



Partnership News

Putnoe Heights & St Mark's Church
17 May 2015
Seventh Sunday of Easter



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

17 May - Seventh Sunday of Easter

9.30am St Mark's - Holy Communion
Preacher - Rev. Dr. Sam Cappleman
Leadership - Mrs. Elizabeth Bean
Intercessions - Ministers
Organist - Miss Marion Prior
11.00 am Putnoe - Holy Communion
Preacher - Rev. Dr. Sam Cappleman
Leadership - Mr. Martin Fannon
Intercessions - Dr. Tim Wilkes
Organist - Mr. Peter Twitchin

24 May - Pentecost

9.30am St Mark's - Morning Worship
Preacher - Rev. Canon Charles Royden
Leadership - Mr Mike Cooper
Intercessions - Ministers
Organist - Miss Marion Prior
11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Worship
Preacher - Rev. Canon Charles Royden
Leadership - Mrs. Veta Hudson-Rae
Intercessions - Mrs. Sue Allen
Organist - Mr. Alan Bunker

Readings 1. Acts 2: 1-21 2. Romans 8: 22-27
3. John 15: 26-27, 16: 4b-15

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

Thank You

The flowers at Putnoe Heights have been given by Barry and Jenny Snelson in memory of their parents.

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.

Banns of Marriage

We publish the banns and pray for the marriage of Graham Paul Hornsby and Alice May Court, both of this parish to be married at St Pandiona & St John the Baptist Church Eltisle (first time of reading)

Prayer for Sunday

Grant to us, O Lord, purity of heart and strength of purpose, that no passion may hinder us from doing your will, and no weakness from doing it; that in your light we may see light clearly, and in your service find perfect freedom; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

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

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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 Mon-Thur 9-5.30pm, Friday 9-1pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Geoff Gypps 365630
Leadership Team Mr Barry Southam 219714
barrysoutham@aol.com
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
Charity No 1160981.

Open Monday - Friday 9am - 5.00pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 342613 office@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Miss Wendy Rider 342613
Leadership Team - Mrs Margaret Appleton 354708
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
8.00am-5.30pm Pre-school Mon-Fri St Mark's
8.00am-5.30pm Top Marks Mon-Fri St Mark's Manager Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634
(See website for more details)
9.00am-12noon St Mark's Pre-School Nursery Manager Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634
9.30-10.30am - Body Control Pilates –Putnoe Heights Stephanie Smith 357787 or 07973174430
10.00am Bakers Barn Art Group. St Mark's Mrs M. Berry 211955
10.00am-12 U3A Play reading Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946
11.00am-12noon Pilates St. Mark's Liz Mason 07816522200
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
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 On April 20
2.00pm 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 Zoe Wilcox 07767311424
6.00pm Brownies St Mark's. Mrs C Mathew 826190
6.15 pm Brownies Putnoe. Sharon Tanner 01767699399 or 07928483418
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 Fit For All Putnoe Heights – Laura Amor 341152 / 07976259081
7.30pm Sugarcraft Guild St Mark's (1st week in month) Mary Daly 217127
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– 18 May 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

9.30am Candlewicking (Needlework). Putnoe Heights. Pat McCart 365507
9.30am -12.30 & 4-9pm Slimming World St. Mark's. 9.30, 11.30, 3.30, 5.30, 7.30. Lorrie Pearson 340473

11-12.15am 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
2.00pm 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.
3.30-6.30pm Stars School of Dance at Putnoe Heights. Esther Richardson 295862 or 07917582468
6-7pm Supple Strength Yoga St Mark's Amanda Alcock 07769747393
7.15-8.15pm Pilates St Mark's Church Jane Butcher 07891879571
7.00pm - 8.30pm Daisy Birthing Putnoe Heights Susie 07980447390
7.30pm Ladies Tuesday Club at Putnoe Heights (Meets monthly Next meeting 19 May Flower Event 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.
10.00-2pm Open House at St Mark's for those with learning disabilities., their friends, family , carers and supporters 342613.
10.00am 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
11.15am U3A Keep Fit at Putnoe Heights
12.30pm Luncheon Club. Putnoe fortnightly. Next meeting 20 May Contact Putnoe Office 365630
1.15pm Social Bridge Club St. Mark's. Mr Barnes 261811
2.00-4.00pm U3A Craft at St Marks.Contact 1st week of the month. Janet King 313946
2.00pm U3A Gilbert and Sullivan Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946
2.00pm - Fifty plus Keep Fit. Putnoe Heights Mrs Webster 856966
3.30-4.30pm Vita Fit St Mark's starting 29 April for 6 weeks Liz Roe 07901684538
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 20 May 2015 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

6.00-7.00pm 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

7.15pm Putnoe Guild Putnoe 3rd Wednesday in every month except August Mrs Jo Street 3446008.

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 20 May 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) Jill Cooper 357960

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.

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

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

1.00-2.30pm Wiggles & Jiggles Putnoe Heights. Drop in.

1.00 - 2.30pm 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 07768481499

6-7pm Supple Strength Yoga St Mark's Amanda Alcock 07769747393

6.15pm Brownies. Putnoe Heights Lou Brenna. 07919402797.

7.00pm Club 2000 Putnoe Audrey Halford 407284

7.00pm U3A Folk & Poetry St Marks (2nd and 4th week in month)Contact Janet King 313946

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

7.15pm Putnoe Art Group Bob Wardale 406094

7.30pm Magpies Women's Group St Mark's (2nd & 4th week in month) Rosemary McNeilage 405594

7.30pm Brickhill Ladies Group St Mark's (1st and 3rd week in month) Linda Stephen 409493

8.00pm 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

Friday

9.30am -3.30pm Machine Knitting group at Putnoe Heights, 2nd week per month.. 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-7.00pm Stars School of Dance at Putnoe. 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 at St. Mark's. 1st Sunday Jun/Aug /Oct/Dec. Contact P Harris 01623 621143

11.00 - 12.00 Church and Junior at Putnoe Heights for the under 9's . A crèche is also available.

2- 4.30pm Indoor Bowls at St. Mark's 2nd & 4th Sunday. Closed for summer break. Re opens 13 September. Ray Seymour 305695 or church office.

Diary Dates



St Mark's Church Council – tba

St Mark's Leadership Team -

Annual Congregational Meetings -

Putnoe Heights Leadership Team – 2nd June

Putnoe Heights Management Meeting – 28 May

Putnoe Church Council - 11 June

Pastoral Group Meeting– 15 September 2015 4.00pm

Churchyard Committee - TBA

Circuit meeting – 16 June at Putnoe Heights

Deanery meeting -

Woodland Burial Trustees – 17 May

Putnoe Heights Children & Youth Meeting - 1 June 2015 2pm

St Mark's Car Boot Sales 2015, 25 May and 31 August.

Harvest Festival service will be on Sunday 27 September.

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

Seventh Sunday of Easter

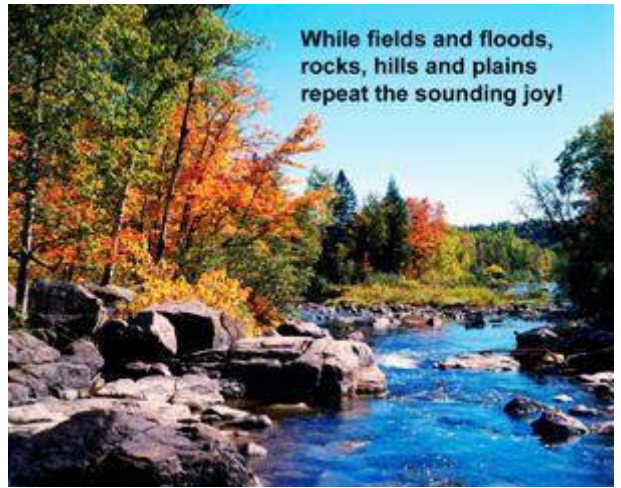
Sentence of Scripture Psalm 1 v 1,2

Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners lead, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law they meditate day and night.

Collect Prayer for the Day

Before we read we pray

Risen, ascended Lord, as we rejoice at your triumph, fill your Church on earth with power and compassion, that all who are estranged by sin may find forgiveness and know your peace, to the glory of God the Father. Amen. *Common Worship Shorter Collect*



First Bible Reading - Acts 1:15–17, 21-26

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) and said, “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus— he was one of our number and shared in this ministry.” Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.”

So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

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

Second Bible Reading - 1 John 5: 9-13

We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

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

Gospel Reading - John 17:6-19

(Please stand when the reading is announced - Glory to Christ our Saviour)

“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

(This is the Gospel of Christ - **Praise to Christ our Lord**)

Post Communion Prayer Eternal God, giver of love and power, your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world to preach the gospel of his kingdom: confirm us in this mission, and help us to live the good news we proclaim; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Hymns for Sunday (*Please distribute Holy Communion Booklet and Hymn Sheets*)

1. The head that once was crowned with thorns, 647;
2. Jesus the name high over all, 385;
3. Thou art the way, 695;
4. Immortal, invisible, God only wise, 327

Commentary The Lord's own Prayer

Following the general election there has been much in the news about leaders and leadership. Who will lead the parties where the leaders have stepped down and new leaders are required, and who will be on the leadership team of the parties that have been elected. Given all the history of the last few years, not surprisingly the qualities, backgrounds and track records of those people who aspire to lead political parties continue to be headline news and subject to much probing and analysis. Today's readings have the theme of leadership running through them. The reading from Acts describes the election of a leader to replace Judas among the disciples by drawing lots, perhaps not as democratic to the methods in place in our society today but one which seems to have been accepted. In today's gospel reading Jesus is preparing for leaving and wants to prepare the disciples as leaders of the embryonic church that Christ is to leave behind. But it's not so much about the quality of the individual, but the quality of the body of believers in their entirety. The disciples (in chapter 16) have just acknowledged who Jesus is (the Messiah) and that He has been sent from God. It's as if it is now safe for Jesus to return to the Father, the disciples have finally understood who Jesus is and what is His mission on earth.

We read that after His prayers, Jesus crosses the Kidron Valley (presumably from Jerusalem) to the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane. The purpose for which He came is reaching a climax and its fulfilment. Indeed, Jesus Himself has just said that He is completing the work that the Father entrusted to Him. It around the time of the last supper and Jesus is painfully aware that He is leaving His mission in the disciple's hands. Given how they seem to have misunderstood what this is until now, this must seem like a risky prospect.

Chapter 17 of John's gospel falls into three sections, the first where Jesus prays for Himself, the second (today's reading) where He prays for the disciples and then thirdly He prays for all believers. Today's passage, the prayer for the disciples, gives us a unique insight into the compassion, love and concern Jesus has for His disciples. The disciples had relied heavily on His physical and visible presence and this was about to change, about to end. Jesus understands their concern and prays for them. Unlike others, such as the Pharisees and Sadducees and many of the Jewish ruling party, the disciples had finally accepted the words of Jesus. They had come to know Jesus was of divine origin and understood His divine nature and task. They had become people of faith and would become His agents on earth. And as He prays for His disciples Jesus' prayer has a fourfold theme.

Firstly, it's as if Jesus is like a parent who is seeing their child off to school or University for the first time. He asks for protection – He asks that the disciples would not get led astray or start mixing with the 'wrong crowd', fall into the 'wrong hands'. He knows how vulnerable they are and open to misplaced ideas of leadership and unsound teaching and ideas. But the time has come for Jesus to depart and so He asks the Father to protect them as His own physical presence will leave them.

One of the key focus areas for this protection leads us into the second theme of the prayer, because after praying for the disciples' protection Jesus prays for unity. Jesus is aware that it is often the sheep that are separated from the flock that find themselves in distress. It's the animals that get separated from the herd in the jungles plains and desserts that gets picked off and eaten. It's a model for the church – a united church is often a strong church. Sometimes we find that unity hard to demonstrate where there are many potential topics which could divide us. But clearly in our unity is our strength and support.

Thirdly Jesus prays that the disciples might have joy, the joy that He has experienced in seeing them become fulfilled in the Father's work. The joy that comes from doing the Father's will and seeing others and the world transformed by His love. In praying for their joy, Jesus acknowledges that the disciples are no longer of this world, no longer of the people who do not believe that the Messiah had come. They have believed in His word, the message revealed and are about to live this out. Jesus has absolute certainty in the Father and the disciples should too. God had given the disciples to Jesus – they did not choose Him, He choose them. It's as if God had lent the disciples to Jesus and now He is handing them back into the safe keeping of God. The disciples are no longer of this world, no longer part of the people who do not believe, who are opposed to the will of God. They have been transformed and so transformed they proclaim Jesus and this is their joy.

Fourthly, Jesus prays that the disciples will be sanctified, set apart and made holy for His work. This requires that they are at one with Jesus, in unity with Him. But they cannot be at one with Jesus if they are not at one with each other and in unity with each other. Neither can we bear witness to Christ effectively if we are not at one with Jesus, as individuals or as a church and at one with each other. We are to be at one with each other so we too can be sanctified by God and set apart for His work and mission and be His

leaders in the world and the church.

Jesus' prayer for the early church, its leaders and all believers (as the passage continues in John) should be our prayer too. That our leaders in the church, locally, nationally and across the world are protected, united and joyful as they engage in their work, which should be none other than the work of Christ. That they and we too in our own leadership roles, however small that may feel, would be holy, one with each other and God through Jesus and set apart to reveal God's glory to the world. **Sam Cappleman**

Beating the Parish Bounds – an Ascension Day Tradition

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday this week, the three days immediately before Ascension Day, which was on Thursday, are termed Rogation Days. The word comes from the Latin 'rogare', meaning to ask, and these were the days when God's blessing was asked on the crops, planted a few weeks earlier and hopefully just beginning to show signs of life in the early Spring. The custom came from Europe where it was initiated by the Archbishop of Vienna in the year 470 after terrible plagues and minor earthquakes had devastated the community. He ordered special prayers to be recited as the villagers processed around their fields asking God blessing on their crops. The custom spread rapidly around Western Europe, and by the eighth century was established in Britain. These processions were also useful to show people their parish boundaries. The custom of 'Beating the Bounds' grew up to show people, and especially the younger members of the parish, where the parish boundaries lay. At the boundary-marks of the parish such as a pond, a big tree or a rock, the vicar would stop and read the Gospel, and when this had been done the boundary would be 'marked' to imprint the boundary in everyone's mind. Sometimes this marking was in the form of beating with willow wands. These willow wands come from the straight suckers of a pollarded willow. Stripping the soft bark from the outside revealed the beautifully smooth white wood of new willow and it is from this action of removing the bark that we get the title of the country dance 'Strip the Willow

Meditation

Jesus prays for His disciples that they will be protected from the evil one and that they may be one, just as Jesus and the Father are one. It would seem that one of the purposes of the evil one is to destroy Christian unity. Through the scriptures we read how Jesus and the Father are one, they are united. Through His obedience to the Father Jesus demonstrates the will of the Father. Through Jesus' incarnation He brings the presence of the Father into our human situations. The challenge of Jesus is that we too are called to bear witness to that same presence of the Father in our human situations. To do so we must be one with Jesus. More challengingly it would seem we cannot be one with Jesus unless we are one with each other. If we are disunited then how can we bear witness to the unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit? This unity is not some kind of homogeneous uniformity. It is the dynamic co-dependency on each other, liberating each other in rich variety as we let go of everything in self-giving and receive everything back from each other in self-acceptance and acceptance of others. Our unity is an active concept, as it is in the bible, a concept of giving and receiving. Whatever our challenges, we should never let a world view full of scepticism or hostility and so often focused on the individual to the exclusion of everything else, divide us, just as a world full of hostility, scepticism and self-interest never divided Jesus and His Father.

Prayers for Sunday and the week ahead

Saviour Christ, of ourselves we cannot love you, cannot follow you, cannot cleave to you; but you came down that we might love you; ascended that we might follow you, bound us round you as your girdle that we might be held fast to you. You loved us, so make us love you; you sought us, so make us seek you; you found us when we were lost, so be yourself the way, that we may find you and be found in you, our only hope and everlasting joy. Amen

Eternal God, the King of Glory, you have exalted your only Son with great triumph to your Kingdom in heaven. Leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where Christ has gone before, and where with you and the Holy Spirit He is worshipped and glorified, now and for ever. Amen

We have a great high priest who has passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God. Amen

Blessed are you, Lord God almighty, who gave your Son, Jesus Christ, to be our redeemer and the author of everlasting life; and exalted Him above all for ever; that at all times and in all places we might be partakers of His power and His glory. Amen

Almighty and ever-living God, give us new strength from the courage of Christ our shepherd, and lead us to join the saints in heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

BELIEF'S Spring course entitled "Reading the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) Today" will run on Wednesday Evenings at St Andrews Church Kimbolton Road Bedford from 8pm to 9.30pm as follows

Week 2 20th May 2015: A Jewish Perspective on the Hebrew Scriptures: Aga Cahn, of the Woolf Institute, Cambridge

Week 3 27th May 2015: The Value and Importance of the Hebrew Scriptures to Christians today: Janet Tollington, of Westminster College, Cambridge

Week 4 3rd June 2015: The Psalms: Brother John, of Turvey Abbey

Week 5 10th June 2015: The Old Testament: Brother William, of Turvey Abbey

This course will cost £4 per session (including refreshments) payable at each session

We do not want anyone to be deterred from attending any of BELIEF events for financial reasons. If you find the fees prohibitive, please contact us. Stephanie Field BELIEF Coordinator Tel 01234 330314 belief@standrewsbedford.org

Putnoe Heights "Missions knitting and crochet group". Knit-a-square for KasCare, providing comfort for orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa. <http://www.knit-a-square.com> a mission project for everyone. We could meet once a month; knit at home; donate wool or postage to send the items we have made. KasCare likes knitted and crochet 8 inch squares sent to them to make blankets to keep children warm. For more details speak to Carolyn Morris or visit their website for patterns and instructions.

Mother Teresa Support Group meet at St Mark's every other Tuesday at 2.30pm to knit and natter. (Wool and needles provided.) Please call Maureen Watling Tel.262225. New people always welcome. Next meeting Tuesday 26 May.

Do you have a skill or something which you do which you could share with Open House. It might be singing or making things or you may have some special photographs which you could show from a trip. Open House would like to welcome you along. Open House provides a relaxed café style environment where people are free to meet and make friends, enjoy themselves and perhaps try a new activity or learn a skill. Please get in touch with Charlie if you could offer to come along one Wednesday.

Visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to St Albans Diocese: June 2015

Sustaining Ministry and Personal Faith - Thursday 18 June 2015 at 7.15pm.

I invite you to come and hear Archbishop Justin speak to clergy, lay ministers, ordinands and congregation members on Thursday 18 June in the Cathedral. Archbishop Justin will draw on his experience and life, as well as his interest in Benedictine spirituality, as he explores the wells which sustain his faith in his demanding role. I know

that his insights will be relevant to us all as we seek to fulfill our various ministries and grow in our personal faith. The format for the event will be:
7:15pm Arrive at St Albans Cathedral and mingle with friends from across the diocese over drinks
8:00pm Talk by Archbishop Justin
8:45pm Period of quiet reflection
8:55pm Compline
9:15pm Leave the Cathedral in silence Bishop Alan

Easter Offering Dedication Service at Kempston East Methodist Church on Wednesday 27 May at 2.30p.m

Offer of prayers of blessing for a same sex relationship and/or a service of thanksgiving

For those who wish to look further into this the circuit has arranged an open evening of information and reflection on this emotive subject, which is open to all who wish to attend. This will be facilitated by Mr David Walton, former vice-president of the Methodist Conference on **Thursday, 21st of May, 7.30pm at Kempston East Methodist Church.**

It is also worth noting that Sam Cappleman has done a lot of study on this issue and can provide more information for any who wish to look into this further.

Can I request we all treat this prayerfully, whatever our own conviction, that we may hold all our diversity (one of the gifts of this partnership) with love, and that people may feel that their deep felt beliefs have been honoured, whatever the outcome.

An Invitation from the Brickhill BEE Group

Thursday 28 May, 1pm until 3pm in the Wren Room. The Citizens Advice Bureau together with Bedford Borough Council are coming along to help give advice and guidance on reducing your energy bills. All advice is free, impartial and strictly confidential. Bring along your energy bills and lets see if switching to an alternative provider will work out better. Bedford Borough Council will also be on hand to offer help and advice.



Sunday 24 May, 12 noon until 4pm
Brickhill BEE Group would like to invite you on a tour around the area starting out from, and returning to St Mark's Church, Calder Rise, Brickhill. The trail visits homes taking part in this years Brickhill Green Open Home event where you can witness first hand the changes that have been made to people's homes - making them far more energy efficient and/or using renewable energy.

Can you help be at St Mark's on this day to show people are boilers, panels and solar hot water ?



Jesus challenges us to love our neighbour.

At Christian Aid, we believe he meant our global neighbour too. We can't sit back and allow poverty to thrive.

So together, as thousands of Christian Aid churches, supporters, partners and staff, we work hard to transform people's lives now and inspire lasting hope for the future. Christian Aid Week is the single biggest act of Christian witness in Britain and Ireland. For thousands of churches, it's a way of getting out into the local community, and of answering Jesus' call to help people in need. We each bring what we have – our energy, our voice, our influence, our money, our time, our talents, our prayer, and our worship – and use them to work for a world that looks more like God's Kingdom.

As Christian Aid week draws to a close, we hear in the news of another powerful earthquake which has struck Nepal less than three weeks after the first devastating quake which killed more than 8,000 people and left nearly 3 million displaced. Christian Aid staff in Nepal now, are trying to get relief through to the area worst hit by this second earthquake. There are envelopes available in church today, if you feel able to donate towards the work of Christian Aid. They can be placed in the offertory or handed in to the church offices at St. Mark's and Putnoe Heights during the next few days. Thank you.

Praying after the election

Post election reflections by Rev Phil Jump

'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.'

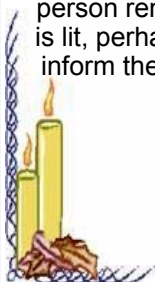
The words above come from Psalm 46. They are a response to several realities that the Psalmist outlines in earlier verses; not least that "nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall". We might not describe the outcome of our General Election in quite such graphic terms, but words like "landslide" and "unprecedented" have been regularly coined, particularly in response to the results from Scotland.

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

Beryl Boness

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



Many are bearing testimony to the fact that this is not an outcome they expected.

The most immediate consequences are the defeats and resignations of many high profile figures in our political life. We should not forget the human reality of this, giving thanks God for their service and praying for them as they now come to terms with disappointment and uncertainty. We can be thankful too that we live in a nation whose political identity is determined through the ballot box and not bullets.

The outcome of this election will no doubt polarise a good deal of political opinion and indeed national identity. As we engage with this reality, we might remember that Jesus pronounces God's blessing on those who seek to be peacemakers. We pray for stability and harmony, not only in our political life, but within our communities and society as a whole.

Our Scriptures offer us a helpful perspective at moments like this. We are encouraged to pray for and respect those who hold authority and public office, but are reminded too that their incumbency is fleeting compared to God's eternal reign and rule. As the dust settles on what has been an intriguing campaign, the call to be still, to reflect and to embrace afresh our identity in Christ is a significant starting place for the journey ahead.

Let us pray together:

For those who are now taking political office, that in serving our communities and national life - truth, justice, peace and wellbeing might become priorities for all.

For those for whom these results mean significant change – that they might find grace and wisdom for the way ahead.

That those with leadership and influence will act wisely and in the interests of all people -seeking stability and justice for our world.

That as Christian citizens in society, regardless of whether we currently face the prospect with relish or trepidation, we will have wisdom and courage to seek God's Kingdom and pursue his purpose in the emerging political landscape.

For those whose Christian identity has inspired them to serve in public life – that they might act as faithful followers of Jesus in every circumstance they face.



Forthcoming Funerals

The funeral of Freda Brandon will take place at the Crematorium at 1.45p.m. on Wednesday 27th May.