

Methodist
Church

Partnership News

15 July 15th in Ordinary



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 15 July –15th in Ordinary

9.30m St. Mark's - Holy Communion
Preacher - Mrs Claire Peck
Leadership - Mr Mick Ovenden
Intercessions - Mrs Wendy Waters
11.00 am Putnoe - Holy Communion
Preacher - Mrs Claire Peck
Leadership - Mrs Veta Hudson-Rae
Intercessions - Mrs Sue Allen

Sunday 22 July 16th in Ordinary

9.30am St Mark's – Morning Worship
Preacher - Revd. Charles Royden
Leadership - Mrs. Morag Stewart
Intercessions– Mr. Chris Izzard
11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Worship
Preacher - Revd. Charles Royden
Leadership - Mrs. Jenny Snelson
Intercessions - Mrs. Sylvia Cohen

Bible Readings 1. Jeremiah 23:1-6 2. Ephesians 2:11-22 3. Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Midweek 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 Putnoe Heights Church this week have been given by Tim and Carolyn Morris on the occasion of their wedding anniversary.

The flowers at St Mark's this week have been given by Barbara Joy and Family in loving memory of her daughter Linda Watts.

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.

A Prayer for Sunday

Give us, we pray,
gentle God,
a mind forgetful of past injury,
a will to seek
the good of others
and a heart of love,
that we may learn to live
in the way of your Son,
Jesus Christ,
through whom we pray.
Amen.

Methodist Worship

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 145135 jane@thisischurch.com

The Reverend 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.ThisChurch.com

Partnership Pastoral Support Team Co-Ordinator

Mrs Mary Stubbs 406784 Mary@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 - 5pm, Friday 9am - 1pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Mr Geoff Gypps 365630 mob 07947 902846
Leadership Team Mrs. Jean Kirk 317699
Treasurer Mr Ian Morse 216428 treasurerph@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator John Hitt 404186
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 - Morag Stewart 360103

Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

Monday

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

Head teacher Mrs Laura Leggett ☎326685

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

9.-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 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 Carolyn Morris youth@thischurch.com 365630

1.30-2.45pm Chat and Make For babies and toddlers 0-5. Crafts, toys, songs, story and refreshments £1. More details email– chatandplay@hotmail.co.uk There will be no meeting on 2.July.

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

66.15pm 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– 16 July 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 Wriggles 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)

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

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 August 21 Strawberry tea at St. Mark's at 2.30pm Details call Janet King 313946

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

Wednesday

9am -1pm Machine Knitting group at Putnoe Heights, fortnightly. Contact Marion Sutton ☎217647

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

9.30am Discovery & Do (Childminders) St. Mark's. Clare Simmons ☎328380 or 07788824666

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 18 July 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 19 September. Wendy Waters401834

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

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

6.15pm 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 18 July 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.0-5 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 .

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. (see contact details below)

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 – 9 October, 11 June

St Mark's Leadership Team - 11 September

Putnoe Heights Leadership Team -

Putnoe Heights Management Meeting

Putnoe Church Council - 15 October,

Pastoral Group Meeting -

Churchyard Committee -

Brickhill Parish Council Meetings -

Commemoration Service 4 November 3.00pm

Harvest Festival 30 September

Circuit meeting -

Deanery Meeting - 16 November

Woodland Burial Trustees– 30 September

Putnoe Heights Children & Youth Meeting -

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

Ordinary 15

Opening Verse of Scripture Ephesians 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Collect Prayer *Before we read we pray*

Eternal God, giver of love and peace, you call your children to live together as one family. Give us grace to learn your ways and to do your will, that we may bring justice and peace to all people, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen Methodist Worship



Beheading of John the Baptist, Caravaggio

First Bible Reading - Amos 7:7-15

This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand. And the LORD asked me, "What do you see, Amos?" "A plumb line," I replied. Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer. "The high places of Isaac will be destroyed and the sanctuaries of Israel will be ruined; with my sword I will rise against the house of Jeroboam."

Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: "Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words. For this is what Amos is saying: "'Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will surely go into exile, away from their native land.'" Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. Don't prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king's sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom."

Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' (This is the word of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God**)

Second Reading - Ephesians 1:3-14

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.

(This is the word of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God**)

Gospel Reading - Mark 6:14-28

King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him." Others said, "He is Elijah." And still others claimed, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of

long ago." But when Herod heard this, he said, "John, the man I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!" For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled ; yet he liked to listen to him. Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you." And he promised her with an oath, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?" "The head of John the Baptist," she answered. At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter." The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. (This is the Gospel of Christ **All: Praise to Christ our Lord**)

Post Communion Prayer

Eternal God, comfort of the afflicted and healer of the broken, you have fed us at the table of life and hope: teach us the ways of gentleness and peace, that all the world may acknowledge the kingdom of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hymns (*Please distribute Holy Communion and Hymns & Praise*)

1. Come let us join our cheerful songs: 810
2. I the Lord of Sea and Sky: (On Partnership news)
3. God has spoken by his prophets: 64
4. Now let us from this table rise: 619
5. Thy hand, O God has guided: 784

Bidding Lord hear us **Response** Lord graciously hear us

Commentary

There is an art to writing a CV in order to get a job or a higher position in our careers. There are books, websites and coaches we can hire to get help putting the best spin on our educational and work experience. "Let us help you put your best foot forward" – might be an appropriate ad for counselors who promise to help us organize our curriculum vitae. After all, prospective bosses can be pretty choosy when they read over our cover letter and CV for a job opening.

So, how come God isn't so fussy when God calls people forward to be a prophet? God goes looking in some rather ordinary places to find "suitable" candidates for the all-important role of speaking for God to an often-resistant audience. The prophets themselves admit to being pretty ordinary – at least until God called them.

The prophet Amos preached in the northern kingdom at the King's own temple at Bethel. The northern kingdom was enjoying prosperous times, so why did God need to choose and send a messenger to them? Because, while some had a lot, the needy were neglected and religious practices had been reduced to empty ritual – more pomp than sincere worship.

Amos railed against the excesses of society and the emptiness of religious practices. The high priest at Bethel was Amaziah and today we hear his reaction to Amos' preaching, "Off with you, visionary and flee to the land of Judah!" In other words, "Go south and try prophesying there, just get out of here!" Amaziah was the high priest, he had prestige and religious authority on his side. Amos must have been pretty prestigious and educated to go up against him – at least one would think so.

But God must have misplaced Amos' CV because, by the prophet's own admission, "I was no prophet... I was a shepherd and a dresser of sycamores." God chose a farmhand to go to a prominent religious center to preach a message of reform to its people, prominent religious leaders and king.

If God chooses the most unlikely people to accomplish God's purposes and to speak God's word then, when they fulfill their role, it is clear that God must have been backing them up. God must have been at work, not any mere human instrument on his or her own.

There are some powerful prophets in our time, people from ordinary backgrounds, but obviously chosen by God to accomplish God's intentions: Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Day – plus, great church leaders, artists and political voices.

But why limit prophets to the headlines? Recall the prophetic voices in our own lives: the parents, grandparents, relatives, friends, teachers and even our critics, who addressed a word to us at a crucial moment and changed our present and future path. These were probably people without much formal faith education, perhaps even a child or a student. But they opened our eyes to the superficial character of our ways, or our social indifference to the needs of others.

These everyday people remind us that, like Amos and numerous other prophets, God frequently calls ordinary people to speak a word of challenge and grace. Let's not forget to include ourselves in the category of "ordinary people" – people also called to speak and act as God's emissaries to the world – lest we exclude ourselves from the important work Amos describes of himself, "The Lord took me... and said to me, 'Go to prophesy to my people....'" God chooses people like us to fulfill special tasks. Each of us, through our baptism, have been called to be a prophetic person.

Meditation

When training to be a teacher in the late 1980's, early 1990's at the College of Ripon and York St. John I also studied Theology. I loved it. Our Old Testament reading today comes from the book of Amos. When I read it in preparation for today's service I was swept back in time to my studying days for as part of our work on the Old Testament we spent a lot of time looking at eighth century B.C. prophets – Amos was one of those! I recently came across a modern day interpretation of Amos' call to be a prophet on a website called rootsontheweb (a website and resource designated to help people in church service preparation). I have used some of it in my sermon today but I think it makes a good read! *Claire Peck*

Suppose Amos lived in the 21st century. How might God have called him? Cast: Amos; God (offstage)

Amos is dressed as a farmer (modern clothes). He enters carrying a basket of fruit. His mobile rings. He puts down his basket, fumbles for his mobile but the ringing stops. He wearily sits down on a chair and looks at his mobile...

Amos Blast another missed call. Fourth time today. Don't folk know I'm working? Not another sales call I hope. Let's see it's the same number. Looks odd. Don't recognise it let alone the caller. Try voicemail. Ah there's a message.

God Amos, please ring me back. It's about prophets. It's important.

Amos Profits, eh? That'd be welcome – the price of livestock's nosedived. And no one is in the market for figs or fruit. Here goes, insert local code... followed by 777777.

God Ah Amos, thanks for ringing back

Amos Who's that? Do I know you?

God It's God

Amos (nearly drops mobile) God? God! You're having me on!

God You are Amos from Tekoa, shepherd and arboriculturist.

Amos Certainly I'm a shepherd, you can smell the stink down the phone, but arbori what's its name?

God You prune sycamore fig trees.

Amos OK. But if you are really God why are you phoning me on a workday? Don't you only work on Sundays?

God I am always at work, Amos. 24/7.

Amos Sorry, it was a cheap crack. However, your message was about profits – so I thought you were from the Tekoa Better Business Bureau offering me a juicy contract.

God I said prophets (spells it out) P R O P H E T S.

Amos Oh... 'prophets' as in Moses. But what's that to do with me – I'm not religious, I'm a farmer? I know about sheep and fruit trees but not that holy stuff. You've called the wrong number.

God I don't make mistakes, Amos.

Amos No you're God, I suppose you don't. But why call me?

God You have eyes, you have ears, you have a heart, you think, and you can speak. Tell me, what do you see?

Amos I have seen poor people driven off the land. I've noticed loan sharks taking the very cloak off their debtors' backs. I have heard rich traders boast about their short measures and loaded scales. I've witnessed rich wives loading up their 4X4's with crates of expensive wine whilst their husbands withhold their labourers' pay.

God Don't you think I haven't seen all this too, and more?

Amos Yes, but you are God, you must! But what's that to do with me?

God I need a voice, Amos.

Amos But I'm not a prophet.

God But you know about the law and the profits (with an f!). You have seen the use and abuse of money. What's more, you know how the powerful exploit religion to justify and fuel their greed and bolster their status. You've seen how rulers use religious leaders as their puppets and mouthpieces.

Amos Oh, yes! You've no need to remind me about Jereboam and his tame poodle Amaziah. What happens at the king's sanctuary at Bethel fair makes my blood boil!

God That's where I am sending you, Amos.

Amos But I am not a prophet, not even a politician.

God Don't get fixated on titles, Amos. It's because of your heart, your passion for justice that I am sending you.

Amos It'll be dangerous.

God Of course, but remember ...

Amos What?

God I have called you and will be with you. You know all you need to know about prophets, however you spell the word.

Amos But what if I need help?

God You have my number. It's just a local call!

(Exit Amos)



Amos, York Minster

John The Baptist Mark 6:14-29

It is a gruesome story and a sad end for the Baptizer who made straight the way in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord. I know Stephen is the first martyr of the church but John is the first one to die for the cause. That's not to say he fully understood it even if in baptizing Jesus he recognized the one who was greater than he. While in prison John sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the one or should they look for another. Jesus sent them back to tell John "the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and good news is proclaimed to the poor." (Matthew 11:5) Maybe Jesus' response emboldened John to continue to be a voice in the wilderness, albeit confined in Herod's prison, calling "that fox" (Luke 13:32) to get out of the hen house. But then John was not a "reed shaking in the wind" or one destined to wear fine clothes. (Matthew 11:7) He was born to be a prophet and "more than a prophet" but like so many prophets before him he paid the price for speaking the truth to power. Jesus will have his own day in court when the crowd demands its due and the prophet from Galilee suffers the same fate as those who went before him. The difference is that the Word made flesh could not be silenced, even by the grave. And John the baptizer was blessed to know he was included in the word that Jesus sent him. We stand in that prophetic tradition as those called to speak the truth and not count the cost for the word sent to John includes us. The dead are raised.

Prayers for Sunday and the week ahead

Though our worship may bring us scorn, you deserve it. Though our songs of praise may stir a jeering response you deserve it. Though our love for you may take us to those who hate you, and us, you deserve it. Though our attempts to follow you, to reflect your grace and compassion, may leave us rejected or misunderstood, resisted or denied, wounded or crucified... You deserve our faith, our devotion, our love and our commitment to walk always in your cross-carrying, peace-loving ways. God of Peace, you are worthy and we praise you. Amen.

We like our agendas, Jesus, we like to set priorities and plan outcomes; and we want the world to follow. But, too often our agendas are not yours; and that can't be good for us or for our world. So we pray, that your agenda would prevail in our hearts, in our words, in our priorities, in our relationships, in our actions. May our world be captured by the beauty and grace that flow from your Kingdom purposes; wherever there is violence, wherever there is division, wherever there is disease, wherever there is need, wherever there is grief, wherever there is despair, may human experience be shaped by your awesome, creative reign. Amen.

In defiance of corruption and falsehood, we commit to truth and integrity and we pray for honesty and uprightness to increase in our world. In defiance of apathy and hatred, we choose to be proactive in love and we pray for understanding and peace to increase in our world.

In defiance of scepticism and cynicism, we embrace the mystery of faith and we pray for humility and wonder to increase in our world. In defiance of self-interest and human arrogance we celebrate God's salvation and we pray for compassion and faith to increase in our world. In defiance of all that would oppose God's purpose among us we choose again to follow Christ, and we continue to pray, not just now, but at all times. Amen

It's a world of fists, Jesus. We have no shortage of excuses to fight; the smallest difference, the most insignificant slight the least justifiable defence of our rights or privilege and our fists are raised and thrown, and we feel no shame. Forgive us the violence of our hearts. Teach us to open our hands, Jesus, like you did, to repair the places that war has destroyed, to heal the people that hatred has wounded, to rebuild the communities that violence has fractured, to reconcile the factions that fear has divided, to forgive the wrongs that have dehumanised us all. Teach us to open our hands, Jesus, like you did, though nails may be all that is offered in return.

Open House Every Wednesday at St Mark's we welcome the Open House group. We have been fortunate that a committed team of volunteers have continued the work of Club House, the charity helping those with learning disabilities. We are always grateful for new helpers so if you can spare an hour or two please do drop in and introduce yourself to Cheryl and the team.

Thursday Prayer Group Putnoe Heights will not meet on July 19 and July 26.

Junior Church at St Mark's will resume on 9 September. Jaana

Methodist Prayer Handbook 2012/2013 "Crossing the Chasm" is now due for publication. The cost, which is the same as last year, will be £3. 50 each. If you wish to purchase a copy, please contact Vera Pearson on 270737 who will be ordering these very soon.

A Hymn for Sunday

I, the Lord of sea and sky.
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin, my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am Lord, is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if you send me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my peoples pain.
I have wept for love of them, they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them, whom shall I send?

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them, my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide,
till their hearts be satisfied,
I will give my life to them, whom shall I send?

Flowers at Putnoe Anyone wishing to contribute towards the cost of flowers at Putnoe on any Sunday during the next six months, is invited to enter their name on the rota on the notice board in the welcome area.

Chat and Make at St Mark's finishes on 16 July and starts again on Monday 10 September at 1.30pm.

Chat and Play at St Mark's finishes on 19 July and starts again on Thursday 13 September at 9.30 am.

Story Box at St Mark's starts again on Thursday 6 September at 12 noon.

Action for Children Thank you to everyone who helped to make the event at Ladyslaude Court a worthwhile occasion. Some long standing lantern box holders met each other again and the residents. If you too would like a lantern box please add your name to the list on either St Mark's or Putnoe Heights notice boards. The total from the boxes from May 2011—June this year is £250. 33 with a further £25 from the refreshments provided on the 27th. Janette will happily welcome us on another occasion. Thank you to Mary for arranging event.

St. Mark's Craft Club Appeal - Wanted for projects for the Christmas Fayre - Round wreath bases in either cane, willow or polystyrene. Please if you have any hand them in to the Offices Thank you..

Great Gappo Show on Monday 23 July at Putnoe Heights from 12 - 2pm. Tickets available from Carolyn Morris. £1 adults, £2 children and £3 on the door.

Clean Square Plastic Pots (up to 4") are needed By Marion Prior, for cuttings, to be sold at next year's boot sales. If you have some to offer, please leave them at St Mark's Church Office. Many thanks.

amazon.com
and you're done.



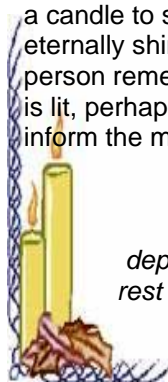
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Rest In Peace

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.

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



Forthcoming Funerals



Please remember these families and friends in your prayers.

The funeral of Lawrence Kay will take place at Bedford Crematorium on Monday 16th July at 12.15pm

The funeral of Frederick Charles Wilbraham will take place at Bedford Crematorium on Tuesday 17th July at 12.15pm