



Partnership News

**Putnoe Heights & St Mark's Church
1 February 2015
Candlemas**



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

1 February - Candlemas

9.30am St Mark's - Morning Family Worship

Preacher - Rev. Canon Charles Royden
Leadership - Mrs. Wendy Waters
Intercessions - Mrs. Wendy Waters
Organist - Mr. Mike Cooper

11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Family Worship

Preacher - Rev. Canon Charles Royden
Leadership - Mrs. Veta Hudson-Rae
Intercessions - Young People
Organist - Mr. Ben Mason

8 February - Second Sunday before Lent

9.30am St Mark's - Morning Worship

Preacher - Mr. Chris Izzard
Leadership - Mr. Edward Parry
Intercessions - Mrs. Mary Stubbs
Organist - Miss Marion Prior

11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Worship

Preacher - Mr. Chris Izzard
Leadership - Mrs. Jenny Snelson
Intercessions - Mr. Alan Bayliss
Organist - Mr. Alan Bunker

Readings 1. Proverbs 8:1,22-31

2. Colossians 1:15-20 **3.** John 1:1-14

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

Thank You

The flowers at St Mark's Church this week have been given by Barbara Pinney in memory of her husband Keith.

The flowers in the Chapel this week have been given by Gill Williams in loving memory of David.

The flowers at Putnoe Heights Church this week have been given by Keith, Glynis, Edward & Carina Armstrong in memory of their Mum and Nana, by Vera Marsh on her birthday and by Ron Simmonds in memory of his wife Maureen.

We are grateful when people make donations towards flowers perhaps to celebrate a special occasion such as an anniversary or in memory of a loved one. Please contact Miss Marion Prior 303254 (St Mark's) or Ann Hitt 404186 (Putnoe Heights) or add your name to the rota in the foyers.

Prayer for Sunday

O God, whose glory the heavens are telling, the earth your power, the sea your might, and whose greatness all the hosts of heaven proclaim; to you belongs all glory, honour, majesty and praise; both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Liturgy of Saint James (fifth century)

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 Monday to Thursday 9am - 5.30pm, Friday 9-1pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Geoff Gypps 365630
Leadership Team Mrs Jenny Snelson 344417
Treasurer Mr John Hitt 404186 treasurerph@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator Mr Lawrence Wyatt 350188
Youth Team Leader Carolyn Morris youth@thisischurch.com

St. Mark's Church Centre

Open Monday - Friday 9am - 5.00pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 342613 office@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Miss Wendy Rider 342613
Leadership Team - Mrs Jean Bank 355698
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 (starts 8 Sept.)

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

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 07720713738.

6.15 Pilates at Putnoe Heights Jane Butcher 300859

6.15pm-8.15pm Fit for Life Yoga - Putnoe Heights Contact Jane Butcher 07891879571

6.30pm-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

7.00pm Sugarcraft Guild St Mark's (1st week in month) Pat Nicholson 353518

7.00pm Cancer Care Society. St Mark's. (1st week in month) Mr J Dewhurst 01908 377020.

7.00-8.00pm Laughter Club at St. Mark's 2nd week each month) Cheryl Green 07729187399

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

7.30pm Whist Drive. St Mark's (Weeks 3 & 5 in the month).. Next meeting– 16 February 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.

Lorrie Pearson 01234 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

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 3 February Indoor Games with raffle. 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 –4pm St Mark's Nursery Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634

12.30pm Luncheon Club. Putnoe fortnightly. Next meeting 11 February Putnoe Heights Office 365630

1.15pm Bridge Club for the Retired. St. Mark's. Mr Barnes 261811

2.00-4.00pm U3A Craft at St Marks.Contact Janet King 313946

2.00pm U3A Gilbert and Sullivan Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

2.00pm - Fifty plus Keep Fit. Putnoe Heights Mrs Webster 856966

3.45.- 5.30pm Messy Church. St Mark's (3rd Week in month). for children of lower school age and their carers. Bible-based story, crafts, singing and a meal. Next meeting 11 February.

2014 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.**00pm**

Badminton Club Putnoe Heights All welcome. Ken Marriott 214867

8.00pm Tudor Reeds Folk Dance Club at St Mark's (1st,3rd & 5th Wednesday in month). Next meeting will be 4 February Everyone welcome. All dances called, only £1 including refreshments. Rosemary 405594 or Graham 406359 for more details.

8.00pm Bedford Wine and Social Club St Mark's (Week 1 in the month) Greta Cansfield 215016

Thursday

9.30am Thursday Prayer Group. Putnoe Heights. Will meet again on 8 January 2015

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

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

1.30 - 3.00pm NHS Baby Clinic at St Mark's (Weeks 1 & 3 in the month)Contact 897401

1pm-2.30pm Drop in (small hall) Next Steps 9-24months Putnoe Children's Centre.Please call Trudy Hamilton

(centre assistant) for more information 340552. **2pm - Friendly Chicago Bridge** at Putnoe Heights £2 per session inc. refreshments. New members welcome. Contact Pat 01234 294220.

2pm U3A Current Affairs - Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

2-4pm U3A Indoor Games. St.Mark's Contact Janet King 313946

2.30 - 4.30pm Bedford Art Society St Mark's Jean Paterson 307210

3.15-5.15pm Social Care Solutions Drama Group Claire Creek 262650

5.45pm Weightwatchers. St. Mark's. Clare Martin 07768481499

6.15pm Brownies. Putnoe Heights Lou Brenna. 07919402797.

7.00pm Club 2000 Putnoe Audrey Halford 407284

7pm U3A Folk & Poetry St Marks (2nd and 4th week in month)Contact Janet King 313946

7.15pm Putnoe Art Group Bob Wardale 406094

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

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

7.30pm Magpies Women's Group St Mark's (2nd & 4th week in month) Mrs Marie Cotchin 402089

8.00pm Brickhill Ladies Group St Mark's (1st and 3rd

week in month) Susan Perugi 300219

Friday

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. 1st Sunday Feb/Apr/ Jun/Aug /Oct/Dec. Contact P Harris 01623 621143

11.00 - 12.00 Church and Junior at Putnoe Heights for the under 9's and Young Peoples Fellowship (Y.P.F) for our young adults. A crèche is also available.

2- 4.30pm Indoor Bowls at St. Mark's 2nd & 4th Sunday. Ray Seymour 305695 or church office.

Messy Church Dates 11 Feb. 18 Mar. 15 Apr.



Diary Dates



St Mark's Church Council – 10 February 2015

St Mark's Leadership Team - 14 May

Annual Congregational Meetings - 26 April 2014

Putnoe Heights Leadership Team – 2 June

Putnoe Heights Management Meeting –

Putnoe Church Council - 19 February & 11 June 2015 at 7.30pm

Pastoral Group Meeting -

Churchyard Committee - 15 April 11.15am

Circuit meeting – 7.30pm 9 February at Amphill

Deanery meeting -

Woodland Burial Trustees –

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

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

Candlemas

Sentence of Scripture - Psalm 118:19

Open for me the gates of righteousness;
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.

Collect Prayer for the Day

Before we read we pray

Almighty and ever-living God, clothed in majesty, whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple, in substance of our flesh: grant that we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts, by 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.

First Bible Reading - Malachi Chapter 3:1-5

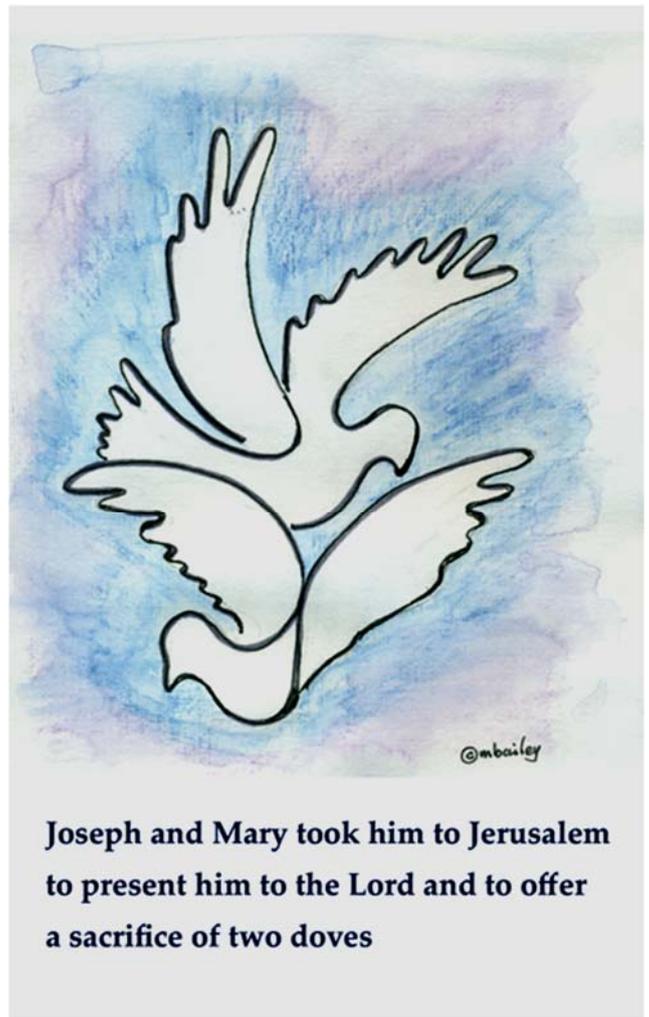
"See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years. "So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud labourers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me," says the LORD Almighty. (This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**)

Second Bible Reading - Hebrews Chapter 2:14-18

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**)

Gospel Reading - Luke Chapter 2:22-40

When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." The child's father and mother marvelled at what



Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord and to offer a sacrifice of two doves

was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. (This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**)

Post Communion Prayer

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna, who lived to welcome the Messiah: may we, who have received these gifts beyond words, prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes to bring us to eternal life; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

Hymns for Sunday (*Please distribute Candlemas Service sheets and hymn sheet*)

1. Mary and Joseph Came to the temple *Tune Bunessan*
2. When candles are lighted on Candlemas day *Tune Lourdes*
3. The light of Christ has come into the world.
4. Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
5. Let all mortal flesh keep silence, *Tune Picardy*

Commentary

'Do not bear lamps, rather become them'

Candlemas is one of those great church festivals where the liturgical calendar dovetails brilliantly into the yearly calendar. Forty days from the birth of Jesus, in accordance with the Levitical commands, he is presented in the temple and Mary his mother receives her purification. It is on this occasion that Simeon recognises Jesus as the Light which God has prepared for the world. Salvation will now be seen to be for all people and not just something confined to the Jews. Our spiritual life is often described as a pilgrimage or journey of discovery of God, at this moment the soul searching has ended for Simeon and he found the meaning of life. Looking at Jesus he is gazing directly into the eyes of God. This is the start of a magnificent new age and no wonder that Simeon in the words we know as the Nunc Dimittis declares that now he is prepared to die in peace. He has seen it all, there is nothing which can top being face to face with the Saviour of all the world !

So at Candlemas we light candles and celebrate the fact that darkness is banished in the presence of God's one true light. The world has seen that God keeps his promises and even though Simeon predicts that the road ahead will be difficult, nevertheless salvation is now present and God is recognised in the midst of the people. For Simeon this was a message of fulfillment of all that he had hoped and longed for. Even though the immediate road ahead was still dark, there was a clear light at the end of the tunnel. That is how this time of the year is for us in the progression of the seasons. Candlemas is a time when we are now halfway through winter, we are at mid point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. The winter is not over yet, not nearly, and for that reason we play games like Groundhog Day, which remind us that winter might still have a fight in her. Yet nevertheless the power of winter has been broken because time is running out, soon the days will be getting longer and longer and the sun will rise higher in the sky, spreading warmth and light. There could be no better time in the year to remind ourselves that the power of sin has been broken and God has drawn near to his people to dispel fear and death.

The theme of Candlemas is therefore light and we light candles and bless them and remind ourselves that Jesus is truly the light of all the world. However Candlemas is also a great time to remind ourselves that these candles are only symbolic. Lighting candles will only be of any purpose if that act of lighting is a prayer. Prayer that process of giving ourselves to God, we pray constantly because we are in the process of turning ourselves into lights for God in the world. In 1 Thessalonians we are told that we should pray 'without ceasing.' This helps us to understand what prayer is, not an endless repetition of words bothering God for things, but rather an orientation of lives, a mindfulness of God being present with us in the here and now of of daily living, our choices and experiences. It is no coincidence that it is in the midst of a this Bible passage which stresses the importance of good daily living such as not being idle or disruptive, helping those who are weaker than ourselves and doing good to others, that we are told to pray continually. *Charles Royden*

Behold then, the candle alight in Simeon's hands. You must light your own candles by enkindling them at his, those lamps which the Lord commanded you to bear in your hands. So come to him and be

enlightened that you do not so much bear lamps as become them, shining within yourself and radiating light to your neighbours. May there be a lamp in your heart, in your hand and in your mouth: let the lamp in your heart shine for yourself, the lamp in your hand and mouth shine for your neighbours. The lamp in your heart is a reverence for God inspired by faith; the lamp in your hand is the example of a good life; and the lamp in your mouth are the words of consolation you speak.

Then, when the lamp of this mortal life is extinguished, there will appear for you who had so many lamps shining within you the light of unquenchable life, and it will shine for you at the evening of your life like the brightness of the noonday sun. *Guerric of Igny c.1070-1157 Quoted from Celebrating the Seasons*

Meditation

On tweeting and touching by Archbishop Justin Welby

In a process of reconciliation in which I was involved recently, one of the questions that people were asked (quite a standard question in these circumstances where the disputes are within the church) was, "What has this dispute done to your soul?" You could adapt the question to different sorts of disputes, not least by changing the word 'soul' to 'spirit' or 'inner self' or something like that. But it is a very valid question: the impact of conflict is not only external, but deeply internal. It causes trauma and lasting damage even where there has been no physical violence.

I will remember for a long time a letter I received in the last few years from someone who'd gone through a particularly difficult conflict in the church. It was full of what can only be described as deep trauma and sorrow. It had been deeply damaging. There were lots of reasons for this, but one that has been on my mind recently has to do with electronic media that we value enormously – Twitter, blogs (this is after all a blog), email, text and all the other ways in which our communications have been made more or less global and instant. (I am aware of numerous other forms but don't want to end up sounding like an advertisement for particular apps). The trouble is that subtleties, tone and access all get muddled up. That's not a new comment - it's been said many times - but every now and then things happen which make it even clearer. The subtleties we lose when we communicate electronically have to do with expression, with touch, with the face-to-face aspect of relationship. Social media does not show tears in the eye, a hand on the arm when saying something painful, body language that speaks of inner turmoil, deep distress – even gentle respect. It is simply there – usually forever.

Certainly within the church, that is not the way the bible teaches us to disagree. Disagreements always happen: they always have, and always will – we only need to read the Acts of the Apostles and the letters in the New Testament to see that. But the best examples of disagreement and strain are dealt with personally. The Gospel of Matthew, chapter 18, sets out the pattern. It starts with personal meetings, and goes on to wider disciplines. It sets something in motion; a new stage of relationship. Print and electronic media is often just static and there, often indelibly, locking us into a permanent present tense that hinders healing. Tone is equally difficult to achieve; electronic media has no volume control. The US President Teddy Roosevelt spoke of speaking softly and carrying a big stick. Electronic media speaks loudly and carries a big stick – through it we have no other means of speaking, especially in the compressed form that is often used.

For disputes within church communities, Jesus in Matthew's Gospel makes it quite clear that personal interaction is essential – yet all of us feel that when someone has done something wrong, we should all say so! Electronic media breaks through locked doors, and pierces people painfully. It is not for all of us to set everyone right on everything. There's a point at which we need to leave it to those who know people to speak to them personally and quietly – in spaces where the tone is subtle and full of love. That is how people can be put back together rather than torn apart and left lying around in electronic media space. Love often says don't tweet. Love often says don't write. Love often says if you must rebuke, then do so in person and with touch – with an arm around the shoulder and tears in your eyes that can be seen by the person being rebuked.

Prayers for Sunday and the week ahead

Today we celebrate Candlemas and Jesus the light of the world. We remember those who do not have a lot of light in their lives. Those who experience the darkness of bullying, of hunger, of loneliness, or of violence. We bring to mind any part of our own lives that feel dark or lonely and we think of people we know who have dark and sad times in their lives. Lord of lights, may your living light illuminate the hearts and minds of all those who seek to serve you and may we bring your light to those we meet.

Simeon called Jesus a light to bring light to the gentiles. We pray that the light of love, which shone from the life of your Son, may bring light to every nation. Anna worshipped faithfully in the Temple day by day. We pray that the life of your church may be centred on faithful worship, In the company of his parents Jesus grew, became strong, and was filled with wisdom. We pray that all families may be places of nurture, where young and old can grow together in wisdom, and in love. A sword would come to pierce the heart of Mary. We pray that all who are pierced by any kind of suffering may know your love and reach to you for strength. Your servant Simeon departed in peace. We ask your peace for all who have departed this life to begin a new one in the light of your presence.

Clear out your wardrobe St Mark's have installed a textile clothing bank in the car park and we want your old clothes, curtains, sheets, soft toys, belts, handbags and shoes. Every kilo which you give us will help raise money for church funds

Singing the Faith Day Saturday 21 February Wesley Church, Cambridge. 10.30am – 4.00pm. alison.walker@methodistchurch.org.uk or 01223 872862.

International John Bunyan Society Conference on Representing Dissent in the Long Eighteenth Century at University of Bedfordshire on Friday 10 April 10.00am - 5.00pm. Free of charge. Contact bob.owens@beds.ac.uk for more information.

Footprints Walk on Sunday 1 February at 2pm. To walk Keysoe Donkey Walk, part of Ancient trackway linking long gone windmills at Bolhurst and Keysoe. Park on Keysoe Row East on the opposite side to the farm entrance. Details Barry and Jenny Snelson 344417

Putnoe Heights Ladies. I have booked for a group of us to have another evening meal at The Cappuccino Bar, in Newnham Street, on Tuesday March 3rd at 7.30p.m. Even if you didn't come last time, you are welcome to join us on this occasion. Please see me for further details. Maximum number 25. Margaret Massey. Tel. 327219.

St. Mark's Church Pre-school. Our lunchtime volunteer now feels unable to carry on so we are looking for someone to help out for 1 hour (or more) a week. We would prefer Monday 12noon to 1pm but volunteers are always welcome. A DBS (Data Background Check) will be required for the children's safety. Please speak to Helen Harpin/ Sue Jones at pre-school or Jean Bank/Janet Day at church.

Confirmation. Confirmation marks the point in the Christian journey at which you affirm for yourself the faith into which you have been baptized and your intention to live the Christian life. The affirmation is confirmed through prayer and the support of the wider church. In the Partnership we welcome The Bishop and the Methodist Superintendent. If confirmation is something which you might be interested in then we would be delighted to discuss it with you. Please speak with one of the ministers.

Spring Cleaning. Putnoe are having a spring cleaning day on 7 March. Please see Barry Southam if you can help.

Dates for your diary
St Mark's Car Boot Sales 2015,
6 April, 4 May, 25 May and 31 August.

Church of England Weekly Podcast

You can hear a round up of news from the Church of England in a new weekly podcast. It's available on the front page of the Church of England website, www.churchofengland.org, or you can now subscribe to it on the 'podcast' section of iTunes. Search for 'Church of England podcast' in the iTunes store and opt to subscribe.

Harvest Festival service will be on Sunday 27th September.

Next Messy Church at St Mark's Church on Wednesday 11 February 3.45 - 5.30pm. Messy Church takes place monthly on a Wednesday from 3.45pm - 5.30pm For children of lower school age and their carers. Bible-based story, crafts, singing and a meal. For details Wendy Waters 401834

Messy Church would like to borrow a 'Quill Pen', to use as a visual aid, at our 11th February session. If you have one which we could borrow please contact Wendy Waters or Jean Bank. Thank you

Registration of St Mark's Charity. We were delighted to hear this week that our documentation for registration of St Mark's as a charity has been submitted to the Charity Commission by the Diocesan Solicitor. Once a successful registration has taken place we will use the same process to register Putnoe Heights, which we should be able to accomplish in a much shorter time having done it before! Charitable registration is something required by law for our two churches and due to the ecumenical nature of our churches we are the first churches in the UK to registered in this way. Hopefully other churches may be able to use our model in the future as more smaller churches are required to register. Very many thanks to Sam for doing so much work over the past few years to bring this together for us.



**He hath abolished the old drouth,
And rivers run where all was dry,
The field is sapp'd with merciful dew.
He hath put a new song in my mouth,
The words are old, the purport new,
And taught my lips to quote this word
That I shall live, I shall not die,
But I shall when the shocks are stored
See the salvation of the Lord.**

**We meet together, you and I,
Meet in one acre of one land,
And I will turn my looks to you,
And you shall meet me with reply,
We shall be sheaved with one band
In harvest and in garnering,
When heavenly vales so thick shall stand
With corn that they shall laugh and sing.**
Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

Preparing for Lent

We have been asked to do one last reminder about things which you may find helpful for Lent. There will be our usual services for Ash Wednesday 18 Feb at St Mark's and Maundy Thursday 2 April at Putnoe. In addition we are running a trip to St Albans for an evening learning about Oscar Romero on Monday 23 March. **This must be booked this week.**

We are also encouraging everybody to attend the Belief sessions with The Very Reverend Dr Jeffrey John on The Book of Revelation on Saturday 21 February at St Andrews Church and Alistair Burt MP talking about Being a Christian in politics on Saturday 14 March at Priory Methodist Church - for more see beliefbeds.org

We have had an offer of a new weekday evening Homegroup for Lent in Putnoe which will be advised. If you would like to offer a Lent Homegroup then we can advertise that and encourage people to come and supply suitable materials for reflection. If you would prefer something during the day then we have a homegroup at St Mark's 2.15pm Tuesday afternoons and this group welcomes new members even if it is just through Lent.

Books and Study for Lent

Finding a Voice is a new and original Lent course by Hilary Brand. Taking the film, The King's Speech, as a starting point, the course explores the ways in which fear holds us back and examines how we, like Bertie, can face and overcome our fears and begin to find our authentic voice. The course is based around five weekly group sessions which each includes extracts from the film, group discussion questions, exercises and meditations. There are also short introductory and follow up chapters, with related Bible passages, for individual reading each week. Also included is a suggested follow up session, along with full notes for leaders. <http://www.chbookshop.co.uk/books/9780232528930/> finding-a-voice

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We now have 47 people registered for www.easyfundraising.com. This works exactly the same when you shop with John Lewis, M&S and a whole host of other shops. This has an added benefit that you will also get some special offers - you can't lose! Please click the link on the church website go online and sign up now

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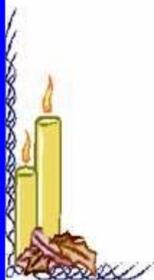
A Beautiful Friendship is based on the film

Casablanca and provides a great basis for discussion of themes of sacrifice, repentance, suffering, loss and hope at Lent. Its wartime setting provides additional poignancy for study at a time of continued armed conflict around the world as well as the centenary remembrance of the first world war. Miranda and Not Going Out writer Paul Kerensa makes an intriguing departure from his comedy writing, preparing this moving book in the style of DLT's classic movie-based Lent Courses. A Beautiful Friendship is written with his wife, Zoe Young. It is designed to be studied by groups or individuals alongside the DVD of Casablanca, starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman. The book includes leaders' notes, timings for film clips, discussion-starters, reflections and prayers. <http://www.chbookshop.co.uk/books/9780232531404/beautiful-friendship>

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

**Brenda Mary Howard
Doreen Chetwood
Frank Tuffin
James Patrick Lee
Vera Marsh**



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

Though the mountains be shaken and the hills removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken.

--Isaiah 54:10



Forthcoming Funerals

The funeral of Edith Hudson will take place at the Crematorium at 1.45p.m. on Tuesday 3 February

The funeral of Mr Patrick Vincent Elms will take place at Bedford Crematorium at 11.30am on Thursday 19 February