



# Partnership News

Putnoe Heights & St Mark's Church  
16 March 2014  
2nd Sunday in Lent



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

## Today – 16 March 2014

### 9.30 St Marks - Holy Communion

Preacher - Revd Wendy Evans-Wood  
Leadership – Mrs Elizabeth Bean  
Intercessions – Mrs Morag Stewart  
Organist - Mr Clive Simmonds

### 11.00 am Putnoe — Holy Communion

Preacher - Revd Wendy Evans-Wood  
Leadership Team - Mrs Jenny Snelson  
Intercessions — Mrs Sue Allen  
Organist - Mr Clive Simmonds

## 23 March– 3rd Sunday of Lent

### 9.30 St Marks – Morning Worship

Preacher - Revd Dr Sam Cappleman  
Leadership – Mr Mike Ovenden  
Intercessions – Deacon Jane Mills  
Organist – Mr Clive Simmonds

### 11.00 am Putnoe – Morning Worship

Preacher– Revd Dr Sam Cappleman  
Leadership Team - Mrs Sue Allen  
Intercessions — Dr Tim Wilkes  
Organist - Mr Clive Simmonds

**Readings** 1. Exodus 17: 1-7 2. Romans 5:1-11  
3. John 4: 5-42

**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 Jenny Blakey in memory of  
Phyl Bland and Ettie Cobley.  
Also by Rita and Nigel Plat and family in memory  
of Justin on his birthday.

*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

God whose mystery  
no tongue can describe  
and whose thoughts  
no speech can utter;  
receive the praise  
of your whole creation  
and illumine our souls  
with the glory of your presence,  
for you live and reign,  
now and for ever. Amen.

*Gregory of Nazianzus (c.329-389)*

**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](http://www.ThisIsChurch.com)  
Twitter follow at [bedfordchurches](https://twitter.com/bedfordchurches)**

### Partnership Pastoral Support Team Co-Ordinators

Mrs Wendy Waters 342613 office@thisischurch.com  
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 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** - Mr Michael Ovenden 826738  
**Treasurer** - Mr Ian Farthing 210892  
treasurer@thisischurch.com  
**Gift Aid Administrator** 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](http://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

**1.30pm Chat & Make.** For babies and toddlers 0-5.

Crafts, toys, songs, story and refreshments £1. More details email-chatandplay@hotmail.co.uk

**2.00pm U3A Calligraphy** at St Mark's (2nd week in the month) Contact Janet King 313946.

**12.00 noon Story box** 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 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— 17 March 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 Jo Jingles.** St. Mark's. Music & movement for pre-school children. Charlotte Williams 07968207442

**9.30am Candleworking** (Needlework). Putnoe Heights. Pat McCart 365507

**9.30am -12.30 & 4-9pm Slimming World** St. Mark's. Helen Skinner 07989080389

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

**11.15am U3A Keep Fit Putnoe Heights** Contact Janet King 313946

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

**1.3pm 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

**7.30-8.30pm Pilates** St Mark's Church Jane Butcher 0789187957

**7pm - 8.30pm Daisy Birthing** Putnoe Heights Susie 07980447390

**7.00pm Keep Fit.** St. Mark's Jan Gregory 328455 (Unfortunately Jan has had to cancel her sessions at the moment, but hopes to re-start in September.

**7.30pm Ladies Tuesday Club** at Putnoe Heights (Meets fortnightly) 18 March TBC Details Janet King 313946

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 26 March 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 19 March 2014 Wendy Waters 401834 Jean Bank 355698

**4.15pm Kumon Maths.** Putnoe Heights Mrs Raksha Mistry 01908 392698  
**6.00 pm 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 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 19 March 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.  
**9.30am Spanish for total beginners.**at Putnoe Heights. Elena 01234 266968  
**9.45am Chat and Play** St.Mark's. A term time group for Mums & toddlers.0-5 Jo Garner 400071 or 07932616468  
**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  
**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  
**7.30pm Gentle Birthing** St Mark's. Pat Wood 07946 847231  
**8 -10pm 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). Mr Newton 01525 378193  
**8.00pm 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  
**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  
**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.  
**7-9pm Tae Kwon Do** St Mark's Adrian Felice www.bedfordtkd.com 07964356355  
**Messy Church Dates** Weds 19th March, 16th April, 21st May, 18th June.



### Diary Dates



**St Mark's Church Council** – 17 June, 14 October  
**St Mark's Leadership Team** - 20 May, 9 Sept  
**Annual Congregational Meetings—27th April**  
**Putnoe Heights Leadership Team** -  
**Putnoe Heights Management Meeting** 30th April  
**Putnoe Church Council** - 10 July  
**Pastoral Group Meeting** - 1 April 4pm  
**Churchyard Committee** -  
**Commemoration Service** - 2nd November  
**Circuit meeting** – 19th June  
**Woodland Burial Trustees—**  
**Putnoe Heights Children & Youth Meeting – Monday 9 June 1.10pm**

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

# Second Sunday of Lent

## Sentence of Scripture **Philippians 2:9**

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father

## Collect Prayer for the Day

*Before we read we pray*

Merciful Lord, grant your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen *Methodist Worship*

## First Bible Reading - **Genesis 12: 1-4a**

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.

(This is the word of the Lord -- **Thanks be to God**)

## Second Bible Reading - **Romans 4: 1-5,13-17**

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

(This is the word of the Lord -- **Thanks be to God**)

## Gospel Reading - **John 3: 1-17**

*Please stand when the reading is announced* —**Glory to Christ our Saviour**

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him." In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be



The Deposition - Nicodemus with the body of Jesus from the cross  
Artist Michelangelo, Year c.1547–1553  
Location, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence

born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven--the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.  
(This is the Gospel of Christ -- **Praise to Christ our Lord**)

### **Post Communion Prayer**

Holy God, we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ: may we who are partakers at his table reflect his life in word and deed, that all the world may know his power to change and save. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Hymns** *(Please distribute Lent Worship booklet and Hymns Psalms)*

1. We give immortal praise, 18
2. Come let us with our Lord arise, 575 Tune Sussex Carol
3. Author of faith eternal Word, 662
4. Love divine, 262 Tune Blaenwern

### **Commentary**

The gospel this morning is one of the outstanding passages in the whole Bible, sometimes called the golden verses.

In verse 1, we read of Nicodemus. He would have heard of the mighty acts of Jesus and was obviously impressed. Here was a man who recognized that he needed a change and wanted to go deeper, he wanted what Jesus offered. Sometimes we all recognize something is missing in our life and seek an answer; it may be difficult to admit this, but Nicodemus was ready to face up to it and decided to approach Jesus.

He was an important man in the community. He was a very rich and was most powerful in Jewish life. He was a Pharisee, one of an elite company never more than 6,000, who took a pledge to spend all their lives observing every details of the Jewish Law. To a Jew, that Law was the most sacred thing in the world. He was also on the ruling council called the Sanhedrin, a Court of 70 members, the Supreme Court of the Jews. All the people looked up to Nicodemus, for he was a teacher and answered questions. He tithed a tenth of all his income, fasted and prayed for two hours each day. He was a man many Churches would welcome. He had religion, but not Christ.

For Nicodemus to be seen going to Jesus could have had serious implications for him so one night he went to see Jesus, which meant he was taking a great risk, for if found doing so it would have meant losing his position, so he had to avoid being seen. There are many people who are in a like situation today who fear being seen going to Church lest they get mocked, and prefer to live a secret faith. No one need to be afraid of seeking Jesus, He will take you however you come.

The religion of Nicodemus was that of doing good works. The problem with a religion of good deeds is that we can never know when we have done enough, but that is the basic religion of the world. Jesus saw that Nicodemus had in his heart a great need for he could see the effect Jesus was having on the crowds and he wanted that experience. He sincerely believed he was doing what he thought God wanted from him, yet he realised something more was necessary; it was that feeling which led him to Jesus and risk incurring the wrath of his people.

So beneath an Eastern sky, on a hill overlooking Jerusalem, when it was dark, Nicodemus went to find and speak to Jesus. He told Jesus that he knew the works Jesus did were such that God must be with Him. and said, no one could help but be impressed by what Jesus had achieved.

Jesus answered that it was not the acts that were important, but it was the effects on a life that mattered. He told Nicodemus that unless a person was born anew, that is from above he cannot see the kingdom of God. This reply was puzzling to Nicodemus, but what Jesus was meaning that in order to see the kingdom of God, that is everlasting life, the Spirit of God must enter their heart.

Nicodemus could not understand the deep meaning of Jesus words, to him it was absurd that a man could again enter his mother's womb and be re-born. Nicodemus took Jesus' words literally and asked 'how can a man be born when he is old. Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb'. Jesus was of course speaking figuratively.

If you think of a birth, the body exists before birth and can move and feel, but knows nothing of this world. It cannot see nor communicate yet the world is all around it. At the moment of birth, the embryo comes in to the world and can see, breathe and make contact. The baby is born of the flesh. Jesus told Nicodemus he needed to be born again, that being to be changed in such a way that can only be described as a re-creation. To be born of the Spirit means to have the Spirit of Jesus Christ living inside of you, and you are ready to believe that Jesus Christ was Lord and is the Saviour of the World.

Jesus then said one has to be born of water and the Spirit. By this He was saying being baptized by water is important; the sign is important as a pictorial representation and seal, but that sign has to be accompanied by the thing signified, the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit. Water may cleanse and may make you smell nicer, but that is not enough in God's eyes. What it stands for is important, but you have to grasp the full meaning, which is repentance for sin, and the start of a new way of living.

What Jesus calls for is a complete transformation in our lives. To lead a life in which we submit all willingly to the will of God. This means in our thoughts, words and actions.

All this seemed very strange to Nicodemus. He was used to pleasing God by the rule of law and works and a person cannot do anything about his birth.

Jesus then referred to the wind which no one can direct or see but it can be felt, and its effects can be witnessed. The relation of the wind to your body resembles that of the Spirit to the soul. Just as the wind does as it pleases so does the Spirit.

Nicodemus was totally confused and asked can all this be. Jesus pointed out he was a teacher of Israel and should know these things, he had the Old Testament and John the Baptist, but had not benefited from them

Jesus said that Nicodemus was not accepting His testimony so if he could not accept what was told of earthly things there was no point in him being told of heavenly things. The point Jesus is making is if all the things which take place within our own experience and are self evident yet we do not understand that by our own ability we are not able to please God, how can we expect to understand heavenly things.

Jesus referred to the wind blowing and being heard without it being seen or knowing where it came from or where it was going. When we are born again we feel the Spirit of God inside us. You don't see God or control Him, but you see the effects when Jesus takes hold of your life. Your worship becomes more meaningful and necessary to you.

When we are born of the Spirit we have a new power within us. It may be asked how do I get it? Sometimes a man and a woman meet and immediately know they have met the person of their dreams, instantly they fall in love. The relationship may last for ever or indeed may fall apart after a while when they reconsider with the regularity of normal living. Another man and woman meet and meet again and again, and suddenly realize how deeply they have come to love each other and they live on happily. If you asked them at what point they actually fell in love, they could not tell you it just developed.

In order to understand heavenly things Jesus said, one must have been present with God, but no one has ever gone up into heaven, but He (Jesus) had come down from heaven.

Like many people today, Nicodemus felt he was too old to change, to set in his ways, but we can begin anew at any age. So many people are desperately unhappy and unsatisfied because they are missing out in their lives. They seek refuge in alcohol or drugs or gambling or whatever. The thought of seeking spiritual help is beyond their ability to think of such a move.

People come to a point in life when they feel that they are going through the motion of religion, of having the ritual without there being any sense of the real thing. If you come to that point in your relationship with God, and it happens to people all the time, you need to come before Jesus and ask Him to come into your life and give you that new life.

We have the whole message of the gospel in verse 16, 'God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.' Just as a mother suffers to give us physical birth, so Jesus suffered on the Cross that we should have spiritual birth. We see the immense love of God acting not for His own sake but for ours. We also see the breadth of God's love it was not just for a nation, but for the whole world. Augustine once wrote, 'God loves each one of us as if there was only one of us'.

As a sequel to this story of Nicodemus, he was present at the burial of Jesus when he assisted in the laying of the body having brought to the tomb expensive aloes and myrrh

## **Prayers for Sunday and the week ahead**

*The Following prayer is used for the Imposition of Ashes on Ash Wednesday:*

Almighty God, you create us from the dust of the earth. Let these ashes be for us a sign of our repentance and a symbol of our mortality. may we always remember that by your grace alone we are given eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Putnoe Book Stall** : Our bookstall is now up and running; the books are to be found on a Library Trolley which is being kept in the Quiet Room. This can be wheeled anywhere in the building and if any Groups using Church premises wish to have it in their room, please take advantage of it (we would ask that it be returned to the Quiet Room afterwards). The loan charge per book is 25p, purchase price of any book is £1 and an honesty box is attached to the trolley. We will still have some books in the Small Hall and the same charges apply here. Until this project gets going, perhaps anyone with any books for the stall will be patient and keep them until later. Thank you to everyone who has donated books up to now. Pam Kinselley

### **Annual Congregational Meetings**

These will take place after Church on Sunday 27 April. Everybody is invited to attend.

**Organ Recital** by William Heywood on 21 March at All Saints Church, Renhold at 7.30pm Tickets £10 each (Refreshments included) Tickets available at the door or in advance from Ann Timms 01234 772605 or Ian Johnstone 01234 871614.

### **Lent Soup Lunch for Christian Aid.**

Make a donation to Christian Aid and enjoy a home made soup, bread and cheese lunch at Putnoe Heights Church after morning service on Sunday 16th March. No tickets but please sign the list in Putnoe Welcome Area.

**St Mark's Craft Group** have their Easter novelties on sale after morning service and from the office during the week. Everything £1. Please support us, all profits to the Church. Thank you.

**Putnoe Men's** second Fellowship meal will take place at the Cappuccino bar on Tuesday 18 March at 7.30pm. If you would like to join them please ring Barry Southam 219714 or email [barrysoutham@aol.com](mailto:barrysoutham@aol.com) for more details.

### **Join the Real Easter Egg 2014 Campaign.**

Out of 80 million chocolate Easter Eggs sold each year, The Real Easter Egg is the only one with the Easter story in the box. This year there are two versions available at £3.99 and £9.99. See St. Mark's notice board for further details and order at the office. By 24th March.

**St. Mark's Church Preschool** are now collecting Sainsbury's kids vouchers. Please pass to Helen Harpin or pop them into the box provided.

**Church Member** requires cleaner, once a fortnight in North Brickhill area. Please apply to Derrick on 01234 400279

**Highfield Residential Care Home** St. Mark's group will hold an Easter Service on April 13 (Palm Sunday) At 2.30pm. All well wishers are welcome to come and help. Vera Pearson.



### **Lent 2014**

This year we are going to do something very different for Lent and we want as many people as possible to join and hopefully also invite friends to come along. On Wednesday 9 April we will be hosting a performance of the Passion Play Inheritance by the Riding Lights Theatre

Company at St Mark's. This is a meditative and reflective opportunity to consider the Passion and our response.

More info at: [ridinglights.org/inheritance](http://ridinglights.org/inheritance)

Good news - the Inheritance trailer is ready!

Link here: <http://vimeo.com/ridinglights/inheritance>

Written by Bridget Foreman, Inheritance weaves the strands of the biblical Passion into a dramatic new narrative. It evokes the community where Jesus lived, the people who knew him best, the powers that brought him to execution. And in the shadow of the cross, it casts light on some of the women who Jesus stands alongside, sharing in their suffering.

Book now ! Tickets have now been released to all churches

### **Saturday 29 March 2014 – Elstow Abbey**

**Abseil** Why not challenge yourself to do something new, and at the same time raise money to help end poverty. Register for our sponsored abseil at Elstow Abbey in Bedford – go to [www.christianaid.org.uk/abseil](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/abseil) or telephone 01865 246818

You could be one of the first people ever to abseil down this historic building, famous for its connection with John Bunyan who grew up in the village. Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis – only £15 to register and aim to raise a minimum of £60 through sponsorship. You will be helping to raise income for Christian Aid's vital work in eradicating poverty around the world. Minimum age is 11 but there is no upper age limit. No previous experience required.

### **Well Done Eryl at St Mark's !!**

I am going to do this abseil and would be very grateful if you would sponsor me. You can do it online at [www.justgiving.com/ErylTucker](http://www.justgiving.com/ErylTucker), or, if you would prefer, I would also be very happy to receive cheques (payable to Christian Aid) or cash. You can come and watch if you like!

Many thanks in advance. *Eryl Tucker*

**Churches Together in Bedfordshire** Annual Forum Thursday 22nd May at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church Flitwick. Speaker Revd. Dr. Janet Wootton. Buffet meal from 6.30pm AGM at 7.30pm Speaker at 8pm. All Welcome.

## Co ordinator Wanted

Friends for Life is seeking to engage a self-employed person to provide services as a Co-ordinator in succession to John Bassill who is retiring from that role but continuing as Company Secretary. The role will involve implementing our new Business Plan and will be responsible for

- Advocating our work amongst the churches, the care homes and the wider community
- Fundraising
- Publicity (including preparation of communication materials, media relationships and managing the web-site for which technical support is well established).

The successful applicant will be able to work from home on their own initiative and be flexible as to time availability.

Engagement will be by way of a "Contract for Services" at an agreed hourly rate commensurate with experience and potential to successfully develop this ecumenical project. The hours initially will be circa 5 per week which may increase as the organisation develops. For further details and /or an informal chat please contact John on 07540828362 or [johnbassill@icloud.co.uk](mailto:johnbassill@icloud.co.uk).

Expressions of interest should be registered by 31 March.

*Friends for Life Bedfordshire is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales company number 7951058.*

*Registered Office: Priory Methodist church, Newnham Avenue Bedford MK41 9QJ  
[www.friendsforlife.org.uk](http://www.friendsforlife.org.uk)*



We have a new twitter account for both our churches. You can follow at - bedfordchurches

## Rest in Peace

Members of St Mark's Church will be saddened to hear the news of the death of Doreen Smart. Doreen has fought bravely with deteriorating health for a number of years but it never stopped her from coming to her church and offering support in any way that she could. Details of her funeral are printed this week.

## 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.'*

**MWiB Circuit Quiet Day** 9<sup>th</sup> April at Priory  
We are sorry to announce the cancellation of the Circuit Quiet Day because of major health issues with those involved in the leadership and organisation. Please will you tell anyone who you know may have been hoping to attend.

**From Tears to Laughter** a recital on April Fool's Day followed by refreshments. ! April at St. Andrew's Church. Joanna Reveley-Flute Simon Giliver-piano. Admission by donation-proceeds to Christian Aid.



**Wi fi** Wifi is now freely available throughout St Mark's Church Community Centre. The password is `jesuslovesme`

**amazon.com**  
and you're done.



**When you do your shopping please shop at [www. ThisChurch.com](http://www.ThisChurch.com)**

Thank you for shopping using the link on ThisChurch.com to shop through Amazon. Please be careful to make sure that you never access Amazon direct but always use the link on ThisChurch.com, this ensures we get a donation every time you make a purchase.

Please also remember the Easyfundraising link. This is really a very good way to shop as it has lots of voucher codes which can save you a fortune on purchases and we receive a commission.

You can shop at John Lewis, M&S etc - please always shop through [www.thischurch.com](http://www.thischurch.com)

## Meditation

"It took me a long time to realize that not only did God not hate my enemies, he didn't even hate his enemies."

*Martin Niemoller*



## Forthcoming Funerals

**The funeral of Sylvia Blitz** will take place at St Mark's Chapel on Tuesday 18 March at 12.30pm

**The funeral of Doreen Smart** will take place at Bedford Crematorium Monday 24 March on at 3.15pm