



St Mark's Church Parish Profile 2024

Parish of Holbrook, Horsham, West Sussex

stmarksholbrook.org.uk



St Mark's Church, Holbrook
Knowing Christ and making Him known



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Introduction from the Bishop of Chichester

Proclaiming the Mystery of Faith

In 2025 this diocese celebrates the 950th anniversary of witness and evangelisation from a mission base in Chichester, building on the earlier mission founded by St Wilfrid at Selsey. 2025 also marks the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea with its reminder of the formative claim upon us of the catholic creeds.

These anniversaries are more than historical footnotes. They speak powerfully about the richness of faith and mission that is our inheritance locally and universally.

Inspired by that inheritance, we seek to be a household of faith that is endlessly curious about how the Holy Scriptures and the sacraments of the New Covenant enable us to know, love and follow Jesus Christ in today's noisy and distracted world.

If God is calling you to join us in the task of proclaiming the mystery of faith in some part of this diocese, we pray that the contribution of your gifts and experience will enrich our witness and deepen your own discipleship.

We take very seriously the call to diversity and radical inclusion as characteristic of the Church's mission. For this reason we welcome applications from ordained women and Global Majority Heritage clergy, who are under-represented in those who serve this diocese.

+Martin



Introduction from the Churchwardens



**Richard Hanson
and Linda Humble**
Churchwardens

St Mark's is a Spirit-led, evangelical church where a warm welcome is assured. We have a broad variety of services from contemporary to traditional, reflective to lively, as well as regular events and groups for children, young people and adults. We aim to *Know Christ and make Him known*.

St Mark's has enjoyed steady growth over the past decade or so under our previous vicar, building on his predecessors' leadership. Our hope is that this will continue under our new incumbent.

This parish profile describes the character and context of our worship and service. We long to see God's Kingdom growing in our area of north Horsham: in the new housing development of Mowbray village, in our local community through the Holbrook Heart Café, and among our youth and children's work. We are committing people and money to these key areas of St Mark's ministry and we pray for a new vicar who can align with this vision and recognise the ways in which these, and other areas, can advance.

We take our spiritual growth seriously. In our various expressions of corporate worship and personal spirituality, we long to see God glorified. Our desire is for this to continue, and we look for a new vicar who will:

- ◆ nurture the traditions and values expressed at St Mark's
- ◆ challenge and develop our praying, thinking, doing and being
- ◆ teach and model a faith which relies on the Holy Spirit's equipping as he or she honours Christ as Lord and serves His people in the parish and beyond

This profile is a summary of the key information a prospective new incumbent may wish to know and includes links to our website and external sources for you to read more. We pray for God's quiet prompting for whoever He is drawing to Holbrook to lead our church. If that's you, read on!



Welcome to St Mark's Church

Holy Communion at 10.30am



Second Sunday of Lent



Our vision and values

We are a broad and diverse church of people of all ages, backgrounds and churchmanship, with a desire to grow in our own faith and to serve the people living in our community.

Our Mission Plan for the period to 2025 has the following nine core aims:

1. **Be a community** growing in awareness and passion for local and global needs, engaging with the wider church to **play our part in God's mission in the world.**
2. **Develop** the talents, gifts and experiences of all the church family, **to bless and serve** all who live, work, learn and play in our growing community.
3. **Invest** into our children, youth and young adults with intentional discipleship and relationships to enable them to **flourish in their faith and serve** within the Body of Christ.
4. **Create** a feeling of **belonging for everyone** in our church community and our wider locality, through warm welcome and generous hospitality.
5. Foster active discipleship to **deepen individual spirituality** and develop a **passion for serving and seeking Christ.**
6. Be a community that seeks to **reveal the love and salvation found in Jesus Christ** in all we do.
7. Work with All Saints, Roffey to **build community** in the new housing development and establish a new worshipping community **in Mowbray Village.**
8. **Train and develop children's/youth leaders** and establish a fellowship of teachers who can support one another and disciple the children on their faith journey.
9. **Develop our buildings and grounds** to enhance worship, meet the growing needs of the community and enable the church to be used by all to its fullest potential.

[www.stmarksholbrook.org.uk/
Groups/342963/Our_vision.aspx](http://www.stmarksholbrook.org.uk/Groups/342963/Our_vision.aspx)





We are supporting these aims through a number of current activities, which are described on pages 8-12, and include:

- ◆ the Holbrook Heart Café
- ◆ appointing both a new Children and Families Worker and a new Youth Worker
- ◆ our monthly Mini-Marks service for pre-school children and their parents/carers
- ◆ our annual Fun Day
- ◆ joining the Growing Hope network
- ◆ resourcing community building and outreach to Mowbray village

Our new incumbent will help us deliver this vision and work with the church's leadership, PCC and congregation to shape our next steps.

St Mark's is a welcoming place with a varied and diverse membership and a wide range of church backgrounds. We respect those differences.

As a PCC and congregation, we do not yet hold an agreed and considered position on the use of the recently approved Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF). As expected, there are differing and in some cases strongly-held views on the subject and our new incumbent will need to provide leadership, teaching and pastoral support.



St Mark's as a community and place of worship

Our Services – welcome to all

At St Mark's we offer both traditional and contemporary worship and extend a huge welcome to everyone who wants to attend one of our services, whatever their age, and whether they are new to the church or have been attending for many years.

See www.stmarksholbrook.org.uk/Services and www.youtube.com/@StMarksChurchHolbrook

Sunday services

- ◆ The **8.30 service** is traditional Anglican Holy Communion with hymns played on the organ, with around 40 attendees.
- ◆ The **10.30 service** with worship led by a music group is contemporary in style and family-orientated, with children's and youth groups running parallel to this service. It includes Holy Communion once a month and All Together services during school holidays and other special occasions. These services generally attract around 110-140 adults plus 30-40 children.
- ◆ We hold an evening service, **Café Praise**, twice a month. This service has an informal feel in a café-style setting; worship is followed by a talk and the opportunity for discussion around the tables, with about 40 taking part.

Both the 8.30 and 10.30 services are live-streamed ensuring that those who are unable to attend in person may still participate. It continues to be a wonderful way to expand our reach and connect with those inside and outside of our community.



Midweek services

- ◆ We hold a **Book of Common Prayer** service every Wednesday morning. This provides a style of worship different from our Sunday services and is attended by a committed group of around 30 mainly older people, with refreshments offered after the service to facilitate and complement pastoral care.
- ◆ Once a month, at lunch-time on Wednesdays, under 5s with their parents, grandparents or carers meet for **Mini-Marks** to make new friends, have fun, enjoy lunch, playtime, songs, craft and Bible stories.

In addition to our normal services, we hold seasonal services to celebrate the key Christian festivals, and special services such as our:

- ◆ Harvest service, where all produce collected goes to our friends at the Salvation Army in Horsham for onward distribution to local people in need.
- ◆ Tree of Light (in conjunction with St Catherine's Hospice, Crawley) and A Time to Remember give a peaceful opportunity for people from across the parish to remember loved ones whom they no longer see.
- ◆ Christingle service is our largest single gathering with the collection going to the Children's Society.
- ◆ Carol service, where the collection goes to support the Horsham Food Bank.

Growing our Church

People are drawn to St Mark's from very different backgrounds and places and find a welcoming community in which each individual is valued, differences embraced and talents shared. This section describes a selection of our regular events and areas of activity, and there is more on the website – check out youth+children, community events, what's on, Alpha and Eco Church as further examples.

Families, children and young people

Children and young people are vitally important to our church today. Recognising the Church of England's youth challenge to double the number of young people in churches by 2030, earlier this year we expanded our staff, in faith, by appointing both a Children and Families Worker and a Youth Worker (to replace a single, combined role) and are very excited about the opportunities which lie ahead.

Besides our usual Sunday morning groups (four groups covering school years R to 13), we have some recent and ongoing youth activities:

- ◆ in April 2023, we started a new football ministry for young people in years 6-11 which has helped us engage and disciple youth outside or on the margins of church. It also helps with the transition from our children's group to our youth group
- ◆ in autumn 2023, a new Sunday evening youth group with games and teaching started for years 7-9 to run alongside and feed into the existing older youth group for years 10+
- ◆ we take a group of young people to a residential weekend away at West Watch (a charitable centre) – it is wonderful to see how the youth have forged strong relationships with God and with each other through this time away
- ◆ Messy Church happens several times a year, including during Easter and Advent

www.stmarksholbrook.org.uk/Groups/352696/Youth_Children.aspx





Mowbray Village

Mowbray is a new housing development in our parish that will eventually comprise around 2,750 new homes and 8,000 people. In late 2022, we welcomed our Associate Vicar, Simon Shorey (together with Lou and their family), to lead in building community on the new site with the goal of starting a new worshipping community there. We host regular events to give an opportunity for the new residents to get to know one another and members of St Mark's.

Holbrook Heart Café

Reaching out to our community is very important to us. Holbrook Heart Café is our weekly community café with free refreshments, open every Tuesday and the 4th Saturday of the month. The café has gone from strength to strength, exceeding our expectations thanks to an incredible team of volunteers. An average of 80+ visitors attend on a Tuesday and 50+ on Saturdays, of whom around two-thirds are not otherwise church regulars. We see new people coming most weeks, while others have gravitated into other church activities. Besides drinks, cakes and a place for conversations, the café is a hub for many other church, civic and social activities:

- ◆ we have links with local GP surgeries, and the café is part of the NHS Social Prescribing programme
- ◆ the café is advertised as a local Warm Space
- ◆ we are part of the Chatty Café scheme and Horsham Befriender programme
- ◆ we distribute leftover food from Horsham Community Fridge donations weekly and the church hosts the Horsham Community Fridge pop-up on some café Saturdays
- ◆ in 2023, we ran a daytime Alpha straight after the café, and
- ◆ there's a fledgling ministry of clothing exchange developing alongside the café work

www.stmarksholbrook.org.uk/Groups/352697/Community.aspx



Fun events

Just a few examples:

- ◆ Community Fun Day (usually in late May) - an incredible opportunity for our church family to serve our community and open our doors and grounds to neighbours and visitors with bouncy castles, games, crafts and food, all free of charge. At the last event, around 500 people visited during the day
- ◆ Harvest Barn Dance
- ◆ Quiz night
- ◆ Men's Ministry including cycle rides, walks and breakfasts
- ◆ Ladies' Ministry including crafts, walks and film nights

www.stmarksholbrook.org.uk/Groups/352698/Whats_on.aspx

Pastoral care

Pastoral care within St Mark's and the Holbrook community has continued to develop through our church fellowship, home groups and the Café where members of the pastoral team are always happy to listen, chat and pray. We also take Holy Communion to two local care homes where we can continue to encourage faith and worship together. Home communion is also offered to those who need it.



Alpha

We typically run an evening Alpha Course once a year, and supplement this with youth Alpha or an additional daytime Alpha when we see a need. There is a dedicated team who support this ministry, and most years we welcome new members into St Mark's as a result of the course.

www.stmarksholbrook.org.uk/Groups/354314/Alpha.aspx

Engaging with households in the parish

- ◆ We leaflet every home in the parish twice a year and deliver letters to residents offering to pray for them and their street and respond to individual prayer requests
- ◆ We deliver cards advertising our Easter and Christmas services and Alpha courses
- ◆ We seek to keep in contact with businesses in our area who have indicated that they wish to have a continuing association with us.



Eco Church

We were awarded an A Rocha UK Silver Eco Church Award in 2018 and are actively working to achieve Gold status this year. Aligning our worship and teaching, buildings and land management, community and global engagement and personal lifestyle with the 5th Mark of Mission we:

- ◆ set up a team to report on achieving net zero by 2030
- ◆ participate in Creation Care and lifestyle audits encouraging households to play their part as well
- ◆ are developing a Community Orchard and wildflower meadows within the church gardens, and
- ◆ took part in Horsham District's Council Community Hotbin trial

www.stmarksholbrook.org.uk/Groups/354101/Eco_Church.aspx



Growing Hope

We see children and adults in our congregations with a variety of physical, learning, mental health and undiagnosed needs and our desire is to make St Mark's as accessible as possible for all to worship God. We are part of the Growing Hope network to encourage our thinking and action, and in March 2024, we achieved their Bronze award.





Our Mission Partners

We support eight local, national and international mission partners. Individuals within St Mark's have personal links with each of these charities or ministries and we are delighted these allow us to focus our prayers and action into God's priorities beyond our parish.

- ◆ St Catherine's Hospice
- ◆ The Children's Society
- ◆ Faith in Action
- ◆ Tearfund
- ◆ Flyers International Partnership Trust
- ◆ Fundukuphila
- ◆ Oasis Crisis Pregnancy Centre
- ◆ The Way of the Spirit

www.stmarksholbrook.org.uk/Groups/344020/Mission_partners.aspx

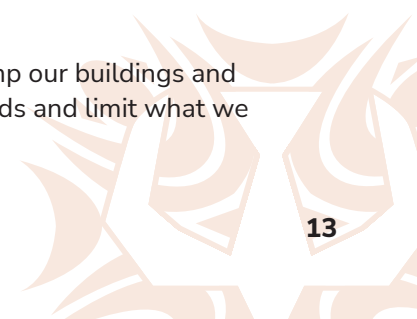
Church Facilities

The church building and adjacent hall were constructed in 1990. The main church has moveable chairs to allow Sunday and Wednesday worship and many of the activities listed above to be accommodated in the same, flexible space. The balcony was re-ordered in 2020 with comfortable, theatre-style seating. We have a good quality PA system, projector and screens, and cameras for live-streaming.

The hall is used both for church activities and is hired out. There's a well-equipped church office, storage and a small kitchen.

The grounds are home to a garden of remembrance and our various Eco Church projects, and the annual Fun Day and open-air service takes place on the front lawn.

Looking ahead, we expect to undertake projects to revamp our buildings and facilities, as these don't adequately meet our current needs and limit what we can do to reach out to and support our local community.



What we're seeking and can offer our new vicar

Our new incumbent

As you are reading, St Mark's is a vibrant church with a lot going on. We are looking for an experienced vicar who can lead, is comfortable with the breadth of worship traditions we embrace, can articulate vision, encourage and help equip our people to join in the Lord's mission for St Mark's, and serve with compassion, faith and a smile.

He or she will clearly be a mature Christian leader and someone holding the following key characteristics:

Lead and pray for the people of St Mark's
Provide vision, encouragement and support for the staff members and key ministry leaders
A gifted preacher, giving Bible teaching in an engaging, thoughtful, prayer-filled and relevant way to challenge, cultivate faith, and equip our people for mission
Demonstrate strategic thinking and the ability to implement change successfully
A committed pray-er, with an attractive personal spirituality, an ability to nurture this in others and further develop our corporate prayer life as a church
Familiar and comfortable with the ministry of the Holy Spirit
Able to delegate and encourage our people to run with the responsibilities the church gives them while keeping a watching eye on what's happening
Be mission-focussed, with a strong desire to bring people to faith



Passionate to see children, youth, the hurting and outcast brought into God's Kingdom
A kind-hearted, compassionate person able to relate to people of all ages
Confident in handling theologically and pastorally complex issues, providing a lead and pastoral sensitivity
Committed to excellent safeguarding practice
Discern and nurture leadership qualities and vocations in others, including potentially training ordinands and curates
Comfortable in talking about finances and giving as a mark of discipleship
Prepared to engage with the work of Horsham Churches Together and other Christian leaders in the town
An effective communicator, discerning and caring, holding things in tension and seeking to resolve difficult situations with honesty and compassion
IT literate and comfortable using technology as a tool
Able to take the church through development of our premises and facilities in the future

Living and working in Holbrook parish

St Mark's offers our new incumbent the challenge of leading a growing, faithful and united body of people with a variety of worship traditions and backgrounds, in a generally affluent area of Sussex but with some local pockets of relative poverty. There is potential to grow the church, especially in:

- ◆ our corporate prayer life and response to the Holy Spirit's work in our lives
- ◆ our engagement with the wider Christian community in the town
- ◆ Mowbray village – led by Simon and Lou – which is planned to almost double the parish population in the coming decade
- ◆ our investment in children and youth – establishing resilient and lasting faith, and building on the current number of families and individuals in the church
- ◆ working with staff and ministry leaders to further develop each of the ministries described in this profile

The St Mark's vicarage is adjacent to the church and was built at the same time in 1990. It includes a kitchen/diner, family room, study and utility room downstairs and 4 bedrooms (including 2 doubles) upstairs. There is a family bathroom and 2 additional toilets. The vicarage has a private family garden backing onto the church grounds.

Although the house provided an adequate home for successive team vicars and the previous parish incumbent and his family, it is in need of refurbishment and does not currently meet all the requirements of the Green Book and Diocesan guidance. We are actively discussing improvements to, or an alternative for, the current vicarage with the Diocese.



Staff, Volunteers and PCC



In common with all churches, St Mark's relies on a mixture of staff and volunteers to function smoothly. The staff and key officers are listed on the website at www.stmarksholbrook.org.uk/Groups/342964/Meet_the_team.aspx

The **leadership team** has practical, operational responsibility for the church. This currently comprises:

- ◆ Associate Vicar Simon (fixed term contract to late 2027) and Lou (Simon's wife)
- ◆ Churchwardens Linda (term finishes April 2024) and Richard (term runs to April 2026, and who has a full-time job)
- ◆ Treasurer Mike who has finance and HR responsibility, and is a willing help for all kinds of things which arise
- ◆ Senior Administrator (part-time post, staff) Jo who co-ordinates most aspects of practical church business
- ◆ Children and Families Worker Mandy (recently appointed staff position, started part-time in March 2024, increasing in hours after the summer holidays)
- ◆ Youth Worker Karen (also recently appointed staff position, starts 3 days a week from April 2024)

The **church office** is staffed 6 mornings a week by two part-time administrators – our senior administrator oversees them and provides holiday cover alongside her other duties.

As well as Simon and Lou, we have one retired vicar (Jim), five Lay Readers (Graham, Leibidh, Martin, Caroline and Mike), and one final-year ordinand (Jo, who will be moving on at the end of June) who **preach and lead** Sunday and Wednesday services. And we have an Authorised Lay Minister (Karen) and another in training (Sue).

Most weekly activities run with sufficient **volunteers**, although we periodically have challenges to fill some rotas, particularly for children's activities. St Mark's has a total of 61 different ministry areas which need people to help in order for them to run - around 80% of the regular membership volunteers in one or more of these.

As you'd expect, the **PCC** meets regularly through the year and fulfils its duties typically with good humour and occasionally lively discussion.



Living and working in Horsham

Horsham is a historic Sussex market town, the origins of which can be traced back to 947 AD, and there is evidence of an earlier settlement. Parts of the St Mary's Horsham Parish Church date from the Norman era. It is the administrative centre for Horsham District, which includes a number of other growing towns including Billingshurst, Pulborough and Steyning.

The town centre has excellent shopping and leisure facilities, and its many cafés and restaurants are busy too. It is a generally affluent and thriving area with an average population age slightly above the national figure. There are many people who commute to London or who are in other professional and demanding jobs, working long hours.

However, there are also pockets of poverty, including in our parish, and there is a YMCA 'Y Centre' in the town for homeless young people. Our local Food Bank has seen a significant increase in demand recently, reflective of the situation nationally. As a church we look to help those in our parish in ways that we are able to. During the pandemic we leafleted all houses offering to assist where we could with such needs as shopping and collections for vulnerable and shielding people, which meant Horsham District Council were able to leave support for our parish with us and concentrate on the rest of the district.

One of the challenges we face is that in a largely comfortable and middle-class environment people are sometimes unaware of the struggles and loneliness others face and this tends to remain hidden for a variety of reasons. Our weekly Holbrook Heart Café is a key venture in connecting with our local community and it has proved highly successful in its service, support and care (more on page 10).

Horsham itself, as well as the surrounding villages, continues to see significant development. Within our own parish in the north of the town the Mowbray Village development is planned to eventually see the building of 2,750 new homes (8,000 people), in addition to the over 4,000 houses (10,000 people) we already have in the parish.



Horsham has good transport links to London by train and easy access to major roads (A23 / A24), the motorway network (via M23 / M25) and Gatwick and Heathrow airports. Sussex is a beautiful part of the country to live in and explore, and we are close to the south coast, cities and towns such as Brighton & Hove, Worthing and Chichester, and the South Downs National Park.

Further information about the town and district can be found at:

[The first results from Census 2021 are in – see how Horsham has grown | Horsham District Council](#)

[Horsham - Wikipedia](#)

[Horsham facts and figures - E07000227 - ONS](#)

[How life has changed in Horsham: Census 2021 \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

Education facilities

Horsham has many schools, rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted ([Find an Ofsted inspection report](#)). The most relevant ones for our parish are:

- ◆ Local Primary schools: Holbrook Primary School; North Heath Community Primary School; Bohunt Horsham Primary opens in September 2024 (Roffey parish); All Saints CofE Primary School (Roffey parish)
- ◆ Secondary schools in Horsham: Bohunt Horsham (co-ed); The Forest School (co-ed); Millais School (girls); Tanbridge House School (co-ed)
- ◆ 6th Form: The College of Richard Collyer

There are also a large number of pre-schools and nurseries in Horsham



Finances

In 2024, we start the year with:

- ◆ Reserves of £150k and Working Capital £57k: total funds £207k
- ◆ anticipated income of £283k
- ◆ budgeted expenditure of £296k

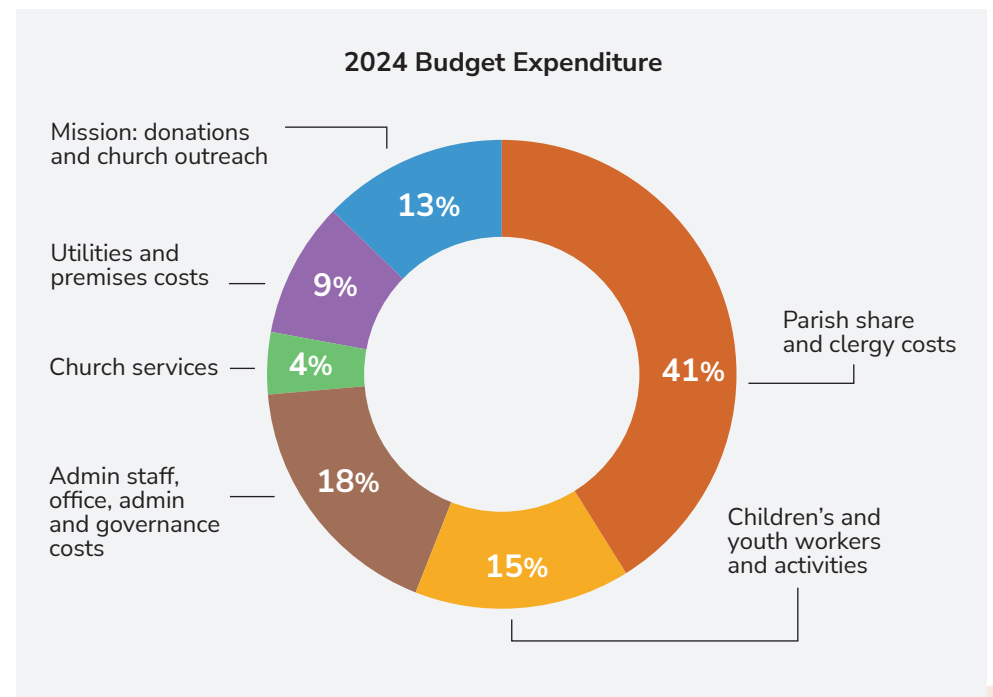
Our financial position has been strong for a number of years with annual surpluses, meaning we have built up very healthy reserves and been able to undertake some significant enhancements to the church without major calls on the congregation for additional support.

As a result we have an aspiration to pay 120% of Parish Share by 2026 (2023: 112.5%, 2024: 115%) to support churches in the diocese that cannot fully fund themselves. It also means we have recently been able to appoint both a Children and Families Worker and a Youth Worker.

Our challenge for 2024 is a projected budget shortfall of £13k and tapering support from the Strategic Ministry Fund for our Associate Vicar. So we are taking a step of faith to capacity build for the future, trusting God for an increase in income as the church continues to grow within the existing Parish housing area and the new Mowbray Village development.

Our Trustees Annual Reports and Accounts are available on the Charity Commission website: search using our Registered Charity no. 1174914: [Search the register of charities \(charitycommission.gov.uk\)](https://www.charitycommission.gov.uk).

As mentioned on page 13, we may in the medium term consider whether a substantial development project is appropriate to improve our facilities to enable us to better serve the local community around St Mark's, plus there may be development considerations for Mowbray Village in due course. But all in God's time!



To arrange an informal discussion,
obtain answers to any specific
questions, set up a visit to the church,
or to make an application, please
contact Rt Rev'd Ruth Bushyager,
Bishop of Horsham, at
bishop.horsham@chichester.anglican.org

St Mark's Church

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stmarksholbrook.org.uk



St Mark's Church, Holbrook
Knowing Christ and making Him known

