



DURBANVILLE METHODIST CHURCH

A short history and record of events and activities related to the founding of the Durbanville Methodist Church in the Durbanville area and the subsequent construction of a Church building for purposes of Worship, Teaching and Administration.

During 1980 a decision was taken by Dr Rev Allister Rundle, minister at Bellville Methodist Church, to plant a new church in the Durbanville area. This action was taken as at least 40 families worshipping at Bellville Methodist Church were residing in the Durbanville area and this was a fast developing area suitable for growing a church.

The church was offered, at an affordable rental, the use of the Fairmont High School hall for worship purposes on Sunday mornings. The Rev John McKaig was appointed to lead this church. The first service took place at 9:00 on 1 March 1981. The Fairmont hall was used for church services from 1981 to 1994. During this period the congregation grew from 40 families to 497 members, excluding children, plus 111 adherents.

A number of sites were considered in the Durbanville area. Between 1985 and 1990 the Municipality suggested two sites. The first, at the intersection of St John's Road and Race Course Road, was withdrawn due to the anticipated changes in future road widening. The second offer was the plot in Bowler's Avenue, adjoining the Bowling Club. This position was quieter and the plot larger than the first offer. Unfortunately this new site sloped steeply downwards from the road and would need extensive and costly earthworks. After discussion and consideration this offer was accepted. Under the supervision of a civil engineer, who also happened to be a church member, the site was reshaped to create a platform suitable for a church building complex.

The Rev Mel van de Berg was invited to shepherd this new congregation and was inducted on 13 January 1990 by Bishop James Gribble. The congregation was growing and needed a larger and permanent venue for worship.

And, as Laura van de Berg noted on Palm Sunday, 14 April 2019 during her short speech to the congregation during the service, the church was “birthed in prayer”

Fundraising, in order to pay for the land and a worship centre, now became an important feature of church activities. Intensive fundraising was implemented and professionally co-ordinated by a church member. Cost estimates indicated that the church could not afford the added expense of employing a building contractor and would thus have to build as an owner-builder. The response from the congregation was positive and an architect and structural engineer were appointed to design and prepare plans for submission to the municipality for approval. These plans were approved and the church was registered as a building contractor with the Building Industrial Council.

A special meeting was called by the Methodist Church of South Africa for permission and approval to proceed with construction without a building contractor. Approval was granted, as there was adequate proof of professional ability and experience within the congregation.

A senior church member, involved in brick manufacturing, supplied bricks at very competitive rates. A special brick-laying event was organised for 14 February 1993, with very enthusiastic members of the congregation participating.

All electrical work was designed and supervised by an electrical engineer church member. A single electrician was employed to do the installation.

The steel frames of the pews were also manufactured by a church member. All timber seating and backrests were designed and manufactured by church members. All timber mouldings of the pews were shaped and cut by a church member.

All the steel and timber work of the communion rail, including the mini glass cup holders, were also manufactured by a church member with the assistance of other members.

The roof trusses were made on site on the floor of the main building (church/sanctuary). Full size template drawings for the galvanised steel

connection plates were done by a youth church member. These plates were then manufactures by a church member.

Sanitary fittings and paint were ordered directly from the suppliers through church members who had the necessary contacts.

The following were all also designed and fitted by church members at cost.

- Decorative glass windows
- Carpeting
- Worship area furniture
- Entrance hall cupboards/bookshelves
- Sound system control desk
- Crucifixion Cross
- Round tables for minor hall.

The development of the gardens was overseen by one of the church members, ably assisted by Jeffrey (Geoffrey) Valentine, who is still in the employ of the church.

The church congregation had, over a period of approximately 10 years, worked and saved just under R1m (R8m in current values). A bond for the balance of R400000 was obtained.

Building work was sufficiently advanced to enable the Dedication Ceremony of the Durbanville Methodist Church to take place on Sunday, 27 March 1994. Bishop James Gribble, who reminded the church that Jesus is “The stone the builders rejected ... the cornerstone” (Ps 118:22), conducted the Ceremony.

And, finally, in the Minister’s Note on Palm Sunday, 14 April 2019, Rev Sean Mcguigan stated “From loud hosannas to tears of compassion. It is the way of Christ, the way of the cross, the true character of DMC’s cornerstone”.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!



*With acknowledgment to Ernest and Blanche Potgieter
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