

Methodist  
Church

# Partnership News

## 18 December 2011

### Advent 4



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

##### 18 December – Advent 4

##### 9.30 am St. Mark's - Holy Communion

Preacher - The Reverend Charles Royden  
Leadership – Mrs Jean Bank

Intercessions – Deacon Jane Mason

##### 11.00 am Putnoe - Holy Communion

Preacher – The Reverend Eric Royden

Leadership - Mrs Veta Hudson-Rae

Intercessions—Mrs Sam Ware

##### 25 December - Christmas Day

##### 9.30am St Mark's - Morning Worship

Preacher - The Reverend Charles Royden

Leadership – Mrs Elizabeth Bean

Intercessions - Ministers

##### 11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Worship

Preacher - Revd Charles Royden

Leadership - Mrs Linda Hoar

Intercessions - Ministers

**Bible Readings** 1.Isaiah 52: 7-10 2.Hebrews 1:1-4  
3.John 1: 1-14

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

#### Thank You

The flowers at Putnoe Heights Church this week have been given by Patricia Pollard in loving memory of her mother Eva Hopkins.

The flowers at St Mark's this week have been given by Joyce Bean in memory of Ray 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 the Week

O Lord our God,  
you rule over all things  
and you accomplish all things.  
You never remove your hands  
from your works, nor ever shall.  
Guide us, we pray, with the power  
and the wisdom with which,  
from the beginning, you have loved  
and made all things;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Julian of Norwich (1342-1416)*



## Christmas Services



#### Putnoe Heights Church

##### Sunday 18 December 6.30pm

Carols by Candlelight

##### Saturday 24 December

4.00pm Children's Crib Service

A special half hour service  
for little ones

##### 11.30pm Midnight Holy Communion

##### Sunday 25 December 11.00am

Family Morning Worship

#### St Mark's Church

##### Saturday 24 December

Christmas Eve

3..00pm Children's Crib Service

A special half hour service  
for little ones

##### 6.30pm Carols by Candlelight

With Bedford Town Brass Band

##### 11.30pm Midnight Holy Communion By Candlelight

##### Sunday 25 December 9.30am

Family Morning Worship

# Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

## Monday

**9.15 –3.45 pm Mon and Wed/ 9.15-12.15pm Tues/Thurs/ Fri. Putnoe Heights Pre-school.** See website for more details [www.ThisChurch.com](http://www.ThisChurch.com)

Head teacher Mrs Janet Smith ☎326685

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

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

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin ☎312634

(See website for more details)

**.9.45am - Body Control Pilates** –Putnoe Heights

Stephanie Smith ☎ 357787 or 07973174430

**10.00am Bakers Barn Art Group.** St Mark's Mrs Berry ☎211955

**10.30am U3A Play reading** (see contact details below)

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

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

**4.15pm Rosemary Conley Diet & Fitness.** Putnoe Heights. Margo Needham ☎843747 or 07881730747

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

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

**6.15 pm Brownies** Putnoe. Sharon Tanner

☎01767699399 or 07720713738.

**6.15 Pilates** at Putnoe Heights Jane Butcher 300859

6.15 - 8.15pm

**6.15pm Weightwatchers.** St. Mark's Sam Thompson

☎07766421000

**7.15pm Fit for Life Yoga** - Putnoe Heights Contact Jane Butcher ☎07891879571

**7.30pm Sugarcraft Guild** St Mark's 1st week Pat Nicholson ☎353518

**7.30pm Cancer Care Society.** St Mark's. 1st Week. Mr J Dewhurst ☎01908 377020

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

**7.30pm Whist Drive.** St Mark's 3rd & 5th week . Next meeting– 19 December 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)

**1.15pm Toddlers Playtime/Sing & Stomp** - Putnoe Heights for toddlers and their carers. Run by Putnoe Childre's Centre Trudy Hamilton ☎340552

**1.30pm U3A Cinema Group.** (see contact details below)

**2.00pm U3A Book Group.** (see contact details below)

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

monthly. Morag Tomkins ☎356895

**2.00pm U3A** (see contact details below)

**2pm U3A Photography** St. Mark's (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.

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

**6.15pm Pilates** St Mark's Church Jane Butcher ☎07891879571

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

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

**7.30pm Hearts in Beds. Cardiac Support Group** 1st Tuesday in the month at St Mark's. Brian Ibberson ☎403497

**7pm Tabernacle of Truth Church** Putnoe Heights Bible study & prayers. Sacha Ojo ☎07590597891 or [www.tabernacleoftruth.co.uk](http://www.tabernacleoftruth.co.uk)

**7.30pm Putnoe Heights Ladies Tuesday Club** - Meets fortnightly. Next meeting Details call Janet King 313946

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

## Wednesday

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

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

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

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

**12.30pm Luncheon Club.** Putnoe Heights fortnightly. Next meeting 4 January 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

**2-5pm Police Surgery.** St Mark's Foyer. ☎349179

**1.30-4.30pm U3A Craft St Mark's** (see contact details below)

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

**3.45.- 5.30pm Messy Church.** St Mark's for children of lower school age and their carers. Bible-based story, crafts, singing and a meal. Next meeting Wednesday 14th December. Jean Banks 355698.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**7.00pm Putnoe Guild** Putnoe Heights monthly Janice Loxley ☎347073

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

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

**8.00pm Tudor Reeds Folk Dance Club** meet at St Mark's 1st,3rd & 5th Wednesday in month. Next meeting will be 21 December 2011 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. Mrs Gansfield ☎215016

### 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 group for Mums & toddlers. Jo Garner 400071 or 07719670624 Restarts on 12 January 2012

**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

**1.30pm Toddler Playtime.** Putnoe Majella Atkinson ☎325293

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

**2pm Putnoe Bridge Club.** Gerald Palmer ☎345991

**2-4pm U3A Indoor Games** (see contact details below)

**2.30 - 4.30pm Bedford Art Society** at St Mark's. Malcolm Smith ☎400741

**6.15 pm Weightwatchers.** St. Mark's. Clare Martin 857850 or 07919402797 .

**6.15pm Brownies.** Putnoe Heights Lou Watkins

**7.00pm Club 2000** Putnoe Heights Nina Ovenden ☎825059

**7pm U3A Folk & Poetry** (see contact details below)

**7.15pm Putnoe Art Group** Bob Wardale ☎406094

**7.30pm Bedford Embroiderers' Guild** St Mark's 3rd week in month. Pauline Lynham ☎01525 714517

**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 Jean Birks ☎219607

**8.00pm Brickhill Ladies Group** St Mark's 1st and 3rd week in month. Pauline Hooper ☎350079

### Friday

**9.30-12.30pm U3A Photography** ((see contact details

below)

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

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

**5.50-7.05pm 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. Mark's. 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

**7.00pm 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](http://www.tabernacleoftruth.co.uk)

**7-9pm Tae Kwon Do** St Mark's Contact Adrian Felice [www.bedfordtkd.com](http://www.bedfordtkd.com)

**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** – 21 February 2012

**St Mark's Leadership Team** - 16 February 2012

**Putnoe Heights Leadership Team** - 25th Jan 2012 7.30pm at 24 Loring Rd. Sharnbrook.

**Putnoe Heights Management Meeting** - Mon. 23rd Jan 2012 7.30 Putnoe Meeting Room

**St Mark's Forum Meeting** - NA

**Putnoe Church Council** - 13 February 2012

**Pastoral Group Meeting** -

**Churchyard Committee** -

**Brickhill Parish Council Meetings** -

**Circuit meeting** - 8 February 2012 @ Kempston East Deanery Meeting

**Woodland Burial Trustees** – 5th February 12.30pm

**Putnoe Heights Children & Youth** – 16 January 2012

*Please advise St Mark's Church Office*

## Advent 4

### Opening Verse of Scripture - Isaiah 9: 6

Unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.



### Collect Prayer *(Before we read we pray)*

God our Redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever Amen. *Common Worship*

### First Bible Reading - 2 Samuel Chapter 7 Verses 1-11,16

After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent." Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you." That night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying: "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" "'Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.'

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

### Second Reading - Romans Chapter 16:25 end

Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him - - to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

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

### Gospel Reading - Luke 1:26-38 The Birth of Jesus Foretold

#### When announced 'Glory to Christ our Saviour'

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with

child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her. **(Praise to Christ our Lord)**

### **Post Communion Prayer**

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

**Hymns** (Please distribute Holy Communion Booklets and Mission Praise)

1. Come now with awe 98 Tune Finlandia
2. The angel Gabriel from heaven came (*On Partnership News*)
3. Love came down at Christmas 451
4. A messenger named Gabriel (*On Partnership News*)

### **Meditation**

This Sunday we are reminded that a young teenager called Mary became the mother of Jesus. She was probably quite poor and she was unmarried and therefore extremely vulnerable. However when she realises that she is to be the mother of God she explodes into praise and not despair. She had a trusting faith in God that all would be well.

What an example to us all as we face uncertain futures, or problems that seem bigger than our ability to cope. Mary is able to hear God's call to her above the noise which so easily could have drowned it out. We all have to try and ensure that we give space for God's voice to be heard in our own lives. The unceasing rush to work, the care for the young and the elderly, the worry over our sick families and friends, all of these can push God out of our hearts and minds.

This Christmas may the peace of the Christ child still our restless spirit and allow the voice of God to be heard speaking to each one of us. Mary hears God tell that she has found favour, God's words are 'good news'. That message is for us this Christmas time, God speaks to us that we need not fear, God loves us and is with us seeking to be our friend.

### **Commentary**

If all we had to go on was the Gospel of Mark, then we would all think that Jesus became the 'Son of God' at his baptism. However, Matthew and Luke who wrote perhaps ten or fifteen years after Mark, date the divinity of Christ all the way back to his birth. It was at his very conception that they regard Jesus as being 'Son of God.' The evidence for this is shown as the spectacular signs which accompany a virgin birth. The Gospel of John goes even further and shows Jesus as having been since creation

Each of the Gospel writers was trying in their own way to communicate from the heart their overwhelming, world-changing feelings of awe, reverence, gratitude, and continuing need for Christ. We see the source of that willingness and vulnerability perhaps more than any other in the girl Mary from Nazareth and the scene of "Annunciation." This and the nativity stories encourage us to suspend our theological critique and adopt an almost childish innocence in order to make ourselves available to the scenes and symbols so that they can have their intended effect on us.

We know quite a lot about Mary from the Bible. We certainly know a lot more about Mary than we do about Joseph. Apparently that is to be expected. The Jewish joke is told about the little Jewish boy who came home from school and he tells mummy that he is in a school play. His proud mother asks him what part he is to play. He tells her that he will be playing a Jewish husband. The mother says that he must go back to school and demand that the teacher gives him a speaking part.!

So we know a lot about Mary, but more has grown up around Mary than we know just from the Bible. Later traditions seemed to want to make Mary out to be something god-like. The vulnerable peasant girl was jettisoned in favour of the desire to make Mary sound as important as other female deities such as the

Egyptian goddess. The outcome was that Mary became removed from real life. Mary has eventually become sinless, taken into heaven, an intercessor

As Christianity grew in the Greco-Roman world it took on some shocking characteristics. Other worldliness became prized, a devaluation of the bodily and the physical. So it was quite early on that Mary became removed from the stuff of our existence. Personally I don't want a goddess, I want a real Mary, not least so that Jesus became real man, flesh like our flesh. I want a real Mary, because I can relate to that. It makes much more sense to me that Mary was ordinary and vulnerable like us. That as she grew old she needed to be cared for. *John 19-25-27*. I don't want an otherworldly Mary who never had sex or a proper family. I believe Jesus' had real brothers and sisters and that is as important for our understanding of Jesus, that he knew what real family life was like.

I don't like the thought of Mary suffering because she is vulnerable like us, but she does. She watches her own child suffer and die a cruel death before her own eyes. Christianity has always been able to address the dreadful crises in which we humans find ourselves, because we believe that in taking flesh Jesus went through what we go through. When we open our papers or listen to the news and read about policewomen being shot, or multiple murders of innocent women. It is because of the earthly humanity of Mary and Jesus that our faith has something to say in situations of grief and suffering. I want to see Mary not as a goddess, but a human being, a woman, or even a girl. I don't believe that Mary was sinless, and I don't want to worship her. I believe in an ordinary Mary and I don't think that this makes her any less to be admired or even honoured.

The Song of Mary, the Magnificat, is a wonderful piece of writing in which Mary is shown to be subversive. The Magnificat is a magnificent radical agenda for social change. Mary's song is a statement of what she believes about God. Like the song of Hannah on which it is modelled, it celebrates the character of God as the great turner of tables. The whole of the history of Israel is about God tearing down the arrogant and lifting up those who are down. He is the God of the poor and the oppressed, under His hand the meek inherit the earth. All of this is so much more powerful because it is spoken by an ordinary person who is one of us.

What we really do know about Mary makes her instantly likeable. Here is a woman who exemplifies so much of humanity in which we want to rejoice. We relate to Mary, a young girl, who has to travel away from her home on a donkey. She has to struggle and take on a difficult journey, to give birth in a stable. She is like us! Even when that episode is safely accomplished she is pursued by an evil king and has to become refugee and escape to Egypt. There are many similarities to the asylum seeker today. We feel for Mary, we can empathise, because Mary goes through the kinds of stuff that we go through.

Mary had real problems being the mother of Jesus. She spent time not understanding what he was up to. She is fallible. Like us, Mary makes mistakes.

1. Jesus in the Temple Luke 2:41-51 At the age of twelve Jesus rebukes His mother for not understanding that He must be in His Father's house.
2. The Wedding at Cana John 2:1-11 In this episode we learn that Jesus once again rebuked Mary for failing to understand Him.
3. Mary thinks Jesus has gone mad. Mark 3:21, 31-35 The Greek translated literally means that they thought Jesus had lost His mind. Jesus' mother Mary and His brothers wanted to take Jesus by force because they thought he was mad.

Yet for all of her failings, in spite of her inability to understand so much of what is going on, just like us Mary keeps her faith in Jesus. Mary isn't superwoman, she is ordinary woman, ordinary human. That is her attraction and her strength for us a role model. Mary hasn't a clue what lies ahead of her, yet to God she says 'yes'

Mary faces a mind bending proposition. Her whole life is going to be changed. She is to become pregnant, bring disgrace on her family and herself and Joseph. But Mary says to God's challenge 'let it be' and in saying 'let it be' she affirms her belief that somehow God is not bound by any human constraints. She affirms her willingness to suffer a life which will ultimately lead to a sword through her soul. (Luke 2:35). She accepts God's plan for her in spite of all the sniggering which she will get. We should not let our reaction to some of the excess about Mary to blind us to her unique and noble example. That example is for us today, to encourage us and to sustain us through our spiritual journey.  
*Charles Royden*

**Christmas Card Posting Box.** I hope you will use the box again this year to send your cards to friends within Putnoe Heights church. I will put the box in the Welcome area on the 5 December. Last day for posting will be 18 Dec. Regretfully, remaining cards will be left in the church until after Christmas. Thank you, Joy Parker.

**Mission Update.** Thank you for all who have given so generously to our appeal this year for Bechar. We have raised from Putnoe £1,924.75 and from St Mark's £2,370, this means a total of £4,294.75 There are still some donations being made so if you have not yet picked up an envelope containing details (or you've lost the one you did take!) please pick one up from either of the church offices after the service. Thank you everyone who has supported such a worthwhile cause.

**Putnoe Heights New Year Lunch.** Sunday 15 January 1.00pm. Tickets available from Putnoe Office or from Sue on Sundays after morning service. £8.00 adults, £4.50 children. Festive three course lunch with drinks included. Book early for this popular event.

**Footprints New Year's Day Walk.** Monday 2nd January 10.30 am. Meet at Aspects (Cinema) Car Park (park on far side nearest the river). Easy 3 mile riverside stroll, no stiles, followed by lunch at Putnoe Heights. All welcome to join our traditional start to the New Year

**Irene McKenzie** and family would like to thank everyone for their cards, flowers and kind words following the death of Eddie. Special thanks to Charlie and Eric for the beautiful service. The sum of £265 was raised for Cancer Research.

#### **Christmas Closures**

**St Mark's Church** office will close at 5pm Friday 23 December and re-open Monday 9 January.

**Putnoe Heights** will close at 5pm Thursday 22 & reopen 9am on Tuesday 3 January.

**Christmas Greetings** to everyone at St Mark's from Vera Tippett.

**Brickhill Community Safety Forum,** The next meeting which is also the Annual General Meeting, will be held on Monday 9th January 2012 at 7.30pm at St Mark's Church, Calder Rise.

**Women's Network / MWiB** The annual Daffodil Day celebration will be held on 5 March 2012 at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster. Corinne Thomas is organizing a coach- cost is £11. Anyone wishing to go please phone Corinne ASAP on 01525 403936.

**Prayer Group** will not meet on December 29.

**St Mark's Church Craft Stall** Thank you all for your support. We made over £570 .If anyone would like to come and join us you would be very welcome. We meet once a month. Look out for the dates in the new year.

**Action for Children.** Bedfordshire Guiders Singing Group and Action for Children Supporters collected £315.78p. carol singing on Monday 12th December. We thank all those who turned out to help and sing to commuters and passengers on their arrival at Bedford station on a cold wintry night. Margaret Standley.

**Christmas Greetings** from Doreen Smart to all her friends at St Mark's Church . Thank you for all the Christmas Cards gratefully received . God Bless.

**Story Box** would like to thank all their volunteers. Story box restarts on Thursday 12 January

**Christmas Presents.** Go to [www.thischurch.com](http://www.thischurch.com) and access Amazon.com to find just about anything you need for presents this year, with free delivery. Remember, never click on Amazon direct, always click on Amazon via the link at [www.thischurch.com](http://www.thischurch.com) and we obtain 5%.

**Bishop of Bedford Farewell Service.** Please would you let us know if you would like to attend the special service to say thank you and farewell to Bishop Richard who is retiring. The service will take place at St Paul's on Saturday 3rd March 2012 at 4.00pm. Please tell Charlie as soon as possible.

**Arthur Merryman** Instead of flowers if people wish to make a donation these will go on a 50-50 basis to the Leysian Mission and the 5th London Boys' Brigade company, both based at Wesley's Chapel, 49 City Road, London EC1Y 1AU. This was our family church in London and the BB company he was a member of.  
Thank you *Phil Merryman*

#### **Thank You**

Sam, Charlie and Jane would like to say a big thank you to everybody for their kindness and best wishes for Christmas.

#### **A Prayer for Today**

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of the present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen *Common Worship Shorter Collect.*

## Fourth Candle - The Candle of Joy( pink) Mary the Mother of Jesus

Leader: May your hearts be filled with joy as you hear the song of Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

### All: Thanks be to God

Leader: Last Sunday we lit the Candles of Hope, Peace and Love

*(A person now lights the Candles of Hope, Peace, and Love)*

Today we light the Fourth Candle of Advent, the Candle of Joy, as we remember Mary the mother of Jesus

*Luke Chapter 1 And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors."*

Mary had been told by the angel Gabriel that she would bear Jesus, a holy child, the Son of God. We are told that Mary rejoiced and sang a song which glorified God. Just as the birth of Jesus gave great joy to his mother, so his presence in the world gave joy to those who had none before. He healed them and gave them hope and peace when they believed in him.

*(Light the fourth pink candle now.)*

Leader: Let us pray:

**All: Lord God, may we follow the example of Mary and serve you in joyful obedience. In all circumstances give us trust in your promises and help us to faithfully serve you, all of our days. We ask this prayer in the name of Jesus our Saviour, the babe of Bethlehem. Amen.**

## A Concert to Celebrate the new organ at St Mark's Church Sunday February 2th at 6.30pm

From Clive Simmonds

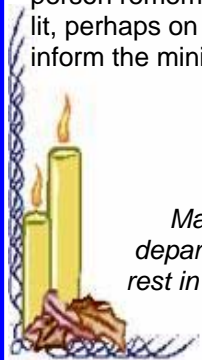
I have asked two friends of mine to join me on Sunday, February 12th 2012 at 6.30pm for a concert to celebrate the arrival of our new organ at St Mark's. They are both professional musicians and singers and they live in the Scottish lowlands in almost the highest village in Scotland. Stewart Kempster is a bass who sings both solo and chorus work professionally in a wide range of venues. He has sung in a number of Covent Garden productions and is frequently involved as soloist in oratorios and a wide range of other solo performances both in this country and abroad. His wife, Taylor Wilson (Tracey to her friends) is a mezzo-soprano and has, for many years been involved in Scottish Opera. She performs regularly as soloist in a wide range of different styles – from cabaret and jazz to many varied classical styles - in many different countries. She is also often involved in Scottish Opera's Educational projects taking suitable productions into schools. We plan to share a time together at St Mark's of very varied music - songs from many styles, plus a few organ lollipops (Bach – Toccata and Fugue in D Minor and Widor's Toccata) and a couple of favourite hymns, so that there is plenty for all to enjoy. Please book the date in your diary and bring others with you who might appreciate the occasion.

We publish the banns and pray for the marriage of Karen Deborah Jackson of this parish and Benjamin Peter Watts of All Saints Church, Kempston.

*Third time of asking*

## 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

Members of Putnoe Heights Church will be saddened to hear the news of the death of Arthur Merryman a faithful member of the church for many years.

Recently Arthur became ill and has been cared for at home by his son Phil. The funeral will take place at Putnoe Heights Church on Thursday December 22 at 1.00pm

**The funeral of Daphne Bates** will take place in St Mark's Chapel at 2-00 pm on Tuesday 20 December, followed by burial at Norse Road.