



A brief history of St. Luke's and its historic relationship with Cripplegate Foundation

- i) The parish of St. Giles without Cripplegate was set up in mediaeval times, and consisted of two divisions, separated by the boundary of the City of London. One division, known as the Freedom part, consisted of 40 acres inside the City boundary, the other, known as the Lordship part, lay in the county of Middlesex and extended in modern terms to the Angel Islington.
- ii) The first recorded gift made to the church for non-ecclesiastical charitable purposes was by a Goldsmith called John Sworder in his will of 1500. During the 16th and 17th centuries his gift was joined by many others, so that by 1690 there were some 60 trusts in existence all administered by the parish vestry.
- iii) Also during these centuries, London grew, and the marshes of Moorfields and Finsbury were drained. More people in the parish lived outside the City walls than inside. In 1732, by an Act of Parliament 6 George II. cap.27, a new parish of St. Luke's Old Street was formed consisting of the Lordship part of the original parish of St. Giles. A new church designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor was built using funds voted by parliament to celebrate Marlborough's victory at Blenheim.
- iv) The Act of 1732 recognised that there were charitable funds and ordered that they should continue to be divided between the two parts of the original parish as had been past practice. In June 1691 the original parish vestry set up a committee to agree the division of funds between the two parts of the parish. They did their work, and it was agreed in October 1692 that the agreed proportions should be recorded in ledgers to be kept by each part of the vestry. These ledgers (known as the black books) were subsequently lost but the income from rents continued to be divided in proportions from past custom and practice. However this caused arguments and differences between the two parishes, with frequent recourse to the Court of Chancery, for the next 150 years.
- v) In 1877, after much argument with the Charity Commission and with vigorous objections in the House of Commons from both parish vestries, an Act of Parliament was passed setting up a new charity called the Joint Gift Estates for the purpose of owning the land and distributing those funds which were not specific to either parish. From this date the division of the income was not disputed.
- vi) On 17th May 1887, the Charity Commissioners issued a scheme amalgamating and regulating all the St. Luke's charities. This was varied many times down the years until a new principal scheme was approved in 1983. Since that time, St. Luke's has had powers to run a Community Centre and to pay grants and pensions.
- vii) With regard to its parish boundaries, St. Luke's Ancient parish was subdivided into about six for ecclesiastical purposes during the 19th century. After World War II damage and population changes, all but one of the daughter churches disappeared. Successive local government reorganisations since 1900 have left boundaries which

have hardly any correspondence with the old parish/charity areas. Finally St. Luke's Church itself had to close in 1959 when it became unsafe and the parish then attached to it was split up, the ecclesiastical boundary with the present parish of St Giles Cripplegate being shifted well north of the City boundary. The St. Giles boundary has itself been modified three times since 1959.

- viii) Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the use of charitable funds by the numerous churches in the City of London became something of a public scandal (mainly lavish meals for the trustees and their cronies). The outcry led to a Royal Commission and subsequently the London Parochial Charities Act of 1883. Under that act all the funds held in trust by the vestries of the parishes in the City were amalgamated into a single fund, which became the charity known today as City Parochial Foundation. However, the five largest parishes, of which Cripplegate was one, were allowed to keep their funds, but amalgamated into a single pot. The Cripplegate charities were thus amalgamated under a Charity Commission scheme in 1891 as Cripplegate Foundation. In accordance with the Charity Commission ideas, the new amalgamated charities were devoted mainly to educational purposes through Polytechnics and Institutes for City workers.
- ix) The early Governors of the Foundation built an Institute on Golden Lane, containing reading and reference libraries, news and magazine rooms, classrooms, meeting rooms for use by outside groups and even a rifle range. The Institute also housed the only licensed theatre in the City of London. The Institute was run until 1973, latterly as a Secretarial College.
- x) From the building of the Cripplegate Institute in 1891, all the administration of the charities (Cripplegate Foundation, Joint Gift Estates, St. Luke's and several others) was a single operation, with one Clerk to them all.
- xi) One of the principal trusts administered under the Joint Gift Estates was Richard and Anne Mills Charity. Dating from 1710, this was a gift of four good acres of grazing in the Borough of Knightsbridge. In 1972, this land (mostly behind Brompton Oratory) was sold, providing St. Luke's and Cripplegate with some £2½ million each. This windfall made both charities far richer than hitherto. Cripplegate decided to close the Secretarial College and its Institute and become a grant giving trust. At the same time the Cripplegate Area of Benefit was extended to include the Lordship part of the original parish. St. Luke's accumulated its new income for several years to be able to buy a disused school in the parish and convert it into a leisure centre for elderly people. This converted building with a new cinema was opened by the Queen in 1982.
- xii) At the same time, partly because there were disagreements with the Clerk, and partly because of the size of the two charities' operations, it was agreed to separate the administrations. It was also agreed in the 1970's to close the Joint Gift Estates charity. Most of the investments in property had been sold and the funds used to buy stocks and shares. The need to hold the investment jointly and split the income no longer held, and it was agreed that this would simplify matters. However, the historic links continued through joint trustees, through grants from Cripplegate to St. Luke's, through a shared staff pension scheme and through the annual service for Governors and Trustees in St. Giles on All Saints Day to give thanks for the pious donors (a continuous tradition dating from 1732).