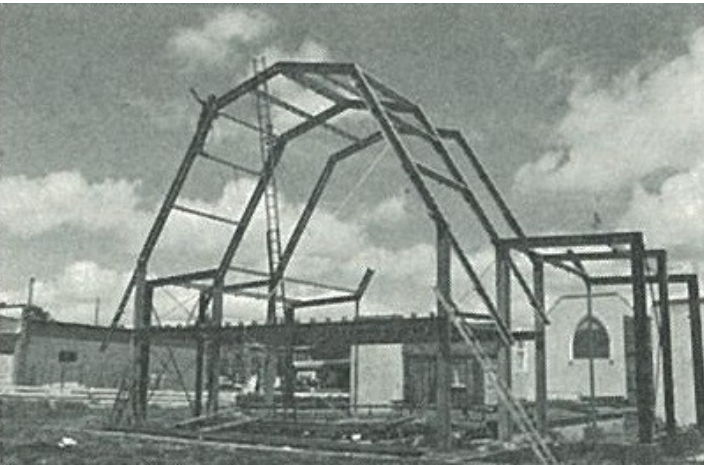
In July 1977, the congregation decided to rebuild the church. The old building needed extensive repairs and, with the estimated growth of the congregation, more seating space would be required. The 1978 statistics showed that there were 504 baptised members, with 394 communicant members.

During the second 25 years of the congregation's history, the Lord certainly has answered the prayers of His people, with all manner of glorious gifts – above all, the gift of grace through His Son. SOLI DEO GLORIA.





## Stages of Demolition and Rebuilding



## THE NEW CHURCH BUILDING

The total area of the previous building, including the sanctuary, vestries, loft and entrance was 307 square metres. The total area of the extended and modified building, including the modified sanctuary, enlarged vestries, new loft and covered drive-in entrance, is 553 square metres. This increased the seating capacity from 350 to 660. Also an additional storage area of 26 metres was built above the two vestries.

To provide harmony between the old and the new two small exterior wall areas contain a stucco finish over the bricks to match the original section of the building that was retained.

Inside, the building has an acoustically designed "Stramit" ceiling. The walls are of natural brick with the exception of the sanctuary and the vestries which are gyprock on plaster. The lighting consists of four pairs of 18" diameter spherical pendants of white satin finish in the nave, one pair of 12" diameter of the same design in both the sanctuary and the loft, and other supplementary lighting. Heating is by strip heaters. Existing timber pews were rebuilt, with some new ones added to provide seating for about 660 adults and children. The floors are composed of hardwood timber, with all of the original floor being retained. The nave and the sanctuary are fully carpeted. Quarry tiles covered the two metre wide entrance area. Since this time this area has been enclosed to create a narthex.

The building has been maintained and updated with repairs to the organ, updates to the sound equipment, installation of video recording equipment, data projectors and screens in the church and hall, installation of fans, creation of a music area downstairs with microphones for group singing, security fencing around the church and construction of a bitumen carpark at the rear of the church.

A cross outside the entrance to the church was installed as a result of a congregational appeal. An illuminated cross, installed on the roof at the rear of the building was donated to the church in memory of Mrs Agnes Kapernick, Reg Kleidon, Des Lange, Elsie Lloyd and Lyn Jeffers by their families.



God has richly provided for our congregation with his many blessings over 90 years . As we face the future we continue to pray for his guidance in all things. We rejoice in the Gospel message and in God's presence when we worship together. He lives in the hearts of all our members, as fellow Christians of Toowoomba's Redeemer Lutheran congregation.