

Horley Team Ministry Rector

Revd. Canon Les Wells says "Faith, Hope and Love" (1 Corinthians 13:13) has been Bishop Christopher's call to Southwark Diocese since he became their Bishop, and with the motto "hearts on fire", we are encouraged to share the good news with all people we come across in our lives.

A rector was first installed in Horley 800 years ago at St Bartholomew's Church, St Francis' and St Wilfrid's are also celebrating 60 years of their church buildings. During this time we have seen the faith, hope and love of many witnesses; Christians have helped shape the community of Horley with the love of the Lord Jesus displayed in their lives through both words and actions over this time.

Horley parish is one of the biggest parishes in Southwark diocese geographically and the population is increasing, especially with the new housing developments. Today we face the same challenge as we as churches for Horley seek to share the love of Christ with all those we come across and to walk in the way of Jesus for the coming years ahead.

The Parish Anniversary Year has a succession of events to help us celebrate this milestone in the life of the church.

It is a special year for not only our three churches, it is also a celebration of Horley and there are events at all three churches which aim to involve people of all ages. It is an amazing testimony that there has been a rector of Horley for eight centuries and people worshipping Jesus Christ at the Church Road site long before that.

St Bartholomew's

Horley is not mentioned in Domesday but it is fairly certain there has been a church, probably timber framed, on this site since about 1150. The North Aisle, now incorporating the Lady Chapel and tower, is the oldest, likely to have been built by the Salaman family in the 14th century. The effigy at the top of this aisle is of Ralph Salaman, who died in 1315.

...people worshipped Jesus Christ at this site long before 1218...

The church expanded to the south with the present nave and chancel built in

about 1400 and the South Aisle was built in 1900 shortly after the great restoration of the church. The upper rooms were added in 1991. The church has examples of some of the best preserved Medieval graffiti in the world. The etchings can be seen all over the interior of the north side of the church, in particular in the porch and door jambs.

The Post of Rector

This is simply recorded as 'Walter' and he was in post for 16 years until 1234. Some of the rectors have served here for up to 45 years such as Rev Henry Lewis who started here as a curate and served over the turn of the 20th century. Today, it is unusual for vicars to stay in a single post for more than 15 years.

Restoration Project

Now a century after the Great Restoration, the spire and parts of the roof are in need of urgent repair once again. This work will be completed in phases under the expert guidance of Diocesan architects and English Heritage. As a Grade I listed building, all work completed has to be carried out to a particular specification and hold true to the original methods and materials used.

St Wilfrid's Church, Horley Row, since 1958



St Wilfrid's

The present St Wilfrid's Church and Community Hall was dedicated on 14th October 1970 and was built on the site of an old school (1834-1929). During 1958 the school was converted to a church. The first service in the converted building was Friday 19th September 1958 and regular attendance grew. Girls from the Kingsley Boarding School, which was just down the road at that time, attended every Sunday morning. After closure of the old school, the Church of England Men's Society held Sunday evening services in the building for people who could not walk all the way to St Bartholomew's.

In the mid 1960s when Horley was expanding fast, it was decided to build a new church and a hall, so a huge fundraising campaign began.

The foundation stone was laid in October 1969 by Sir Barnes Wallis (of bouncing bomb fame). He was a famous scientist, engineer and inventor, who was Treasurer of Christ's Hospital.

St Francis'

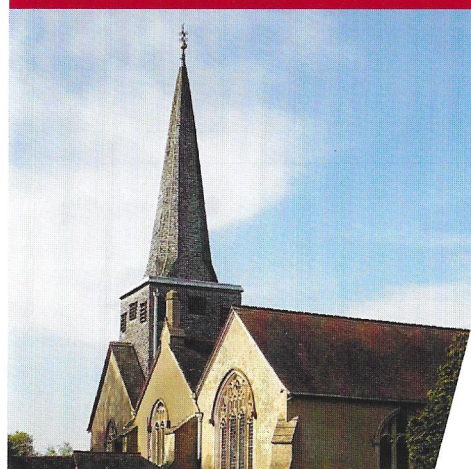
After the idea of a church for East Horley was conceived in 1936, St Francis' Church became a reality 20 years on and building started in 1957 under the first Curate in Charge Revd. John Cresswell. The land was donated by Mr and Mrs Edwards and Patron Saint of Animals St Francis of Assisi was chosen as the name, as the Edwards family were fond of animals.

In September 1957, a large wooden cross made from timber of a 400-year-old barn was carried from St Bart's to the Balcombe Road site. It is now affixed to the outer wall. The foundation stone was laid by the Bishop of Kingston in 1958. In October of that year he dedicated the final church building, hall and the Burke Room, named after the first Sunday School leader Daisy Burke. Other items around the church are dedicated to significant members, such as the All Saints Chapel in memory of Lay Reader Harry Luck and his wife Dorothy; the Flower and Paschal Candle (Evelyn Coulter) and Praying Hands plaque (Gladys Stanham). Most recently stained glass windows near the altar were dedicated in 2017 by the Bishop of Croydon in memory of John Lohead.

St Francis' Church Balcombe Road, since 1958



St Bartholomew's Church, Church Road, since 1218



A) HM Queen opens London Gatwick in 1958 & Royal Coat of Arms of UK
D) Local Malcolm Campbell in Bluebird K7 water-speed record in 1958

B) Henry III is crowned King aged 9 in 1218
E) The Forest Charter was signed in 1218

C) BBC Television show Blue Peter first airs in 1958
F) The first transatlantic flight took place in 1958