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Church celebrates centenary

FAITHFUL FRIENDS: Ninety-year-old parishioner Joe Kowaleski (right) recalls old memories of the Stratford Immaculate Conception church with centenary committee secretary Bernard Lyon.

The Catholic church is celebrating 100 years in Stratford this weekend with a family evening tonight, and a mass, dinner and get-together tomorrow.

Mr Kowaleski, who is believed to be the church's oldest parishioner, has attended since he was born in 1908. He recalls his family of 15, his parents and grandmother all piling on to a horse-drawn cart for the trip from Midhirst to Sunday services.

Mr Kowaleski, who now lives at Marire Home in Stratford, still attends Sunday services at the church and will participate in the centenary festivities.

He said the biggest changes he had seen in his 90 years with the church were the new building in 1973 and the changing faces of the priests.

Photo: AIDAN RODLEY