



Methodist
Church

Partnership News

11 March 2012

Third Sunday in Lent



Church of
England

Partnership Church Services Today

8.30am Holy Communion every Sunday
1st, 3rd and 5th Sunday at Putnoe Heights
2nd and 4th Sunday at St. Mark's Church

Today – 11 March

9.30am St. Mark's - Morning Worship
Preacher - Reverend Charles Royden
Leadership – Mrs Elizabeth Bean
Intercessions - Mrs Margaret Appleton
11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Worship
Preacher - Reverend Eric Royden
Leadership - Mrs Linda Hoar
Intercessions — Mrs Sue Allen

18 March — Mothering Sunday

9.30am St Mark's - Holy Communion
Preacher - The Reverend Sam Cappleman
Leadership – Mr Mick Ovenden
Intercessions - Deacon Jane Mason
11.00 am Putnoe - Holy Communion
Preacher - The Reverend Sam Cappleman
Leadership - Mrs Jenny Snelson
Intercessions – Dr Tim Wilkes

Bible Readings

1 Numbers 21: 4-9 2. Ephesians 2: 1-10
3. John 3: 14-21

Midweek Worship Holy Communion at St Mark's
Chapel every Wednesday at 10.00am and at Sir William
Harpur House on first Monday of every month at 10.00am

Thank You

The flowers at St Mark's and Putnoe Heights Church this week have been given by the family in celebration of the Diamond Wedding Anniversary of Eric and Olive Royden.

We are grateful when people make donations towards flowers perhaps to celebrate a special occasion such as an anniversary or in memory of a loved one. Please contact Miss Marion Prior 303254 (St Mark's) or Ann Hitt 404186 (Putnoe Heights) or add your name to the rota in the foyers.

Prayer for the Week

Truth be told, Jesus,
There are lots of tables that need overturning
in our lives;
Beneath the veneer of respectability
the tidy rows and neat regulations
hide dark addictions and angry judgements
hungry greeds and heartless rejections.

We know the pain - and so do those around us -
of keeping up the facade;
What a relief it would be to have it all
upset, smashed, scattered, destroyed.

So, perhaps, Jesus, today you could pay us a visit
and help us to radically rearrange
the furniture of our lives.

The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman

107 Dover Crescent, Bedford MK41 8QR
266952 Fax- 402624 nsm@thisischurch.com
(Sam also works full time as a Vice President for Hewlett
Packard)

Deacon Jane Mason

12 Hartop Close, Bedford MK41 8HE
348091 Mobile 07807 146535 jane@thisischurch.com

The Reverend Charles Royden

The Vicarage, Calder Rise. MK41 7UY
309175 Mobile 07973 113861 vicar@thisischurch.com

For Data Protection Purposes

Please note that any items submitted for inclusion in
Partnership News will automatically be posted on our website
and may appear in other local media sources.

Partnership News is also archived on our
church website www.ThisChurch.com

Partnership Pastoral Support Team Co-Ordinator

Mrs Mary Stubbs 406784 Mary@ThisChurch.com
*Please inform us if you know of anyone who is ill, bereaved,
housebound, requires a visit, home communion or counselling services.
Please also ask us if you would like a home visit for any reason.*

Churchyards Administrator

Mrs Avril Williams 01234 342613

Putnoe Heights Church Centre

Open Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm, Friday 9am - 1pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Mr Geoff Gypps 365630 mob 07947 902846
Leadership Team Mrs. Linda Hoar 782717
Treasurer Mr Ian Morse 216428 treasurerph@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator John Hitt 404186
Youth Worker Emma Gordon email - 07593266091
youth@thisischurch.com

St. Mark's Church Centre (Open 9am - 5.00pm)

Tel/fax & Answering Service 342613 office@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Miss Wendy Rider 342613
Leadership Team - Laura Farthing 210892
Treasurer - Mr Ian Farthing 210892 treasurer@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator Jim Williams 360605

Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

Monday

9.15 –3.45 pm Mon and Wed/ 9.15-12.15pm Tues/Thurs/ Fri. Putnoe Heights Pre-school. See website for more details www.ThisChurch.com

Head teacher Mrs Janet Smith ☎326685

8.30-5.30pm Pre-school Mon-Fri St Mark's

9.30-3.15pm Top Marks Mon-Fri St Mark's

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin ☎312634

(See website for more details)

.9.45am - Body Control Pilates –Putnoe Heights

Stephanie Smith ☎ 357787 or 07973174430

10.00am Bakers Barn Art Group. St Mark's Mrs Berry

☎211955

10.30am U3A Play reading St Mark's (see contact details below)

12.15pm Story box Putnoe Heights We welcome the under 5's and their carers to join them between 12.15 and 1.15 for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based story and singing. Contact Emma Gordon ☎07593266091

2.00pm U3A History Group St Marks.(see contact details below)

2pm U3A Music Appreciation - (see contact details below)

4.15pm Kumon Maths Putnoe Heights. Mrs Raksha Mistry ☎01908 392698

6.00pm Brownies St Mark's. Mrs C Mathew ☎826190

6.15 pm Brownies Putnoe. Sharon Tanner

☎01767699399 or 07720713738.

6.15 Pilates at Putnoe Heights Jane Butcher 300859

6.15pm Fit for Life Yoga - Putnoe Heights Contact Jane Butcher ☎07891879571

7.00pm Sugarcraft Guild St Mark's 1st week Pat Nicholson ☎353518

7.00pm Cancer Care Society. St Mark's. 1st Week. Mr J Dewhurst ☎01908 377020

7.15pm Guides. St Mark's. Mrs Gill Lake ☎218091

7.30pm Whist Drive. St Mark's 3rd & 5th week . Next meeting– 19 March Judith Stanton. ☎823313

7.30pm House group 30 The Ridgeway. The home of Eddy & Margaret Peck ☎267567.

8pm 'Get Fit, Stay Fit' Putnoe Heights. Mrs Diane Field ☎404976

Tuesday

9.30am Jo Jingles. St. Mark's. Music & movement for pre-school children. Renu Elston ☎07790206016

9.30am Candlewicking (Needlework). Putnoe Heights. Pat McCart ☎365507

9.30am -12.30 & 4-9pm Slimming World St. Mark's. Helen Folbigg ☎351223

10am Autism Beds Adult Support Group. St Mark's. Sally Cripsley ☎350704

11.15am U3A Keep Fit Putnoe Heights (see contact details below)

1pm –2.30pm Drop in Wiggles and Jiggles 0-5 years, Putnoe Children's Centre. Please call Trudy Hamilton (centre assistant) for more information ☎340552

1.15pm U3A Cinema Group. St Mark's (see contact details below)

2.00pm U3A Book Group 1 St Mark's (3rd Wk) (see contact details below)

2.00pm U3A Book Group 2 St Mark's (2nd Wk) (see contact details below)

2.00pm Library Walk W.I. Putnoe Heights, meets monthly. Morag Tomkins ☎356895

2pm U3A Photography Group 3 St. Mark's (1st Wk) (see contact details below).

2.30pm Mother Teresa Support Group. St Mark's Fortnightly . Wool and knitting needles provided. Mrs Maureen Watling ☎262225

2.15pm Tuesday Afternoon Housegroup. St Mark's Fortnightly. Mary Stubbs ☎406784.

3.45pm-6.15pm Stars School of Dance. Putnoe Heights. Esther Richardson ☎295862 or 07917582468.

4.30pm—6pm BIGG Writing Putnoe Heights Natalie John 07772184721

6.30pm Creative Card making. Putnoe Heights Church. Carol Houghton ☎346718

6.15pm Pilates St Mark's Church Jane Butcher ☎0789187957

7pm—8.30pm Daisy Birthing Putnoe Heights Susie 07980447390

7pm Keep Fit. St. Mark's Jan Gregory ☎328455

7pm MT Karate [all ages] Putnoe Heights. Karen King ☎07941 264885

7pm Tabernacle of Truth Church Putnoe Heights Bible study & prayers. Sacha Ojo ☎07590597891 or www.tabernacleoftruth.co.uk

7.30pm Putnoe Heights Ladies Tuesday Club - Meets fortnightly. Next meeting March 20 - 'Arrangement in a Teacup'. Details call Janet King 313946

8.15pm - 10.15pm Bedford Advanced Dancers St. Mark's 1st Tuesday in month. Shirley Sadler ☎01767 651767

Wednesday

9.30am Body Control Pilates. Putnoe Heights. Stephanie Smith ☎357787 or 07973174430.

10am-2pm Open House at St Mark's for those with learning disabilities., their friends, family , carers and supporters ☎342613.

10am U3A Gardening Group 3 St Marks.(see contact details below)

10.00am Holy Communion. St. Mark's Chapel. A half hour service followed by coffee. All welcome.

10am U3A Card Making, St Marks (see contact details below)

12.30pm Luncheon Club. Putnoe Heights fortnightly. Next meeting 14 March 2012 Putnoe Heights Office ☎365630

1.00-3pm Police Surgery at Putnoe Heights (Fortnightly)

1.15pm Bridge Club for the Retired. St. Mark's.

Mr Barnes ☎261811

1.45 Scots Society Whist Putnoe monthly .All welcome Nancy Barr ☎268147

2.00-4.00pm U3A Craft St Marks.(see contact details below)

2.15pm - Fifty plus Keep Fit. Putnoe Heights Mrs Webster ☎856966

3.45.- 5.30pm Messy Church. St Mark's (3rd Wk). for children of lower school age and their carers. Bible-based story, crafts, singing and a meal. Next meeting 21st March. Wendy Waters401834

4.15pm Kumon Maths. Putnoe Heights Mrs Raksha Mistry ☎01908 392698

6.00 pm Brownies. St Mark's. Mrs Carol Warden ☎219731

6.00pm Shooting Stars. Youth Group for 9-13yrs at Putnoe Heights fortnightly. Contact Emma Gordon 365630.

6.15pm Yoga and Relaxation Putnoe Heights Racheall

Monton ☎01234 297138 or 07910835994.

6-8pm Karate. St Mark's Karen King ☎079412 64885

7.00pm Bunyan Bridge. St. Mark's Brian Sallows ☎407725

7.00pm Archaeological & Local History Society Putnoe Heights monthly. Vanessa Aykac 268098 or 07917385987

7.00pm Putnoe Guild Putnoe Heights monthly Mrs O Holt ☎266004

7.00pm Line Dancing Putnoe Heights Mike Del-Boyer ☎348378

8.00pm Badminton Club Putnoe Heights All welcome. Ken Marriott ☎214867

8.00pm Tudor Reeds Folk Dance Club meet at St Mark's 1st,3rd & 5th Wednesday in month. Next meeting will be 21 March 2012. Everyone welcome. All dances called, only £1 including refreshments. Ring Valmai 219555 Rosemary 405594 or Graham 406359 for more details.

8.00pm Bedford Wine and Social Club St Mark's 1st week in the month. Jean Ross ☎771870

Thursday

9.30am Thursday Prayer Group. Putnoe Heights. Valerie Capon ☎356306 .

Request for prayer can be written in the prayer diary on the information table.

9.45am Yoga Putnoe Heights Denise Green ☎244970

9.45am Chat and Play St.Mark's. A term time group for Mums & toddlers. Jo Garner 400071 or 07719670624

12pm Storybox . St Mark's welcome the under 5's and their carers to join them between 12 noon and 1pm for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based story and singing. Lots of fun. Contact Jaana Swaby ☎363283

1.30 - 3.00pm NHS Baby Clinic 1st and 3rd Thursdays St. Mark's ☎267444

1pm—2.30pm Drop in (large hall) Children's Chatty Time 0-5 years, Putnoe Children's Centre.Please call Trudy Hamilton (centre assistant) for more information ☎340552.

1pm—2.30pm Drop in (small hall) Next Steps 9-24months Putnoe Children's Centre.Please call Trudy Hamilton (centre assistant) for more information ☎340552.

1.45 Friendly Chicago Bridge at Putnoe Heights £2 per session inc. refreshments. New members welcome. Contact Pat 01234 294220.

2pm Putnoe Bridge Club. Mrs. P. Cass ☎294220

2-4pm U3A Indoor Games. St.Marks.(see contact details below)

2.30 - 4.30pm Bedford Art Society St Marks Mary Rich ☎272470

6.15 pm Weightwatchers. St. Mark's. Clare Martin 07805408811.

6.15pm Brownies. Putnoe Heights Lou Watkins

6.30-7.30pm Bootcamp/Circuits. (Fitness) St Marks. ☎Laura Amor.341152. 07976259081.

7.00pm Club 2000 Putnoe Heights Nina Ovenden ☎825059

7pm U3A Folk & Poetry St Marks (2nd and 4th week) (see contact details below)

7.15pm Putnoe Art Group Bob Wardale ☎406094

7.00pm Bedford Embroiderers' Guild St Mark's 3rd week in month. Carol Plant ☎01832710504

8 –10pm Bedford Folk dancers (formerly Barn dancers) Meet weekly at Putnoe Heights . Different guest callers each week. All welcome, cost £2 Including refreshments. More details Ron Law 825574.

8.00pm Bedford Writers Circle. St Mark's 1st week in

month. Mr Newton ☎01525 378193

8.00pm Magpies Women's Group St Mark's 2nd & 4th week Pat Cass ☎294220

8.00pm Brickhill Ladies Group St Mark's 1st and 3rd week in month Kay Logan 01234 309105.

Friday

10am -12.00 U3A Photography St Marks.(4th week) (see contact details below)

10am - 12 & 1.15 - 3.15pm U3A Beginners French St. Marks (see contact details below)

2.00-4.00 pm Whist St Marks. Patricia Holland.☎262823

5-8pm Stars School of Dance Putnoe Heights Contact Esther Richardson ☎295862 or ☎07917 582468

6.00-7.00pm Zumba at St Mark's. Contact Laura Harrow ☎07834529833

6.15pm Yoga and Relaxation Putnoe Heights. Racheall Monton ☎297138 or 07910835994

7.45 - 10.45pm Bedford Astrology Club.St Marks(2nd week) Carol Brown ☎01438 233385

Saturday

10.00am Theatretrain St Mark's. Dancing acting, singing. Kate Howard ☎01234 782414

Young Embroiderers bi monthly Putnoe Heights Terry Fletcher ☎357198

2.15pm Society of Recorder Players at Putnoe Heights. G Parry ☎01462 674792

6.45pm Duplicate Bridge. St Mark's Mrs Pillinger ☎212066

Sunday

9.30 - 10.30 Church and Sunday School at St Mark's with crèche for under 3's

11.00 - 12.00 Church and Junior at Putnoe Heights for the under 9's and Young Peoples Fellowship (Y.P.F) for our young adults. A crèche is also available.

1pm Tabernacle of Truth Church Putnoe Heights Sacha Ojo ☎07590597891 or

www.tabernacleoftruth.co.uk

7-9pm Tae Kwon Do St Mark's (not 25 March) Contact Adrian Felice www.bedfordtkd.com 07964356355

U3A For information on the U3A groups meeting at St Mark's and Putnoe Heights Church please contact Yvonne Francis ☎405119



Diary Dates



St Mark's Church Council – 19 June

St Mark's Leadership Team - Thursday 17 May

Putnoe Heights Leadership Team - 28 May

Putnoe Heights Management Meeting

Putnoe Church Council - 11 June

Pastoral Group Meeting - Tuesday 19 June 4.00pm

Churchyard Committee -

Brickhill Parish Council Meetings -

Commemoration Service 4 November 3.00pm

Harvest Festival 30 September

Circuit meeting - 12 June

Deanery Meeting

Woodland Burial Trustees– 12 May Open Day at wood

Putnoe Heights Children &

Please advise St Mark's Church Office of the dates of your meetings.

Third Sunday in Lent

Opening Verse of Scripture – . Psalm 19:14

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Collect Prayer *(Before we read we pray)*

Eternal God, give us insight to discern your will for us, to give up what harms us, and to seek the perfection we are promised in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Common Worship Shorter Collects

First Reading - Exodus 20: 1-17

And God spoke all these words: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

"You shall have no other gods before me.

"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of

anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the

waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

"Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. "You shall not murder. "You shall not commit adultery. "You shall not steal.

"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.

"You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour

(This is the Word of the Lord All: Thanks be to God)

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 1: 18-25

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."

Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. **(This is the Word of the Lord All: Thanks be to God)**

Gospel Reading – John 2: 13-22

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and



*Jesus' cleansing of the Temple,
Cathedrale d'Amiens*

cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. (This is the word of the Lord **All: Thanks be to God**)

Post Communion Prayer

Merciful Father, who gave Jesus Christ to be for us the bread of life, that those who come to him should never hunger: draw us to the Lord in faith and love, that we may eat and drink with him at his table in the kingdom, where he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen

Hymns (*Please distribute Lent Morning Worship and Special Lent Hymn Sheet*)

1. Revive thy work O Lord (*Carlisle*)
2. Heaven shall not wait
3. Jesus is waiting (*Noel Nouvelet*)
4. No weight of gold (*Passion Chorale*)
5. And can it be (*Sagina*)

Commentary

In our Gospel reading today we see Jesus in the most aggressive physical action of his entire ministry. We read that he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market! These actions can hardly be more different from the picture of Jesus which we sometimes sing and read about, who is so serene and holy to the extent that he is detached from the 'nitty gritty' of ordinary human life. In this episode Jesus is really on fire, wound up and angry and so much so that physical violence becomes a part of his behaviour. We are so used to the principle of peaceful protest that this seems almost unreal and out of character. Perhaps we need to consider whether the picture we have of Jesus is too bland, have we been missing something about the real Jesus?

There are more than one account of this episode, in fact it is recorded in every Gospel, so we know that it was important. The synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke all put it at the end of Jesus ministry, John puts it at the start. (*The gospel writers were less concerned with chronological details than with the theological meaning of the events they describe.*) Mark and Luke are very clear in telling us that immediately after this incident the chief priests and scribes decided that they had to destroy Jesus. The reason was because they feared the popularity which Jesus was attracting. Perhaps this year more than others, we can begin to understand why Jesus attracted this popularity. This Easter when we remember Jesus taken up on the cross we do well to remind ourselves that he was killed because he threatened the economic interests of the privileged few. He died because he challenged the vested interests of the ruling classes. He threatened their wealth and power, his actions threatened to deprive them of their vested interests. Jesus is laying down a challenge to the system. Jesus does not sit comfortably with those on top. Jesus scolds those who wear fine clothes because they were the outward mark of social rank, and those who live in King's palaces. The wealthy, including priests and scribes connected with the Temple establishment, were easily identified by their glitzy robes. This year in our own society we have the background of economic and banking woes, with people so angry that some seem to be exploiting others and not sharing the same burden. So we can appreciate why this message of Jesus would have resonated with the downtrodden poor who saw the privileged few getting rich at their expense.

This year especially we might appreciate that this episode should never be called the 'cleansing of the temple.' Such a term seems to suggest that the system could be cleaned up. Jesus never proposes cleaning up the social injustice and exploitation, he wants nothing more than complete revolution. Just as those tables were turned upside down, Jesus demands a completely different system, one in which the poor are recognised and the rich are sent away empty, one in which the powerful are brought low and the humble and meek ones are raised up. It all sounds very nice unless you are one of those about to lose your shirt in this revolution.

Jesus is deeply concerned about social justice, rather more indeed than individual piety. This should not surprise us, you don't fall out with the authorities for telling people how to pray nicely. There are several places in the Bible where God rejects the worship of his people because they lack justice (eg. Micah 6:6-8; 1 Tim. 6:9-10, 17; Matt. 6:19-21), but nowhere in the Bible does God reject the justice of his people because they lack worship. Does this mean that social, political and economic justice are more important to God than worship? Possibly it does, what it most certainly does mean is that worship which doesn't grow out of justice is shallow. Remember for example, how does Jesus tell us that we inherit eternal life? Luke 10 and the parable of the Good Samaritan tells us that it is by looking after those who are less well off than ourselves, showing pity and spending our own money to care for those who cannot care for themselves. And remember, the ones which we must care for are those we hate most ! Only by doing this can we show our love for God. Matthew 25 tells us that those blessed with inheriting the kingdom will be those who fed the hungry, gave water to the thirsty, cared for the stranger, clothed those with nothing and visited those in prison. They will be surprised because they thought they were just engaged in social justice, they never knew that Jesus was sharing the poverty of the lost and lonely

Therefore we as Christians we must be engaged in addressing the circumstances which give rise to poverty, just as Jesus did. When our wealth is built upon the sacrifices of others, that is not acceptable. As Christians we should be using opportunities to speak of a new way. It is interesting to see how divided the church was in response to the occupation outside St Pauls. Three senior clerics resigned over the incident. That is how dynamite money is. Possibly the only people who care enough to lose a night sleep over this issue are the ones we have evicted from the temple precincts because they protested. They were correct, the banks are the most glaring issue of our time. At the same time as the bailiffs were moving into St Pauls, the announcement was being made that Barclays had devised a scam whereby they could engineer 500million pounds of tax avoidance.

Jesus refuses to restrict his religion to prayers and hymns and his actions today encourage us to be angry and involved in what is going on around us. The church to needs to constantly seek out its place in society to liberate people. In his penetrating book *The First Circle*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the famous Russian author who defected to America, makes an interesting observation about how the Russian authorities handle the church. He writes: "No one stops them from ringing their bells; they can break communion bread anyway they please. They can have their processions with the cross. But they will in no way allow them to have any connection with social or civic affairs." The church was allowed to go through the motions; it could have a presence, but it dare not have an influence. We must seek to be an influence, to be God's presence in the world. The church needs always to question where it stands and at times we have sided with wealth and protected it, today Jesus forcefully reminds us that there are times when we need to get the whip out. *Charles Royden*

Meditation

Money talks and power makes the world go around, or so they would have us believe; And we, forgetting that other voice, join the march in hopes that we may find a place among the rich and strong. But, you, O God, feel no shame, fear no harm as you walk among the poorest and weakest feeling completely at home. Thank you for the voice of your love that keeps singing of the power in weakness, the wealth in simplicity, and the freedom and safety that is found in walking your humble, serving way. Amen.

Prayers for Sunday and the Week Ahead

The law is easy, Jesus, lists to be made, items ticked as each is fulfilled; Love is messy, people to be heard and seen, consequences and compassion to be considered; But we've lived too long by law - the law of the sword taking lives to achieve our goals; the law of the market seeking gain without thought of the impact the law of religion handing out judgement in your name;

But, the poor and the weak, the diseased and the lonely, the rejected and the sinful find no healing in our laws;

So teach us to love, Jesus, as you do, enough to defend the helpless and overturn the tables of the powerful; enough to sacrifice ourselves so others may live. Teach us to love, Jesus, as you do. Amen.

Teach us the courage, O God, to turn from what seems so natural, so safe: the way of grasping power, and befriending the powerful, in the hope of protection and security. Teach us the humility, O God, to turn from what is so enticing, so persuasive: the way of accumulating things, and trusting in wealth, in the hope of comfort and life Lead us, O God, in another way, the way of true security, true wealth,

Count Your Blessings. During Lent Christian Aid's 'Count Your Blessings' reminds us how fortunate we are in the freedoms and living standards we enjoy. Each day, there is a different focus of prayer, reflection, thanks or an invitation to donate a small amount of money. 'Count Your Blessings' pamphlets and shortened children's version are now available in the foyers at St Marks and Putnoe. Please help yourselves. For further information please contact Carolyn Morris at Putnoe 350722 after 12 noon, or Jean Bank St Mark's 342613

Mother Teresa Group would be very grateful for any knitting wool you have to spare. Any ply, any colour we will knit it! Please leave at St. Mark's Church office. Thank you. Maureen Watling

House Group at the home of Wendy Waters, 13 Farnham Way, 7.45pm on; ;19 March and 26 March. We will use the St Alban's Diocese Old Testament based Lent Course 'Transforming Life'. New people most welcome. For more details contact Wendy Waters 401834.

Putnoe Lunch Club. We are looking for new members so if you know anybody who would like to come along fortnightly on Wednesday then please do let us know. We are also looking for drivers who will help transport guests.

Henry Olonga Concert to be held on Sunday 29 April 2012 at Priory Methodist Church, Newnham Avenue, Bedford. No admission charge but please be willing to give generously to an offering for the Zimbabwe Victims' Support Fundto provide food and care for hundreds who may not otherwise survive the brutality and poverty.

The Bedford Community Chamber Orchestra (BCCO) returns on Saturday, March 24 to perform a series of well known classical pieces. The concert programme will feature Schubert's unfinished Symphony and pieces from Handel's Water Music as well as pieces from Mozart and a 'Salute to the Big Apple'. Starting at 19:30, the event will include free refreshments during the interval and the now familiar raffle which is always a particular favourite. The BCCO has been performing regularly at Putnoe since December 2009 and continues to enjoy a loyal following from the local community. Come and enjoy this, the latest presentation from this popular amateur orchestra.

Craft Stall's Easter Novelties on sale now £1 each, Chicks, Rabbits and Lambs containing chocolate cream eggs or eggs containing chocolate eggs.

"Spring Clean" morning at Putnoe Heights Church 10am to 12noon on Saturday 12 May. All helpers welcome. "

Dates for your Diary Car Boots for 2012

9th April 7th May 4th June 27th August

Songs of Praise with Pam Rhodes at Elstow Abbey 6pm Sunday 29th April. £8 adults £5 concessions £3 children Tel. 01234 261477

Crispian Steele-Perkins Concert at St. Andrews Church 17 March 7.30pm Tickets £8, Concessions £7 students £3. Also Brass workshop at 2.30pm Tel. 01234 216881.

Hope in the rubble: stories from Haiti. Come and hear how money given to Christian Aid in response to the Haiti earthquake has helped people get back on their feet. Aldrin Calixte works for Haiti Survive, a Christian Aid partner organisation, and can give us a first-hand account of the difference our giving has made. We will also be looking ahead to Christian Aid Week 2012. To be held on Wednesday 21 March 2012, 7-9pm, at Priory Methodist Church, 63 Newnham Avenue, Bedford MK41 9QL, to book please contact Peter Littleford on 01234 356645.

Beds, Essex, Herts District Methodist Women in Britain Spring Craft Day on 31 March at Priory Methodist Church 9.45am to 4.30pm. Information and booking forms from Pam Seymour 305695 or Ann Hitt 404186. Forms to be returned by the 19 March.

Thank you to everyone who helped in the Garden of Remembrance on Saturday. We planted a beautiful new box hedge which will greatly enhance the area around the columbaria.



You will find the link above on the homepage for www.thisischurch.com. Please click on it to access Amazon.com and just about anything you need. You can also sign up to Easyfunding. You will receive special offers and promo codes to buy everything you ever need online at discount prices! Remember, never click on Amazon direct, always click on Amazon via the link at thisischurch.com, then we obtain 5%

LENT

Partnership Lent Course starts this Thursday

Refreshments served at 7.30pm at Putnoe Heights Church

This week we will be looking at our churches life and reflecting upon who we are and what we do. This is something like an audit of church life and we would like you to come along and be a part. We will consider whether we are involved in the life of our community, what have we to offer and whether we are effective. Please come along to the evening having thought about the strengths and weaknesses of our churches. It is vital that this exercise of looking and listening is infused with prayer; seeking to look with the eyes of Christ and beginning to hear the voice of the Spirit. Looking and listening prayerfully is perhaps the most important part of the entire process as we begin to develop a vision for how we might be the presence of Christ in our community and the wider world. Developing a vision means that we have to establish priorities and make choices, perhaps for the next 5 years. Once we agreed these priorities we need to set the goals for each of them. These goals need to be SMART. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resourced and Timed.

Signs of healthy Church

The following have been suggested as signs of a healthy church, you may like to consider them or have a few ideas of your own.

- 1 Energized** by faith rather than just keeping things going or trying to survive
- 2. Outward-looking** focus with a 'whole life' rather than a 'church life' concern, deeply rooted in the local community, working in partnership with other denominations, faiths, secular groups and networks. Passionate and prophetic about justice and peace, locally and globally, making connections between faith and daily living. Responds to human need by loving service
- 3. Seeking** to find out what God wants discerning the Spirit's leaning rather than trying to please everyone. Able to call for, and make, sacrifices, personal and corporate, in bringing about the above and living out the faith.
- 4. Faces the cost of change and growth** rather than resisting change and avoiding failure. While embracing the past, it dares to take on new ways of doing things, takes risks: and admits when things are not working, and learns from experience
- 5. Operates as a community** rather than functioning as a club or religious organisation. Relationships: are nurtured, often in small groups, so people feel accepted and are helped to grow in faith and service. Leadership: lay and ordained work as a team.
- 6. Makes room for all being inclusive rather than exclusive.** Welcome works to include newcomers into the life of the church diversities: different social and ethnic backgrounds, mental and physical abilities, and ages, are seen as a strength
- 7. Does a few things and do them well focused rather than frenetic.** Does the basics well: especially public worship, pastoral care, stewardship and administration. Being good news as a church in its attitudes and ways of working. Enjoys what it does and is relaxed about what is not being done

Please come and join us on Thursday and share in this prayerful reflection of our church life

Rest In Peace

On the Sunday following a funeral service we remember in church those who have died. We light a candle to symbolise the light of Christ which eternally shines and brings hope. If you would like a person remembered in our service when the candle is lit, perhaps on an anniversary or birthday, please inform the ministers, or telephone the church office.

Ian Williamson

May the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.'



Maundy Thursday. By popular request our Maundy Thursday service will be held at Putnoe at 7.30pm and will take the form of a Last Supper, with a meal provided kindly by the catering team.



Forthcoming Funerals

The funeral of Allan Neil Cannon will take place at Bedford Crematorium on Monday 12th March at 12.15p.m.