

The Partnership

21 March 2004

Fourth in Lent—Mothering Sunday

Methodist
Church

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

Church of
England

Church Services Today

8.30am Service of Holy Communion

Held at both churches

9.30am St Mark's Church – Family Worship

Preacher – Rev Neil Bramble-Chapman

Leadership Team - Mr Mike Cooper

Intercessions – Mrs Delia Shephard

11.00am Putnoe Heights – Family Worship

Preacher – Rev Neil Bramble-Chapman

Leadership Team - Mrs Sue Allen

Intercessions -Mrs Sue Allen

Sunday 28 March

8.30am Service of Holy Communion

Held at both churches

9.30am St Mark's Church – Morning Worship

Preacher – Rev Jim Gorringe

Leadership Team - Mrs Janet Day

Intercessions – Mrs Pat Leusby

11.00am Putnoe Heights Church – Morning Worship

Preacher – Rev Jim Gorringe

Leadership Team - Mr Peter Bayliss

Intercessions - Ministers

Thank You

The flowers at St Marks this week have been given by Olive & Tom Harvey in memory of their daughter Susan on her birthday.

The flowers at Putnoe Heights Church this Mothering Sunday have been given by Alan and Margaret Massey in memory of their parents Harry and Mabel Massey and Wilfred and Jessie Rollason.

Prayer for Sunday

God our Father,
your Son Jesus Christ lived
in a family in Nazareth:
Grant that in our families on earth
we may so learn to love and to live together
that we may rejoice as one family
in your heavenly home;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Contact Details

The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman

107 Dover Crescent, Bedford MK41 8QR

266952 Fax- 402624 Sam_Cappleman@hotmail.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 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

Time for God Volunteer Kasia Pieczyk

St Mark's Flat - 315455

Partnership 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.*

Putnoe Heights Church Centre (Open 9am - 1.00pm)

Tel/fax & Answering Service 365630 www.ThisisChurch.com

Centre Manager Miss Wendy Rider 342613

Wendy@thisischurch.com

Leadership Team - Mr Stephen Clare 308299

Treasurer Mrs Kathryn Morse 216428

treasurerph@Thisischurch.com

Gift Aid Administrator - Mr John Hitt 404186

Junior Church Co-ordinator - Mrs Samantha Ware 304058

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

Tel/fax & Answering Service 342613 www.ThisisChurch.com

Centre Manager Miss Wendy Rider 342613

Wendy@thisischurch.com

Leadership Team - Mr Jim Williams 360605

Treasurer - Mr John Day 295592 treasurer@Thisischurch.com

Gift Aid Administrator Mr Jim Williams 360605

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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).

10.00 am at St. Mark's Church G.O.L.D. (*Growing to Overcome Learning Difficulties*).

Day Care Centre - Mrs. Karen Bywater 269515

12.00pm - 1.00pm Storybox at Putnoe Heights Church. Service for parents/carers & children under 5. Sandwich lunch, Bible Stories Children's activities songs and prayers, all in one hour from 12-1pm!

4.15 - 5.45pm Kumon Maths at Putnoe Heights. Contact Ms R.Mistry 01908 217555

6.00pm Brownies St Mark's. Mrs Gill Lake 218091

6.15 pm Brownies Putnoe. Alison McEwen 358583

7.30pm Sugarcraft Guild meets first Monday every month at St. Mark's Mrs. Jill Williams 357020

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

7.30- 9.30pm Creative Needles at Putnoe Heights. Mrs Hayward 307648

7.30pm Whist Drive - At St Mark's each month. Next 17 March Contact Mrs. Judith Stanton. 823313

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

8.00 - 9.00 pm 'Get Fit, Stay Fit' at Putnoe Heights. Mrs Diane Field 404976

Tuesday

9.30am - 12.30pm Candlewicking (Needlework) at Putnoe Heights - Mrs Olive Shotbolt 267203

9.30am - 11.30pm Jo Jingles at St. Mark's. Music & movement for pre-school children. Contact Renu Elston 01908 282866

10.00am - 11.00am - Keep Fit at Putnoe Heights. Contact Mrs Stileman 822230

12.30 -3.00pm Putnoe Heights Church Toddlers Playtime Contact 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 Contact Val Careless 345213.

2.15pm Putnoe Heights Women's Fellowship - Next meeting - March 23 ' Mission Mrs Anne Alderman. Contact Mrs Betty Wyatt 350188

2.15pm Putnoe Heights Men's Fellowship. Next meeting 6 April Members Afternoon Contact Lawrence Wyatt 350188.

2.30pm Mother Teresa Support Group. Meets fortnightly at St. Mark's. Wool and knitting needles provided. Contact Mrs Joan Gravett 356911 and Mrs Marjorie Taylor 305709

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

3.30 - 4.30pm Putnoe Heights Church Essential Stretch Contact Caroline 07778 898135 or 326096

6.30 - 7.30pm Yoga at Putnoe Heights. Contact Rachel Leontyne 01234 783129

6.45pm Guides at Putnoe Heights - Liz Rix 363607

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

7.30 - 9.30pm Bibleway Church at Putnoe Heights - Bible study & prayers. Contact Pastor Tarr 348438 or 07773354129

7. 45 pm Putnoe Heights Ladies Tuesday Club - Meets fortnightly . Next meeting 30 March Games Evening. Contact Mrs C Davies 219130

8.00pm Tuesday Housegroup will resume after Easter. Meeting is at 16 Swindale, Contact Alison 403551 or Brian 305347.

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

Wednesday

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

10.00 am G.O.L.D. (*Growing to Overcome Learning Difficulties*) meets at Putnoe Heights Church. Day Care Centre. Contact Mrs Karen Bywater 269515

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

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

12 - 1pm Putnoe Height Church Total Boding Toning Contact Caroline 07778 898135 or 326096

Luncheon Club at St. Mark's meets fortnightly. Next one 31 March Contact St. Mark's 342613

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

4.15 - 5.45pm Kumon Maths at Putnoe Heights Contact Ms R Mistry 01908 217555

6. - 7.00pm Self Defence at Putnoe Contact Mr James 07711 687449

6.00 -7.30 pm Brownies at St Mark's Contact Mrs Carol Warden 219731

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

7-10pm Putnoe Guild - Putnoe Heights 3rd Wednesday each month. Contact Mrs Dallas 212609

7.45 - 8.45pm Kick Boxing Junior classes St. Mark's. Mr James 07711687449 or 07810234890

7.45pm Badminton Club at Putnoe Heights - all welcome. Contact Ken Marriott 214867

Thursday

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

10.30am - 12.00am Brickhill Clinic at St Mark's with **Fledglings 2.00pm—3.00pm** Contact 267444

10.00am - 11.30am Yoga at Putnoe Heights Contact 244970

12 - 1.00 pm Storybox at St Mark's Church.

Service for parents, carers & children under 5.

Sandwich lunch, Bible Stories, Children's activities, songs & prayers, all in one hour from 12-1pm.

1.30 - 3.00 pm St. Mark's Church Toddler Group.
Contact Debbie Coppenhall 356828.

12.30 -3.00pm Putnoe Heights Church Toddlers
Playtime Contact Geraldine Skeel 406828

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

6.15 pm Weightwatchers at St. Mark's.

Contact Mrs Margaret Ralph 01767 224978.

6.15pm Brownies at Putnoe Mrs S Lewis 300198

7.30 - 9.30pm Club 2000 Putnoe 2nd Thursday of the month. Contact Mrs Moreton 771261

6.15 - 7.30pm Bedford Junior Chess Club. St. Mark's Contact Mr & Mrs Pike 823795

7.30pm - 11.00pm Bedford Senior Chess Club at St Mark's Contact Mr Hatton 824988

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

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

8.00 - 10pm Bedford Writers Circle meets at St Mark's Church 3rd Thursday each month. Contact Mr John Broadhouse 740271

Friday

10.00 am at St. Mark's - G.O.L.D.

(Growing to Overcome Learning Difficulties). Day Care Centre - Contact Mrs. Karen Bywater 269515

6 -7.00 pm Self Defence at Putnoe Contact Mr James 0771 687449 or 07810 234890

7. 30 - 9.30pm Young Peoples meeting Contact Pastor Tarr 376841

7.30pm Music Group St. Mark's Church/monthly

6.30pm -8.30 pm Dog Training Classes at St. Mark's Contact Mrs L. Laton 365601

Saturday

10.00am - 1.00pm & 2 - 5pm Theatre Train at St Mark's -dancing acting, singing,- Kate Randle 304865

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

Sunday

1- 3pm & 7-9pm Bibleway Church at Putnoe Heights - Worship. Contact Pastor Tarr 348438
Mob. 07773354129

News, Views and Information

Forthcoming meetings. Please check!

Partnership Council 8 June

Putnoe Centre Management

26 Apr, 7 Jun, 26 Jul,

St Mark's Centre Management

Church Council at St Mark's

Wednesday 16 June in the Chapel

Churchyards Committee

Next meeting

Putnoe Leadership Team Meeting

Wednesday 5 May. Putnoe Heights Church

St Mark's Leadership Team

28th April at Jim Williams, Thursday 27 May,

Tuesday 7 September

Annual Congregational Meetings Sunday 9 May

3.00pm at St Mark's and 4.00pm at Putnoe

Putnoe Church Council

Monday 14 June

Future Event The Fun Run June 13th at 2.30pm

St Mark's More details to follow

Pastoral Group The following dates have been proposed for our next meetings

Tuesday 20 April 4.30pm Pastoral Group Meeting at St Mark's Would team members please advise Mary Stubbs is you are not able to make the meetings.

Spring Craft Day Saturday 27 March at Southdown Methodist Church, Harpenden. Details of workshops and booking forms from Pam Seymour. Tel 305695. Please book early, no later than 1 March .

Help Needed for Good Friday Storybox.

A special Good Friday event from 12.30 -1.45. There will be a story, music & Easter activities. Offers of help with party lunch to Margaret Peck please ! Offers of help to Joan Crossley, Liz Spavins & Sam Ware (Junior Church).

British Red Cross Open Gardens. There are more gardens open this year in this area. For details please refer to the booklet which can be found on the notice board. If you wish to help with these events contact Jo Whitney 361060.

St Mark's Storybox. I am starting to think about the rota for next term. If anyone who is not yet a volunteer & would like to help, would like to drop me a note, & if anyone has any dates that they know they will not be available, please let me know. Joan



Bible Notes, Lent—Mothering Sunday (Year C, Purple)

Opening Verse of Scripture *Isaiah 66.13*

As a mother comforts a child so will I comfort you, says the Lord.

Collect Payer for the Day - Before we read we pray

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and drew the whole human family to himself: strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to bring together and to heal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen *Collect for Mothering Sunday*

First Bible Reading **Joshua Chapter 5:9-12**

Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." So the place has been called Gilgal to this day. On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate of the produce of Canaan. (This is the word of the Lord -- **Thanks be to God**)

Second Reading **2 Corinthians Chapter 5:16-21**

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (This is the word of the Lord -- **Thanks be to God**)

Gospel Reading **Luke Chapter 15:1-3 & 11b-32**

Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him.

But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." Then Jesus told them this parable:

"There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.

He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and

against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate. "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'" (This is the word of the Lord -- **Thanks be to God**)

Post Communion Prayer

Loving God, as a mother feeds her children at the breast you feed us in this sacrament with the food and drink of eternal life; help us who have tasted your goodness to grow in grace within the household of faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymns (Please distribute Hymns and Psalms and special service sheet)

445 Lord the light of your love is shining;

572 Rejoice rejoice;

59 Blessed assurance;

31 Amazing Grace

559 To God be the glory

Commentary The Lost Son

This reading is a very familiar passage and the theme of God's love not letting our sin be a permanent barrier is quite wonderful. In its original context and for those who first heard the story, it would have been shocking and outrageous. For the youngest son to ask for his share in the inheritance is like him living and acting as if his father has already died. The father, perhaps out of love and even a little foolishly we might add, agrees to his son's request and gives him his share of the estate. The young man moves away and lives a life of reckless abandon, fulfilling every desire without a thought for the consequences. However the results of his actions soon catch up with him and he runs out of money. What is even more scandalous is that Jesus tells the people that the youth was reduced to eating pig food. Pigs were regarded as unclean and so in eating their food and touching them he would become unclean himself and therefore beyond God's love, mercy and protection. Even then he does not repent, but seeks to look after number one and returns to his father to work as a hired hand, seeking a wage from the man he has retreated so badly.

Even more shockingly, the father responds with love and compassion. In a culture that prized dignity, honour and respect, the father's response is totally outrageous. The father offers the son a prized place in the family. By giving him a ring, possibly the ring used to seal business deals, the father indicates that he trusts him and will allow him to act as his agent. A modern day comparison would be to give your errant child your credit card! The father gives him a cloak and sandals, thus elevating him again to the level of important family member, since servants wore tunics and went barefoot. So it is hardly surprising that the elder son is outraged. His anger represents the audiences anger, and our anger too. The celebration meal seems to heap coals on the fire of his wrath, and he blasts away at his father, fully venting his anger.

This passage speaks to us of irresponsibility, of righteous anger, of deep, deep love and of

restoration. In the context of the lost coin and the lost sheep, two parables which precede this one, it tells us that God is willing to come and search for us. We learn that God looks for the lost and desires that they are back in the fold. We can be reassured that in spite of our selfishness and wilfulness, despite the fact that we are easily distracted by the passions of this world, God reaches out and embraces us. He still loves us. No matter how far we journey away from God's commands and no matter how unfaithful we may be, God is seeking our return. This is not a licence for disobedience and selfishness, thinking that it doesn't matter what I do, because God will love me anyway. Rather it serves as a reminder that love is costly and painful, think of the financial cost to the father, think of Jesus death on the Cross, and it teaches us to honour the love of those who care for us. Neil Bramble- Chapman

Meditation Mary, the mother of Jesus

Motherhood was not easy for Mary. She was young, inexperienced and unmarried. Her pregnancy was viewed with suspicion. Her baby was born far from home in difficult and dangerous surroundings. When she took her son to the temple, only days old, Simeon's prophecy for his future was both ominous and exciting. Jesus' childhood gave her cause for concern and in adulthood, it was clear that his life would become increasingly dangerous and he would be marginalised. Mary had to learn to put her own feelings to one side to support him in his mission. Finally, she suffered the worst thing that can happen to a mother, she had to watch her son die a tortured death.

Mothering Sunday

The fourth Sunday in Lent is called Mothering Sunday. There are traditions associated with Mothering Sunday in England which date back as long ago as the 16th century. It is told that this was the day when people were encouraged to return to worship in their 'mother church where they had been baptised. People who usually attended the local parish church, would make a longer journey to the 'mother church' or cathedral of the Diocese. Girls in domestic service would bake to show their mothers their new skills in the form of a gift, traditionally a simnel cake. On this day many girls who were in service and apprentices were allowed time off from domestic chores to visit their mothers and their family. Today Mothering Sunday is a popular day when Christians choose to use the occasion to think about all things which concern motherhood. We give thanks for the Church as Mother, the Virgin Mary as the mother of Jesus, we remember that God cares for us like a mother and last but not least we give thanks for our own mothers.

Mothering Sunday is the fourth Sunday in Lent and it is a time of special for thanksgiving. Sunday is the one day of joy in Lent, when flowers abound in all churches and when people are allowed a time off from the penitential season. It is also known as Mid-Lent Sunday, Refreshment Sunday or Laetare Sunday. The Latin name of Laetare, means rejoice.

Prayers for Sunday and the Week Ahead

Motherly God, in whose arms are held all who cry out to you. Teach me to open my heart, my home, even when I have little to give to make room for all your children and give them space to grow. Dear Life, Christian Aid, 1998

For mothers. Lord Jesus, you know well the blessing an earthly home can bring: Receive our thanks for all the love we have received in our homes, especially from those who have nurtured us from our earliest years. Hear our prayers for mothers everywhere, that they may never lose heart nor ever be taken for granted, but receive from their children the honour and love you showed to your mother, Mary, even as you were suffering on the Cross. Bless and keep them all, for your love's sake. **Amen**

For those in need Remember, O Lord, all those in need: people with no good food or proper clothes, no home of their own, or no work to do; those who have neither family nor friends and no knowledge of the your love. Supply their needs. Bless those who try to help them and bring us all to trust in you. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

For those who live alone God our Father, we ask you to bless all who live alone, those who have lost their partner in marriage, those who have never married, those whose families are grown up and away from home and those who have outlived other members of their families and many of their friends: Be with them to assure them of your love and of their value to you every moment of their lives, and enable them to rejoice in the fellowship of your Church on earth and in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

News, Views and Information

Coffee Time Cards New stocks of Easter cards are on sale from today, after morning service. Usual reasonable prices. Commissions still taken.

Mima Noble would like to thank everyone for the cards and flowers and good wishes. She has had her operation and is feeling very much better.

Bedford Town Concert Band & Progress Brass
Friday 26 March, 8.00pm "BRASS GOES POP"
Tickets £5 Concessions £3 from Roger Nichols
357268 or available at the door.

MHA I have available from Sutton's catalogues for Spring and Summer plants and seeds. If interested please contact me. 20% of the value of each order is passed to The Methodist Homes. This is a great way to raise funds for this worthwhile charity and to make your garden beautiful. Thank you Graci Foster215053

Supper & Spring Lecture. "Hitch-Hiking around the Universe" Saturday 27th March 7pm at Sharnbrook Methodist Church. Tickets £7—available from Eileen Smith 82241.

Ramblers Please also note that details of the Ramblers week-end away in September are now available in the welcome area

Saturday 3rd April 2004 All day walk incorporating a short train ride (Bedford to Ridgmont £2.70) and 8½ mile walk from Ridgmont station to Millbrook. Lunch 12.30—1.00pm at "The Swan" Cranfield. Meet 10.10am St John's station for 10.17 train. Free car parking behind 'Kid's World' and St. John's station. Any queries contact Margaret or Alan 327219.

Partnership Singers. A reminder to all members past and present that rehearsals for Easter Services continue on Friday 19 March at 7.00pm

Coffee morning in aid of Mission Funds will be held on Saturday 27th March, at the home of Grace Foster - 75 Putnoe Lane, between 10 am and 12 noon - cakes and raffle. (Donations gratefully received). Please come from both churches to support this worthy cause. Please note this replaces the Coffee Morning arranged for 3rd April. Grace. phone 215053.

Fun Run & Sponsored Walk 5KM & 3KM. on Sunday 13 June .in Mowsbury Park, 2.30pm start. Prize giving at St Mark's at 4pm. BBQ, Bouncey Castle, Balloon Race. Entry forms available from St. Mark's Church.

St Mark's /Putnoe Heights Partnership

We have decided to make a block booking of seats for the opening screening of The Passion of Christ. Our seats are booked for 27 March at 11am. at Bedford UGC Cinema, Aspects Leisure Park.

Tickets are only £3 each and available at St Mark's Church Office. Do come along and join us as we watch this moving portrayal of the last days of our Lord. Please telephone Tel. 01234 342613 to make reservations or speak with Charles Royden this morning

Easter cards. Our Easter cards for circulation around the churches, friends and community are now ready. Please do take these and distribute them freely. Please remember that the very best way to get somebody along to church is to give them a card and then bring them.

Spring Arts and Crafts Fair

at Priory Methodist Church on

Saturday 3rd April from 11a.m. to 3p.m. A wide variety of craft stalls, paintings, cards, books, cakes and home produce and children's activities will make your visit very pleasurable. Admission is 50p (children free) Do come and bring your friends. In aid of the Church Development Scheme.

A service for Mothering Sunday is being held at Highfield residential home at 2.15pm. A group from St Mark's conducts a simple service there every third Sunday in the month. We shall be making arrangements for the next of these on April 4 following our morning service at a meeting in the chapel. If you feel that you would like to help in some way, singing, chatting to the residents, choosing hymns etc., we shall be pleased for you to join us. Thank you. Vera Pearson & John Standley

Partnership Lent Course 2004 7.30pm at Putnoe Heights Church

Great Hymn Writers

This year our Lent Course will be looking at the lives and theology of four great hymn writers.

Our Ministers will speak about a separate hymn writer each week in Lent. This would be an excellent event to bring along a friend or somebody who does not come to church.

22 March Fred Pratt Green Charles Royden
29 March Wesley Neil Bramble Chapman

Information about our Worship

Welcome to our churches, it is always our pleasure to welcome visitors.

Refreshments Please do feel welcome to stay behind after church for coffee which will be served in the church

Sunday School takes place during morning service a Crèche is available at the back of the church, please feel able to walk in and out during the service.

Parents Please remember that colouring boards and crayons are available for children during the service.

Hard of hearing? Please note that a hearing aid loop is fitted at our churches. Please switch to the 'T' setting.

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

James William Davenport
Margaret Allman Hayward

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

Margaret and Claire did it with the help of Eddie counting the lengths. Each swam 30 lengths. A big thank you to all who sponsored them and helped to raise over £500 for MacMillan Nurses and the Swimathon Foundation. Money is now being collected and any additional donations will be gratefully received.

Flowers gifted to the church.

We are extremely grateful when donations are made for the flowers. This may be as a celebration of a happy occasion such as an anniversary or in memory of someone who has died. Contact Miss Marion Prior 303254 (St. Mark's) or Miss Jennie Cooper 404950 (Putnoe Heights).

In the fourteenth century Julian of Norwich, the first woman to write in modern English, experienced and understood the motherhood of God in her visions. Mothering Sunday is a good day to share her vision and recognise that although we are distinguished by our gender, God is not. Instead God is both mother and father to us .

'As truly as God is Father, so just as truly is he our mother.' Julian of Norwich

We publish the banns and pray for the marriages of

Michael John Puttock and Penelope of the parish of St Andrew's Bedford on the electoral roll of this parish. This is for the 3rd time of asking (7,14,21) Geoffrey Charles Gypps and Lynne Burr of the parish of St Mary's Goldington, on the electoral roll of this parish. This is for the second time of asking (21,28,4)

Strong mother God,
working night and day,
planning all the wonders of creation,
setting each equation,
genius at play:
Hail and Hosanna
strong mother God!

Warm father God,
hugging every child,
feeling all the strains of human living,
caring and forgiving,
till we're reconciled:
Hail and Hosanna,
warm father God!

**'God could not be everywhere,
so he made mothers.'**

Traditional proverb