



# Partnership News

**Putnoe Heights & St Mark's Church  
29 November 2015  
First Sunday of Advent**



## Sunday Services

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

## First Sunday of Advent

**9.30am St Mark's – Holy Communion with PCH**  
Preacher - Deacon Jane Mills  
Leadership - Mrs. Elizabeth Bean  
Intercessions - Mr. Ian Farthing.  
Organist - Mr Clive Simmonds  
**11.00 am Putnoe - Holy Communion with PCH**  
Preacher - Deacon Jane Mills  
Leadership - Mr. Barry Southam  
Intercessions - Ministers  
Organist - Mr Clive Simmonds

## 6 December Christingle - Gift Services Second Sunday of Advent

**9.30am St Mark's – Messy Christingle Service**  
Preacher - Mr. Richard Ledger/ Mrs. Wendy Waters  
Leadership - Mr Mike Cooper  
Intercessions - Mrs. Wendy Waters  
Organist - Mr Clive Simmonds  
**11.00 am Putnoe - Traditional Christingle Service**  
Preacher - Revd. Canon Charles Royden  
Leadership - Mrs. Veta Hudson Rae  
Intercessions - Young People  
Organist - Mr Clive Simmonds  
**Readings** 1. Malachi 3: 1-4 2. Philippians 1: 3-11  
3. Luke 3: 1-6  
Mid Week Holy Communion at 10.00am at St Mark's  
Chapel every Wednesday and at Sir William Harpur  
House on first Monday of every month.

## Thank You

The flowers at Putnoe Heights this week  
have been given by Irene McKenzie in  
loving memory of her husband Eddie.



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

## Prayer for Sunday

Weave a silence, O Lord,  
onto our lips;  
weave a silence  
into our minds;  
weave a silence  
within our hearts.  
Close our ears to distractions;  
close our eyes to attractions;  
close our heart to temptations. Amen.



*Traditional Celtic Prayer*

**The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman**  
Assistant Rural Dean of Bedford  
107 Dover Crescent, Bedford MK41 8QR  
Tel: 266952 nsm@thisischurch.com

**Deacon Jane Mills**  
c/o Putnoe Heights Church Centre  
Tel. 348091 Mobile 07807 146535  
itsjanemills@gmail.com

**The Reverend Canon Charles Royden**  
The Vicarage, Calder Rise. MK41 7UY  
309175 Mobile 07973 113861 vicar@thisischurch.com

**Partnership News** is sent out by email every Saturday in a  
colour edition. If you would like to receive a copy please send an  
email entitled 'Partnership News' to vicar@thisischurch.com.  
Please note that any items submitted for inclusion in Partnership  
News will automatically be posted on our website and may  
appear in other local media sources.

**Partnership News is also archived on our church  
website [www.ThisIsChurch.com](http://www.ThisIsChurch.com)**  
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**Partnership Pastoral Support Team Co-Ordinator**  
Mrs Wendy Waters 342613 office@thisischurch.com  
*Please inform us if you know of anyone who is ill, bereaved,  
housebound, requires a visit, home communion or counselling services.  
Please also ask us if you would like a home visit for any reason.*

**Churchyards Administrator**  
Mrs Avril Williams 01234 342613

**Putnoe Heights Church Centre**  
**Open Mon-Thur 9-5.30pm, Friday 9-1pm**  
**Tel/fax & Answering Service** 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com  
**Centre Manager** Geoff Gypps 365630  
**Leadership Team** Mr Barry Southam 219714  
barrysoutham@aol.com  
**Treasurer** Mr John Hitt 404186 treasurerph@thisischurch.com  
**Gift Aid Administrator** Mr Lawrence Wyatt 350188  
**Youth Team Leader** Carolyn Morris youth@thisischurch.com

**St. Mark's Church Centre Charity No 1160981.**  
**Open Monday - Friday 9am - 5.00pm**  
**Tel/fax & Answering Service** 342613 office@thisischurch.com  
**Centre Manager** Miss Wendy Rider 342613  
**Leadership Team** - Mrs Margaret Appleton 354708  
**Treasurer** - Mr Ian Farthing 210892  
treasurer@thisischurch.com  
**Gift Aid Administrator** Mr Jim Williams 360605

# Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

## Monday

**Hazeldene Heights Pre-school.** Sessional and Full Day care available—open Mon.—Fri. Full Day Care 8.30am to 5pm Sessional times 9am—12noon and 12.45pm -  
**3.45pm** For more info please contact Laura Leggett 01234 326685 or www.hazeldeneheights.com  
**8.00am-5.30pm Pre-school** Mon-Fri St Mark's  
**8.00am-5.30pm Top Marks** Mon-Fri St Mark's Manager Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634  
(See website for more details)  
**9.00am-12noon St Mark's Pre-School Nursery** Manager Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634  
**9.30-10.30am - Body Control Pilates** –Putnoe Heights Stephanie Smith 357787 or 07973174430  
**10.00am Bakers Barn Art Group.** St Mark's Mrs M. Berry 211955  
**10.00am-12 U3A Play reading** Putnoe Heights Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557  
**9.45am - 10.45am & 11.00am-12noon Pilates** St. Mark's Liz Mason 07816522200  
**12.00 noon Storybox** Putnoe Heights We welcome the under 5's and their carers to join them between 12noon and 1pm for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based story and singing. Contact Carolyn Morris youth@thisischurch.com 365630  
**1.30pm Chat & Make.** Term time for babies and toddlers 0-5. Crafts, toys, songs, story and refreshments £1. More details contact St Mark's Church Office on 01234 342613 or Janine 01234 297481  
**2.00pm U3A Music Appreciation** Putnoe Heights Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557  
**2.00pm U3A Italian** Putnoe Heights– fortnightly contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557  
**4.15pm Kumon Maths** Putnoe Heights. Mrs Raksha Mistry 01908 392698  
**5.30 - 8.30 NHS Eat Smart Think Active** at Putnoe Heights. For more details contact Zoe Wilcox 07767311424  
**6.00pm Brownies** St Mark's. Mrs C Mathew 826190  
**6.15 pm Brownies** Putnoe. Sharon Tanner 07928483418 email firstputnoebrownies@hotmail.co.uk  
**6.15 Pilates** at Putnoe Heights Jane Butcher 300859  
**6.15pm-8.15pm Fit for Life Yoga** - Putnoe Heights Contact Jane Butcher 07891879571  
**6.30pm-8pm Cubs** at Putnoe Ages 8 –10.5 Email:phxg.enquiries@gmail.com Tel Tom 07974566509  
**6.30pm Fit For All** Putnoe Heights – Laura Amor 341152 / 07976259081  
**7.30pm Sugarcraft Guild** St Mark's (1st week in month) Mary Daly 217127  
**7.00pm Cancer Care Society.** St Mark's. (1st week in month) Mr J Dewhurst 01908 377020.  
**7.00-8.00pm Laughter Club** at St. Mark's 2nd week each month) Cheryl Green 07729187399  
**7.15pm Guides.** St Mark's. Mrs Gill Lake 218091  
**7.30pm Whist Drive.** St Mark's ( Weeks 3 & 5 in the month).. Next meeting—30 November Judith Stanton. 823313  
**7.30pm No Fear Bridge Club** St. Mark's Mrs. Susan Ford 300218.  
**7.30pm House group** 30 The Ridgeway. The home of Eddy & Margaret Peck 267567  
**7.45-9.15 Get Fit Keep Fit** at Putnoe Heights Diane Field 01234 404976

## Tuesday

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

**9.30am -12.30 & 4-9pm Slimming World** St. Mark's. 9.30, 11.30, 3.30, 5.30, 7.30. Lorrie Pearson 340473  
**11-12.15am U3A Keep Fit Putnoe Heights** Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557  
**1.15pm U3A Cinema Group.** St Mark's Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557  
**1.30pm U3A Choir.** St Mark's Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557  
**2.00pm U3A Book Group 1** St Mark's (3rd Week in month) Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557  
**2.00pm U3A Book Group 2** St Mark's (2nd Week in month) Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557  
**2.00pm Library Walk W.I.** Putnoe Heights, meets monthly. Morag Tomkins 356895  
**2.00pm U3A Photography Group 3** St. Mark's (1st Week in month) Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557  
**2.30pm Mother Teresa Support Group.** St Mark's (Alternate Tuesdays) Wool and knitting needles provided. Mrs Maureen Watling 262225  
**2.00-3.30pm Tuesday Afternoon Housegroup.** St Mark's. A social and Bible Study group. Meets alternate Tuesdays. Mrs Jean Bank 355698  
**3.30-6.30pm Stars School of Dance** at Putnoe Heights. Esther Richardson 295862 or 07917582468  
**6-7pm Supple Strength Yoga** St Mark's Amanda Alcock 07769747393  
**7.15-8.15pm Pilates** St Mark's Church Jane Butcher 07891879571  
**7.00pm - 8.30pm Daisy Birthing** Putnoe Heights Susie 07980447390  
**7.30pm Ladies Tuesday Club** at Putnoe Heights (Meets monthly Next meeting 8 December - Christmas Event Details Diane Bayliss 268101  
**8.00pm Hearts in Beds Committee** St Mark's ( week 4 in month) Mrs N Aspey 309816

## Wednesday

**9.30am Body Control Pilates.** Putnoe Heights. Stephanie Smith 357787 or 07973174430.  
**10.00-2pm Open House** at St Mark's for those with learning disabilities., their friends, family , carers and supporters 342613.  
**10.00am U3A Gardening Group 3** St Marks. Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557  
**10.00am Holy Communion.** St. Mark's Chapel. A half hour service followed by coffee. All welcome.  
**10am U3A Card Making,** St Marks Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557  
**11.15am U3A Keep Fit** at Putnoe Heights  
**12.30pm Luncheon Club.** Putnoe fortnightly. Next meeting 2 December Contact Putnoe Office 365630  
**1.15pm Social Bridge Club** St. Mark's. Mr Barnes 261811  
**2-4pm Ukulele Group** at Putnoe Heights. Beginners welcome. Contact Alan 340448  
**2.00-4.00pm U3A Craft** at St Marks. 1st week of the month. Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557  
**2.00pm U3A Gilbert and Sullivan** Putnoe Heights Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557  
**2.00pm - Fifty plus Keep Fit.** Putnoe Heights Mrs Webster 856966  
**3.45.- 5.30pm Messy Church.** St Mark's (3rd Week in month). for children of lower school age and their carers. Bible-based story, crafts, singing and a meal. Next meeting 9 December Wendy Waters 401834 Jean Bank 355698  
**4.15pm Kumon Maths.** Putnoe Heights Mrs Raksha Mistry 01908 392698  
**5.00–6.00pm Rainbows** at Putnoe Heights Mrs Gill

Lake 218091

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

**6.15pm Yoga and Relaxation** Putnoe Heights Racheall Monton 01234 297138 or 07910835994

**6.00-7.00pm ATSK Karate** at Putnoe Height Kevin Stark Tel.01234 353865

**7.00pm-9.00pm Scouts** at Putnoe ages 10.5-14;  
Email:phxg.enquiries@gmail.com Tel Tom 07974566509

**7.00pm Bunyan Bridge.** St. Mark's Colin Jackson 363398 or Brian Sallows 407725.

**7.00pm Archaeological & Local History Society** Putnoe Heights monthly. Sylvia Woods 365095

**7.15pm Putnoe Guild** Putnoe 3rd Wednesday in every month except August Mrs Jo Street 344600

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

**8.00pm Tudor Reeds Folk Dance Club** at St Mark's (1st,3rd & 5th Wednesday in month). Next meeting will be 2 December Everyone welcome. All dances called, only £1 including refreshments. Rosemary 405594 or Graham 406359 for more details.

**8.00pm Bedford Wine and Social Club** St Mark's ( Week 1 in the month) Jill Cooper 357960

### 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.

**10.30pm Spanish Holiday Survival** at Putnoe Heights. Elena 01234 266968

**9.45am Chat and Play** St.Mark's. A term time group for Mums & toddlers.0-5 Contact St Mark's Church Office 01234 342613 or Janine 01234 297481

**12pm Storybox** . St Mark's welcome the under 5's and their carers to join them between 12 noon and 1pm for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based story and singing. Lots of fun. Contact Jaana Swaby 342613

**1.00-2.30pm Wriggles & Jiggles** Putnoe Heights. Drop in.

**1pm-2.30pm Drop in** (small hall) Next Steps 9-24months Putnoe Children's Centre.Please call Trudy Hamilton (centre assistant) for more information 340552. 2pm -

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

**2pm U3A Current Affairs** - Putnoe Heights Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557

**2-4pm U3A Indoor Games.** St.Mark's Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557

**2.30 - 4.30pm Bedford Art Society** St Mark's

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

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

**6-7pm Supple Strength Yoga** St Mark's Amanda Alcock 07769747393

**6.15pm Brownies.** Putnoe Heights Lou Brenna. 07919402797.

**7.00pm Club 2000** Putnoe Audrey Halford 407284

**7.00pm U3A Folk & Poetry** St Marks (2nd and 4th week in month)Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557

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

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

**7.30pm Magpies Women's Group** St Mark's (2nd & 4th week in month ) Rosemary McNeilage 405594

**7.30pm Brickhill Ladies Group** St Mark's (1st and 3rd week in month) Linda Stephen 409493

**8.00pm Bedford Folk Dancers** (formerly Barn dancers) Meet weekly at Putnoe Heights Different guest callers

each week.Except August. All welcome, cost £2. Including refreshments. More details Ron 825574 or Shirley 01767 651767

**8.00pm Bedford Writers Circle.** St Mark's (1st week in month). John Broadhouse 01525 404014

### Friday

**9.30am -3.30pm Machine Knitting** group at Putnoe Heights, 2nd week per month.. Contact Marion Sutton 217647

**10am -12.00 U3A Photography** St Marks.(4th week in month) Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557

**10am - 12 & 1.15 - 3.15pm U3A Beginners French** St. Marks Contact Hilary Holt 01234 342557

**2.00-4.00 pm U3A Whist** St Marks. (2nd week in month) Contact Hilary holt 01234 342557

**2pm U3A Gardening—Putnoe Heights** Contact Hilary Holt 01234342557

**4.50pm-7.00pm Stars School of Dance** at Putnoe. Esther Richardson 295862 or 07917582468

**6.30pm-8.00pm Beavers** at Putnoe Ages 6-8 Email: phxg.enquiries@gmail.com Tel Tom 07974566509

**7.00pm-9.00pm Meditation** St Mark's.Cheryl Green 07729187399

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

### Saturday

**9.00am Faith Temple Ministries** St Mark's (1st week in month) Dawn Kelly 07863762593

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

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

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

### Sunday

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

**10 - 5.30pm Bedford Stamp Fayre at St. Mark's.** 1st Sunday Oct/Dec. Contact P Harris 01623 621143

**11.00 - 12.00 Church and Junior** at Putnoe Heights for the under 9's . A crèche is also available.

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



## Diary Dates



**St Mark's Church Council** - TBA

**St Mark's Leadership Team** -

**Annual Congregational Meetings** - 24 April

**Putnoe Heights Leadership Team** – 19 January

**Putnoe Heights Management Meeting** – 13 January

**Putnoe Church Council** - 26 January

**Pastoral Group Meeting—**

**Churchyard Committee** - TBA

**Circuit meeting –**

**Deanery meeting -**

**Woodland Burial Trustees** – Sunday 29 Nov

**Putnoe Heights Children & Youth Meeting -**

**Messy Church** Wednesday 9 December 3.45pm

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

# First Sunday in Advent

## Sentence of Scripture Romans Chapter 13:11

Now is the time to wake out of sleep: for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

## Collect Prayer for the Day

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Common Worship & Methodist Worship



## First Bible Reading - Jeremiah 33 v14-16

'The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will fulfil the gracious promise I made to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. "In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.'

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

## Second Bible Reading - 1 Thessalonians 3 v 9 - 13

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. (This is the word of the Lord -- **Thanks be to God**)

## Gospel Reading - Luke 21 v 25 – 36

*Please stand and when the Gospel is announced we say - **Glory to Christ our Saviour***

There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. "I tell you the truth; this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." (This is the Gospel of Christ - **Praise to Christ our Lord**)

## Post Communion Prayer

O Lord our God, make us watchful and keep us faithful as we await the coming of your Son our Lord; that, when he shall appear, he may not find us sleeping in sin but active in his service and joyful in his praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

## Hymns for Sunday

*(Please distribute Holy Communion with PCH booklet and hymn sheets where required)*

1. Come thou long expected Jesus.
2. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.
3. The trumpets sound, the angels sing.
4. Lo, he comes with clouds descending.

## Commentary

Advent, from the Latin *Adventus* (coming) is a season that begins on the 4th Sunday before Christmas day and marks the beginning of the church liturgical year. The colour for Advent is purple, which happens to be my favourite colour! There is a richness to the colour purple, which was traditionally a colour associated with royalty, probably due to the expense of the dye required to create it. Liturgically purple signifies that something serious is taking place, Lent and Advent are both times of preparation, of looking forward to a momentous event, yet there is also a sense of solemnity to it and it is also the colour of mourning, often associated with funerals.

There are numerous traditions associated with this season, for example; Advent Crowns, rings and bridges. In our churches we follow the practice of lighting a candle each week, marking four themes of Advent, which are simply Love, Hope, Peace and Joy. Those of you around my age, or who have children who are, will probably remember the famous Blue Peter advent ring, and may actually have tried to make one out of coat hangers and tinsel! Putnoe, along with many other churches, has a travelling nativity that visits household members and church groups, attempting to help people feel 'part of something'. Then there are Advent calendars, often with a 'treat' each day, and Advent candles, with sections to burn each day, which risk turning Advent into a simple 'countdown to Christmas', rather than a season in its own right.

While Advent is indeed about preparing for Christmas; when we meet the infant Christ once more, it is also a time to recall that Christ promised to come again, while remembering that God is already with us, always, and to the end of the age.

There is, undoubtedly, a special quality about waiting for something to happen (a reunion, a needed holiday, new opportunities, a new child etc.) yet it is important that we do not let this focus on a future event wipe out the value of the present. As God's people we are called to look forward to the Kingdom while recognising the value of today, to celebrate what is good, while looking again prayerfully at that which troubles us.

In recent years some people have rejected a Church that can appear more concerned with the future than the present. I find this very sad, because this is the opposite of what I believe Jesus requires of us. If we are indeed called to be 'Children of God', or 'Co-creators with Christ', we must experience God in the present, in every person and situation we meet. Too often, even His Church, walks by without realising we just missed the people God is working in and through.

Yes, Advent is a time of watching and waiting, but this does not mean we are to stand around 'impotently' waiting for Jesus to arrive and sort it all out.

### Signs of the Kingdom

Signs are everywhere if we know how to read them, road signs are intended to both alert us to potential dangers and to remind us of things we know, like the speed limit, and encourage us to check our behaviour. Even within nature we are accustomed to signs, some more reliable than others, some examples;

- Cows sitting down = expect rain,
- 'Red sky at night' = expect a good night/ 'red sky in the morning' = expect rough weather,
- The first Cuckoo or the first snowdrops are seen to herald the coming of spring,
- Lots of berries = expect a hard winter.
- Hurting joints/wounds = expect cold/wet weather

At times like this, with all the horrifying acts of terror, wars and natural disasters we see, it can be uncomfortable reading some of the apocalyptic prophecies. Yet, in the Gospel reading today, Jesus warns us that we should "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap."

Sound familiar? There has been much talk this week about the dangers of 'over sharing', especially in regards to children becoming unnecessarily concerned about the dangers of terrorism. I have long been aware that there is a tendency for those who cannot get out of their house to watch a lot of TV, especially the BBC it would appear for an older generation, who still feel that this is public service programming. I first became aware that some people are watching BBC 24 news for hour after hour in the daytime – no wonder they often become scared of going out!

More recently I have become aware of the detrimental effect of some daytime viewing on people with dementia, how programmes about 'rogue traders', 'cowboy builders' and burglary can easily become confused with life, and I have seen people convinced it is them that have been defrauded. We need to be aware of the risks, but we risk focussing on the potential dangers and actually failing to live. There is a common conception that the world is much more dangerous that it once was, yet I heard a man on the radio who had been injured when the IRA bombed Harrods in 1984 compel people to carry on with their lives. After all, I had a wonderfully free childhood, despite growing up in Sheffield while police were searching for Peter Sutcliffe (The Yorkshire Ripper).

Our society is at risk of focussing only on the negatives, so perhaps this is the very situation that Jesus' warning about not letting our hearts be weighed down by anxieties can speak into today? If I could do one thing to change how many people now see this time of year it would be to remove the panic and stress! I would dearly love to refocus some priorities away from 'the perfect Christmas Meal' or 'The perfect Christmas gift' back to those four simple words that are represented by our advent candles. For if everyone could truly focus on Love, Hope, Joy and Peace, would anything else actually matter?

There is a sense in which the act of preparation and looking ahead is a privilege reserved only for those who can afford to do so. A persons' priorities depend on their needs, if you are thirsty that is your primary concern, once you have water the next need is food, then shelter and community etc. Only when all of these basic needs are met can a person start to plan ahead, beyond the next meal.

What are we to do with this gift of preparation then? Given the opportunity to plan perhaps it is time to review our own priorities, and why it is we believe them to be so important. We can ask ourselves if we are actually ready for the coming of Jesus, by reflecting on the question If He were to appear, here, this year and walk the streets of our community, would we be happy with what he would see?

Perhaps if you do have an advent calendar this year maybe each day, as you open a new door, you can think of it as an opportunity to draw closer to God, to remove any personal barriers, let down your defences and dare to Love, and be loved. *Deacon Jane Mills*

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

Today, O God, let us know your power to make us strong, your counsel to make us wise, your grace to make us holy and your glory to bring us into your presence. Amen.

*Martin Luther (1483-1546)*

### **From The Methodist Secretary of Conference**

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

As you will be aware all Methodist Ministers are under the discipline of the Conference. It is the conference that agrees the stations, that is the place where a minister will serve. The Conference does this on an annual basis and as such although a person might be invited to serve for a particular period of time that is subject to the annual act of stationing by the Conference. From time to time, and in order to serve the needs of the wider church, the Conference through its officers asks or directs that a minister take up a new appointment earlier than they might have expected. I have made such a request of the Revd An ne Brown. After much prayer and reflection I was certain that An ne has the necessary gifts and skills required to undertake the role of Chair of the Leeds District, and to do so for one year from 151 September 2016. Anne has agreed to this request and the Leeds District Policy Committee has agreed to nominate Anne to the role. The Leeds District finds itself needing a new chair at relatively short notice and at a time when consideration is being given to the formation of the districts in Yorkshire. The current Chair, the Revd Or Liz Smith will be retiring at the end of December and some provisional arrangements will be in place for the remainder of the connexional year. Anne, as you will realise, is very well placed to serve as a Chair of District during a time of change and transition. Her skills and experiences will be of great value to the wider church and yet I know how much she will be missed in the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire District. I will be meeting with the key officers of the District to discuss the arrangements for the nomination of a successor to Anne. Please keep An ne and An drew in your prayers. A costly request has been made of them and they have responded with much grace. Please be assured that the District is in my prayers as we together we express what it means to be a connexion in which each of us plays a part. Yours sincerely, Rev Gareth Powell The Secretary of the Conference

**North Bedfordshire Circuit Advent Service** will be held on Sunday 6 December at 4pm at Kempston East Methodist Church. Refreshments will be available after the service and everyone is welcome.

**Highfield Residential Care Home** St. Mark's will conduct a Christmas Service at Highfield on Sunday 13 December at 2.30pm. All are welcome. Vera Pearson

**Can you hear the reindeer?** Santa's on his way! The Magic of Christmas begins on Saturday, 28 and Sunday, 29 November from 11am – 4pm, when Santa arrives with his reindeer and elves at St John's Moggerhanger. For full times and ticket details visit, [www.sueryder.org/SJxmasfayre](http://www.sueryder.org/SJxmasfayre) or call 01767 642412. Santa Claus will be visiting Sue Ryder St John's Hospice in Moggerhanger for the first time this year and it is going to be a truly magical event. The big man is coming straight from the North Pole to take up residence, and help the boys and girls go through their Christmas lists. The Grotto offers an experience like no other including a 20 minute crafting experience, pictures and time to ask the big man any burning question.

**St Mark's Church Office Christmas Closure** The office will be closed from 1pm Wednesday 23 December and will reopen 9am Monday 4 January.

**St Mark's Messy Church style Christingle Service** Sunday 6 December. Service 9.30 to 10.15. Songs, Craft, Drinks and cake

**St Mark's Weekly Offering Envelopes.** Sets of Weekly Offering Envelopes are available after the service this morning. If you do not currently use the envelope scheme or would like to find out more about regular giving to the Church please contact Jim Williams tel. 01234 360605.

**Christmas Carols in Harpur Square 4pm Sunday 6 December**. Please contact Simon Mushonga [Simon.mushonga@threeriversbedford.uk](mailto:Simon.mushonga@threeriversbedford.uk) Hope Coordinator Three Rivers Church Bedford Tel: 01234 217 519

**Putnoe Provender Sunday 6 December** Sales of the ever popular Christmas puddings, cakes, mince pies, jam, marmalade and much more in the Welcome Area after Morning Service. Proceeds in aid of Partnership Autumn Project. All contributions gratefully received. John and Sally Gunning (305925)

**Christmas Voices** Friday December 11 at Putnoe Heights. 7.30 pm Come and enjoy once more a selection of seasonal poetry and prose and a little music around the Christmas tree as some of our regular Putnoe readers help us capture the Christmas spirit. Mulled wine & mince pies during the interval. Admission free. Donations welcome for the Karibuni Appeal

**Community Coffee Mornings** at Putnoe Heights Church with the final one this year at 10am on Wednesday December 9.

**Carols by Candlelight** Revd. Cass Howes and the Community & Faith Centre, on behalf of the University of Bedfordshire invite you to Carols by Candlelight Tuesday 8 December at St. Paul's Church, Bedford, starting at 18:30hrs. The theme is 'Leaving home - refugee Jesus', featuring carols and readings, with the Chamber Choir from Bedford Choral Society, University of Bedfordshire Theatre Society. University of Bedfordshire Dance Society, Marc James - singer, songwriter with Gospel singers from Three Rivers Church Bedford, Ben Haynes - English studies student, To get your ticket please visit <https://uobcarolsbedford.eventbrite.co.uk>

**Scouts** are looking for a Treasurer and Secretary. If interested please contact Group Scout Leader Michelle Davis at [michelle.davis@phxg.uk](mailto:michelle.davis@phxg.uk).

**Footprints Walking Group** - Today. Our final walk in 2015 will be the "Tea and Cake" walk. Meet at Bedford Park, Foster Hill Rd Car Park at 2.00pm on 29 November for one hour walk followed by tea at The Pavilion Cafe. The invitation to join us at 3.00pm for tea is extended to all non walking friends of Footprints.

**Putnoe flower arrangers** invite anyone interested to join them, please contact Ann Hitt 404186 or Sue Allan 407264. Help will be given if required. Thank you Ann and Sue.

**Mission Update** A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed so generously to our Mission Project this year. Already over £2500 has been donated between our two churches. This significant sum will make a real difference to the many children and families who Karibuni are able to support and otherwise would be ensnared in poverty and lacking the opportunity to gain an education. Through this they are then able to develop employment prospects and have hope for the future. If you have not yet been able to make a contribution but would like to do so there is still time. Please pick up a letter with details after church or pick one up from the church offices during the week. Thank you once again for your generosity and for your prayers.

**Thank you to everybody** who helped with the Christmas Fayre last week have now raised over £2,750 which will be allocated towards painting the outside of the church. Very special thanks to Avril

**Karibuni Appeal** Thank you to everybody who has made gifts for our Autumn Appeal for Karibuni. We have so far raised over £3,500 and the appeal will be draw to a close next week at our Christingle / Gift Services

## First Candle - The Candle of Hope (Purple Candle) The Patriarchs, Abraham, the Old Testament Ancestors of Jesus

May your hearts be filled with hope as you hear the promises God made to bless all the peoples on earth through Abraham, the father of our faith.

**All: Thanks be to God**

Today is the First Sunday of Advent, we will light a candle to remember the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the ancestors of our faith.

### Genesis Chapter 12

*The LORD had said to Abraham, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, God of our ancestors: to you be praise and glory for ever. You called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfilment. May we be obedient to your call and be ready and watchful to receive your Christ, a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for you are our light and our salvation. Blessed be God for ever.

*(A person lights the first candle here)*

Let us pray:

**Lord Jesus, light of the world,  
born in David's city of Bethlehem,  
born like him to be a king:  
be born in our hearts at Christmas,  
be King of our lives today.**

## 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

**Harry Russell**



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

**Free Christmas Party** "Senior Citizens are invited to an afternoon of nostalgic and seasonal song performed by a professional entertainer. At - Brickhill Community Centre, Avon Drive, Brickhill on - Wednesday 9 December  
Time - 2.00pm - 4.00pm Free admission and refreshments To reserve your place please contact Sue Stewart at the Community Centre on 01234 312332"

**St Albans Woodland Burial Trust Trustees** meeting this Sunday 29 November at 12:30 pm at St Marks.

## Christmas Online Shopping

**Please shop at ThisisChurch.com  
Use Amazon and Easyfundraising**

**"SHOP ONLINE?"**  
Raise funds for free with **easyfundraising** org.uk **SIGN UP NOW**

**amazon.com**

On our website homepage you will see these banners. Please shop by using these links on our website and make a point of always going to Amazon through the link on [www.ThisisChurch.com](http://www.ThisisChurch.com). If you look at an item through Amazon direct they put a cookie on your machine and we don't get any commission! Please make it a habit to always go through the church website. This costs you nothing and we get a bit of commission.

**www.easyfundraising.com.** This works exactly the same when you shop with over 2,500 shops including John Lewis, M&S and a whole host of other main shops. This has an added benefit that you will also get some special offers - you can't lose ! Please click the link on the church website go online and sign up now.

Both of these cost you nothing and we can receive commission so please sign up please always go shopping on Amazon through the link on [www.ThisisChurch.com](http://www.ThisisChurch.com). This costs you nothing and we get a bit of commission.

## Forthcoming Funerals



**The funeral of Mary Nicholls** will take place at Bedford Crematorium at 12:15pm on Wednesday 2 December 2015

**The funeral of Cyril Lewis Spinks** will take place at Bedford Crematorium on Tuesday 8 December at 2.30pm