



Partnership News

Putnoe Heights & St Mark's Church
2 March 2014
Transfiguration Sunday



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

Today – Transfiguration Sunday

9.30 St Marks - Morning Family Worship

Preacher - Revd. Canon Charles Royden
Leadership – Mrs. Wendy Waters
Intercessions – Ministers
Organist - Miss Marion Prior

11.00 am Putnoe — Morning Family Worship

Preacher - Revd. Canon Charles Royden
Leadership Team - Mr Barry Southam
Intercessions — Young People
Organist - Miss Marion Prior

9 March 2014 - 1st Sunday in Lent

9.30 St Marks – Morning Worship

Preacher - Mr. Richard Ledger
Leadership – Mrs. Jean Bank
Intercessions – Mrs. Margaret Appleton
Organist - Mr. Clive Simmonds

11.00 am Putnoe – Morning Worship

Preacher– Mr. Richard Ledger
Leadership Team - Mrs. Jean Kirk
Intercessions — Mrs. Sam Ware
Organist - Mr. Clive Simmonds

Readings 1. Genesis 2:15-17 2. Romans 5:12-19
3. Matthew 4: 1-11

Midweek 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 St. Mark's have been given by Jean Bank in memory of her dear mother and to give thanks to God for her loving family.

The flowers at Putnoe Heights have been given by Diane Johnson in loving memory of her mother Jean Brown.

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

Lord Jesus,
who revealed yourself to the disciples
on the mountain of Transfiguration,
reveal to me your glory
that I may know your risen presence
and by your mighty power
reflect the almighty love of God
that others may know
his power to change and save

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

Deacon Jane Mills
c/o Putnoe Heights Church Centre
Tel. 348091 Mobile 07807 146535
jane@thisischurch.com

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

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

Partnership News is also archived on our church website www.ThisIsChurch.com

Partnership Pastoral Support Team Co-Ordinators
Mrs Wendy Waters 342613 office@thisischurch.com
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 Jenny Snelson 344417
Treasurer Mr John Hitt 404186 treasurerph@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator Mr Lawrence Wyatt 350188
Youth Team Leader Carolyn Morris youth@thisischurch.com

St. Mark's Church Centre
Open Monday - Friday 9am - 5.00pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 342613 office@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Miss Wendy Rider 342613
Leadership Team - Mr Michael Ovenden 826738
Treasurer - Mr Ian Farthing 210892
treasurer@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator 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

8.30-12.30pm St Mark's Pre-School Nursery

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634

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

9.00-3.45pm 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 M. Berry 211955

10.30am U3A Play reading Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

1.30pm Chat & Make. For babies and toddlers 0-5. Crafts, toys, songs, story and refreshments £1. More details email-chatandplay@hotmail.co.uk

2.00pm U3A Calligraphy at St Mark's (2nd week in the month) Contact Janet King 313946.

12.00 noon Story box 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

2pm U3A Music Appreciation Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

2.00pm U3A Italian Putnoe Heights— fortnightly

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

5.30 - 8.30 NHS Eat Smart Think Active at Putnoe Heights. For more details contact Emily Taverner 01234 792013

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

6.15 pm Brownies Putnoe. Sharon Tanner 01767699399 or 07720713738.

6.15 Pilates at Putnoe Heights Jane Butcher 300859

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

6.30pm Boot Camp Putnoe Heights – Laura Amor 341152 / 07976259081

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

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

7.00-8.00pm Laughter Club 92nd 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— 17 March 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 –1pm Bedford Stop Smoking at Putnoe Heights. For more details please contact Olivia Tornyie 01234 276826

9.30am Jo Jingles. St. Mark's. Music & movement for pre-school children. Charlotte Williams 07968207442

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

9.30am -12.30 & 4-9pm Slimming World St. Mark's. Helen Skinner 07989080389

10am Autism Beds Adult Support Group. St Mark's.

Sally Cripsley 350704

11.15am U3A Keep Fit Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

1.15pm U3A Cinema Group. St Mark's Contact Janet King 313946

1.3pm U3A Choir. St Mark's Contact Janet King 313946

2.00pm U3A Book Group 1 St Mark's (3rd Week in month) Contact Janet King 313946

2.00pm U3A Book Group 2 St Mark's (2nd Week in month) Contact Janet King 313946

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

2pm U3A Photography Group 3 St. Mark's (1st Week in month) Contact Janet King 313946

2.30pm Mother Teresa Support Group. St Mark's (1st & 3rd week in month). Wool and knitting needles provided.

Mrs Maureen Watling 262225

2.15pm Tuesday Afternoon Housegroup. St Mark's (2nd & 4th week in month) Mary Stubbs 406784.

4.00pm-6.15pm Stars School of Dance at Putnoe Heights. Esther Richardson 295862 or 07917582468

7.30-8.30pm Pilates St Mark's Church Jane Butcher 0789187957

7pm - 8.30pm Daisy Birthing Putnoe Heights Susie 07980447390

7.00pm Keep Fit. St. Mark's Jan Gregory 328455

7.30pm Ladies Tuesday Club at Putnoe Heights (Meets fortnightly) 4 March Beetle Drive Details Janet King 313946

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.

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. Contact Janet King 313946

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

10am U3A Card Making, St Marks Contact Janet King 313946

10am U3A Diet and Nutrition- Putnoe Contact Janet King 313946

11.15am U3A Keep Fit at Putnoe Heights

12.30pm –4pm St Mark's Nursery

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634

12.30pm Luncheon Club. Putnoe fortnightly. Next meeting 12 March Putnoe Heights Office 365630

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

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

2pm U3A Gilbert and Sullivan Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

2.15pm - 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 19 March 2014 Wendy Waters 401834 Jean Bank 355698

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

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

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

6-7pm ATSK Karate at Putnoe Height Kevin Stark Tel.

01234 353865

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

7.00pm Putnoe Guild Putnoe 3rd Wednesday in every month except August Mrs Jo Street 344600

7.00pm Line Dancing Putnoe Mike Del-Boyer 348378

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 5 March Everyone welcome. All dances called, only £1 including refreshments. Rosemary 405594 or Graham 406359 for more details.

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

Thursday

8.30am—12.30pm St. Mark's Pre School Nursery Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634

9.30am Thursday Prayer Group. Putnoe Heights. Valerie Capon 356306. Request for prayer can be written in the prayer diary on the information table.

9.30am Spanish for total beginners.at Putnoe Heights. Elena 01234 266968

9.45am Chat and Play St.Mark's. A term time group for Mums & toddlers.0-5 Jo Garner 400071 or 07932616468

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

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

1pm-2.30pm Drop in (small hall) Next Steps 9-24months Putnoe Children's Centre.Please call Trudy Hamilton (centre assistant) for more information 340552. 2pm -Friendly Chicago Bridge at Putnoe Heights £2 per session inc. refreshments. New members welcome. Contact Pat 01234 294220.

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

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

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

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

5.45pm Weightwatchers. St. Mark's. Clare Martin 07805408811.

6.15pm Brownies. Putnoe Heights Lou Watkins .

7.00pm Club 2000 Putnoe Nina Ovenden 825059

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

7.15pm Putnoe Art Group Bob Wardale 406094

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

7.30pm Gentle Birthing St Mark's. Pat Wood 07946 847231

8 -10pm Bedford Folk Dancers (formerly Barn dancers)

Meet weekly at Putnoe Heights Different guest callers each week.Except August. All welcome, cost £2.50 Including refreshments. More details Ron 825574 or Shirley 01767 651767

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

8.00pm Magpies Women's Group St Mark's (2nd & 4th week in month) Mrs Marie Cotchin 402089

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

week in month) Susan Perugi 300219

Friday

8.30am—12.30pm St. Mark's Nursery

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634

8.30am Diabetic Centre St Mark's (1st week in month) Deborah Hennessey 792013

9am -1pm Machine Knitting group at Putnoe Heights, fortnightly . Contact Marion Sutton 217647

10am -12.00 U3A Photography St Marks.(4th week in month) Contact Janet King 313946

10am - 12 & 1.15 - 3.15pm U3A Beginners French St. Marks Contact Janet King 313946

2.00-4.00 pm U3A Whist St Marks. (2nd week in month) Contact Janet King 313946

2pm U3A Gardening - Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

4.50pm-8.15pm Stars School of Dance Esther Richardson 295862 or 07917582468

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

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

Saturday

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

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

Young Embroiderers bi monthly Putnoe Heights Terry Fletcher 357198

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

Sunday

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

10 - 5.30pm Bedford Stamp Fayre. 1st Sunday Feb/ Apr/Jun/Aug /Oct/Dec. Contact P Harris 01623 621143

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

7-9pm Tae Kwon Do St Mark's Adrian Felice www.bedfordtkd.com 07964356355

Messy Church Dates Weds 19th March, 16th April, 21st May, 18th June.



Diary Dates

St Mark's Church Council –

St Mark's Leadership Team - 20 May, 9 Sept

Annual Congregational Meetings—27th April

Putnoe Heights Leadership Team -

Putnoe Heights Management Meeting 30th April

Putnoe Church Council - 10 July

Pastoral Group Meeting - 1 April 4pm

Churchyard Committee -

Commemoration Service - 2nd November

Circuit meeting – 19th June

Woodland Burial Trustees–

Putnoe Heights Children & Youth Meeting – Monday

9 June @ 1.10pm

Please advise St Mark's Church Office

of the dates of your meetings.

Transfiguration Sunday

Sentence of Scripture Psalm 8:3-9

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what are we, that you are mindful of us, humankind that that you care for us? You have made us a little than the heavenly beings, and crowned us with glory and honour. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Collect Prayer for the Day Before we read we pray

Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Common Worship*

First Bible Reading - Exodus 24: 12-18

The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction." Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. He said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them." When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the Lord called to Moses from within the cloud. To the Israelites the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. (This is the word of the Lord -- **Thanks be to God**)

Second Bible Reading - 2 Peter 1:16-21

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (This is the word of the Lord -- **Thanks be to God**)

Gospel Reading - Matthew 17: 1-9

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead. (This is the word of the Lord -- **Thanks be to God**)



Transfiguration icon by Theophanes the Greek, 15th century

Post Communion Prayer

Holy God, we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ: may we who are partakers at his table reflect his life in word and deed, that all the world may know his power to change and save. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hymns (Please distribute Morning Worship)

1. Praise to the Lord 564 Mission Praise, 2. Your mercy flows, 3. I watch the sunrise, 4. Great is thy faithfulness 200 Mission Praise, 5. Lord of all hopefulness 552 H&P Slane

Commentary

We are coming to the end of Epiphany, soon we will be in Lent. But just at the end of this season we have the passage today from the Gospel of Matthew where the episode occurs in Jesus ministry which we call the 'Transfiguration'. The word Epiphany could be expressed as 'manifestation', 'disclosure', 'unveiling', or 'appearance.' Very appropriately therefore the Transfiguration has been described as the greatest Epiphany ever! This is an occasion when the disciples, Peter, James and John see a vision in which they hear a heavenly voice and see appearances of Moses and Elijah. The Transfiguration is important because it reminds us that Christianity is not about a set of beliefs, or ideas, it is about a person - Jesus. Jesus was not an ordinary man, he was special and the Transfiguration shows us this. Christians believe that through Jesus we see God. Jesus is so special that his followers said 'You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God' Matt 16:13 Jesus has been described as 'God with skin on' to put it in the traditional theological phrase, 'God Incarnate' or 'God in flesh'.

Jesus lived in First Century in Palestine, he subsequently died by execution after he had seriously upset the Jewish leaders who handed him over to the hand of Pontius Pilate. There is no reason to doubt that he lived, his life was so significant that not only is it recorded by the Roman historian Tacitus at the time, our calendar is dated from his birth. For an unbiased person it is not however about whether Jesus lived and died, it is more important to ask questions such as who Jesus was, what he said and did, and why he died. The fact that a first century Jew called Jesus died on a cross is a matter of historical record and it is hard to argue against. It is inconceivable that followers of Jesus would invent a story about their leader which involved crucifixion, a punishment reserved for the worst criminals, with all of its connotations of shame. These facts however are not the cause of serious dispute, the question is rather how we interpret those basic facts. Jesus died, but who was he and why did he die?

They followers of Jesus, his disciples, spoke about Jesus and put into writing in the Gospels their recollections of what he had said and done. They used words and ideas of their time, ideas current in Judaism and paganism to express their view of who Jesus was. This makes some of what we read difficult to understand, such as when Jesus is referred to using a term current in Greek philosophy at the time 'The Logos.' or 'Word'. In calling Jesus 'logos' it meant that Jesus was God's way of speaking to us. God communicated with us in the person of Jesus. It means that if we look at Jesus then we can know what God is saying to us. When the Gospel writer John tells us that Jesus is the Logos, he means that Jesus shows us what God is thinking. This so important, when we look at Jesus we look deep into the being of God himself. We see his compassion on the poor, we see his love for all and his willingness to be born in human form and literally give his life for us.

When speaking to Jews it was quite easy for the Gospel writers because the followers of Jesus saw him as the fulfilment of the Jewish scriptures. Jesus was the promised 'Messiah.' So the writer of the Gospel of Matthew spends a great deal of time showing how Jesus could be seen to fulfil Old Testament promises. Terms which were very current in the Greek world were also applied to Jesus such as 'Saviour.' This was a title which was commonly used for the Roman emperor, Augustus Caesar was 'The Saviour of the World.' It is little wonder that the Christians caused such offence to Rome, when they ascribed to their poor Jewish executed criminal the same title reserved for the divine presence which ruled Rome.



Jesus was clearly an ordinary man, he was flesh like us and had the same human senses and desires. However the stories of Jesus also seek to demonstrate that Jesus was extra ordinary. It is worth thinking how the fish came to be the symbol of faith for the early Christians - the five letters spelling out "fish" in Greek came to represent the slogan "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour"

Iesus / Jesus Christus / Christ Theos / God Uios / Son Soter / Saviour

The earliest Christian writings were not the Gospels, which were written after 60AD, but rather the letters of the New Testament such as Paul's letter to the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians 1:2 we read that the earliest Christians didn't just think of Jesus as a great man, they actually worshipped Jesus as God. *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

We don't understand how Jesus can be human and yet have the fullness of God in him, however one episode from the life of Jesus is helpful in showing these two elements. In the account of Jesus crossing the Sea of Galilee in a boat (Matthew 23-27). Jesus is shown to be exhausted and asleep in the boat but his divinity is shown when he stills the wind and the waves.

When we see Jesus it is the closest we can ever be to knowing what God is like. When we listen to the words of Jesus recorded by those who were prepared to lay down their lives for him, that is as close as we can get to listening to God's teaching. It is not that Christians believe that God does not disclose himself to other people in other religions, rather the fact that in Jesus God takes flesh brings us to the most amazing truth that God has stepped close to us in a unique way - personally not in the words of another, such as prophets Moses and Elijah.

Jesus was a man, but he was not **just** a man, he was God and man. For Christians this is crucial, because Jesus becomes a unique and special bridge between God and humankind. The early Christian writers spoke of Jesus as a 'Mediator' (1 Timothy 2). The Apostle Paul said that God was in Jesus 'reconciling' us to himself.

In Jesus we see God in sort of scaled down version, but that scaled down version is mind blowing, for we are told that God regards us as his friends. The love of God is like the love of a man who will lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

I remember some years ago we had a church outing to see the 'Passion of Christ' a gruelling film indeed. We all came out feeling shell shocked at the very literal depiction of a crucifixion, it was truly horrible, but what that story does is to very graphically show us that God's love for us will go all the way. We might find it hard to put into words what God is like or what he thinks of us, but that is what Jesus does. Jesus gives us a walking talking picture of who God is and what he thinks of you and me, that out of love for us God will endure the cross. Everything in the Gospels tell us that the life of Jesus was building up to the cross. When he is born we are told that Mary and Joseph are to call the baby Jesus - because that name means 'God saves'. Jesus lives a remarkable life, gives amazing and inspiring teaching, but it is perfectly obvious that the climax of Jesus life is death on the cross. Jesus knows that his journey to Jerusalem will involve him paying the ultimate price - for his love, for God's love for humankind. Jesus sacrifices his love for God's friends, for us.

This is such a wonderful story that not just theologians but writers of music, poetry and hymns have written and composed pieces of text and music ever since. God is not a distant judge who criticises and condemns us, but has humbled himself to meet with us on our terms and offers us forgiveness. Jesus told a story about a child who was really rude to his father, who went off and behaved horribly and squandered away an inheritance that his father had worked hard for all of his life. When in poverty the son comes crawling back offering to do lowly work we might expect the father to send him away or put him to hard labour to earn his keep. Instead Jesus spoke of the Father running to greet the foul creature and welcoming him back with open arms and a slap up feast. There is something which makes us question the logic of God's love that can fail to hold a grudge. The message is clear, God is not like us - he is like Jesus. On very good days we may be able to show what God is like in small ways, but it is Jesus in his extraordinary willingness to lay down his life for us who really shows us what God is like. In Jesus God has entered our humanity and made divinity understandable and if we are honest it beggars belief. It looks at times weak and very unlike the concepts of human power and authority which we live by every day. Jesus spoke about the blessings for the poor and the weak ones, he saved his kindest acts for the sick and the despised ones. He attacked those who lived well off lives whilst others suffered and he led by an example of selflessness which has never been seen since.

The outcome of who Jesus was and what Jesus did is that we should feel a sense of thankfulness. We can see that just like the father who welcomed the prodigal son, God forgives our foolish ways. When we look at the world around us we can easily lose faith in humanity and question our belief in God. Our world is clearly broken in many ways, we have damaged human relationships and we create wars and suffering on a global scale. We use world economies and trade to exploit those who are weaker than ourselves and we are resentful in sharing from our great wealth with those who do not even have bread to eat.

Jesus shows God offering us forgiveness and seeking to reconcile the broken world. The overpowering love of God for the world is self evident in the cross, for Jesus died for sinners. Not for those who had improved themselves, or who had really made a good effort, but for sinners. The fact that Jesus died, that God died, for our world is important. It shows the seriousness of the condition in which we find ourselves. The forgiveness which God gives is not cheap it is painful and costly and demands from God a great sacrifice. The followers of Jesus were overwhelmed with him, their lives were turned upside down and they were prepared to go to tortured deaths rather than disown Jesus. Moreover they were more committed and animated in their discipleship after Jesus died than before! Until Jesus died they were somewhat clueless followers, constantly making mistakes and not catching on to his teaching.

Putnoe Heights Bring & Buy Stall.

In the welcome area on Sunday 9 March. Please bring any saleable items to the Church Office or on the day, eg bric-a-brac, gifts and cakes. Then come along to BUY. It is hoped that this will be the first of a series of modest monthly fund-raising events for church funds. We have recently had some expenses which were not in the budget so funds are urgently needed. If you would like to help with future events please speak to a member of the Leadership Team.

Putnoe Book Stall : Our bookstall is now up and running; the books are to be found on a Library Trolley which is being kept in the Quiet Room. This can be wheeled anywhere in the building and if any Groups using Church premises wish to have it in their room, please take advantage of it (we would ask that it be returned to the Quiet Room afterwards). The loan charge per book is 25p, purchase price of any book is £1 and an honesty box is attached to the trolley. We will still have some books in the Small Hall and the same charges apply here. Until this project gets going, perhaps anyone with any books for the stall will be patient and keep them until later. Thank you to everyone who has donated books up to now. Pam Kinselley

Christian Aid News: Christian Aid Oxford are organising a sponsored abseil down Elstow Abbey tower. They are busy looking for volunteers to abseil as well as sponsors. more details to follow shortly. Speaker Sarjon Toma from Iraqi Christian Aid partner REACH will be at Stopsley Baptist Church, St Thomas Road, Luton LU2 7XP on Tuesday 11 March, 7pm. An evening to hear about your impact in Iraq and beyond, as well as discussing faith, hope, conflict, and the role churches can play in building peace this Christian Aid Week. Carolyn

Annual Congregational Meetings

These will take place after Church on Sunday 27 April. Everybody is invited to attend.

Women's World Day of Prayer Services 7 March 'Streams in the Desert' - Praying for Egypt

2pm at the Miracle Church of God. Speaker: Revd. Glayne Worgan 7.30pm at St Mark's Church. Speaker: Revd. Fiona Gibson. Men and women welcome to this moving, interdenominational, service compiled by the women of Egypt. This is the first time it has been held at St Mark's so do come if you can. For more information please speak to Wendy Waters

Organ Recital by William Heywood on 21 March at All Saints Church, Renhold at 7.30pm Tickets £10 each (Refreshments included) Tickets available at the door or in advance from Ann Timms 01234 772605 or Ian Johnstone 01234 871614.

Footprints walk:- There will be a footprints walk

at Felmersham Pits on Sunday 2 March
Meet at Felmersham Pits Nature Reserve Car Park (Free) OS MR SP 988582 at 2.00pm
It is likely to be muddy, wellington boots are recommended! No Stiles, approx 1.5 miles.
Any queries contact Martin Fannon
msfannon@gmail.com (We have a dry standby walk if it is totally impassable on the day! It was OK on 18th Feb and we will check again nearer the time)

Lent Soup Lunch for Christian Aid.

Make a donation to Christian Aid and enjoy a home made soup, bread and cheese lunch at Putnoe Heights Church after morning service on Sunday 16th March. No tickets but please sign the list in Putnoe Welcome Area.

St Mark's Craft Group have their Easter novelties on sale after morning service and from the office during the week. Everything £1. Please support us, all profits to the Church. Thank you.

Putnoe Men's second Fellowship meal will take place at the Cappuchino bar on Tuesday 18 March at 7.30pm. If you would like to join them please ring Barry Southam 219714 or email barysoutham@aol.com for more details.

Fashion Show and Nearly New Sale Putnoe Conservatives will be holding this show at Putnoe Heights Church on Saturday 8 March, at 7.30pm. Many bargains for men, women and children in all sizes. Entrance fee £3. 50. All welcome

Join the Real Easter Egg 2014 Campaign.

Out of 80 million chocolate Easter Eggs sold each year, The Real Easter Egg is the only one with the Easter story in the box. This year there are two versions available at £3.99 and £9.99. See St. Mark's notice board for further details and order at the office
By 24th March.

St. Mark's Church Preschool are now collecting Sainsbury's kids vouchers. Please pass to Helen Harpin or pop them into the box provided.



Lent 2014

This year we are going to do something very different for Lent and we want as many people as possible to join and hopefully also invite friends to come along. On Wednesday 9 April we will be hosting a performance of the Passion Play Inheritance by the Riding Lights Theatre Company at St Mark's. This is a meditative and reflective opportunity to consider the Passion and our response. We will be issuing tickets soon but for now it is important to have the date in your diary

Jesus gave up everything and behaved like a servant whilst they jostled for first place among his followers. When Jesus was arrested they ran away, suddenly terrified by the authority held by the Jewish leaders and the occupying Roman forces. However after Jesus died they changed. They claimed that Jesus had been raised from death as he had promised and they claimed that Jesus had appeared among them and spoken with them.

This is an amazing claim and one which we cannot either prove or disprove. However ever since the followers of Jesus have proclaimed Jesus risen life and have witnessed that by placing faith and trust in Jesus, God's presence can literally be known in our own lives today. This is a claim which has continued for over two thousand years. Christians do not claim that they no longer experience doubts and fears, however even those who have really struggled, often through difficult circumstances, continue to hold this faith. Indeed throughout history Christians have often spoken of their faith in Jesus with most commitment at times of extreme persecution.

The same Jesus, who walked around teaching and challenging our ideas about God, who died on the cross and proclaimed that God loved the world, that same Jesus, Christians worship and follow today. He shows to us what God is like, offers us God's forgiveness and he still changes lives as he did then. It is as we take Jesus to our hearts that God's presence is truly with us, making sense of this strange world and showing us that our seemingly worthless and transient lives really are important to God. It is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus which gives meaning to our own lives and reassures us that all life is created by God and is sacred and precious. At the Transfiguration Jesus made an appearance or 'Epiphany' to his disciples. It is the same Jesus who still reveals, discloses or manifests himself to those who seek him today. *Charles Royden*

Prayers for Sunday and the week ahead

A prayer for the Methodist Church in Britain *Daleep Mukarji, Vice-President of the British Methodists*, Almighty God, in the beginning you made the world and saw that it was good, yet today we see a world broken and in need of healing: people face discrimination and injustice, children live in poverty, hunger and disease, and many are denied their basic human rights. People cry out for justice: they want a better world, where all can be valued and hope for life in all its fullness. Your Son promised a world that is healthy, just, inclusive and sustainable. Give us courage to speak out and work for this new society. Enable us to be agents of your kingdom, in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven." Amen.

Come from the four winds, O Lord, and in your holiness breathe upon us with your Spirit, that we may be gathered into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. *The Didache (c.100)*



**Service in the Chapel at
St Mark's
This Wednesday
at 7.30pm**

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.

**Haydn Woodward
Baby Alice Margaret Woolley**

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

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Forthcoming Funerals

There are no funerals this week