

## St Joseph's Catholic Church Caramut

The present Catholic Church in Caramut was built by Fr J Davis on land that was donated by the Dickson family. The opening ceremony was performed by Father Waldron in 1908. Previous to this, a priest rode a horse from Belfast (Port Fairy) to celebrate Mass at Caramut. Mass was held in the homes of various Catholic families in the area.

The Church became part of the Mortlake Parish and Mass was celebrated about once a month. In the 1960s Mass was celebrated more often due to the large influx of soldier settlers in the Caramut district.

In 1964, the Church was clad with conite.

Some of the priests in those years were Frs Michael Gleeson, Michael Dohle, Henry Nolan, Patrick Downes and William Melican.

In 1982 the Caramut Catholic Church became part of the Penshurst Parish.

In 1986 the church, under the guidance of parish priest Fr Thomas Brophy, was refurbished. The opening ceremony was celebrated by the Bishop of Ballarat and attended by a large congregation of present and past parishioners.

In 2011, when Penshurst became part of the Hamilton parish, Caramut again returned to the Mortlake parish.

Some of the priests over those years were Frs Meredith Delahunty, Lawrence O'Toole, Tom Brophy and Frank Madden.

The congregation declined but under Fr Gerry Puntty and Fr Michael McKinnon, Mass was celebrated on a Friday night and well attended. Many times afterwards all retired to the Caramut Hotel for fish and chips.

In November 2023, Fr Gary Jones celebrated the final Mass and the church was decommissioned. There was a great gathering of former parishioners that returned to Caramut on the day. A luncheon was held at the Caramut Hotel to celebrate.

