

### **Founding Members -April 1917**

Mr. & Mrs. William H. Witty- Mrs. Julia P. Wilson and Family- Mrs. Bassett and Family- Mr. Joseph Love - Mr. John Stevenson - Mr. Mitchell - Mrs. Cuthbert- Mrs. Martha Parker.

St. Luke's grew out of All Saints Mission which started in June 1914 under the leadership of the Rev. F. Wilcom Ellegor. The first site was the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Whitty, 869 East 224th Street. The location was then moved to the second site at 719 East 217th Street. This mission dissolved in 1919 to be later called St. Luke's Mission, which was organized once more at the Whitty's home on November 11, 1921 under the leadership of the Rev. Harold McLean. To quote the late Mr. Edgar O. Wilson's documentary, "It was due mostly to the efforts of Mr. William Whitty that St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Williamsbridge became a fact".

In November of 1921, the group moved to a third site, 726 East 223rd Street, and was officially sanctioned by the diocese. Fr. McLean served for eight years and was succeeded by the Rev. Claudius Nero (1929-1936). The mission continued to grow, but due to the many cures then under Fr. Nero, his time with the mission was limited. SL Luke's mission needed a full-time pastor; therefore the diocese appointed the Rev. Arthur Best in 1936. At a Bronx Archdeaconry meeting in the mission, the decision was made to purchase the site at Barnes Avenue and 222nd Street for \$2,000.00. Ground breaking was on Monday, November 1, 1937; building construction started November 8, 1937; the cornerstone was laid November 28, 1937. The building was completed toward the end of 1938 and was dedicated Sunday, February 6, 1939. This became the fourth site, 767 East 222nd Street.

In 1941, the Rev. Hugh Henry succeeded Fr. Best, having been appointed vicar by the Rt. Rev. William T. Manning. In 1943 St. Luke's officially received mission status and was in union with the diocesan convention.

### **The New St. Luke's**

Within the next ten years the congregation outgrew the mission. In 1945, five lots were purchased adjacent to the property. In conjunction with the diocese, the congregation raised monies to break new ground, which was done on June 10, 1950 by the Rt. Rev. Charles K. Gilbert. The Rt. Rev. Horace W. B. Donegan laid the cornerstone on May 19, 1951, and on Sunday, July 29, 1951, Archdeacon George Bratt officially opened the church for services. The church was consecrated on October 21, 1951 by the Rt. Rev. Charles F. Boynton, Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese. The new St. Luke's Episcopal Church became a parish on January 23, 1956. Fr. Henry became its first Rector. He retired on December 31, 1959 and was Rector Emeritus from December 31, 1959 to March 8, 1965. Rev. Hugh H. Henry was succeeded by a young man, the Rev. Allan R. Went, who was a recent seminary graduate.

### **Rev. Allan R. Went: 1960-1970**

Reverend Went had to commute between Bronx, NY and his home in Stamford, Connecticut because there was no rectory. Sometimes he was accorded lodging and hospitality by parishioners. Sometime thereafter, a rectory located at 1064 East 219th Street, was acquired for \$16,000.00 through a loan from Westside Federal and Loan Association.

Under Rev. Went's leadership, several improvements were made to the church. The old pews were replaced, the altar wall was redecorated, the sanctuary was remodeled, and a new electronic organ was installed. In 1970, having spent 10 years in this parish, the Rev. Went resigned.

**Rev. Patrick Walker: 1970 -1988**

On November 1, 1970, the Rev. Patrick DeSouza Walker became the rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church. Between the years 1972 and 1973, Mission '72, an overall plan for the next five to ten years was developed. The plan included:

Expansion of the Church facilities establishing Youth and Senior Citizens programs and strengthen fellowship

Development and construction Senior Citizen Housing

Development and erection a Community Center Complex.

The period 1972 – 1977 was a time of financial expansion, during which several debts were liquidated including a \$12,000 debt on the Rectory and assessment debts to the Diocese. This period also witnessed the growth of the congregation, the development of the Building Fund, as well as a formal loan agreement (June 1977) with the Diocese in the amount of \$293,000 for the expansion of the church building. St. Luke's merged with St. George's Church, located at 661 East 219th Street, where we temporarily relocated until the St. Luke's expansion project was completed. Our new building was dedicated on Sunday, October 21, 1979, by the Rt. Rev. Paul Moore Jr., Diocesan Bishop. Also in 1979, we were awarded a contract for the Senior Citizens Housing, at 771 East 222nd Street.

The Rev. Patrick DeSouza Walker faithfully served his congregation until he departed this life in 1988. He was subsequently replaced by the Rev. Canon Franklin Lionel Reid.

**The Rev. Canon Franklin Lionel Reid: 1989-2010**

Rev. Canon Franklin Lionel Reid was installed as Rector of St. Luke's in 1989.

Under his leadership, St. Luke's experienced great growth, not only in the size of the congregation, but also in the Church's spiritual and social commitment. The following groups were formed: the Voices in Praise Choir, Men on a Mission, The Men's Chorus, and Boy Scouts of America Troop Pack 111. An Endowment Fund was also initiated.

He encouraged the congregation to be a "caring and loving" church, and by example, stressed the importance of the church's involvement in community activities. He involved himself, and by extension, the church, in activities such as the Bronx Clergy Coalition. Under his leadership, the church became involved in extensive work in the townships of Tanzania and South Africa, reaching out to orphans and homeless children. Canon Reid's motto is "We were all created for each other and not against each other".