



Methodist
Church

Partnership News

1 January 2006

Second Sunday of Christmas

Methodist Church & the Church of England in Partnership at both
Putnoe Heights Church & St. Mark's Church



Church of
England

Church Services Today

8.30 Holy Communion both churches Communion

9.30am St Mark's Church - Morning Worship

Preacher - Revd Dr Joan Crossley

Leadership Team - Mrs Janet Day

Intercessions - Mrs Alison Holden

11.00am Putnoe Heights - Morning Worship

Preacher - Revd Dr Joan Crossley

Leadership Team - *To be announced*

Intercessions - *To be announced*

8 January 2006 Covenant Service

8.30 Service of Holy Communion Both churches

9.30am St Mark's Church - Family Worship

Preacher - Revd Dr Joan Crossley

Leadership - Mrs Delia Shephard

Intercessions - Mike Elliott

11.00am Putnoe Heights - Family Worship

Preacher - Revd Dr Joan Crossley

Leadership Team - *To be announced*

Intercessions - *To be announced*

Reading 1 : Isaiah 60: 1- 6 **Reading 2** : Ephesians

3:1-12 **Reading 3** : Matthew 2:1-12

At the covenant service next week we will all be considering our part in the life of the church. if anyone would like to be acknowledged as recent members of the congregation, would they please drop their names into either church office. *Joan Crossley*

Thank You

The flowers at Putnoe Heights Church have been given by Jill Richards in memory of her husband, Barry.

We are always grateful for any donations for flowers perhaps to celebrate an anniversary or in memory of a loved one. Please contact Miss Marion Prior 303254 (St. Mark's) or Miss Jennie Cooper 404950 (Putnoe Heights).

Prayer for New Year 2006

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,
ring out the narrowing lust of gold,
ring out the thousand wars of old,
ring in the thousand years of peace.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

**May God who makes all things new,
yet who is for ever the same,
bless you, this year and guard you
in all that you do.**

**That you may live in his service
and abide in him always.**

Contact Details

The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman

107 Dover Crescent, Bedford MK41 8QR

266952 Fax- 402624 NSM@ThisisChurch.com

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

The Reverend Neil Bramble-Chapman BA, CTM

(Day off Friday)

12 Hartop Close, Putnoe. MK41 8HE

326643 Mobile -07917 356062 Minister@ThisisChurch.com

The Reverend Dr. Joan Crossley (Day off Friday)

30 Cutcliffe Grove, Bedford. MK40 4DD.

Home 344536 Crossley@Thisischurch.com

The Reverend Charles Royden (Day off Thursday)

The Vicarage, Calder Rise. MK41 7UY

309175 Mobile 07973 113861 Vicar@ThisisChurch.com

Partnership Youth and Children's Worker

Mrs Liz Spavins 302349 youth@thisischurch.com

For Data Protection Purposes

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

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 9am - 1.00pm Monday & Friday

9am - 4pm Tuesday/Wednesday & Thursday

Tel/fax & Answering Service 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com

Centre Manager Mr Barry Snelson 365630

Leadership Team - Mrs Sue Allen 407264

Treasurer Mrs Kathryn Morse 216428

treasurerph@Thisischurch.com

Gift Aid Administrator - Mr John Hitt 404186

Junior Church Co-ordinator - Mrs Liz Spavins 302349

St. Mark's Church Centre (Open 9am - 5pm)

Tel/fax & Answering Service 342613 office@thisischurch.com

Centre Manager Miss Wendy Rider 342613

Leadership Team - Mr Ian Farthing 210892

Treasurer - Mr John Day 295592

treasurer@Thisischurch.com

Gift Aid Administrator Mr Jim Williams 360605

Children's and Youth Worker-Mrs Liz Spavins 302349

Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

Monday

9.30 - 12.00 pm Pre-school (See website for more details) Mrs Janet Smith 326685 (Putnoe Heights) or Mrs. Helen Harpin **312634** (St. Mark's).

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

10.00am Supple Strength at Putnoe Heights. Louise Woodcock 270302

12.00pm - 1.00pm Story box Putnoe Heights church welcome the under 5's and their carers to join them between 12noon and 1pm for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible story, singing and activities. Lots of fun, donations. Contact Liz on 01234 302349

4pm Story Box Plus at St.Marks for 4 -11 year olds meet at 3.30. for refreshments & games, then till 5pm make props, sing & rehearse a short play to perform in church the 1st Sunday of each month. Lots of fun. Free. Contact Liz 302349

4.15 - 5.45pm Kumon Maths at Putnoe Heights. Contact Ms Raksha Mistry 01908 392698

6.00pm Brownies St Mark's. Mrs C Mathew 400987

6.15 pm Brownies Putnoe. Penny Fulham 406045

7.30pm Sugarcraft Guild meets first Monday every month at St. Mark's Mrs Pauline Parrott 768419

7.15 m Guides -St. Mark's. Mrs Gill Lake 218091

7.15pm Yoga at Putnoe Heights Church. Contact Karen Simpson 244970

7.30pm Creative Needles at Putnoe Heights.

Jacky Hayward 307648. New members welcome.

7.30pm Whist Drive - At St Mark's each month the next 16 January Mrs. Judith Stanton. 823313

7.30pm Housegroup 30 The Ridgeway. The home of Eddy & Margaret Peck 267567.

8.00pm 'Get Fit, Stay Fit' at Putnoe Heights. Mrs Diane Field 404976

Tuesday

9.30am Candlewicking (Needlework) at Putnoe Heights. Mrs Olive Shotbolt 267203

9.30am Jo Jingles at St. Mark's. Music & movement for pre-school children. Jayne Phillips 01582 485333

10.00am Keep Fit at Putnoe Heights. Mrs Stileman 822230

1.30-3pm Toddlers Playtime at Putnoe Heights. Geraldine Skeel 406828

12 noon - 10.00 pm Slimming World at St. Mark's. Sessions start at 12, 1.30pm, 4pm, 5.30pm & 7.15pm Val Careless 345213.

2.00pm Library Walk W.I. at Putnoe Heights meets monthly. Contact Morag Tompkins 356895

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

1.30pm Body Control Pilates at Putnoe Heights. Stephanie Smith 357787

2.15pm Putnoe Heights Women's Fellowship - Next meeting 3 January -Revd Sam Cappleman Betty Wyatt 350188.

2.15pm Putnoe Heights Men's Fellowship. Next meeting 3 January with Ladies Fellowship Lawrence Wyatt 350188.

2.30pm Mother Teresa Support Group. Meets fortnightly at St. Mark's. Wool and knitting needles provided. Mrs Maureen Watling 262225

2.30pm Tuesday Afternoon Housegroup. Meets fortnightly at St. Mark's. Mary Stubbs 406784.

6.30 - 7.30pm Yoga at Putnoe Heights. Rachel Leontyne 783129

6.45pm Guides at Putnoe Heights. Emma Holloway 293792

7.00 - 8.00 pm Keep Fit at St. Mark's. Mrs Jan Gregory 214107.

7.00 - 10pm Card Makers Club meets fortnightly at St Mark's. Carol Houghton 346718

7.30pm Bibleway Church at Putnoe Heights. Bible study & prayers. Revd.Tarr on 360188 or 07866775515

7. 45 pm Putnoe Heights Ladies Tuesday Club - Meets fortnightly.at 7.45pm Next meeting 13

December Christmas Madge Walsh 359088

8.30-9.30pm St. Mark's - Qi Gong (Self help healing group) - Mr F Steele 355937

Wednesday

9.30am Childminding Support Group at Putnoe Heights. Mrs S Longman 313949

9.30am Bedford U3A at Putnoe Heights meets bi-monthly. Next meeting . Jenny Coggins 266379

9.00 a.m. Clubhouse at St Mark's for those with Learning Disabilities. Contact Karen Bywater 315460.

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

10am Sewing & Chat Putnoe Heights Contact Valerie Russell 01462 815966

Luncheon Club at Putnoe Heights fortnightly. Next meeting 11 January 2006 Putnoe 365630

1- 3pm Police Surgery at Putnoe Heights .

1.30 - 4.00pm. Bridge Club for the Retired at St. Mark's. Mrs Truss Boyce 781133

4.15pm Kumon Maths at Putnoe Heights Ms Raksha Mistry 01908 392698

6.00pm Self Defence at Putnoe Mr James 07711 687449

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

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

7.00pm Archaeological & Local History Society meets monthly at Putnoe Heights. Next meeting . Sylvia Woods 365095

7pm Putnoe Guild meets monthly at Putnoe Heights. Pam Holley 771964

7.45pm Kick Boxing Junior classes at St Mark's. Contact Mr James 07711687449 or 07810234890

7.45pm Badminton Club at Putnoe Heights - all

welcome. Ken Marriott 214867

8.45-9.45pm St. Mark's - Qi Gong (Self help healing group) starting Mr F Steele 355937

Thursday

9.30am Thursday Prayer Group at Putnoe Heights in the quiet room. Sylvia Cohen 343424 *Request for prayer can be written in the prayer diary on the information table.*

9.45am Yoga at Putnoe Heights. Karen Simpson 244970

1.00pm - 3.00pm Clinic at St. Mark's from 5.1.06 267444

12pm Story box St Mark's Church welcome the under 5's and their carers to join them between 12 noon and 1pm for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible story, singing and activities. Lots of fun, donations. Contact Liz Spavins on 1234 302349

1.30-3pm Toddler Playtime at Putnoe Heights. Geraldine Skeel 406828

1.30pm St. Mark's Church Toddler Group. Debbie Coppenhall 356828.

2.30 Bedford Arts Society at St. Mark's. Celia Maddison 782901

2pm U3A Indoor Games at Putnoe Heights. Radmila Dancer 404811

4.00 Story box Plus at Putnoe Heights for 4-11 year old. Meet at 3.30 for refreshments & games. Then till 5pm make props, sing & rehearse a short play to perform in church on the 1st Sunday of each month Lots of fun. Free. Liz Spavins 302349

5.30 - 7.30pm Police Surgery. St Mark's Foyer.

6.15 pm Weightwatchers at St. Mark's.

Mrs Margaret Ralph 01767 224978.

6.15pm Brownies at Putnoe Heights. Helga Nash 218521

7.00pm Club 2000 at Putnoe Pat Stidolph 345247

6.15pm Bedford Junior Chess Club. St. Mark's Mr & Mrs Pike 823795

7.30pm - 11.00pm Bedford Senior Chess Club at St Mark's Mr P Housden 376597

7.30 - 9.30pm Embroiderer's Guild St Mark's- 3rd Thursday of the month. Mrs K Sage 771525

Bibleway Church 7.30—9.30-Putnoe Heights Bible Studies every 2 Thursday- Pastor Tarr 360188

7.45pm. Housegroup- Meets fortnightly at 3 Little Headlands. Newcomers always welcome. Betty Wyatt 350188

8.00 - 10pm Bedford Writers Circle meets at St Mark's 3 Thursday each month. 1 Thursday as from January 2006 Mr John Broadhouse 740271

Friday

9.30am U3A Exercise at Putnoe Heights. Carole Maunder 301325

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

6pm Self Defence at Putnoe. Mr James 0771 687449 or 07810 234890

7. 30pm Bibleway Young Peoples meeting Contact Pastor Tarr 360188

Saturday

9.30am Stars School of Dance at Putnoe Heights. Contact Esther Sancto 272517

10.00am - 1.00pm Theatre Train at St Mark's - dancing acting, singing. - Kate Randle 01234 782414

2.30pm Calligraphy Group at Putnoe Heights. Meets monthly next meeting. Philip Jones 350295

7.15pm - 10.30pm Duplicate Bridge at St Mark's Contact Ann or Peter 212066

Sunday

Junior Church with crèche for under 3's

9.30—10.30 at St. Mark's

11-12 at Putnoe Heights.

1- 3pm & 7-9pm Bibleway Church at Putnoe Heights - Worship. Contact Revd. Tarr 360188 Mob. 07866775515

6.00pm TNT (The Nearly Teens) meet fortnightly at Putnoe Heights for various fun activities. Contact Putnoe Office 365630

Diary Dates

St Mark's Church Council

8 February 2006

Circuit Meeting 16 March 2006

St Mark's Leadership Team - 2006 17 January, 24 April, 6 June,

12 September

Putnoe Heights Leadership Team

St Mark's Church Management Meeting

All meetings to start 7.00pm

Putnoe Heights Management - 16 Jan 2006

Putnoe Church Council 6 February 2006

Pastoral Group Meeting - 6 February 2006 2.00pm

Churchyard Committee -

Putnoe Heights Mission Group Meeting-

18 January 2006 7.30p.m. at 14 Flint Way..

Partnership Council - 24 January 2006

Brickhill Parish Council - 24 November 2005

Joint Deanery Circuit 18 January 2006

Annual Congregational Meeting 7 May 2006

Mission Group Meeting - 18 January 2006, 7pm at 14 Flint Way.

Calendar dates appear also on our church website www.ThisChurch.com.

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

Bible Notes

Second Sunday of Christmas - Year B (White)

Verse of Scripture Matthew 1:21

"You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins"

A Collect Prayer - Before we read we pray.

Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so may we share the life of his divinity; who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading – Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3

I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations. For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. You will be a crown of splendour in the Lord's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

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

Second Reading - Galatians 4:4-7

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

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

Third Reading - Luke 2: 15-21

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived.

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

Post Communion Prayer

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home: help your Son to live as one family, united in love and obedience and bring us all at last to our home in heaven through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen



The Adoration of the Shepherds by Caravaggio (b1571, d1610)

Hymns (*Please distribute Morning Worship and Hymns and Psalms*)

1. Brightest and best of the sons of the morning, 123 (Tune Epiphany Hymn)
2. Come and praise the Lord our King (Junior Praise, see below)
3. In the bleak mid winter, 107 Hymns and Psalms
4. When our God came to earth (See below)
5. What if the one who shapes the stars (Tune Banks and Braes, See Below)

Commentary

Take a look at your Christmas cards before you throw them away after Christmas. Ask yourself how many of them give a real picture of what the birthplace of Jesus might have been like. It is true that the Gospels do not actually tell us, but they give us clues when they tell us that Mary and Joseph couldn't get a room and the baby Jesus was laid in a manger. The painting by Caravaggio is probably as good as it gets. Mary has a couple of haloes, but apart from that the scene is basic with animals standing around.

If we want to know what life was like for Jesus when he was born then we would have to learn to be poor, really poor. We would have to go back to basics and discover the rejection felt by the holy family as they their first born son in a feeding trough.

In truth we do not know what the birthplace of Jesus was exactly like. By the time the Magi arrived Mary and Joseph have moved into a house in Bethlehem. However we know from Luke that when Jesus was born he was laid in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn. The manger became important, it was the fact that Jesus was lying in a manger which identified him to the shepherds as the baby spoken of by the angels.

So what was the birthplace like? Some have suggested a kind of cave, or a stable and others have proposed the underneath of a house where animals were sometimes kept, we will never know. However we can reasonably assume that it was a place where animals lived, because we are told about the manger. It is difficult to find good pictures or paintings of the nativity scene, so many are romanticised and unlike anything which might have taken place. The painting shown today by Caravaggio is good at least for its simplicity and honesty, we can almost smell the earthiness associated with animals and straw. In the wooden stable stand a donkey and an ox. There is a realism with straw on the floor and a simple basket contains bread. There is a bag with the tools of the carpenter and Joseph in a red cloak shows the shepherds the young Virgin Mother, lying on the floor in a red dress. Mary is shown cuddling her baby with two haloes around her head, but at least she is shown lying down, giving some semblance of the fact that she has been through an ordeal.

Since we do not know what the birthplace is really like there is a need for imagination and guesswork. Nevertheless it is important that the scene reflects the harsh reality that Jesus found his birthplace not among the expected comforts of a normal place of birth. The artists has not tried to show Mary in way which pretends that she has given birth without effort, the theological pretence of Mary the perpetual virgin. This is a real baby in a real mucky barn and real mother who has many things on her mind.

This is important, because if we loose the reality of the birth of Jesus, then we risk making our faith remote and God becomes out of touch with our real lives. Thank God that Jesus was born in a real place, surrounded by real animals and visited by real people at a particular moment in our world history. Jesus became flesh, with all of its issues, this is not an abstract theological idea, he really did make his dwelling among us.

The reading today finishes with the information that on the eight day Jesus was circumcised and named Jesus. According to Jewish law a woman became ceremonially unclean after the birth of a child. On the eight day the male child was circumcised (Gen 17:12). The mother remained unclean for an additional 33 days, sixty six if the child was female (Leviticus 12:1-5). At the end of this time the mother offered a sacrifice, either a lamb, or if she was poor, two doves or two young pigeons. (Leviticus 12:6-8). If the child was the first son, then he was to be presented to the Lord, and then bought back with an offering (Numbers 18:15, 1 Samuel 1:24-28). Mary and Joseph showed conformity to this law and they offered birds instead of a lamb, which shows their poverty.

Charles Royden

Meditation

We could accuse God of bad taste, choosing to be born to a poor lowly teenager who ends up giving birth in a stable. God uses the juxtaposition, God arranges for something which might offend and certainly contradicts our expectations. Jesus is born to the wrong person in the wrong place. That is God's decision not ours and it should challenge us. God's ways to us are incongruous. God chooses to behave in this contradictory way and in so doing shows that his authority and power are quite unlike anything which meets our expectations. The birth of Jesus was unremarkable, few people saw, heard or understood what took place that night. The choirs of angels singing were heard only by poor shepherds, there was perhaps an unusually bright star in the sky, but not so brilliantly obvious that Herod, his royal advisors and soldiers were able to follow it. If our faith sometimes lacks the spectacular, the reassuring glimpses of the divine splendour, then get used to it. Ours is a saviour who becomes flesh, who is born in a stable. *Charles Royden*

Prayers for Sunday and the Week Ahead

With the angels and saints, each day and each night, each shade and each light, I bend my knee in the eye of the Father who created me, in the eye of the Son who redeemed me, in the eye of the Spirit who cleansed me. In love and affection, in wisdom and grace, in love and in fear, for ever and ever. Amen.
Gaelic Prayer to the Trinity

"O God, all holy one, you are our Mother and our Father and we are your children. Open our eyes and our hearts so that we may be able to discern your work in the universe. And be able to see Your features in every one of Your children. May we learn that there are many paths but all lead to You. Help us to know that you have created us for family, for togetherness, for peace, for gentleness, for compassion, for caring, for sharing.

"May we know that You want us to care for one another as those who know that they are sisters and brothers, members of the same family, Your family, the human family. Help us to beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks, so that we may be able to live in peace and harmony, wiping away the tears from the eyes of those who are less fortunate than ourselves. And may we know war no more, as we strive to be what You want us to be: Your children. Amen."

Desmond M. Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, South Africa

O Child, who willed to have for your crib a manger; O Creator of the universe, who stripped yourself of divine glory; O Redeemer, who offered your vulnerable body in sacrifice for the salvation of humanity! May the radiance of your birth light up the night of the world. May the power of your message of love thwart the proud snares of the evil one. May the gift of your life make us understand ever more clearly the worth of the life of each human being. Too much blood is still being shed on the earth! Too much violence and too many conflicts trouble the peaceful coexistence of nations! You come to bring us peace. You are our peace! You alone can make of us "a people purified" and belonging to you for ever, a people "zealous for good deeds" (Tit 2:14). *John Paul II, Christmas Homily 2003*

When the song of the angels is stilled. When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home. When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost, To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry, To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations, To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart. *Howard Thurman, African-American mystic*

Save us from the great evils which rend humanity in these first years of the third millennium. Save us from the wars and armed conflicts which lay waste whole areas of the world, from the scourge of terrorism and from the many forms of violence which assail the weak and the vulnerable. Save us from discouragement as we face the paths to peace, difficult paths indeed, yet possible and therefore necessary; paths which are always and everywhere urgent, especially in the Land where You were born, the Prince of Peace.

Hymn 2
(Tune Michael Row)

*Come and praise the Lord our King, alleluia,
Come and praise the Lord our King, alleluia.*

- 1 Christ was born in Bethlehem, alleluia,
Son of God and Son of Man: alleluia.
- 2 He grew up an earthly child, alleluia,
Of the world but undefiled: alleluia.
- 3 From him love and wisdom came, alleluia;
All his life was free from blame, alleluia.
- 4 Jesus died at Calvary, alleluia,
Rose again triumphantly! alleluia.
- 5 He will cleanse us from our sin, alleluia,
If we live by faith in Him: alleluia.
- 6 He will be with us today, alleluia,
And forever with us stay, alleluia.

Hymn

(Tune Personent Hodie pies cantiones)

- 1 When our God came to earth,
not for him noble birth:
he affirmed human worth
from a humble manger,
just another stranger.
*Let the poor rejoice!
Let the mute give voice!
Love is shown,
God is known,
Christ is born of Mary.*
- 2 Not for kings was the word
which the poor shepherds heard:
hope renewed, grace conferred,
and the hillside ringing
with the angels' singing.

3 Bethlehem, humble town
where the babe wears the crown,
turns the world upside down:
God so unexpected,
homeless and rejected.

4 Let us sing Mary's song,
bringing hope, righting wrong,
heard with fear by the strong,
poor and humble raising,
God of justice praising.

Hymn 5

(Tune Banks and Braes)

- 1 What if the One who shapes the stars
and puts the planets in their place
should set all majesty aside
and move amongst the human race?
What if the One who engineers
the eye, the ear, the heart, the brain,
should make his home here as a child
at Mary's breast in Bethlehem?
- 2 What if the One who spoke the word
when all was dark, 'Let there be light!'
should enter this disordered world
to make our fading hopes more bright?
What if the God who waits outside
should all at once be found within,
and Mary's child be given the strength
to overturn the power of sin?
- 3 What if the One who always was,
creation's hidden energy,
should-for love's sake-inhabit time,
God's living Word for all to see?
Yes, true it is: Christ's Gospel truth,
the truth on which we all may build!
So let this be the truth for us
as now we welcome Mary's child.

News, Views and Information

Odd Job Dave. Decorating, Carpentry and all odd jobs! No job too small, call for a free quote. Cheap rates for OAP's 01234 401184 / 07788 862609

Footprints New Year Walk Monday 2 January 2006. Meet at Sharnbrook Methodist Church at 10.30 for coffee followed by 3 mile circular walk (may be muddy). Please park carefully in the village. Optional lunch afterwards at the Bedford Arms Souldrop. All welcome.

Putnoe Heights New Year Lunch 1pm Sunday 15 January Tickets now available £8 (£4.50 children under 10). 3 courses, wine, coffee & seasonal festive atmosphere. Proceeds to Mildmay Charity and Putnoe Church Funds.

This week St Mark's Preschool received notification from Beds Foundation Stage Team that as a result of both Ofsted Early Years Education and Child Care Inspections their setting has been placed at *Green 1*. This equates to outstanding and



Mildmay 'Continuing the mission of Jesus'

Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

Mark 1 v 14 – 42.

Thank you for your gifts for the Mildmay appeal. We have already now collected over £1,000. Please continue to give generously to this appeal. Mildmay is a Christian charity which works with victims of Aids in London and sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe. We will conclude the appeal in February. On 15 January our speaker at both churches will be Dr Veronica Moss who is Mildmay's Chief Executive and Chief Medical Officer which is great news. Please support this important fundraising effort and help us make a difference for the men, women, children and babies who are afflicted by this terrible disease in our own country and across the world. **Sam**

What you gifts can do

£10 buys minibus fuel, to bring in sick children to our centre in Uganda

£28 pays for intensive counselling to help UK patients overcome the trauma of AIDS illnesses

£49 pays for the crucial services provided by our pastoral care team in Uganda

£75 pays for vital physiotherapy to get Ugandan patients back on their feet again after illness

£100 provides expert medical care at our UK hospital to keep patients free of pain and monitored for side-effects from strong anti-HIV drugs

£250 provide a special air-cushioned mattress to make a chronically ill patient more comfortable

£500 pays for a whole day's nursing care for 'family admissions' at our UK hospital

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.

Barry Richards

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

indicates a minimum level of support needed. No better result could have been awarded. Congratulations to all the Preschool Staff.

Visual Prayer is a series of reflections & meditations on CD suitable for use on home computers by Christopher Herbert, the Bishop of St. Albans. £10 inc. P & P. from St Mark's Church. Cheques payable to St. Mark's Church.

Flowers at Putnoe Anyone who wishes to donate flowers at Putnoe Heights Church during the next few months, is invited to enter their name on the rota displayed on the notice board in the foyer.

Thank you to Judith Stanton and all supporters of her Whist Drive group for their recent generous donation to St. Mark's. Their continued support is very much appreciated.

Putnoe Heights Church Office reopens on Tuesday 3rd January 2006 at 9am. From this date the office opening hours will be 9am-5pm, closing at 12 noon on Monday and Friday. **St Mark's Church Office** re-opens on Wednesday 4 January

Diocesan Resources Locate to St Mark's. We are delighted to announce that the Diocese of St Albans Education Department has decided to relocate their educational resources to St Mark's. New furniture will be provided in the chapel to display books and materials, which can be browsed in the special environment which the chapel provides of peace and tranquillity. Since St Mark's is open all day it provides an ideal location for anybody wanting to drop in and see what is available. In supporting this move the church council have embarked upon an exciting new venture into the area of Christian education. We will make an announcement when resources start to be moved to St Mark's.

Rest in Peace

Forthcoming funerals
to be taken by our Ministers

The funeral of Mrs Doris Wilson will take place at 10.00am on Monday 9 January at Bedford Crematorium. *Royden*

The funeral of Mrs Joan Elizabeth Voce will take place at 12.15pm on Thursday 5 January *Crossley*

The funeral of Mr Cyril Herbert Judd will take place at Bedford Crematorium at 1.45pm on Thursday 5 January *Crossley*