



Partnership News

**Putnoe Heights & St Mark's Church
14 December 2014
Third of Advent**



Sunday Services

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

14 December - Third of Advent

9.30am St Mark's - Morning Worship
Preacher - Rev. Canon Charles Royden
Leadership - Mr Edward Parry
Intercessions - Mrs Morag Stewart
Organist - Miss Marion Prior
11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Worship
Preacher - Rev. Canon Charles Royden
Leadership - Mrs Veta Hudson Rae
Intercessions - Mrs Sylvia Cohen
Organist - Mr Alan Bunker

21 December - Fourth of Advent

9.30am St Mark's - Holy Communion
Preacher - Rev. Wendy Evans-Wood
Leadership - Mrs. Jean Bank
Intercessions - Mrs. Margaret Appleton
Organist - Mr. Clive Simmonds
11.00 am Putnoe - Holy Communion
Preacher - Rev. Wendy Evans-Wood
Leadership - Barry Southam
Intercessions - Sue Allen
Organist - Mr. Clive Simmonds
Readings St Mark's 1. 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
2. Romans 16: 25-27 3. Luke 1: 26-38
Readings at Putnoe
Exodus 3:1-8, Luke 1:47-55

Thank You

The flowers at Putnoe Heights Church this week have been given by Pearl James in memory of her husband Vyn on their wedding anniversary.

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 Sunday

Look upon your servants, O Lord,
weak in faith but praying for your strength;
cold in heart, but seeking the fire of love;
assailed by doubt, but awaiting assurance;
abounding in sin, yet longing for righteousness;
now and forever. Amen.

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Midweek Holy Communion at St. Mark's Chapel every Wednesday at 10am and at Sir William Harpur House on first Monday of every month at 10.00am.

The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman
107 Dover Crescent, Bedford MK41 8QR
Tel: 266952 nsm@thisischurch.com

Deacon Jane Mills
c/o Putnoe Heights Church Centre
Tel. 348091 Mobile 07807 146535
jane@thisischurch.com

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

Partnership News is sent out by email every Saturday in a colour edition. If you would like to receive a copy please send an email entitled 'Partnership News' to vicar@thisischurch.com. 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.ThisIsChurch.com

Music Copyright CCL1501

Partnership Pastoral Support Team Co-ordinators
Mrs Wendy Waters 342613 office@thisischurch.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 - 5.30pm, Friday 9-1pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Geoff Gypps 365630
Leadership Team Mrs Jenny Snelson 344417
Treasurer Mr John Hitt 404186 treasurerph@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator Mr Lawrence Wyatt 350188
Youth Team Leader Carolyn Morris youth@thisischurch.com

St. Mark's Church Centre
Open Monday - Friday 9am - 5.00pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 342613 office@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Miss Wendy Rider 342613
Leadership Team - Mrs Jean Bank 355698
Treasurer - Mr Ian Farthing 210892
treasurer@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator Mr Jim Williams 360605

Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

Monday

Hazeldene Heights Pre-school. Sessional and Full Day care available—open Mon.—Fri. Full Day Care 8.30am to 5pm Sessional times 9am—12noon and 12.45pm - 3.45pm

For more info please contact Laura Leggett 01234 326685 or www.hazeldeneheights.com

8.30-12.30pm St Mark's Pre-School Nursery

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634

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

9.00-3.45pm 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 M. Berry 211955

10.30am U3A Play reading Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

11am-12noon Pilates St. Mark's. Liz Mason

07816522200 (starts 8 Sept.)

1.30pm Chat & Make. Term time for babies and

toddlers 0-5. Crafts, toys, songs, story and refreshments

£1. More details contact St Mark's Church Office on 01234

342613 or Janine 01234 297481 Restarts 12 January

12.00 noon Storybox Putnoe Heights We welcome the

under 5's and their carers to join them between 12noon

and 1pm for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based

story and singing. Contact Carolyn Morris

youth@thisischurch.com 365630

2pm U3A Music Appreciation Putnoe Heights Contact

Janet King 313946

2.00pm U3A Italian Putnoe Heights— fortnightly

4.15pm Kumon Maths Putnoe Heights. Mrs Raksha

Mistry 01908 392698

5.30 - 8.30 NHS Eat Smart Think Active at Putnoe

Heights. For more details contact Emily Taverner 01234

792013

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-8.15pm Fit for Life Yoga - Putnoe Heights

Contact Jane Butcher 07891879571

6.30pm-8pm Cubs at Putnoe Ages 8 –10.5

Email:phxg.enquiries@gmail.com Tel Tom 07974566509

6.30pm Boot Camp Putnoe Heights – Laura Amor

341152 / 07976259081

7.00pm Sugarcraft Guild St Mark's (1st week in month)

Pat Nicholson 353518

7.00pm Cancer Care Society. St Mark's. (1st week in

month) Mr J Dewhurst 01908 377020.

7.00-8.00pm Laughter Club at St. Mark's 2nd week each

month) Cheryl Green 07729187399

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

7.30pm Whist Drive. St Mark's (Weeks 3 & 5 in the

month).. Next meeting— 19 January Judith Stanton.

823313

7.30pm No Fear Bridge Club St. Mark's Mrs. Susan Ford

300218.

7.30pm House group 30 The Ridgeway. The home of

Eddy & Margaret Peck 267567

7.45-9.15 Get Fit Keep Fit at Putnoe Heights Diane

Field 01234 404976

Tuesday

9 –1pm Bedford Stop Smoking at Putnoe Heights. For

more details please contact Olivia Tornyie 01234 276826

9.30am Candlewicking (Needlework). Putnoe Heights.

Pat McCart 365507

9.30am -12.30 & 4-9pm Slimming World St. Mark's.

Lorrie Pearson 01234 340473

11.15am U3A Keep Fit Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

1.15pm U3A Cinema Group. St Mark's Contact Janet King 313946

1.30pm U3A Choir. St Mark's Contact Janet King 313946

2.00pm U3A Book Group 1 St Mark's (3rd Week in

month) Contact Janet King 313946

2.00pm U3A Book Group 2 St Mark's (2nd Week in

month) Contact Janet King 313946

2.00pm Library Walk W.I. Putnoe Heights, meets

monthly. Morag Tomkins 356895

2pm U3A Photography Group 3 St. Mark's (1st Week in month) Contact Janet King 313946

2.30pm Mother Teresa Support Group. St Mark's (1st & 3rd week in month). Wool and knitting needles provided.

Mrs Maureen Watling 262225

2.15pm Tuesday Afternoon Housegroup. St Mark's

(2nd & 4th week in month) Mary Stubbs 406784.

4.00pm-6.15pm Stars School of Dance at Putnoe

Heights. Esther Richardson 295862 or 07917582468

7.15-8.15pm Pilates St Mark's Church Jane Butcher

07891879571

7pm - 8.30pm Daisy Birthing Putnoe Heights Susie

07980447390

7.30pm Ladies Tuesday Club at Putnoe Heights (Meets

fortnightly Next meeting Christmas Crafts 6 January

Details Diane Bayliss 268101

8.00pm Hearts in Beds Committee St Mark's (week 4 in month) Mrs N Aspey 309816

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. Contact Janet King 313946

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

10am U3A Card Making, St Marks Contact Janet King 313946

10am U3A Diet and Nutrition- Putnoe Contact Janet King 313946

11.15am U3A Keep Fit at Putnoe Heights

12.30pm –4pm St Mark's Nursery

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634

12.30pm Luncheon Club. Putnoe fortnightly. Next

meeting 17 December Putnoe Heights Office 365630

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

Mr Barnes 261811

2.00-4.00pm U3A Craft at St Marks.Contact Janet King

313946

2pm U3A Gilbert and Sullivan Putnoe Heights Contact

Janet King 313946

2.15pm - Fifty plus Keep Fit. Putnoe Heights

Mrs Webster 856966

3.45.- 5.30pm Messy Church. St Mark's (3rd Week in

month). for children of lower school age and their carers.

Bible-based story, crafts, singing and a meal. Next

meeting 21 January.

2014 Wendy Waters 401834 Jean Bank 355698

4.15pm Kumon Maths. Putnoe Heights Mrs Raksha

Mistry 01908 392698

5.00–6.00pm Rainbows at Putnoe Heights Mrs Gill

Lake 218091

6.00pm Brownies. St Mark's. Mrs C Warden 219731

6.15pm Yoga and Relaxation Putnoe Heights Racheall Monton 01234 297138 or 07910835994

6-7pm ATSK Karate at Putnoe Height Kevin Stark Tel. 01234 353865

7.00pm-9.00pm Scouts at Putnoe ages 10.5-14; Email:phxg.enquiries@gmail.com Tel Tom 07974566509

7.00pm Bunyan Bridge. St. Mark's Colin Jackson 363398 or Brian Sallows 407725.

7.00pm Archaeological & Local History Society Putnoe Heights monthly. Sylvia Woods 365095

7.00pm Putnoe Guild Putnoe 3rd Wednesday in every month except August Mrs Jo Street 344600

7.00pm Line Dancing Putnoe Mike Del-Boyer 348378

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

8.00pm Tudor Reeds Folk Dance Club at St Mark's (1st,3rd & 5th Wednesday in month). Next meeting will be 17 December Everyone welcome. All dances called, only £1 including refreshments. Rosemary 405594 or Graham 406359 for more details.

8.00pm Bedford Wine and Social Club St Mark's (Week 1 in the month) Greta Cansfield 215016

Thursday

8.30am-12.30pm St. Mark's Pre School Nursery Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634

9.30am Thursday Prayer Group. Putnoe Heights. Valerie Capon 356306. Request for prayer can be written in the prayer diary on the information table.

9.15am Spanish for beginners Plus at Putnoe Heights

10.30pm Spanish Holiday Survival at Putnoe Heights. Elena 01234 266968

9.45am Chat and Play St.Mark's. A term time group for Mums & toddlers.0-5 Contact St Mark's Church Office 01234 342613 or Janine 01234 297481 Restarts 15 January 2015

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 342613 Restarts 11 January 2015

1.30 - 3.00pm NHS Baby Clinic at St Mark's (Weeks 1 & 3 in the month)Contact 897401

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

2pm U3A Current Affairs - Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

2-4pm U3A Indoor Games. St.Mark's Contact Janet King 313946

2.30 - 4.30pm Bedford Art Society St Mark's Jean Paterson 307210

3.15-5.15pm Social Care Solutions Drama Group Claire Creek 262650

5.45pm Weightwatchers. St. Mark's. Clare Martin 07805408811.

6.15pm Brownies. Putnoe Heights Lou Brenna. 07919402797.

7.00pm Club 2000 Putnoe Nina Ovenden 825059

7pm U3A Folk & Poetry St Marks (2nd and 4th week in month)Contact Janet King 313946

7.15pm Putnoe Art Group Bob Wardale 406094

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

Bedford Folk Dancers (formerly Barn dancers) Meet weekly at Putnoe Heights Different guest callers each week.Except August. All welcome, cost £2.50

Including refreshments. More details Ron 825574 or Shirley 01767 651767

8.00pm Bedford Writers Circle. St Mark's (1st week in month). John Broadhouse 01525 404014

7.30pm Magpies Women's Group St Mark's (2nd & 4th week in month) Mrs Marie Cotchin 402089

8.00pm Brickhill Ladies Group St Mark's (1st and 3rd week in month) Susan Perugi 300219

Friday

8.30am—12.30pm St. Mark's Nursery Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634

8.30am Diabetic Centre St Mark's (1st week in month) Deborah Hennessey 792013

9am -1pm Machine Knitting group at Putnoe Heights, fortnightly . Contact Marion Sutton 217647 (9.30 am— 3.30pm from January.)

10am -12.00 U3A Photography St Marks.(4th week in month) Contact Janet King 313946

10am - 12 & 1.15 - 3.15pm U3A Beginners French St. Marks Contact Janet King 313946

2.00-4.00 pm U3A Whist St Marks. (2nd week in month) Contact Janet King 313946

2pm U3A Gardening - Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

4.50pm-8.15pm Stars School of Dance Esther Richardson 295862 or 07917582468

6.30pm-8.00pm Beavers at Putnoe Ages 6-8 Email: phxg.enquiries@gmail.com Tel Tom 07974566509

7.00pm-9.00pm Meditation St Mark's.Cheryl Green 07729187399

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

Saturday

9.00am Faith Temple Ministries St Mark's (1st week in month) Dawn Kelly 07863762593

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

Sunday

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

10 - 5.30pm Bedford Stamp Fayre. 1st Sunday Feb/Apr/ Jun/Aug /Oct/Dec. Contact P Harris 01623 621143

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.

2- 4.30pm Indoor Bowls at St. Mark's 2nd & 4th Sunday. Ray Seymour 305695 or church office.



Diary Dates



St Mark's Church Council –
St Mark's Leadership Team - 26 January 2015
Annual Congregational Meetings - 26 April 2014
Putnoe Heights Leadership Team -
Putnoe Heights Management Meeting -
Putnoe Church Council - 20 February 2015
Pastoral Group Meeting -
Churchyard Committee -
Commemoration Service -
Circuit meeting –
Deanery meeting -
Woodland Burial Trustees–
Putnoe Heights Children & Youth Meeting - Monday 19 January 2015

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

Third Sunday of Advent

Sentence of Scripture - 1 Thessalonians 5:16

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Collect Prayer for the Day *Before we read we pray*
O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you: grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready your way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in your sight; for you are alive and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



First Bible Reading Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. "For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the Lord has blessed." I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the soil makes the young plant come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations. (This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**)

Second Bible Reading - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. (This is the word of the Lord-- **Thanks be to God**)

Gospel Reading - John 1:6-8, 19-28

There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ." They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" Now some Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing. (This is the word of the Lord-- **Thanks be to God**)

Post Communion Prayer

We give you thanks O Lord for these heavenly gifts; kindle in us the fire of your Spirit that when your Christ comes again we may shine as lights before his face: who is alive and reigns now and for ever. Amen

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

1. Hark the glad sound! the saviour comes. *Bristol*
2. The advent of our King. *Franconia*
3. Tell out my soul. *Woodlands*
4. Thou who wast rich beyond all splendour. *Fragrance*
5. Christ is surely coming. *Dam Busters' March*

Commentary

On Advent Three we think about John the Baptist that wonderful prophetic figure who came proclaiming the coming of the Jesus. John was excited and totally motivated to work for God and he had high hopes for what God was going to do in the world. He proclaimed that wonderful things were going to take place with Jesus, but then he looked at Jesus and found him to be a great disappointment. John had said that God was going to do a whole lot of judgement and punish the wicked, instead he found himself incarcerated in prison. Why had Jesus not roused a rebellion and overthrown the wicked and unjust? We can perhaps sympathise with John. He was a man waiting for God to work in certain ways and Jesus had failed to live up to his expectations. Jesus has not taken an axe to any trees, and had not burned any "chaff" with "unquenchable fire." He had not led a revolt, nor caused any prison walls to fall. No wonder that John asks.. "Are you the coming one, or should we look for another?"

John associated God with certain types of action, judgement, punishment. Jesus was very different and instead of judging the people he met, he understood them and preached forgiveness. It was the opposite of what John expected, yet it is an astonishing glimpse of the divine attitude towards humanity. John the Baptist expected thunder and lightning, the wrath of God from above and Jesus said he had to see God in other ways. Jesus' said,

"Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them."

John was thinking of the kingdom in earthly terms, in terms of power and authority. If this was the Kingdom of God then Jesus was spectacularly failing, but what Jesus was doing was starting a different way of looking at things, a new set of values. We too might expect God to work in certain ways, but looking at Jesus we realise that God is not like us, our expectations are going to need to change.

In a sense this was not something new, the way of God is described over and over again by the prophets:

- Take care of society's most vulnerable (the widow, the orphan, the immigrant);
- Limit the gap between rich and poor (the Year of Jubilee),
- Do not use power to further the narrow self-interest of yourself and your friends;
- Do not accumulate wealth at the expense of the poor.

So when John's disciples question Jesus, he answers in language they both understand. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed. This is the way of God—definitely not the human way of establishing your authority. John was expecting Jesus to do something different, the result was that the Messiah was there in front of him but he never recognised it.

So what does this teach us today? Well it challenges us as to how we recognise the presence and activity of God in our world.

- Some would see God at work if the Church numbers were growing fast, in the same way that shareholders examine a report for growth in a business.
- Beautiful, grand religious building might be places where we would see God, as the disciples marvelled at the huge stones of the temple.
- Perhaps we would see God at work if our prayer requests were answered the way that we want. God is seen as a bit like Santa, rewarding the good with their wishes.

This way of judging success leads to disappointment with God and we end up feeling like John the Baptist. Jesus did not have lots of followers and he was frequently sent away by people who wanted nothing to do with him, even his own family. His birth in a stable was a defining moment which characterised the rest of his life as one of rejection where people refused to give him room. Some folks are still looking for signs of God in the way that John the Baptist was, and like John the Baptist they will be disappointed. Yet Jesus is God and this is how God works. God is at work all round us, if only we have eyes to see and ears to hear. *Charles Royden*

Meditation

When I think about prophets I think of people like Martin Luther King. Prophets are people who are willing to speak out and say uncomfortable things, challenging things, without fear. Listen to some of the words of Martin Luther King from his 'I have a dream' speech. It is possible that this speech by Martin Luther King was one of the greatest sermons ever preached. We are fortunate to have it recorded. (It would have been wonderful to have John the Baptist on film also).

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

Martin Luther King uses words from Isaiah 40:4,5. If he had started his quotation at the previous verse 3 he would have included

A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD ; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

He had a dream. He was speaking about what he believed to be the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth. He was speaking about the achievement of the struggle for real freedom and equality of black people in the United States. In his dream those things in the America of his day which are incompatible with the coming of Christ - the 'mountains and hills of injustice, prejudice, inequality and oppression - are laid low' by the love of Christ and the dignity of all human persons. That is the true spirit of our Advent: An awareness that there are things in ourselves and in our world which are not worthy of Christ. A consciousness of our need and our ability in faith to challenge those things both in ourselves and in our world that are wrong and to attempt to rebuild a world worthy of Christ. A willingness to pay the price of the opposition that witness will bring. John the Baptist and Martin Luther King both died for their witness

Prayers for Sunday and the Week Ahead

Lord our God, the life of those who look to you and the help of those who fly to you; purify our hearts that we may walk before you in perfect love and cleanse our consciences, that we may pray to you in confidence and hope; through Christ our Lord. Amen. *Basil of Caesarea (c. 330-379)*

God of Surprising Generosity and Unexpected Grace, we have come to witness a miracle; to prepare our hearts for a new invasion of Your Light; We have come once again to open our souls and our lives to the divine birth. And in this sacred moment we ask for Your gentle Presence to captivate and challenge us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Merciful God of peace, your word, spoken by the prophets, restores your people's life and hope. Fill our hearts with the joy of your saving grace, that we may hold fast to your great goodness and in our lives proclaim your justice in all the world. Amen.

God our Father, in the name of him who gave bread to the hungry, we remember all who through our human ignorance, folly, and sin are condemned to live in want. Show us, who have so much, what we can do to help those who have so little; and bless the efforts of those who work to overcome poverty and hunger, that sufficient food may be found for all; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bowls at St Mark's Please note that from December sessions will be held on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month. Ray Seymour

Clear out your wardrobe St Mark's have installed a textile clothing bank in the car park and we want your old clothes, curtains, sheets, soft toys, belts, handbags and shoes. Every kilo which you give us will help raise money for church funds

Service at Highfield. A group from St. Mark's will be conducting a Christmas Service at Highfield Residential Care Home on Sunday 14 December at 2.30pm. Helpers will be very welcome

Carol Singing. Putnoe Heights Church will be singing carols at Library walk on Saturday 20 December 11.00am - 12.00noon. All welcome to come and sing in aid of BeCHar. Meet at Putnoe heights at 10.30 for tea/coffee beforehand. Refreshments will be served in the small hall afterwards. John & Sally Gunning (305925)

Christmas closure at St Mark's Church office. The office will be closed from 1pm Wednesday 24 December and will reopen 9am Tuesday 6 January

Emmaus Mission Project Final Update

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this year's Autumn Mission project in support of Emmaus. Through the generous and mission hearted giving of everyone involved we have raised an incredible total of £5300 between the two churches. On top of this there is still a contribution to be added



from the Kempston Musical Society event yesterday evening at Putnoe. Thank you to everyone who contributed financially and by organising events such as last night and the Putnoe Provender stall last week. The money raised will make a significant difference to the work at Emmaus at Carlton village, both to the Companions who live and work there and beyond them to the people that they work with more widely. Sam Cappleman

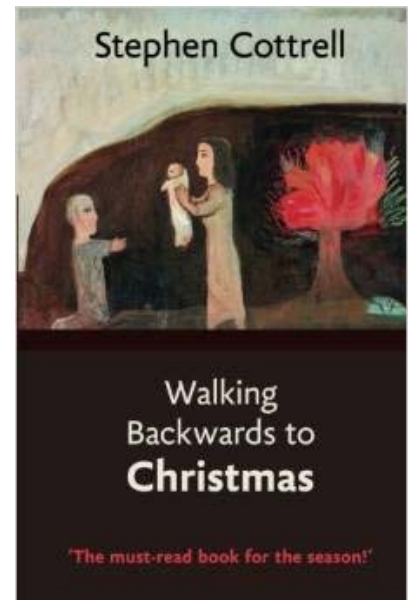
St Mark's Craft Stall would like to thank everybody for their support and are pleased to say they made £650 for church craft fayre funds.

Open House will have their Christmas Party this coming Wednesday 17 December and then will close until 14 January

Footprints New Year's Day Walk 2015
Meet at 10.30 am on 1 January at Danish Camp car park, Willington for easy circular walk on good paths. Lunch after walk at Putnoe Heights - please give numbers for lunch to Sue by 31st December.

Advent Book Review - Walking Backwards to Christmas by Stephen Cottrell

Stephen Cottrell is the Bishop of Chelmsford and has written an engaging book looking at the Christmas story from the perspective of some of the individuals who were involved in the event of the birth of Christ. The walking backwards concept comes as, rather than telling the story in its chronological order, the narrative evolves by starting with the event itself and then working backwards through time looking at the happenings that led up to the birth of Christ, through the eyes of those people who were involved in some way with the event. It's an easy book to read, and a great Advent reflection for the season as we prepare for Christ's coming as God incarnate and as the Lord and King of glory. Sam Cappleman



If you get it through Amazon, don't forget to click through from the church website!

The Christian Aid Christmas Appeal: The government will match pound for pound all donations sent to Christian Aid this Christmas to further support the work being done in Kenya with mothers and newly born children.

Hazeldene Heights Pre-school are holding a Christmas Raffle on Fri 19 Dec and would welcome any donations for the Hamper and Raffle Prizes. Chocolates, biscuits, Christmas pudding, wine, toiletries, toys, any unwanted gifts. Please kindly check sell-by dates. All donations will be gratefully received & can be brought in to Pre-school before Thurs 18th Dec. Thank you.



Thank you to everybody who has helped deliver the St Mark's Christmas Newspaper. We have just a few more roads and we will have sent out over 3,000 copies. Please take one of the final bundles if you have time.

Church Christmas Cards

These are available at both churches with details of our Christmas Services. Please take one and invite somebody along

Third Candle - The Candle of Love (Purple Candle) John The Baptist



Leader: May your hearts be filled with
God's love towards all
people as you consider the life of
sacrifice and
encouragement of John the
Baptist.
All: Thanks be to God

Last Sunday we lit the Candles of Hope and
Peace.
*(A person now lights the Candles of Hope, and
Peace.)*

Today is the Third Sunday of Advent and we light the Candle of Love
and remember John the Baptist.

Matthew Chapter 3

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: 'A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, just and true: to you be praise and
glory for ever. Your prophet John the Baptist was witness to the truth
as a burning and shining light. May we your servants rejoice in his
light, and so be led to witness to him who is the Lord of our coming
kingdom, Jesus our Saviour and King of the ages. Blessed be God
for ever.

(A person now lights the third candle)

Leader: Let us pray:

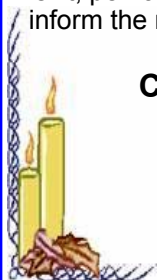
**Lord Jesus, light of the world,
John told the people to prepare,
for you were very near.
As Christmas grows closer day by day,
help us to be ready to welcome you now.**

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

Colleen Heather Littlewood

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



Christmas Shopping



Please can you make a point of always going to
Amazon through the link on www.ThisChurch.com.
If you look at an item through Amazon direct they
put a cookie on your machine and we don't get any
commission! Please make it a habit to always go
through the church website. This costs you nothing
and we get a bit of commission. For some reason
very people have registered for
www.easygiving.com. This works exactly the same
when you shop with John Lewis, M&S and a whole
host of other shops. This has an added benefit that
you will also get some special offers - you can't
lose !

**Please always shop through
www.thischurch.com**

Forthcoming Funerals

*There are no
funerals this week*

