

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CHRIST THE SAVIOUR

(Gavin L Frank and Jullian Warnasuriya)

The history of the Anglican Church in Lenasia is closely intertwined with the history of Lenasia. While the focus was specifically geared for Anglican worship, the church has always operated mutually within the broader community of Lenasia. It is within this context that the church existed and so the history and development of the church cannot be seen as a separate entity from the development of Lenasia.

THE EARLY FIFTIES UP TO 1967

In the early fifties, the Reverend Bernard Lazarus Emanuel Sigamoney was reported to have obtained permission for the old Military Camp to be used to house homeless and people in need of accommodation. With Lenasia officially declared an Indian Group Area, several other residents moved into the “township” area, which is now part of Extension 1.



Rev BLE Sigamoney

Reverend Sigamoney took on the responsibility of initiating prayer meetings at the homes of Anglican worshippers in the early fifties. By 1956, he conducted official church services. He travelled every Sunday from his home in Vrededorp to carry out these responsibilities. Lenasia Secondary School, which was situated where Signet Terrace Shopping Centre now stands, became our early home when we were allowed the use of a classroom for our church services. This arrangement really allowed us to establish a

foundation for our continued worship. After 1963, different priests took over these responsibilities.



(L-R) Stanley Joseph, WAM (Billy) Moonsammy, Wilfred Warnasuriya, Father Peter Hipkins and Morris Moonsammy

1967 TO 1972

From 1967, the Anglican churches from Lenasia, Kliptown and Protea were grouped together under St. Alban's in Malay Camp, near Fordsburg. Under the leadership of Father Peter Hipkins, and a dedicated church council, they embarked on the struggle to get approval for the building of the church from the authorities during the apartheid era. A church in Lenasia was finally erected on the corner of Rose Avenue and Petrea Street and was named, The Church of Christ The Saviour. The church was consecrated on the 3 May 1969.

AFTER 1972

There were a number of residential priests that served the parish.

- 1972-1973 Reverend Erson
- 1973-1982 Reverend Dennis Jacobs
- 1982-1987 Reverend Michael Kuppin
- 1988-1984 Reverend Ron Daniels
- 1994-1996 Reverend George van der Merwe/Reverend Gill Lee
- 1996-2005 Reverend Arun John
- 2005 Ven. Joan Hepburn
- 2006-2012 Reverend Kumeran

- 2012 Reverend Maureen
- 2013 Canon George van der Merwe
- 2014- 2015 Reverend David Mahlonoko
- 2016- 2025 Reverend and now Canon Mpho Mohale
- Currently caretaker Priest Reverend

Renovations to the church commenced on 31 July 2018 and were completed a year later.

THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

From the early days there existed respect and support, which operated on a mutual basis, between the church and the Lenasia community. The support from the broader community during the building of the church was indeed encouraging.



Bishop Desmond Tutu after a confirmation service in Lenasia

The 1970s marked a period of political activity and change in Lenasia and the rest of the country. With the Anglican Church in South Africa and people like Archbishop Desmond Tutu openly voicing their opposition to apartheid, the local parish did not desist from getting involved. Links were established with a variety of groups and people who were agents of change. Members of the congregation were actively involved in the struggle for non-racial sport and in particular, soccer.

In a township that possibly has the most places of religious worship per square kilometer, the Anglican church has co-existed peacefully within a community with such strong spiritual attachments. The church has hosted a number of Inter-Faith and Evangelical conferences and opportunities for dialogue. In terms of our social

responsibility, our efforts were not confined to the congregation but to the wider community, which included efforts to address drug and alcohol addiction and HIV/Aids.

Individually, members have played a major role in terms of education, soccer and sports in general. What was particularly memorable and unique was the midwife, affectionately known as Auntie Ella, who was a congregant of the church. Together with Nurse Fredericks from Eldorado Park, they delivered many babies born from those early years in Lenasia, up until 1968, when Anti-Natal Clinics finally took over this responsibility in Lenasia. As a member of this congregation, she literally contributed to the growth of this community.

Currently, there is the annual Wellness Day which is open to the community, and which has always been supported by volunteer healthcare professionals locally. This year it was hosted in partnership with the groups for Breast Cancer Awareness and the Lenasia Lions Club.

As a congregation we are proud to be a part of the celebration of Lenasia's heritage.

23 April 2025