

Open Door

**The Newsletter of
Old Coulsdon Congregational Church**

JUNE 2023



**Affiliated to the Congregational Federation
A Member of Churches Together in Coulsdon**

Price £1.80

Welcome to OLD COULSDON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Coulson Road, Old Coulsdon, Surrey, CR5 1EH
(www.occc.coulsdon.net)

This community Church was formed in 1953 and has been on its present site since 1958. We hope you will enjoy visiting and sharing worship with us. Please make yourself known to the Minister, one of the Deacons, or a Steward, if you have any questions or queries.

Church Officers

Minister Pastor Malcolm R. Newman
 82 Court Avenue
 Old Coulsdon, Surrey, CR5 1HE
 Tel: 01737 554362 or 07713 248704
 email: pastormalcolm@btinternet.com

Please note: **Tuesday is the Minister's day off-duty**

Administrator Heather Jones
 32 Tollers Lane
 Old Coulsdon, Surrey, CR5 1BB
 Tel: 020 8406 0164 or 07788 418591
 email: jones.heather47@gmail.com

Treasurer Nigel Spencer
 142 Coulsdon Road
 Old Coulsdon, Surrey, CR5 2LE
 Tel: 020 8660 2959
 Mobile 07800 699553
 email: nige.spencer61@gmail.com

Halls Manager Cathy Spencer
 142 Coulsdon Road, Old Coulsdon, CR5 2LE
 To hire the Cameron Hall or Heath Room
 Tel: 0208 660 2959
 Mobile: 07722 565433
 email: bookingsoccc@gmail.com

**Please see inside back cover for list of
Church organisations and contacts.**

FROM THE MINISTER



Dear Friends

With the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church at Pentecost, followed swiftly at the start of this month for 2023 with Trinity Sunday, perhaps it's a good time to reflect on that word 'Church'.

The Church, Our Church – God's Church. A Church is God's house. A dwelling place where all may come and find peace. BUT always remember that THE Church is not any church building – it is YOU and ME, the people of God.

I sat in OCC the other day when I wanted to 'be' and sit, and pray. The most amazing thing was the peace and calm I felt just being in God's house. Within a couple of minutes, I just felt the worries and tensions flow of me and be replaced with the love, presence and peace of God.

And it got me thinking:

The idea of the church is a fascinating concept, dreamed up by God. Who else would think of throwing together every kind of sinner in the world and then form them into a cohesive family to love and support one another through good times and bad and work for the glory of God in love and service.

Oh yes – the church was built for sinners, not for perfect people. And if that is not the case then surely

Jesus died for nothing. Becoming a Christian does not make us perfect people. We're all still sinners who have banded together to try and survive and serve God. So, we need to work together, love together, look after one another and support each other.

The Famous preacher Henry Beecher wanted to buy a horse. The owner of the stables brought out one particular animal.

He told Rev Beecher:

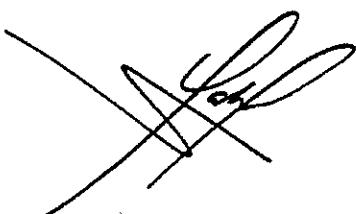
"He's great. Any gait, placid, works anyplace you put him. Goes where you want him to go. Very gentle and full of spirit. Doesn't bite, kick or run off when he sees something strange".

With a wistful look in his eye, Rev Beecher said: "If only that horse was a member of my church"![.]

Friends, we must love one another warts and all, support, uphold and when necessary, admonish. We are a family with all the strengths and frailties of a family. Bound together in Faith and in Fellowship let us serve cheerfully in Jesus Name.

Amen

Grace and Peace

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Malcolm" or a variation of it, is crossed out with a large, simple "X".

Pastor Malcolm

NOTES FROM THE MINISTER:

THANK YOU!

We have had various events recently including the Coronation Street Party and the Christian Aid Soup Lunch. These events have been very well attended and a great deal of work went into making them happen. (See separate articles).

Thank you to all those who worked so hard to make them a success and all who attended.

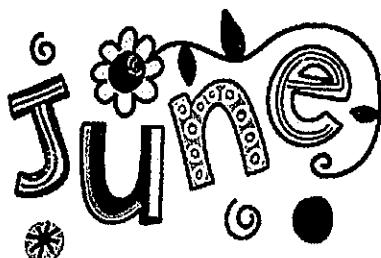
VILLAGE FAIR: Saturday 1st July from 12noon
A reminder that this year's Village Fair is on Saturday afternoon, 1st July starting at 12noon.

We have a stall selling cakes so PLEASE – volunteers to make cakes. [IMPORTANT: NO nuts and NOT frozen]. We'd like volunteers please to help set up our stall in the morning, help staff it while the fair is on and clear up at the end. Offers of cakes and help to Pat Robertson please.

Our Margaret Thiry celebrated her 97th birthday!! on Monday 22nd May. So, at the service of Sunday 21st, she was congratulated, given a card and flowers, Malcolm thanked her for the wonderful piano playing at our services – we are so lucky to have her - and we shared a cake at our coffee session – made by a friend.

This photo was taken at the Retirement Centre event for the Coronation the following Thursday. Margaret was asked to cut the cake, and received another card and gift.





takes its name from the Roman Goddess of love and marriage – Juno. This is why June is thought to be the best month in which to marry.

‘Marry in the month of roses – June, life will be one long honeymoon’. The phrase ‘tie the knot’ is linked back to an old custom of the couple’s hands being tied together.

Wearing white wedding dresses wasn’t initially about purity or symbolising virginity – but about showing wealth, because a white wedding dress was so hard to clean, the insinuation was that it would only be worn once, a sign of luxury. Queen Victoria first selected white for her wedding dress, after which it became popular.

June is the month of light – the month of the summer solstice, when millions of people in northernmost Europe stay out late to enjoy the sight of the midnight sun. To have light and glory where there is usually darkness is something we celebrate, we welcome.

In John 9 Jesus said: “I am the light of the world”. He wasn’t comparing Himself to the summer solstice, but preaching at a Jewish occasion which celebrated light every bit as much. It was the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:14), which was a celebration not only of God’s provision of water, but also of the light of God’s presence with the Israelites in the wilderness.

June Weatherlore:

A calm June puts the farmer in tune.

June damp and warm does the farmer no harm.

It is claimed that summer doesn’t start until the elder is in flower.

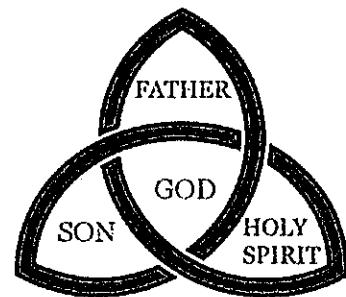
**4th JUNE - TRINITY SUNDAY
CELEBRATING OUR GOD WHO IS THREE PERSONS**

Trying to explain the doctrine of the Trinity has kept many a theologian busy down the centuries. One helpful picture is to imagine the sun shining in the sky.

The sun itself – way out there in space, and unapproachable in its fiery majesty – is the Father. The light that flows from it, which gives us life and illuminates all our lives, is the Son. The heat that flows from it, and which gives us all the energy to move and grow, is the Holy Spirit.

You cannot have the sun without its light and its heat. The light and the heat are from the sun, are *of* the sun, and yet are also distinct in themselves, with their own roles to play.

The Bible makes clear that God is One God, who is disclosed in three persons: Father, Son (Jesus Christ) and Holy Spirit.



In other words, the sun eternally gives off light and heat, and whenever we turn to its brilliant light, we find that warmth and life are there as well.

FRIENDSHIP CLUB – 4th May

This was a very special occasion, to celebrate The Coronation. A large group of us gathered in the Cameron Hall – the tables were set with union jack decorations – there were even little flags on some of the cakes. Barbara had brought some past copies of the church magazine, containing interesting old articles from Queen Elizabeth's Coronation. Margaret Thiry had escorted her class of children to the embankment.



Audrey Stephens welcomed everyone, and announced that we would be having a sing-a-long, lead by Gillian McGleenon and accompanied by our Margaret Thiry. Thank you to Audrey, Jennie, Les (in the background), and Maureen for serving the teas.

Here's Gillian second left. She has such a beautiful powerful voice. We all loved this, and sang very well! – Margaret had brought her word sheets.

(Photographs by Anthea Thorpe)

It was a most enjoyable afternoon – with many of us wearing red/white/blue.

Audrey thanked everybody, and announced that our next meeting is on Wednesday 14th June, when we will have a flower arrangement demonstration and a strawberry and cream tea.

OUR CORONATION INDOOR STREET PARTY

Sunday 7th May 2023

This was a resounding success – thoroughly enjoyable and so well organised. The Cameron Hall was beautifully decorated - the long tables were a sea of Red. White and Blue. Many thanks to Pat, Jan, Anthea, Hamish, Terry and Graham. We enjoyed sandwiches, wine or soft drinks, then cakes and jellies.



We were entertained by Mark Cooper – what a great singing voice he has, and we all joined in. And, as is now our custom, we sang “Sweet Caroline” – twice!

Just before we left, Malcolm announced a surprise item. Margaret Thiry had suggested that we all sang ‘Land of Hope and Glory’, and played the accompaniment for us.



A big thank you to everybody.

9th June - EPHREM THE SYRIAC PROLIFIC HYMN WRITER

Here is a saint for you, if you have ever been touched by the words of a song. Ephrem the Syriac was born 306AD in Nisibis, Turkey. Baptised in 324, he joined the cathedral school in Nisibis, where it was soon obvious that he had an outstanding gift for writing both music and lyrics.

Ephrem would have agreed with St Paul about the value of using music to express our faith in God. In an age of widespread illiteracy, he saw that hymns could be powerful carriers of orthodox Christianity, even when sung by uneducated people.

And so Ephrem wrote – and wrote. His poetry was so powerful, and his melodies so evocative, that soon his hymns were spreading far and wide across the Roman Empire. And wherever they went, his hymns took the Christian gospel along with them.

Some of Ephrem's hymns were written to refute heretical ideas, while others praised the beauty of the life of Christ. To Ephrem, everything around us could become a reminder of the presence of God, and an aid to worship.

Ephrem became the most prolific and gifted hymn-writer in all of eastern Christianity. His hundreds of hymns influenced the later development of hymn-writing in both Syriac and Greek Christianity.

Ephrem was also a well-respected Christian theologian and writer, always keen to defend orthodoxy from the widespread heresies of the time. Ephrem stressed that Christ's perfect unity of humanity and divinity represented peace, perfection and salvation.

After Nisibis fell to the Turks in 363, Ephrem fled to Edessa, where he continued to work. But plague struck the city in 373, and while nursing others with the plague Ephrem finally died of it himself on 9th June. But his music lives on - more than 500 of his hymns still survive today.

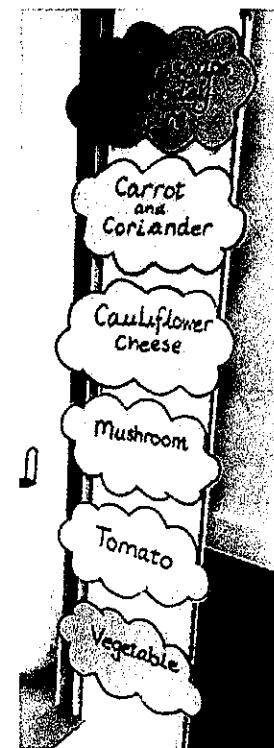
CHRISTIAN AID SOUP LUNCH – **SATURDAY 13th MAY**

Christian Aid is the relief and development agency of 41 Christian (Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox) churches in the UK and Ireland, and works to support sustainable development, eradicate poverty, support civil society and provide disaster relief in South America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia.

Our Soup Lunch was held to support Christian Aid.

The home made soups, with French bread and butter were all very good.

Here's the menu. We were invited, nay, expected to try second and even third helpings!



The sum of £100 was made for Christian Aid (not including a retiring collection at the next day's Church service).

Well done everybody.

A PARABLE FROM INDIA

Following our Christian Aid Soup Lunch, this old parable seems relevant.

Once upon a time four beggars, clothed in rags, gathered together by chance in the beggars' hut. They had nothing to eat, so they set out with their begging bowls, hoping to receive charity.

And the first beggar was given a little meat.

And the second beggar was given a few vegetables.

And the third beggar was given some spices.

And the fourth beggar was given some rice.

Now, when they were all met together again in the hut toward sundown, they talked amongst themselves, and agreed that although not one of them would wish to make a meal wholly of meat, vegetables, spices or rice, by putting all these into a common pot, each might enjoy a savoury supper.

So, the pot was filled with water and hung over a fire, and in the gathering gloom the beggars sat round. And the first beggar, a cunning fellow, thought 'If I pretend to put my meat into the pot, but do not actually do so, I shall share what the others have received, and have a meal all ready for the next day'. Then he pretended to put his meat into the pot, but actually hid it under his rags.

And the second, third and fourth beggars thought and acted likewise. Then they sat round the pot for an hour, and when at last, they helped themselves to their evening meal, all they had to enjoy was boiled water.

*So, think about this tale from the East -
if you give nothing, you can expect nothing.*

WORDSEARCH NOTES

Each June, the Church of England holds its Petertide ordinations. This is to coincide with the feast day of the great apostle Peter, who led the Church at Pentecost.

Simon had been a fisherman from Bethsaida, near the Sea of Galilee, when his brother Andrew introduced him to Jesus. When Simon made his famous confession of faith, that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus gave him a new name – Cephas, or Peter, which means rock.

The ‘gates of hell’ would never prevail against Jesus’ Church, and He gave Peter the power of ‘binding and loosing’, and also the ‘the keys of the kingdom of heaven’.

Peter witnessed the Transfiguration, the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and Jesus praying in Gethsemane. Peter betrayed Jesus but after the Resurrection, Jesus entrusted him to feed both the lambs and the sheep of Christ’s flock.

Peter was the first apostle to work a miracle.

After Jesus’ death Peter served as the head of the apostles, and performed a miracle after Pentecost (Act 3:1-11). Peter and John were at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, where there was a man who had been lame all his life.



The man asked for money, but Peter said “I give you what I have – in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I order you to get up and walk”. He helped him up, and the man’s feet and ankles became strong – stood up and went into the Temple with them, walking and jumping, and praising God.

WORDSEARCH

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SIMON	RAISING	LAMBS
PETER	DAUGHTER	SHEEP
FISHERMAN	GARDEN	KEYS
BETHSAIDA	GETHSEMANE	KINGDOM
GALILEE	BETRAYED	GATES
ANDREW	COCK	HELL
JESUS	CROWED	BINDING
ROCK	FEED	LOOSING
TRANSFIGURATION	MY	

Mother Teresa once said about her work
“It’s only a drop in the ocean – but the
ocean wouldn’t be the same without that drop”.

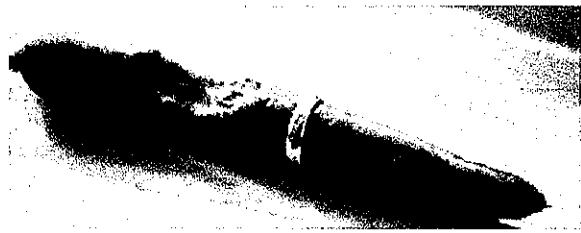
There is a Mexican prayer which expresses a similar thought:

I am only a spark – make me a fire.
I am only a string – make me a lyre.
I am only a drop – make me a fountain.
I am only an anthill – make me a mountain.
I am only a feather – make me a wing.
I am only a rag – make me a king!

How our smallest efforts are magnified when the motives behind them are unselfish!

A young couple came into the church office to fill out a pre-marriage questionnaire. The young man was very nervous. When the Minister came to ask “Are you entering this marriage of your own free will?”, there was a long pause. Finally, the girl looked across to her apprehensive fiancé and said, “Put down ‘yes’ ”.

A woman in Sweden accidentally threw her wedding ring out with her vegetable peelings, in 1995.



Sixteen years later, she dug up a carrot, and her ring was around it!

BARSHAM CHURCH, SUFFOLK



This 14th Century church has a round-tower, a thatched-nave and an extraordinary flint lattice at the east end.

But there is also an amazing feature.

At the spring and autumn equinox, the setting sun hits a window at the east end, and illuminates the 5ft carving of Christ on the cross for four spellbinding minutes.

The spectacle dates back to the 1300s, when the narrow window was built in the church tower. The original screen was removed in the reign of Henry VIII, but rebuilt in 1870 with an identical figure of Christ in the same position. However, the vicar hung a painting over the window! The painting was only taken down in 1979 when a fire destroyed the nave roof. Even then the light show went unnoticed for several more years until, by chance, the assistant curate spotted it.

Twice a year people gather to share this incredible sight.

(I did not know of this when I visited the church some years ago. Barbara).

GARDENING IN A NUTSHELL

**That God once
loved a garden we
learn in Holy writ.
And seeing gardens
in the Spring I well
can credit it."**

- Winifred Mary Letts

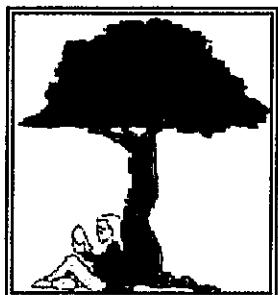


I think that if ever a mortal
heard the voice of God it
would be in a garden at the
cool of the day.

F. Frankfort Moore,
A Garden of Peace

**The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden and there
He put man whom he had formed ... God took the man and
placed him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.**

Genesis 2:8 and 15.



Someone's sitting in the shade
today because someone planted a
tree a long time ago.

Les Brown

***Our England is a garden, and
such gardens are not made by
singing: - "Oh, how beautiful!"
and sitting in the shade.***

Rudyard Kipling, "The Glory of the Garden"



When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing
a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes
out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant.

Author Unknown

**The greatest gift of the garden is
the restoration of the five senses.**

Hanna Rion

BE CAREFUL

Be careful of your thoughts
for your thoughts become your word.
Be careful of your words
for your words become your actions.
Be careful of your actions
for your actions become your habits.
Be careful of your habits
for your habits become your character.
Be careful of your character
for your character becomes your destiny.

Unknown

"By the Skin of Your Teeth"

A phrase often used in everyday conversation - which means: narrowly or barely. This refers to a narrow escape from a situation or disaster, or marginally achieving something.

These words first appeared in English in the *Geneva Bible*, 1560, Job 19:20, which provides a literal translation of the original Hebrew: "*I have escaped with the skinne of my tethe.*" This was copied into the *King James Bible* (1611).

(Teeth don't have skin, of course, so the writer may have been alluding to the teeth's surface or simply to a notional minute measure).

YEARS AGO, IN A YORKSHIRE VILLAGE, there lived a minister who loved to walk in the solitude of the countryside. To reach it however, he had to walk through the village, and time and time again he would be stopped by members of the community who wanted to talk to him. By the time they had finished with him it was often too late for his walk.

At last he found a way to avoid this. He built some stepping stones across the stream behind his manse, so that he could slip out of the back door, cross the stones, and reach the open country without meeting anyone. These "hipping stones" as they were known in the area, were his escape route.



Sometimes, amid the busyness of our lives we all need "hipping stones" – our retreat into silence and solitude. Like this minister, we may find it in the countryside, maybe in music, an engrossing book, the silence of an ancient church or simply the peace of our own home.

"Hipping stones" can help us to slip away for a while from the pressures of daily life so that we can come back refreshed and ready once again for the fray.

He who has a thousand friends
has not a friend to spare,
And he who has one enemy
will meet him everywhere.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

WORRIED ABOUT CHANGES IN OUR LIVES?

A wise farmer rotates his crops. No one thing should always be grown in the same place. In fact, change and diversity are the key to long-term health. It is the same for us: for us to be at our most productive, we must not be surprised if God suddenly rests us from 'growing corn', and gives us something else to do instead. Often it is something we would never have imagined!

Life is lived in seasons: in each of our lives, there is a time to do this, a time to do that. Too many of us lose our sense of self-worth and direction because we don't understand when we're leaving one season and entering another in life. We struggle and want to hang on to what we had.

But sometimes God wants to give us something *new*, to make us productive at *every* stage of our life. God will never put you in a place too small to grow. You may be asked to grow in ways that seem uncomfortable at first, but He is out to develop you fully, in every aspect of your being – not just the ones at which you are already good!

A snippet from an old book.

A man was talking to his friend, complaining that women had started to wear trousers. He thought it was most unseemly! And said to his friend "If we are walking behind two people, presumably a man and his wife, how do we know who was who?" "Easy" said his friend, "The one who is listening is the man!"

SENIOR MOMENTS

As Birthdays come and Birthdays go,
It really does focus your mind
That the years that you have before you,
Are less.....than you have behind.
Do you hear yourself quoting your parents
And berating the youth of today,
Recalling what happened a decade ago,
But not what you did yesterday?
Don't worry if you can't remember,
What you've climbed up the stairs to find,
You're just having a Senior Moment,
And not going out of your mind!
Would you rather "do" lunch, than have dinner,
As you can't possibly eat after eight,
Have you cut out all treats for cholesterol
And still cannot shift any weight.
Do you bump into people whose face you recall,
But just wish you could remember their name,
Have you noticed that everyone whispers today,
And how your glasses look smart on a chain.
I wish we had brains like computers,
We could download the rubbish to file,
Make room to remember that outstanding bill
And our card numbers once in a while.
But it's not all bad news, getting older,
You mature like a very fine wine,
In your mind you are still in your twenties,
And up for a jolly good time!

Janet Stokes - (submitted by Heather Jones)

And a PS from Barbara :

*Have you ever looked in a clothing catalogue, and
thought, momentarily, "That's a nice bedjacket".*

CHURCH DIARY – JUNE 2023

Coffee Pot and Welcome Place Wednesdays and Saturdays – 10.30am – 2.00pm

Sunday	4th	10.00am	Morning Service for TRINITY SUNDAY
Monday	5th	10.30am	Bible Study
Sunday	11th	10.00am	Morning Service including Holy Communion
Monday	12th	10.30am	Bible Study
Wednesday	14th	2.00pm	Community Friendship
Friday	16th	7.30pm	Film Club
Sunday	18th	10.00am	Morning Service
Monday	19th	10.30am	Bible Study
Thursday	22nd	10.30am	Events Committee meets (at Pat's)
Sunday	25th	10.00am	Morning Service
Monday	26th	10.30am	Bible Study
ADVANCE DATES FOR JULY:			
Saturday	1st	12 NOON	OLD COULSDON VILLAGE FAIR
Saturday	8th	7.30pm	CHURCH QUIZ NIGHT (Cameron Hall),

Who's Who in Old Coulsdon Congregational Church

The Diaconate: **Minister, Church Administrator, Church Treasurer, Halls Manager and Deacons:**

Jan Edwards 01737 554624
Terry Edwards 01737 554624
Brian French 01737 557447
Audrey Stephens 01883 344863
Sarah Davis (Co-opted)
Hamish Robertson (Co-opted)
Pat Robertson (Co-opted)

Life Deacons: **Heather Jones, John Harwood
Judy Earl, John Hughes**

Contacts and Organisations:

Church Premises/Church Office		01737 552303
Pastoral Care Co-ordinator:	Pat Robertson	0208 660 0792
Leprosy Mission:	Evelyn Wooden	01737 552456
South East Area Representative:	Contact the Minister	01737 554362 for Federation Information
Bible Fellowship Group:	Minister	01737 554362
Community Friendship Club:	Audrey Stephens	01883 344863

Magazine Team:

Editor:	Barbara Ann Brown 83 Chaldon Way Old Coulsdon, Surrey, CR5 1DN email: brownba1947@gmail.com	01737 552045
Business Manager:	Evelyn Wooden	01737 552456
Proof Reader:	Evelyn Wooden	01737 552456

**Copy for the July/August 2023 issue
must reach Barbara by
Friday 23rd June 2023**

**OLD COULSDON
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

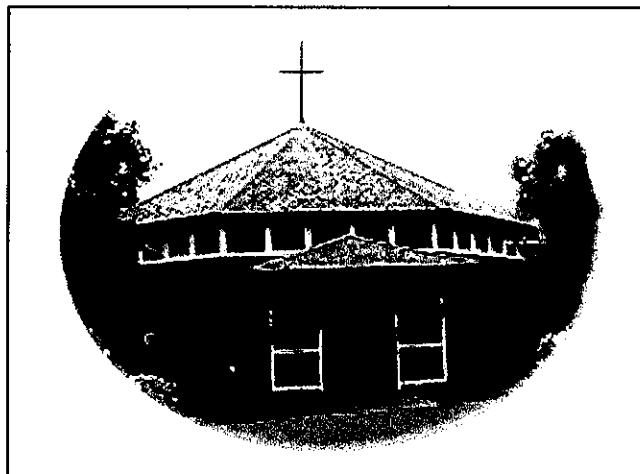
Formed in 1953 and on the present site since 1958

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY YEAR 2003

**DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY YEAR 2013
of the formation of the Church**

**DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY YEAR 2018
of the Opening of the Church Building**

**Over 70 YEARS OF SERVICE
1953 - 2023**



- * **A Christian Church**
- * **A Caring Church**
- * **A Community Church**

**Our Mission Is
To Share Christ's love with the Community**

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