



Methodist
Church

Partnership News

19 April 2009

2nd Sunday of Easter



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

9.30am St. Mark's – Holy Communion

Preacher - Mrs. Wendy Waters
Leadership - Mrs. Morag Stewart
Intercessions - Mr. Mike Elliott

11.00am Putnoe Heights – Holy Communion

Preacher - Mrs. Wendy Waters
Leadership - Mrs Wendy Nash
Intercessions – Ministers

Sunday 26 April

9.30am St Mark's - Holy Communion

Preacher– Mr. Paul Fricker
Leadership - Mrs. Delia Shepherd
Intercessions – Mrs. Mary Stubbs

11.00am Putnoe Heights –Holy Communion

With blessing of a child
Preacher – Mr. Paul Fricker
Leadership - Mrs. Sue Allen
Intercessions - Mr. Lawrence Wyatt

Readings

Acts 3: 12-19
1 John 3: 1-7
Luke 24: 36b-48

Thank You

The flowers at Putnoe Heights Church this week have been given by Alan and Diane Bayliss to celebrate their Wedding Anniversary and with loving memories of their parents.

We are always grateful for any donations for 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 Jennie Cooper 404950(Putnoe Heights) or add your name to the rota in the foyers.

A Prayer for Sunday

O Holy Spirit, giver of light and life:
impart to us thoughts
higher than our own thoughts,
and prayers better than our own prayers,
and powers beyond our own powers;
that we may spend and be spent
in the ways of love and goodness,
after the perfect image
of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Eric Milner-White, 1884-63

Contact Details

The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman

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(Sam also works full time as a General Manager for Hewlett Packard)

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For Data Protection Purposes

Please note that any items submitted for inclusion in Partnership News will automatically be posted on our website.

Partnership News is also archived on our church website www.ThisIsChurch.com

Partnership Pastoral Support Team Co-Ordinator & Churchyards Administrator

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.

Putnoe Heights Church Centre

Open Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm, Friday 9am - 1pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Mr Barry Snelson 365630 & 344417
Leadership Team Mrs. Wendy Nash 357119
Treasurer Mr Ian Morse 216428 treasurerph@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator - Mr John Hitt 404186
Youth & children's worker - Mrs Spavins 302349
youth@thisischurch.com

St. Mark's Church Centre (Open 9am - 5.00pm)

Tel/fax & Answering Service 342613 office@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Miss Wendy Rider 342613
Leadership Team - Mr Mike Cooper 306751
Treasurer - Mr Ian Farthing 210892 treasurer@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator Jim Williams 360605

Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

Monday

- 9.30-12.00pm Mon-Fri Putnoe Heights Pre-school**
Headteacher 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)
- 9.00am Clubhouse** at St. Mark's for those with Learning Disabilities. Karen Bywater ☎315460.
- 9.45am - Body Control Pilates** –Putnoe Heights
Stephanie Smith ☎ 357787 or 07973174430
- 10.00am Bakers Barn Art Group.** St Mark's Mr Kellie ☎ 721063
- 10.30am U3A Play reading** St Mark's J Birks ☎219607
- 12.00pm 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. ☎Liz 302349
- 1.30pm U3A History Group** St Mark's ☎ David Fowler 824474
- 2pm U3A Drama** St Mark's 1st & 2nd week. Mr Ovenden ☎ 825059
- 4.00pm Storybox Plus** Putnoe Heights for 4-9 year Old. Meet at 3.30 for refreshments & games. Then till 5pm 'follow the year' through stories, drama, singing & craft activities. We then make a short presentation in church on first Sunday in each month. ☎Liz Spavins 302349
- 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 ☎ 07720713738.
- 6.15 Pilates** at Putnoe Heights Jane Butcher 300859
- 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
- 7.15pm Yoga.** Putnoe Heights Denise Green ☎244970
- 7.30pm Whist Drive.** St Mark's 3rd & 5th week . Next meeting 20 April Judith Stanton. ☎823313
- 7.30pm House group** 30 The Ridgeway. The home of Eddy & Margaret Peck ☎267567.
- 8.00pm 'Get Fit, Stay Fit'** Putnoe Heights. Mrs Diane Field ☎404976

Tuesday

- 9.30 12.30 Jo Jingles.** St. Mark's. Music & movement for pre-school children. Renu Elston ☎01908 587299
- 9.30am Candlewicking** (Needlework). Putnoe Heights. Judi Staughton ☎341821
- 9.30am -12.30 & 4-9pm Slimming World** St. Mark's. Helen Folbigg ☎351223
- 10am -Bedford Arts Society** starting at St Mark's Mrs Brown☎771676
- 10am Autism Beds Adult Support Group.** St Mark's. Sally Cripsley ☎350704
- 11.15am U3A Keep Fit** Sally Banks ☎ 870357
- 1.30pm Toddlers Playtime.** Putnoe Heights Majella Atkinson ☎325293.
- 1.30pm U3A Cinema Group.** St Mark's 4th Week in

- month . Mrs Beaumont ☎261461
- 2.00pm U3A Book Group.** St Mark's 3rd Week Mrs Forrest ☎344043
- 2.00pm Library Walk W.I.** Putnoe Heights, meets monthly. Morag Tomkins ☎356895
- 2pm U3A Photography** (Group 3) St Mark's 1st Week. Janet King ☎313946
- 2.15pm Putnoe Heights Women's Fellowship.** Next meeting 21April Members : Crafts and Hobbies. Betty Wyatt ☎350188.
- 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 Stars School of Dance.** Putnoe Heights. Esther Sancto ☎295862 or 07917582468.
- 6.30pm Creative Card making. Putnoe Heights Church. Carol Houghton 346718
- 6.30pm Yoga** Putnoe Heights Veronica Lafferty ☎781466 or 07788750360
- 7pm Keep Fit.** St. Mark's Jan Gregory ☎328455
- 7pm MT Karate** [all ages] Putnoe Heights. Karen King ☎ 07941 264885
- 7.30pm Tabernacle of Truth Church** Putnoe Heights Bible study & prayers. Revd. Tarr ☎360188 or 07866775515
- 7.30pm Chartered Management Institute** St Marks 3rd week. Mrs Dimmock ☎01525 862374
- 7.30pm Putnoe Heights Ladies Tuesday Club** - Meets fortnightly. Meeting 21 April Talk about Pension Service Mary Allan Details from Audrey Wilkins☎365068 or Margaret Gentle ☎309043

Wednesday

- 9.30am** Body Control Pilates. Putnoe Heights. Stephanie Smith ☎357787 or 07973174430.
- 9.00am Clubhouse** at St Mark's for those with Learning Disabilities. Karen Bywater ☎315460.
- 10.00am Holy Communion.** St. Mark's Chapel. A half hour service followed by coffee. All welcome.
- 10am Sewing & Chat.** Putnoe Heights Valerie Russell ☎01462 815966
- 12.30pm Luncheon Club.** Putnoe Heights fortnightly. Next—22 April 2009 Putnoe Heights Office ☎365630
- 1.00-3pm Police Surgery** at Putnoe Heights .
- 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
- 2pm U3A Craft St Mark's** 1st & 3rd week. Pat Holland ☎ 262823
- 2.15pm - Fifty plus Keep Fit.** Putnoe Heights Mrs Webster ☎856966
- 4.15pm Kumon Maths.** Putnoe Heights Mrs Raksha Mistry ☎01908 392698
- 6.00 pm Brownies.** St Mark's. Mrs Carol Warden ☎219731
- 6.15pm Yoga and Relaxation** Putnoe Heights Racheall Monton ☎01234 297138
- 6-8pm Karate.** St Mark's Karen ☎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

7.00pm U3A Sky at Night 2nd Week. Mr Farish ☎824984

8.00pm Badminton Club Putnoe Heights All welcome.

Ken Marriott ☎214867

8.00pm Tudor Reeds Folk Dance Club St Mark's, 1st ,3rd & 5th Wednesday in month. Next Meeting 29 April AGM Everyone welcome. Ring Graham ☎406359 or Alan 345312. or Rosemary 405594 for more details

8.00pm Bedford Wine and Social Club St Mark's 1st week in the month. Mrs Gansfield ☎215016

7.45 for 8pm God talk -[women's group monthly meeting for worship and friendly chat at Wendy Nash's Contact Majella Atkinson ☎325293

Thursday

9.30am Thursday Prayer Group. Putnoe Heights in the quiet room. Sylvia Cohen ☎343424

Request for prayer can be written in the prayer diary on the information table. (No meeting on 9th April)

9.45am Yoga Putnoe Heights Denise Green ☎244970

9.45am Chat and Play St.Mark's. A group for Mums & toddlers. Emma Strangwick ☎211070

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 Emma Strangwick ☎211070

1.30 - 3.00pm NHS Baby Clinic St.Mark's ☎267444

1.30pm Toddler Playtime. Putnoe Majella Atkinson ☎325293.

2pm Putnoe Bridge Club. Gerald Palmer ☎345991

2.30 - 4.30pm Bedford Art Society at St Mark's. Mary Rich ☎272470

4 - 7.00pm Police Surgery. St Mark's Foyer. ☎349179

6.15 pm Weightwatchers. St. Mark's. Mrs Margaret Ralph ☎01767 224978.

6.15pm Brownies. Putnoe Heights Caroline Morgan ☎07786508351

7.00pm Club 2000 Putnoe Heights Nina Ovenden☎825059

7pm U3A Folk & Poetry Group. St Mark's 2nd & 4th week in month. Doug Ovenden ☎825059

7.15pm Putnoe Art Group Bob Wardale ☎406094

7.30pm Bedford Embroiderers' Guild St Mark's 3rd week in month. Nadeen Salmon ☎301550

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. Pat Foulks ☎346505

Friday

9.30-12.30pm U3A Photography (Group 1) St Marks 4th week in month Val Scrivener ☎346397

9.00am Clubhouse St. Mark's for those with Learning Disabilities. Karen Bywater ☎315460.

10am - 12 U3A Beginners French St Mark's Joyce Fields ☎353086

12.15pm U3A Photography (Group 2). St Mark's 4th week in month. Sue Butler ☎354183

5pm Stars School of Dance Putnoe Heights Contact Esther Sancto ☎295862 or ☎07917 582468

2.00pm U3A Gardening Group Putnoe Heights Eve Whitehead ☎356875

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

6.30pm Line Dancing. St Mark's Christine Rushton ☎782360

7pm Bedford Art Society monthly Putnoe Heights. Next meeting 1st May Mary Rich ☎272470

7.45 - 10.45pm Bedford Astrology Club. St. Mark's. Carol Brown ☎01438 233385

Saturday

9.45am Bedford Stamp Auction at Putnoe Heights Next Auction 30th May. Contact Stuart or Anne 01327 876438

10.00am Theatretrain St Mark's. Dancing acting, singing. Kate Howard ☎01234 782414

Young Embroiders bi monthly Putnoe Heights Terry Fletcher Tel 357198

2.15pm Society of Recorder Players at Putnoe Heights. Next Meeting 18th April 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 Revd. Tarr ☎360188 or ☎07866775515

4pm B.A.M.A.A. at St Mark's. Chinese soft martial arts. Mr Chris Butcher ☎07886894922

6pm T.N.T. Putnoe. For 9-12 year olds (fortnightly) join us for fellowship & fun. Please see Liz ☎302349 .



Diary Dates

St Mark's Church Council – 22 June, 9 Nov

St Mark's Leadership Team – 11 May 2009

Putnoe Heights Leadership Team – 8 June at Linda's, 12 Oct, 8 Feb 2010

Putnoe Heights Management Meeting 20 Apr, 20 Jul

St Mark's Church Forum Meeting -

Putnoe Church Council - 15 Jun, 5 Oct

Pastoral Group Meeting -5th May 4.30pm

Annual Congregational Meetings 26 April

Churchyard Committee - 29th April 3.30pm

Putnoe Heights Mission Group

Partnership Council -

Brickhill Parish Council Meetings -

Deanery Meeting 18 Jun, 17 Sep, 19 Nov,

Circuit/Deanery Meeting

Woodland Burial Trustees –

Putnoe Heights Children & Youth –27th April 2009

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

Easter 2

Opening Verses of Scripture John 6 : 40

Jesus said to his disciples, 'This is the will of my Father, that whoever sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and that I shall raise him up on the last day.

Collect Prayer for the Day — *Before we read we pray*

Almighty Father, you have given your only Son to die for our sins and to rise again for our justification: grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness that we may always serve you in pureness of living and truth; through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. *Common Worship*

First Bible Reading Acts 4:32-35

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

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

Second Reading 1 John 1:1-2:2

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

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

Gospel Reading John 20:19-31 (*When announced All: Glory to Christ our Saviour*)

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will

Then Jesus said
to Thomas,
"Put your finger here and
see my hands.
Reach out your hand
and put it in my side.
Do not doubt
but believe."

John 20:27



not believe it."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

(Reader: This is the Gospel of Christ– **All: Praise to Christ our Lord**)

Post Communion Prayer

Lord God our Father, through our Saviour Jesus Christ you have assured your children of eternal life and in baptism have made us one with him: deliver us from the death of sin and raise us to new life in your love, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen

Commentary

'Alleluia He is Risen'! Why reserve this cry just for Easter Day? Surely for Christians this is part of our calling, to declare this to the world every day by what we think, say and do? The post Easter early Christians we heard about and from in today's New Testament readings, certainly seemed to have aspired to such living, although they did need reminding and encouraging to do so. In Acts 4 v 32 – 35 we have an account of the ideal way for a Christian community to live. By careful use and distribution of possessions, including lands and houses, they ensured that no one was left in need. It was not that they had to instantly sell up everything and put it into a communal pot, but as and when the need arose. We are not told who decided on when each person was required to contribute, but perhaps it was left up to the individual conscience. If we go on to read verses 36 and 37 we hear how a Christian, Joseph from Cyprus who became known as Barnabas, sold a field and gave the money to the apostles. This indicates it was a personal decision. In Acts Chapter 5 verses 1 to 10 we also read how a man and wife, Ananias and Sapphira who appeared to be giving generously, were tempted to keep back some of the profit from the sale of property and as a result were accused of lying to God. So it was that this community who aspired to live as Christ had taught them, which was made up of ordinary men and women, some times fell short of what was required.

In the letter of 1 John we find an example of how leaders of those early Christian communities tried to encourage and guide their fellow believers who understandably found it hard to adjust to the new ways of living that were required of them. In this letter there is a strong emphasis on the author having witnessed first hand Jesus and heard first hand his message which he was then called to pass on to others. The first few verses echo the words of the Gospel of John and it is generally regarded that the author of Gospel and the letter are one and the same. The term 'we proclaim' in verses 2 and 3 portray a sense of inspired climax to being such a witness of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Why did the author write like this? The answer is in verse 4: 'We write this to make our joy complete'. So inspired by Jesus these early witnesses were desperate to pass on the message he brought. A message of forgiveness. The writer gives the analogy of sinning being like walking in the dark whereas being free from sin is like walking in the light. The light that comes from Jesus. We are to recognise that we do sin, even if we like to think we don't. God knows when we sin, we cannot deceive him, as Ananias and Sapphira discovered to their cost. However, as the letter writer reminds us, if we do sin 'we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. Now there is a good a reason as any to proclaim daily 'Alleluia He is Risen'! *Wendy Waters*

Meditation

On our own, what can we do to give the voiceless their say, and to promote a society without castes? With the whole people of God, collectively, it is possible to light a fire on the earth. One of

Christ's questions hits home. When the poor person was hungry, did you recognize him? Where were you when I was sharing the life of the utterly destitute? Have you been the oppressor of even one single human being? When I said 'Woe to the rich' - rich in money, or rich in dogmatic certainties - did you prefer the illusions of wealth? Your struggle cannot be lived out in the ideas that fly from pillar to post and never become reality. 'Free from oppression the poor and the exploited, and to your astonishment you will see signs of resurrection springing up, here and now. Share all you have for greater justice. *Roger Schutz (Brother Roger of Taize)*

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

1. We have a gospel to proclaim 728 1(Fulda), 2. O happy day 499, 3. Brother, sister let me serve you. (*On Partnership News*), 4. We come as guests invited 723 (*Passion Chorale*), 5. Praise to the Lord The Almighty 564 (*Lobe Den Heren*).

Prayers for Sunday and week ahead

Ever living God, help us to celebrate our joy in the resurrection of the Lord and to express in our lives the love we celebrate. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, on God, for ever and ever.

Save us, Lord, from the temptation to buy what we do not need; from confusing what we need with what we want; from wasting what we do not own, from owning what we will never use; from idealising the past as a golden age; from bequeathing our children a sorry inheritance. Strengthen the arm and the will of all who, for the good of the world you made and love, challenge our greed and inform us about appropriate living. *Iona Community*

Grant us a vision, Lord; To see what we can achieve; To reach out beyond ourselves; To share our lives with others; To stretch our capabilities; To increase our sense of purpose; To be aware of where we can help; To be sensitive to your Presence; To give heed to your constant call. *David Adam*

Guide us that we may be more sensitive to our neighbours needs. We pray for awareness of those needs: the need of the old to know they are wanted, the need of the young to know they are listened to, the need of all people to know they are of value. Lord, keep us aware. *Women of New Zealand (adapted)*

What to do about Doubt ?

In our Gospel reading today, the disciple Thomas wants to put his hands in the holes in the wounded body of Jesus. He needs to know that Jesus is really alive. If we had been near Jesus after the resurrection we might also have been surprised at what was going on. Thomas just says out loud the things the other disciples (and perhaps us) think but keep to themselves.



It was Thomas also who asked Jesus what on earth he was talking about when he said he was going to 'prepare a place for them.' We are fortunate that Thomas voices the questions which we all have and in so doing shows us that it is alright to have doubts and fears in our faith. Like Thomas we do not know what happens when we die, we are filled with questions. But thankfully this is a good thing, faith is like a muscle it grows by stretching. It is good for our faith to be stretched like Thomas and as it is we learn to understand that there many things which we just do not and never will understand.

We all have doubts, we might not always express them, but they are there, a normal part of living. So it is with our faith, there will be things which trouble and confuse us, or things which we simply cannot bring ourselves to accept or understand. What do we do when our doubts trouble us? In the Gospel reading today we learn of Thomas. He could not accept that Jesus had risen from the grave, and he could not even accept the witness of the disciples who told him that they had seen Jesus with their own eyes. Thomas struggled with the resurrection story, but it was not just Thomas, we are told others doubted as well, until they too had seen Jesus.

Thomas was lucky, soon he saw Jesus for himself, we are not so fortunate So what do we do about our doubts, we who believe but have not seen ? Perhaps the first things is to understand that everybody has doubts, the best things is to talk about them and use them to encourage ourselves to move on in our faith.

House Group April 2009 Wendy Waters will be holding a house group at 13 Farnham Way, Putnoe at 7.45 pm on Mondays 20th, 27th, April and 11th and 18th May. We will use a 'York Course' entitled "Faith, Hope and Love". The course comprises of a CD which provides thought provoking input from well-known Christians such as Bishop Tom Wright and Anne Atkins, and a booklet which forms the basis of informal exploration and discussion. There is space for a few more people, so if you are interested in being part of the group or for more details please contact Wendy Waters on 401834.

Footprints Sunday 3rd May at 2.30pm. A pleasant, easy walk of approx. 3.5 miles, with a few stiles. Meet outside Melchbourne Church. Parking in the road leading up to the church. Further details from Margaret and Alan. Tel. 3272191.

North Bedfordshire Circuits Most of you will be aware that our Bedford North Circuit has been exploring the possibility of merging with our two neighbouring circuits – Bedford South & Ampthill Circuit, and Biggleswade Circuit. During March each of the three Circuit Meetings voted on the principle of merging. The voting by each circuit was as follows: Bedford South & Ampthill - 42 in favour, and 6 against Bedford North - 33 in favour and 1 against. Biggleswade – 24 in favour, no votes against, and 4 abstentions. This means that all three circuits have now voted in favour of the process to merge into one new single circuit within northern Bedfordshire. The work now continues, as we consider in more detail the structures and staffing of the new circuit. It is intended to consult widely with the churches during this phase. The immediate step will be the appointment of a new Superintendent Minister (for September 2010), and that subsequently the new circuit will come into being in September 2011. Please remember this is your prayers. Martin Hounsfield

Action for Children Sunday afternoon 26th April. Join us for tea and cakes from 2-4pm in the Wren Room. This will include news and information about Action for Children, as well as the opening of collection boxes for their worthy charitable work with children in need. All Welcome. Come to meet your friends.

Ouse Valley Mothers Union open meeting. Come and listen to D.C. Enid Giles, Bedfordshire Police H.Q. at St. Peter's Room, Sharnbrook Thursday 23rd April 7.15 for 7.30pm. Non members £2 Light refreshments. Contact Caroline Evens 782000

The Brickhill Community Safety Forum. Everyone who lives or works in Brickhill is invited to Sir William Harpur House, Clyde Crescent on 7.30pm Thursday 23rd April 2009. This is your



Please help Doreen and Joan as they 'Hike for the Homeless'

Doreen Denny from Putnoe Heights Church and Joan Eatwell from St Mark's are representing our churches on the sponsored walk for the King's Arms Project on 9 May. If anyone from either Church would be prepared to sponsor them we would be very grateful. They are hoping to complete the 20 miles but that might depend on what the weather is like on the day!! So sponsor them for turning up and see how far they get Doreen's telephone number is 405840 and Joan's is 771156. There are sponsor forms in each church office.

chance to have your say to all the agencies that are working in Brickhill. The Community Safety Forum is your Forum and gives you the chance to express your opinions and ideas about the present and future of the area. We look forward to seeing you.

Art Encounters - Thursday 7th May. ("Art tours in London with a spiritual perspective") Art Encounters was started by Bishop Christopher and Joan Crossley in 2008 and they have offered to conduct a visit to the National Gallery for members of the Partnership. There are still a few places left and if you are interested in joining us, please ring John or Sally Gunning. (305925)

Spring Breakfast Sharnbrook Methodist Church Saturday 25th April. Start your day with a hearty, full English breakfast £7 or a delightful continental breakfast £4. Served between 8.45 and 10am. To reserve your place please contact Margaret Love 84 High Street Tel 782594. Proceeds to CHARIS, mother and baby care in Bedford and Matthew Rusike Children's Home in Zimbabwe.

Woodland Friends — Copies of the latest Friends Newsletter for the St Albans Woodland Burial Trust are now available from the churches, or can be downloaded from www.woodlandburialtrust.com

A Hymn for Sunday

Brother, let me be your servant,
Let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my servant, too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
We are brothers on the road;
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you
In the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping,
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
'Til we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven
We shall find such harmony,
Born of all we've known together
Of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, let me be your servant,
Let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my servant, too.

Rest In Peace

Members of our churches will be saddened to hear the news of the death of Stella Brooks. One of our long standing members at Putnoe Heights Church, Stella died peacefully on Monday. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her. Her funeral will be held at Putnoe Heights Church on Tuesday 28 April at 1.00pm

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.'*

St Mark's Church Welcomes Kempston Musical Society

Saturday 25 April 2009 at 7.30pm

Programme

Magnificat - John Rutter
The Hundredth Psalm - Ralph Vaughan
Williams
Soloist - Miranda Doggett
Choral Suite from The Armed Man Karl Jenkins
Five mystical songs Ralph Vaughan Williams
Soloist - Mark Wisson

Music Director - Janet Welch
Accompanist - Derrick Robinson

Organist - Brian Fox

*Tickets £7 in aid of the
St Mark's Church organ fund
Available from the church offices.*

Annual Congregational Meetings

Please note that the Annual Congregational Meetings for St Mark's and Putnoe Heights Churches will take place on Sunday 26 April. The meetings will take place after the Sunday morning services. Nominations forms for Church Council are available from the church offices and we encourage nominations,

Forthcoming Funerals



The funeral of Stella Brooks will take place at Putnoe Heights Church on Tuesday 28 April at 1.00pm

The funeral of Phyllis Marjorie Chivnell will take place at Bedford Crematorium at 11.30am on Tuesday 28 April

The funeral of Joyce Sheila Marsh will take place at Bedford Crematorium at 3.15pm on Tuesday 28 April