

New Fareham vicar is planter of churches

THE new vicar of St John's Church, Fareham, is coming with a reputation as a prolific church planter.

Bishop Jonathan has appointed the Rev Henry Kendal to be the new vicar of St John's. He was most recently the vicar of a large charismatic church in London that has planted six new congregations over the past 30 years.

Henry was associate vicar and then vicar of St Barnabas, Woodside Park, in Finchley, north London for 23 years. Before that, he'd also led a church plant as a layman and a curate in St Peter's Church, Roxeth, in Harrow. He stepped down from St Barnabas in 2022 and has spent a year or so in sabbatical mode before applying for this role.

"The big thing about St John's Fareham is the opportunity to make a difference," he said. "I'm really pleased to be coming to a place with such a missional bishop, and there is a great chance to rejuvenate a local church and to step out in mission."

Henry became a Christian at the age of 13, thanks to his elder brother who brought him to a Crusaders group. After a career as a surveyor and in property development, Henry was asked to lead a church plant as a lay person, with a small number of worshippers moving from Christ Church, Roxeth, to revitalise St Peter's Church, Harrow, more than 30 years ago.

Henry then trained for ordination



The Rev Henry Kendal

on an evening course run by Oak Hill theological college, while he continued with his daytime job of leading the church. He served his curacy at St Peter's for five years before switching to St Barnabas, Woodside Park, in 1999.

He began as associate priest, alongside the Rev John Coles, who led New Wine ministries from 2001-14. By 2006, Henry had taken over as vicar with John as his associate priest. The congregation now numbers 500.

St Barnabas planted its first congregation into a local United Reformed Church in 1995, as an ecumenical project. There were then six church plants during Henry's time at the church, including

an estate church, a network church that met in cafes, a graft into a traditional parish and a multi-cultural plant in a new area of development.

In 2018, Henry also oversaw a £12m project to relocate St Barnabas Church from its original Edwardian building into the largest commercial office space in north Finchley. The church, on Finchley High Road, has an auditorium, youth space, and facilities to help the homeless.

"For me, church planting is a Kingdom principle," he said. "We receive from God by giving, which seems counter-intuitive. Everything suggests that we should close ranks and keep going with what we have, but actually what

makes our churches healthy is to go out in faith to start something new. That is what grows and flourishes. It's always scary, but God blesses it.

"I wrote a book about our church's move. There were so many miraculous things that happened, which seemed impossible in human terms, that I thought it was worth writing about. We had basically run out of space in our Edwardian church building, and so we needed somewhere larger."

Henry is a speaker in the New Wine network. He's married to Jane, who also worked for St Barnabas, and they have three adult children. He will be licensed by Bishop Jonathan as vicar of St John's, Fareham, on a date to be announced.