



Methodist  
Church

# Partnership News

26 February 2012  
First Sunday in Lent



Church of  
England

## Partnership Church Services Today

**8.30am Holy Communion every Sunday**  
1st, 3rd and 5th Sunday at Putnoe Heights  
2nd and 4th Sunday at St. Mark's Church

### Today – 26 February

**9.30am St. Mark's - Morning Worship**  
Preacher - Andrew Gale County Ecumenical Officer  
Leadership – Mrs Margaret Appleton  
Intercessions - Mrs Mary Stubbs  
**11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Worship**  
Preacher - Andrew Gale County Ecumenical Officer  
Leadership - Mrs Jean Kirk  
Intercessions - Mr Alan Bayliss

### 4 March - 2nd Sunday in Lent

**9.30am St Mark's - Morning Worship**  
Preacher - Mr John Ayers  
Leadership – Mrs Jean Bank  
Intercessions - Mr Richard Ledger  
**11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Worship**  
Preacher - Mr John Ayers  
Leadership - Mrs Veta Hudson-Rae  
Intercessions – YPF

### Bible Readings

1.Genesis 17:1-7 2.Romans 4: 13-25  
3.Mark 8: 31-38

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

## Thank You

The flowers at Putnoe Heights Church this week have been given by Diana Johnson in memory of her mother, Jean Brown, and by the family of Marjorie and Derrick Stoneham.

The flowers in St Mark's Church this week are given by Vera Pearson in memory of family members, giving thanks for her landmark birthday and the Golden Wedding of her brother and his wife.

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

## Prayer for the Week

Almighty God, whose dear Son went not up to joy before he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; though the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

*William Huntington (1838-1902)*

### The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman

107 Dover Crescent, Bedford MK41 8QR  
266952 Fax- 402624 nsm@thisischurch.com  
(Sam also works full time as a Vice President for Hewlett Packard)

### Deacon Jane Mason

12 Hartop Close, Bedford MK41 8HE  
348091 Mobile 07807 146535 jane@thisischurch.com

### The Reverend Charles Royden

The Vicarage, Calder Rise. MK41 7UY  
309175 Mobile 07973 113861 vicar@thisischurch.com

### For Data Protection Purposes

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.ThisChurch.com](http://www.ThisChurch.com)

### Partnership Pastoral Support Team Co-Ordinator

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.*

### Churchyards Administrator

Mrs Avril Williams 01234 342613

### Putnoe Heights Church Centre

**Open Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm, Friday 9am - 1pm**  
**Tel/fax & Answering Service** 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com  
**Centre Manager** Mr Geoff Gypps 365630 mob 07947 902846  
**Leadership Team** Mrs. Linda Hoar 782717  
**Treasurer** Mr Ian Morse 21428 treasurerph@thisischurch.com  
**Gift Aid Administrator** John Hitt 404186  
**Youth Worker** Emma Gordon email - 07593266091 youth@thisischurch.com

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

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

# Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

## Monday

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

Head teacher Mrs Janet Smith ☎326685

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

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

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin ☎312634

(See website for more details)

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

Stephanie Smith ☎ 357787 or 07973174430

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

☎211955

**10.30am U3A Play reading** St Mark's (see contact details below)

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

**2.00pm U3A History Group** St Marks.(see contact details below)

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

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

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

**6.15 pm Brownies** Putnoe. Sharon Tanner

☎01767699399 or 07720713738.

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

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

**7.00pm Sugarcraft Guild** St Mark's 1st week Pat

Nicholson ☎353518

**7.00pm Cancer Care Society.** St Mark's. 1st Week. Mr J Dewhurst ☎01908 377020

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

**7.30pm Whist Drive.** St Mark's 3rd & 5th week . Next meeting– 19 March Judith Stanton. ☎823313

**7.30pm House group** 30 The Ridgeway. The home of Eddy & Margaret Peck ☎267567.

**8pm 'Get Fit, Stay Fit'** Putnoe Heights. Mrs Diane Field ☎404976

## Tuesday

**9.30am Jo Jingles.** St. Mark's. Music & movement for pre-school children. Renu Elston ☎07790206016

**9.30am Candlewicking** (Needlework). Putnoe Heights. Pat McCart ☎365507

**9.30am -12.30 & 4-9pm Slimming World** St. Mark's. Helen Folbigg ☎351223

**10am Autism Beds Adult Support Group.** St Mark's. Sally Cripsley ☎350704

**11.15am U3A Keep Fit Putnoe Heights** (see contact details below)

**1pm –2.30pm Drop in Wiggles and Jiggles** 0-5 years, Putnoe Children's Centre. Please call Trudy Hamilton (centre assistant) for more information ☎340552

**1.15pm U3A Cinema Group.** St Mark's (see contact details below)

**2.00pm U3A Book Group 1** St Mark's (3rd Wk) (see contact details below)

**2.00pm U3A Book Group 2** St Mark's (2nd Wk) (see contact details below)

**2.00pm Library Walk W.I.** Putnoe Heights, meets monthly. Morag Tomkins ☎356895

**2pm U3A Photography Group** 3 St. Mark's (1st Wk) (see contact details below).

**2.30pm Mother Teresa Support Group.** St Mark's Fortnightly . Wool and knitting needles provided. Mrs Maureen Watling ☎262225

**2.15pm Tuesday Afternoon Housegroup.** St Mark's Fortnightly. Mary Stubbs ☎406784.

**3.45pm-6.15pm Stars School of Dance.** Putnoe Heights. Esther Richardson ☎295862 or 07917582468.

**4.30pm—6pm BIGG Writing** Putnoe Heights Natalie John 07772184721

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

**6.15pm Pilates** St Mark's Church Jane Butcher ☎0789187957

**7pm—8.30pm Daisy Birthing** Putnoe Heights Susie 07980447390

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

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

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

**7.30pm Putnoe Heights Ladies Tuesday Club** - Meets fortnightly. Next meeting March 6 - Beetle Drive. Details call Janet King 313946

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

## Wednesday

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

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

**10am U3A Gardening Group** 3 St Marks.(see contact details below)

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

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

**12.30pm Luncheon Club.** Putnoe Heights fortnightly. Next meeting 29 February 2012 Putnoe Heights Office ☎365630

**1.00-3pm Police Surgery** at Putnoe Heights (Fortnightly)

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

**1.45 Scots Society Whist** Putnoe monthly .All welcome Nancy Barr ☎268147

**2.00-4.00pm U3A Craft** St Marks.(see contact details below)

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

**3.45.- 5.30pm Messy Church.** St Mark's (3rd Wk). for children of lower school age and their carers. Bible-based story, crafts, singing and a meal. Next meeting 15th February. Wendy Waters401834

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

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

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

**6.15pm Yoga and Relaxation** Putnoe Heights Racheall

Monton ☎01234 297138 or 07910835994.

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

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

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

**7.00pm Putnoe Guild** Putnoe Heights monthly Mrs O Holt ☎266004

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

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

**8.00pm Tudor Reeds Folk Dance Club** meet at St Mark's 1st,3rd & 5th Wednesday in month. Next meeting will be 29 February 2012. Everyone welcome. All dances called, only £1 including refreshments. Ring Valmai 219555 Rosemary 405594 or Graham 406359 for more details.

**8.00pm Bedford Wine and Social Club** St Mark's 1st week in the month. Jean Ross ☎771870

### Thursday

**9.30am Thursday Prayer Group.** Putnoe Heights. Valerie Capon ☎356306 .

*Request for prayer can be written in the prayer diary on the information table.*

**9.45am Yoga** Putnoe Heights Denise Green ☎244970

**9.45am Chat and Play** St.Mark's. A termtime group for Mums & toddlers. Jo Garner 400071 or 07719670624

**11.30 - 12.30 Baby Yoga/Massage** St Mark's starting on the 1st March.☎Laura Amor.341152. 07976259081.

**12pm Storybox .** St Mark's welcome the under 5's and their carers to join them between 12 noon and 1pm for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based story and singing. Lots of fun. Contact Jaana Swaby ☎363283

**1.30 - 3.00pm NHS Baby Clinic 1st and 3rd Thursdays** St. Mark's ☎267444

**1pm—2.30pm Drop in (large hall) Children's Chatty Time** 0-5 years, Putnoe Children's Centre.Please call Trudy Hamilton (centre assistant) for more information ☎340552.

**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.

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

**2pm Putnoe Bridge Club.** Mrs. P. Cass ☎294220

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

**2.30 - 4.30pm Bedford Art Society** St Marks Mary Rich ☎272470

**6.15 pm Weightwatchers.** St. Mark's. Clare Martin 07805408811.

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

**6.30-7.30pm Bootcamp/Circuits. (Fitness)** St Marks. ☎Laura Amor.341152. 07976259081.

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

**7pm U3A Folk & Poetry** St Marks (2nd and 4th week) (see contact details below)

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

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

**8 -10pm Bedford Folk dancers** (formerly Barn dancers) Meet weekly at Putnoe Heights . Different guest callers each week. All welcome, cost £2 Including refreshments.

More details Ron Law 825574.

**8.00pm Bedford Writers Circle.** St Mark's 1st week in month. Mr Newton ☎01525 378193

**8.00pm Magpies Women's Group** St Mark's 2nd & 4th week Pat Cass ☎294220

**8.00pm Brickhill Ladies Group** St Mark's 1st and 3rd week in month Kay Logan 01234 309105.

### Friday

**10am -12.00 U3A Photography** St Marks.(4th week) (see contact details below)

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

**2.00-4.00 pm Whist** St Marks. Patricia Holland.☎262823

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

**6.00-7.00pm Zumba at St Mark's.** Contact Laura Harrow ☎07834529833

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

**7.45 - 10.45pm Bedford Astrology Club.**St Marks(2nd week) Carol Brown ☎01438 233385

### Saturday

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

**Young Embroiderers** bi monthly Putnoe Heights Terry Fletcher ☎357198

**2.15pm Society of Recorder Players** at Putnoe Heights. G Parry ☎01462 674792

**6.45pm Duplicate Bridge.** St Mark's Mrs Pillinger ☎212066

### Sunday

**9.30 - 10.30 Church and Sunday School** at St Mark's with crèche for under 3's

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

**1pm Tabernacle of Truth Church** Putnoe Heights Sacha Ojo ☎07590597891 or [www.tabernacleoftruth.co.uk](http://www.tabernacleoftruth.co.uk)

**7-9pm Tae Kwon Do** St Mark's (not 25 March) Contact Adrian Felice [www.bedfordtkd.com](http://www.bedfordtkd.com) 07964356355

**U3A** For information on the U3A groups meeting at St Mark's and Putnoe Heights Church please contact Yvonne Francis ☎405119



## Diary Dates



**St Mark's Church Council** – 19 June

**St Mark's Leadership Team** - Thursday 17 May

**Putnoe Heights Leadership Team** - 28 May

**Putnoe Heights Management Meeting**

**Putnoe Church Council** - 11 June

**Pastoral Group Meeting** - Tuesday 19 June 4.00pm

**Churchyard Committee** -

**Brickhill Parish Council Meetings** -

**Commemoration Service** 4 November 3.00pm

**Harvest Festival** 30 September

**Circuit meeting** - 12 June

**Deanery Meeting**

**Woodland Burial Trustees**– 12 May Open Day at wood

**Putnoe Heights Children &**

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



## First Sunday in Lent

### Opening Verse of Scripture – Psalm 25:4

Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths;  
guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God  
my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.

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

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty  
days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are,  
yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves  
in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness,  
so may we know your power to save; 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 for ever. Amen Common Worship



### First Reading— Genesis 9:8-17

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you--the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you--every living creature on earth. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."

So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth."

The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.)

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

### Second Reading – 1 Peter 3:18-22

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also, not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

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

### Gospel Reading – Mark 1: 9-15

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him. After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

(This is the word of the Lord) **All Praise to Christ our Lord**)

## Post Communion Prayer

Merciful Father, who gave Jesus Christ to be for us the bread of life, that those who come to him should never hunger: draw us to the Lord in faith and love, that we may eat and drink with him at his table in the kingdom, where he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen

## Hymns (Please distribute Morning Worship and Mission Praise)

1. I heard the voice of Jesus say 275 (*Kingsfold*)
2. In the cross of Christ I glory 338 (*All for Jesus*)
3. Spirit of holiness 611 (*Blow the wind southerly*)
4. Like a mighty river flowing 419
5. Jesus the name high over all (*Lydia*)

## Commentary

We have a wonderful reading from Mark today as we start Lent. We are told that Jesus sees "The heavens being split open." The Greek word is 'schizomenous'. Schizo means "split," schizophrenia, for example, literally means "split mind." Perhaps Mark intends a reference to Isaiah 64:1: "*Oh, that you would tear open the heavens and come down.*" After the splitting of the heavens, Jesus also sees "*the Spirit like a dove descending into him.*" Not only did the Spirit "*come down,*" it went into Jesus. As Jesus went into the Jordan, the Spirit now goes into Jesus. The plea of Isaiah is answered, and we are given a dramatic glimpse into how Jesus is fulfilling the hopes of generations. So also the baptism reminds us of the Red Sea and the forty days in the wilderness recalls the forty years the Israelites spent in the wilderness. The Promised Land now becomes a reality not in geographic terms but rather as Jesus opens the door to the kingdom of God.

Jesus is baptised and we might expect that afterwards there would be some kind of celebration. Instead we read that Jesus is tempted in the wilderness by Satan. We are told that he is also "*with the wild beasts.*" What is meant by this reference to wild beasts? People in the first century might have identified the "*wild beasts*" with those spoken of by the prophet Daniel: "*I, Daniel, saw in my vision by night the four winds of heaven stirring up the great sea, and four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another (7:2).*" The "*great beasts*" of Daniel have been identified as the political powers of the world, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Mark might therefore be proposing this confrontation: Satan and worldly political powers on the one side versus Jesus and the angels on the other. This theme will continue throughout Mark, for we are reminded that the worldly political powers are continuing to assert their influence. Immediately after Jesus' encounter in the wilderness, Mark tells us that John the Baptist has just been arrested by those same powers. Throughout the Gospel, Mark delivers a devastating political commentary. He is saying that the powers of the world--the Jerusalem establishment and Rome--are in league with Satan. Jesus' struggle with these demonic powers takes place in the political realm, i.e. this world, but Mark also wants his readers to understand that that struggle is also a spiritual, i.e. cosmic, battle.

The New Testament gives us this idea of Satan who is the arch-enemy of God. And Jesus is engaged in a titanic battle and goes out for confrontation, note that Jesus is not tempted into the wilderness, it is the Spirit which takes him there. The Holy Spirit of God takes Jesus directly out into the desert for a confrontation with the Devil. That confrontation will be prominent throughout the pages of the Gospels as Jesus is seen to confront evil and go about restoring to wholeness that which had been corrupted. It is God's intention to take on evil and not to see Jesus avoid it. What is evil and what should we do about it, does it exist and should we be afraid?

You might like to ask yourself whether you really believe in evil at all. Just as some people take God out of their world view and deny his spiritual force in the universe, so too others deny any evil force. On a daily basis we are confronted by stories and newspaper reports of terrible things taking place in our world. It can be tempting to think that humanity is progressing, becoming more civilised. But we know that the world doesn't just advance steadily towards a better future. As soon as we become optimistic about human behaviour or the world in which we live, we are confronted by the terrible reality of all that is wrong within and around us. History repeats itself and as we look back we see the world express the same shock and surprise when things go wrong. It happened with events such as 9/11, or the holocaust. .

Some people do refuse to acknowledge the existence of evil and suppose that the world is basically a good place but they do so in the face of so much evidence to the contrary. The world and its problems are not solved by human means. Technology, education, development or 'westernization', political ideals of western democracy. None of these save us. There is no day when we will make things better, we must recognise the inevitable truth that there is no moral evolution, no social Darwinism. There is no steady march towards freedom and justice. Humankind does not have the solution to its core problem and so is not able to make itself advance. It's not all about money as Marx said, it's not all about sex as Freud said,

neither is it all about power as Nietzsche said. There does exist evil and we must recognise evil so that we are not surprised by it and are able to deal with it.

Christian tradition has spoken of evil very seriously. Since the enlightenment there has been a tendency to move away from the personification of a Devil, to drop the 'D' and speak more of an impersonal force of evil. Nevertheless evil and its effects have been recognised. An understanding of evil resonates with what we instinctively know to be true. There is no need to go into great explanation of what is meant in 'Star Wars' when it speaks of the 'Dark Side,' because we all have one!

Christians believe that evil really does exist as a power separate from God. Call it by whatever name you choose it was a real choice which Jesus had to make of what authority to follow. There is such a thing as a force, or forces, of evil which are supra-personal, supra-human, which appear to take over humans as individuals or, in some cases, as entire societies. Is it not also true that big commercial enterprises, corporations and institutions, industrial companies, governments and indeed churches, all of these have a kind of soul themselves? This corporate soul can become corrupted to the extent that even those running the enterprise can be subject to the power of the corruption and evil which has become endemic within.

But as Christians we do not believe in any dualism, that is, an equal power like God. Evil comes out of creation, Satan is described as a created being, God has no equal and cosmic order will be restored. So we know that it is entirely to be expected that evil will not triumph over God. Humanity is seen locked in a struggle with evil. A battle is waged in every human heart and by heart I mean our spiritual, emotional and intellectual centre. The battle with evil is not something which was reserved for Jesus alone. We too are called to recognise evil when we see it and refuse to go down without a fight.

Life is about choices and decisions, how we live our lives, bring up our children, spend our money. The values which we think are important, education, consideration of others. When we do bad things, we can blame someone else, our upbringing our peers, yet most decisions are at least partly our own choice. In those choices we can all be influenced by God or evil. As Jesus had difficult choices to make so must we. We can choose as individuals to follow evil, it cannot overpower us. The choice is yours and mine.

The power of God is not compromised by evil, Satan is defeated, there is nothing about which we need be afraid. John Bunyan used the description of the Christian facing an adversary like a lion. Christian is walking down the road when to his horror he discovers a ferocious lion barring his path. There is no way that he can avoid this animal! Then to his delight he notices that the lion has been chained to a post. Someone has been that way before him and tamed the fearsome beast. Of course it is Jesus who chains evil in this episode and ultimately in the cross of Christ and we should recognise his struggles as our own. From this episode we know that we too have a choice to follow the higher power of God. Today you too can know that power of God in your situation. We should know that there is no power greater than God. Of what are you afraid? Why do you worry? There is no power stronger than the power of God and nothing of which we need be afraid. *Charles Royden*

### **Meditation Taken from Living God's Love** [http://www.livethechallenge.co.uk/verse/transforming\\_life\\_4/](http://www.livethechallenge.co.uk/verse/transforming_life_4/)

Psalm 51.10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

**Re-creation** The season of Lent is a gift. In Lent we are invited to make a journey back to God, to the ever welcoming love of God. It's a road of re-creation. As we travel that road we discover the inner transformation of God; the gentle, creative remaking that restores the mess of our lives. And we find that we are called to be part of God's continual re-creation of the world.

**Pause** Take time today ... to stop. Reflect on that little phrase 'create in me a clean heart'.

**Act...** what might it mean for God to put a new and right spirit within you today? Make time today ... for recreation and discover God's gift of re-creation.

### **Prayers for Sunday and the Week Ahead**

Lord take our minds and think through them  
Take our lips and speak through them  
Take our hearts and set them on fire  
With the desire to do your holy will  
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Loving Father, today is the first Sunday of Lent. Over the next six weeks, with your help, we are going to prepare for Easter. From today we are making a new start with a bigger effort to be more loving and kind. Help us to show concern for the less fortunate, the hungry and the poor, and especially help us to speak to you more often. We ask this through your Son, Jesus, whose death and resurrection we will be thinking about in the next few weeks. Amen. *Tony Castle*.

**Count Your Blessings.** During Lent Christian Aid's 'Count Your Blessings' reminds us how fortunate we are in the freedoms and living standards we enjoy. Each day, there is a different focus of prayer, reflection, thanks or an invitation to donate a small amount of money. 'Count Your Blessings' pamphlets and shortened children's version are now available in the entrance lobby at St Marks and in the Welcome area at Putnoe. Please help yourselves. For further information please contact Carolyn Morris at Putnoe 350722 after 12 noon, or Jean Bank at St Mark's 342613

**Ladybird Book Tokens.** We would be grateful if any readers of the Daily Mirror could save the children's Ladybird book tokens for Hazeldene Heights Pre School. Many thanks from Laura Leggett

**Mother Teresa Group** would be very grateful for any knitting wool you have to spare. Any ply, any colour we will knit it! Please leave at St. Mark's Church office. Thank you. Maureen Watling

**House Group** at the home of Wendy Waters, 13 Farnham Way, 7.45pm on Mondays 27 February; 5 March; 19 March and 26 March. We will use the St Alban's Diocese Old Testament based Lent Course 'Transforming Life'. New people most welcome. For more details contact Wendy Waters 401834.

**Table Top Sale at Putnoe Heights Church** on Saturday 10th March at 10am. Tables cost £6.00 each. Light Lunches, tea, coffee and cakes available. Event in aid of church funds. To reserve a Table please contact Ian Morse on 01234-216428

**Quiz Night at St Mark's Church,** Saturday 10 March 2012. Cost £6 per head which includes Fish & Chip supper. Tickets available from St Mark's Church

**Putnoe Lunch Club.** We are looking for new members so if you know anybody who would like to come along fortnightly on Wednesday then please do let us know. We are also looking for drivers who will help transport guests.

**Maundy Thursday.** By popular request our Maundy Thursday service will be held at Putnoe at 7.30pm and will take the form of a Last Supper communion meal provided kindly by the catering team

**Footprints Walk** on Sunday March 4. A two and a half miles walk on Pertenhall Paths, setting off at 2.30pm. Meet at the Village Hall (parking) which is on the road to Swineshead about 200 yards from the B660 (Bedford - Kimbolton). Led by Jean and Alan Kirk.

**Henry Olunga Concert** to be held on Sunday 29 April 2012 at Priory Methodist Church, Newnham

Avenue, Bedford. No admission charge but please be willing to give generously to an offering for the Zimbabwe Victims' Support Fund .....to provide food and care for hundreds who may not otherwise survive the brutality and poverty.

### **Dates for your Diary Car Boots for 2012**

9 April, 7 May, 4 June, 27 August

**The Bedford Community Chamber Orchestra** (BCCO) returns on Saturday, March 24th to perform a series of well known classical pieces. The concert programme will feature Schubert's unfinished Symphony and pieces from Handel's Water Music as well as pieces from Mozart and a 'Salute to the Big Apple'. Starting at 19:30, the event will include free refreshments during the interval and the now familiar raffle which is always a particular favourite. The BCCO has been performing regularly at Putnoe since December 2009 and continues to enjoy a loyal following from the local community. Come and enjoy this, the latest presentation from this popular amateur orchestra.

**The Women's World Day of Prayer 'Let Justice Prevail'** prepared by Christian Women of Malaysia - Is on Friday 2 March 2012. Afternoon service 2pm at The Salvation Army, and at 7.30pm at Christchurch. Further details see poster.

**Craft Stall's Easter Novelties** will be on sale shortly £1 each, Chicks, Rabbits and Lambs.

**"Spring Clean"** morning at Putnoe Heights Church 10am to 12noon on Saturday 12 May. All helpers welcome. "

**Songs of Praise** with Pam Rhodes at Elstow Abbey 6pm Sunday 29th April. £8 adults £5 concessions £3 children Tel. 01234 261477

**Brickhill Parish Council** meets Thursday 1 March at 7.30pm at St Mark's Church Centre

**Belief Bedfordshire** have released details of their spring course Better Together?  
Wednesday, 18 April 2012 Better Together Proclaiming the Gospel?  
Wednesday, 25 April 2012 Better Together in Social Action?  
Wednesday, 2 May 2012 Better Together Locally?  
Wednesday, 9 May 2012 Better Together in Eucharist?  
Wednesday, 16 May 2012 Better Together in Worship?  
Venue: The Holt Room, St Andrews Church, Kimbolton Road, Bedford, MK40 2PF, beginning at 7.30pm and ending at 9.30 pm. For details please visit <http://www.beliefbeds.org.uk/>





## Bedford Ecumenical Lent Services Lent 2012

**Theme** Less than Gold: Serving God and Mammon Ecumenical Services at 1.10pm on Wednesdays in Lent at

Bunyan Meeting, Mill Street, Bedford. Each service will include a theological reflection on the Lenten theme

**29 February** Cllr. Rev'd Charles Royden

**7 March** Paul Hunt The Chief Executive, YMCA, Beds

**14 March** A Speaker from the Bedford Foodbank

**21 March** Michael Campbell Senior Chaplain, Luton Town Centre Chaplaincy

**28 March** Charles Whitehead Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton Finance Team

### Partnership Lent Course Dates

The Lent course will begin with refreshments at 7.30pm and the meeting proper will start at 8.0pm

This year for Lent we are looking at doing our Mission Plan. It would be helpful for you to take a look at <http://www.livinggodslove.org/resources/resource/mission-action-planning>

We will be using three evenings during Lent to go through the stages Look, Listen, Plan, after Lent we will be looking at implementation ie Act

There are also materials for homegroups to use during Lent and for personal prayer and Bible study. <http://www.livinggodslove.org/resources/resource/lent-course-2012>

We would like to stress that Mission Action Planning is not about looking for more things to do. It is about recognising who we are, what we do and where we see ourselves in the future. This might mean that we do some new things, however there is no expectation that we will do more. So if we decide to do something new, then we will be giving something else up! We cannot do everything and we already do so much. However it will be good to take some stock of where we are, a kind of audit and ask prayerfully what our strengths and weaknesses are. It should be something which we gain some satisfaction from as we reflect together on the life of our churches. Please speak to Sam if you have any questions !

### Meetings

Thursday 15 March at Putnoe Heights Church

Thursday 22 March at St Mark's - Wren Room

Thursday 29 March at Putnoe Heights Church

Please do book these dates in your diary.



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## 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.

**Maureen Simmonds**

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



## Green Borough Fair Today

The Green Borough Fair returns today Sunday 26 February for the second year running at St Mark's Church Community Centre in Brickhill.

The event is to provide information and offer encouragement and support to community groups, schools and individuals to raise general awareness of greener living and getting active outdoors. A range of groups will be on hand to offer advice and ideas for reducing waste and saving energy. There will be opportunities to get involved with projects and activities such as creating community gardens and allotments, projects for Eco-Schools, local volunteer and conservation projects, running a local 'In Bloom' campaign plus much more. There will also be demonstrations, displays, stands, a children's game room and refreshments.

The Green Borough Fair takes place between 12noon – 4.00pm on Sunday 26 February at St Mark's Church Community Centre, Brickhill. Entry is free.



## Forthcoming Funerals

**The funeral of Reg Woodford** will take place at Bedford Crematorium on February 27 at 10.45am