**A brief history of St Giles, Uley**

For at least eight hundred years a parish church on its hillock has watched over the village of Uley.  Long ago it was dedicated in honour of St. Giles. Through all the political upheavals, and religious and economic changes of the centuries; through times of turbulence and placidity; of prosperity and depression; of diminution and of growth, St Giles’ Church has witnessed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the service of Uley people.  Within it more christenings, confirmations, weddings and funerals have taken place than we can ever know; worship, prayer and administration of the Sacraments have never ceased.  For this we thank God today.

During the 11th century a stone church was built at Uley where our present Victorian church now stands.  The first recorded Rector was Osmund, 1180. Gloucester did not become a bishopric until 1541, when the monastery was dissolved by order of King Henry VIII, and the Abbey became Gloucester Cathedral. The patronage of Uley church then became, and remained, vested in The Crown.

Through the troubled years and changes of the Reformation and the Elizabethan Settlement, the Jacobean era, the reign of Charles I, the Cromwellian interlude and beyond, nine Rectors ministered at Uley.  What did our church look like in the 17th century?   It had on the north side, a contemporary account tells us, “a large, strong, low tower with battlements,” a wide nave with an aisle on the south side, and on the north side of the chancel Basset’s Chapel, belonging to the family at Basset’s Court.

In 1856, during the long tenure of the scholarly Rector Marlow Watts Wilkinson, 1823-1867, it was decided to demolish the old church and re-build.  So the old church and tower were razed to the ground, to make way for the third stone built church on the site.  S.S. Teulon the well-known London architect was commissioned, and Jackson the builder of Uley was in charge of the work.  The foundation stone was laid on 15th May 1857.  The new church, in which we worship today, was consecrated on 28th September 1858 by the Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.

In the space under Teulon’s ornate tower were re-set the old memorial tablets, including that to John Eyles of Wresden “the first that ever made Spanish Cloath in this parish.”  The great bell, cast in 1715 by Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester, was re-hung.  Its inscription reads: “The living I to church do call, and to the grave do summon all.”  The church clock mechanism is of fine early 18th century workmanship, paralleled in Gloucestershire only by that at Avening.  The ancient Norman font-bowl still lies in the church.  An organ, by the Bristol firm of Vowles was installed in 1870; additional stained glass windows in 1874, and a reredos behind the Holy Table put in during 1879.  The Reverend Charles Chapman Browne (Rector 1867-1886) also had the Rectory built in 1874 at his own expense, and presented it to the Church.