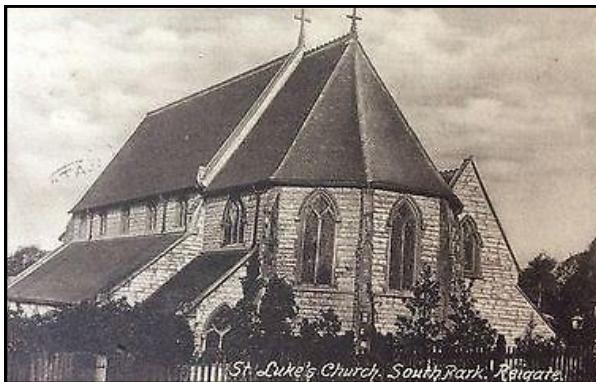


A BRIEF HISTORY
1871–2015
ST LUKE'S CHURCH
REIGATE



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With much material taken from the 75th Anniversary Booklet
written by Revd. Walter Godwin

For centuries, people living amongst the lanes and fields of south west Reigate who wanted to go to church would have trekked over the hill to St Mary's. In the 1860s, however, with the population growing towards 1,000 there was a need for a new church building in the area. There were already new churches at St John's, St Mark's and St Matthew's in Redhill.

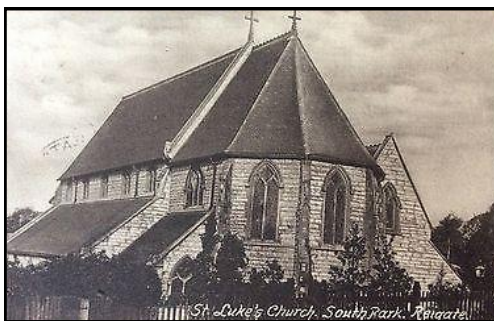


Services were first held in the Mission Hall (pictured left) in Park Lane East, which was originally built as an adult school for men by Mr W.C. Alexander. The services were taken by the Rev John P. Wright who went on to become the first Vicar of the new Church. (In 1919, Mr Alexander gave the Mission Hall to St Luke's in memory of his father.)

Fundraising, mainly by local people, produced £3,000. In those days that was enough to pay for the nave and one of the aisles, so the go-ahead was given. John Lees, a local architect, produced the design. To be a proper church at that time, the building had to be in the Gothic style, imitating the cathedrals and churches of previous centuries.

The builder of the Church was William Carruthers, a Scottish mason who had come south some years earlier bringing only his craftsman's skills and his bag of tools. Before long he was running projects and had built St Mark's and St Matthew's using 'Reigate stone' (hardened chalk) from quarries on Colley Hill. He was later elected Mayor of Reigate.

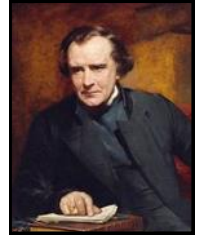
By 1871 the building was ready. It was consecrated on 30th January that year and so the life of St Luke's Church formally began.



The new building with its freshly cut stone was a focal point for the village, and to this day there is no building of comparable interest in South Park.

The North Aisle, Vestry, Organ Chamber and a new entrance with porch were added in 1882. The west end of the Church was left unfinished with a temporary plaster wall. A scheme was being prepared for its completion in 1914, when the outbreak of war prevented further progress.

It is interesting to note that the Parish of St Luke's, Reigate was originally in the Diocese of Winchester, and it was the Bishop of Winchester (pictured right), Samuel Wilberforce (son of William Wilberforce, the anti slave trade campaigner) who consecrated the original Church in 1871.



By 1882, the Parish of St Luke's, Reigate had transferred to the Diocese of Rochester, so the building was dedicated by Anthony Thorold, the Bishop of Rochester (pictured left).

In 1899 White Hall Farm, which was situated opposite the then vicarage on Sandcross Lane, was sold off for housing. The farm's old barn, situated on the corner of Sandcross

Lane and New North Road, was purchased and in 1908 St Luke's Parish Hall was erected, funded by public subscription.



In 1905 the Parish was transferred again, this time to the newly formed Diocese of Southwark. It was therefore Mervyn Stockwood, the Bishop of Southwark, who dedicated the West End alterations in 1969. Jonathan Clark, the Bishop of Croydon, will open the new Annex in 2015.

The main entrance to the Church has always been down the side path from Church Road. This is because churches are traditionally aligned so that when you enter and take your seat you are facing east. The 1882 entrance was on the northwest corner and, although the porch is long gone, traces of the doorway can still be seen even today in the new foyer.

In the early days of St Luke's many parishioners used to walk up a small path which ran between two houses on Priory Road. No records exist as to when the house owners stopped access across their land. In 1941 however, Mr Stobbs gave the Church a strip of land from his property adjoining the Church so that there might once again be a pathway from Priory Road up to the Church.

The only incidence in which St Luke's Church suffered damage during the Battle of Britain was a machine-gunning of the roof. It took the gales in the 1960s to cause any significant damage to the Church.



The west end of the Church had never been properly completed. This created a problem as it was exposed to the prevailing winds and rain. The original structure of lath and plaster with tiles to the exterior was not adequate and was blown in during gales in the 1960s. (How dark the Church must have been when it was lit only by gas until electricity came in in the 1920s).

In 1969 the damaged west wall was replaced by a highly glazed elevation which let in much more light. The funding for it came from the sale of the Mission Hall in Park Lane East (now the Chantry) where Sunday School and Women's meetings had been held.

An entrance foyer, small room and toilets were also added in 1969 at the same time as the new west elevation. Whilst the glass let in a vast amount of light, it also caused problems for afternoon or early evening services. In certain months the sunlight was so bright and strong that the vicar could hardly see and the congregation were nicely roasted on the backs of their heads.

The prevailing winds and rain continued to be a challenge to the wooden window, and major repairs were required after a storm in 2007.

With the large west window nearing the end of its life and more space urgently required, the new Annex



was proposed and built. With a new entrance, two large meeting rooms, improved toilets and a new kitchen, we have gained a fantastic annex and hopefully the west wall problem has been solved for the next 100 years.

The Parish Hall (pictured right) was sold in 1992 and is now used by Daisy Chain Montessori Nursery. Some of the proceeds of the sale have been used towards the cost of building the new annex.



About 50% of the funding for the new annex has come from the sale of Church property, the majority from the sale of St Peter's Church in Dovers Green (pictured below).



St Peter's Church was built in 1956 within the new Dovers Green Estate, as a daughter church to St Luke's. It served the people in Dovers Green until 2008 when it was sold to Shapes Nursery as by then the building required major refurbishment which was too costly for the Parish.

Without the sale of St Peter's it is unlikely that we would have been able to build the new annex. In recognition of this, the main downstairs room in the annex has been named the "St Peter's Room".

As well as the building of the new annex, alterations have been made within the original Church building:

The oak choir stalls, which were installed in 1905, have been removed allowing the chancel to be opened up to provide a large open space at the front of the Church for leading worship.





The large projector screen, which hid much of the chancel and obscured views of the stained glass at the eastern end of the Church, has also been removed. The screen has been replaced with a series of large monitors. These provide a better view of the projected song words and liturgy.

The Lady Chapel, to the south side of the chancel, had originally provided an area of reserved seating for the occupants and visitors to Reigate Priory. In 1921, it was converted into a memorial chapel to those that died in the First World War. The names of the residents of South Park who died in the war are inscribed on an oak tablet.

Within the memorial chapel is an altar table and reredos which were given by Mr Mitchell in memory of his son, who died on the S.S. Arcadia when it was torpedoed in 1917.



As part of the ongoing Church refurbishment, the reredos is to be lowered from its elevated position to the same level as the rest of the chapel. This will allow a blocked up window behind it to be opened, allowing more natural light into the chapel. We hope, in time, to install glass walls to the open sides of the chapel, making it a space for quiet prayer.

The Communion Table is a replica of one in St John's Church in Ephesus, reputed to be the oldest Christian Church in the world. It is made of walnut with five inlaid crosses. This type of altar table is intended to be used without a frontal cloth.

The font has been returned to close to its original position. It was originally paid for by 221 of the children that attended the Sunday school in 1870. In its new position, it will be easier to use within our main services as its previous location in the southwest corner of the building made it difficult for the congregation to see it in use.



The pipe organ was presented by a Church warden in 1891 and was originally powered by hand-pumping the bellows. Hydraulic power was installed in 1928. The organ is currently inoperative and an electric one is used when required. As part of the Church refurbishment we have agreed to keep the pipe organ and in time investigate the cost of repair and restoration.



The vestry doors are painted with scenes of sick people on one side, and the same people depicted on the other side healed, with our Lord the healer in the middle and St Luke beside him.

With the passing of the years and changes in the patterns of worship, we find ourselves today no longer so dependent on ecclesiastical architecture. Indeed, we may hardly cast a glance at what surrounds us. Yet our Church remains to remind us of the worshippers we succeed.

The building stands as an offering to God and a silent and inspiring background to our modern prayers and praises.

**ST LUKE'S
CHURCH.
LIFE
MATTERS.**

VICARS OF ST LUKE'S CHURCH

1871 - 1877	John Wright
1877 - 1885	William Hillis
1885 - 1890	Malcolm Baynes
1890 - 1897	Arthur Murray
1897 - 1900	Ernest Mort
1900 - 1909	Edward Rhys-Jones
1909 - 1914	P.W.Shepherd Smith
1914 - 1951	Walter Godwin
1951 - 1959	Arnold Turner
1959 - 1965	Frederick Serjeant
1965 - 1985	Ilex Pullenayegum
1985 - 2000	Alan Mayer
2001 - 2009	Mike Fox
2010 -	Anita Colpus



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