



# Partnership News

Putnoe Heights & St Mark's Church  
30 July 2017  
Trinity 7 Ordinary 17



## 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

### 30 July 2017 - Trinity 7 Ordinary 17

**9.30am St Mark's - Holy Communion with PCH**  
Preacher - The Reverend Canon Charles Royden  
Leadership - Mrs Laura Farthing  
Intercessions - Mr Ian Farthing  
Organist - Miss Marion Prior

**11.00 am Putnoe - Holy Communion with PCH**  
Preacher - The Reverend Canon Charles Royden  
Leadership - Mrs Veta Hudson Rae  
Intercessions - Mrs Julia Bailey  
Organist - *No organist no problem*

### 6 August 2017 - Trinity 8 Ordinary 18

**9.30am St Mark's - Family Worship**  
Preacher - The Reverend Ross Royden  
Leadership - Mr Edward Parry  
Intercessions - Mr Warwick Holden  
Organist - Mr Bill Fudge

**11.00 am Putnoe - All Age Worship**  
Preacher - Mr Geoff Talbot  
Leadership - Mr Martin Fannon  
Intercessions - Young People  
Organist - Miss Marion Prior

**Readings** 1. Isaiah 55:1-5 2. Romans 9: 1-5  
3. Matthew 14: 3-21.  
Mid Week Holy Communion at 10.00am at St Mark's  
Chapel every Wednesday and at Sir William Harpur House  
first Monday of every month

## Thank You

The flowers in St Mark's Church this week have been given by Mrs Rosemary Anderson in memory of her husband John, whose birthday is on 1 August.



The flowers at Putnoe Heights Church have been given by Margery Charie in loving memory of her husband Harry

Also by Lawrence and Betty Wyatt on their Wedding Anniversary.

*We are always pleased 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 Christ,  
wisdom and Word of God,  
dwell in our hearts,  
by your most Holy Spirit,  
that out of the abundance  
of our hearts our mouths  
may speak your praise. Amen.

### The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman

Assistant Rural Dean of Bedford  
107 Dover Crescent, Bedford MK41  
Tel: 266952 nsm@thisischurch.com

### The Reverend Wendy Evans-Wood

c/o Putnoe Heights Church Centre  
Tel: 346317 wendyeanswood@yahoo.co.uk

### The Reverend Canon Charles Royden

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

**Reader: Mrs Wendy Waters**  
**Pastoral Support Team Co-Ordinator**  
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.*

**Partnership News** is sent out by email every Saturday in a colour edition. To receive a copy please email vicar@thisischurch.com. 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)**

### St Mark's Churchyard 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** Mr Geoff Gypps 365630  
**Leadership Team** Mrs Sue Allen 407264  
**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 1164416

**Open Monday - Friday 9am - 5.00pm**  
**Tel/fax & Answering Service** 342613 office@thisischurch.com  
**Centre Manager** Miss Wendy Rider 342613  
**Leadership Team** - Mrs Wendy Waters  
**Treasurer** - Mr Ian Farthing 210892  
treasurer@thisischurch.com  
**Gift Aid Administrator** Mr Jim Williams 360605  
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# Regular Weekly Activities - Putnoe Heights Church

## 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  
**9.30-10.30am - Body Control Pilates** –Stephanie Smith 357787 or 07973174430  
**12.00 noon Storybox** Welcomes under 5's and carers to between 12noon and 1pm. Sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based story and singing. Contact Carolyn Morris youth@thisischurch.com 365630  
**2.00pm U3A Music Appreciation** Chris Fordham 217396  
**2.00pm U3A Italian** – fortnightly Chris Fordham 217396  
**4.15pm Kumon Maths** Mrs Raksha Mistry 01908 392698  
**6.15 pm Brownies** . Sharon Tanner 01767 699399 email firstputnoebrownies@hotmail.co.uk  
**6.15-7.15pm Pilates** Jane Butcher 07891879571  
**7.15pm-8.15pm Fit for Life Yoga** Jane Butcher 07891879571  
**6.30pm-8pm Cubs** Ages 8 –10.5 Michelle Davis 07711916870 email: michelle@putnoescouts.org  
**6.30pm Fit For All** – Laura Amor 341152 / 07976259081  
**7.30pm House group** 30 The Ridgeway. The home of Eddy & Margaret Peck 267567  
**7.45-9.15 Get Fit Keep Fit** Diane Field 01234 404976

## Tuesday

**9.30am Candlewicking** (Needlework). Jenny Snelson 344417  
**11-12.15am U3A Keep Fit** Chris Fordham 217396  
**2.00pm Library Walk W.I.** meets monthly. Jo Fordham (President) 01234 217396 Margaret Bull (President) 01234 267866 Cheryl Gardner (President) 01234 261584  
**2.30pm. Ladies Tuesday Club** (meets monthly) Next Meeting Tuesday 18 July - Priory Marina. Details Diane Bayliss 268101  
**2.30-4.30 U3A Play Reading** Chris Fordham 217396  
**6.30pm– 8.00pm Cubs** 6.30pm—8.00pm Ages 8-10.5 michelle@putnoescouts.org

## Wednesday

**9.30am Body Control Pilates.** Stephanie Smith 357787 or 07973174430.  
**10am-12 Community Coffee Morning** (Fortnightly) Next date 21 June contact Jenny Snelson 365630  
**11.00am U3A Keep Fit.** Chris Fordham 217396  
**12.30pm Luncheon Club.** Fortnightly. Next meeting 12 July, Closed till 6 September Contact Putnoe Office 365630  
**2-4pm U3A Ukulele Group.** Beginners welcome. Contact Chris Fordham 217396  
**2.00pm - Fifty plus Keep Fit.** Mrs Webster 856966  
**4.15pm Kumon Maths.** Mrs Rakha Mistry 01908 392698  
**5.00–6.00pm Rainbows** Mrs Gill Lake 218091  
**6.15-7.15pm ATSK Karate** Kevin Stark 01234 353865  
**7.00pm-9.00pm Scouts** ages 10.5-14; Michelle Davis 07711916870 email:michelle@putnoescouts.org  
**7.00pm Archaeological & Local History Society** monthly. Sylvia Woods 365095  
**7.15pm Putnoe Guild** Putnoe 3rd Wednesday in every month except August Mrs Jo Street 344600

## Thursday

**8.15-2.15pm Sing & Sign.** Julie Warriner 01767 691488  
**9.30am Thursday Prayer Group.** Valerie Capon 356306. Request for prayer can be written in the prayer diary on the information table. Will meet again on August 17.  
**10.00-12pm U3A Painting & Sketching** Chris Fordham 217396  
**1.30pm-3.00p.m Play and Learn**(Dropin) Contact Trudy 341977  
**2pm –4pm U3A Current Affairs** Chris Fordham 217396  
**2.30pm-3.30pm U3A Spanish** (Weekly) Chris Fordham 217396  
**5.15-8.15pm NHS Eat Smart Think Active** contact : Laura Rocket 355122  
**6.00pm-7.30pm Beavers** Ages 6-8 michelle@putnoescouts.org  
**6.15pm Brownies.** Putnoe Heights Lou Brennan. 07919402797.  
**7.00pm Club 2000** Putnoe Monthly second Thursday in the month. Sandra White 313645  
**7.15pm Putnoe Art Group** Bob Wardale 406094  
**8.00pm Bedford Folk Dancers** (formerly Barn dancers) Meet weekly with different guest callers each week.Except August. All welcome, cost £2. Including refreshments. More details Ron 825574 or Shirley 01767 651767

## Friday

**9.30pm Spanish Holiday Survival** Elena 01234 266968  
**9.30am –3.30pm Machine Knitting** group 2nd week per month.. Contact Marion Sutton 217647  
**10am-12 U3A French Conversation** Chris Fordham 217396  
**2pm U3A Gardening** Chris Fordham 217396  
**6.30pm-8.00pm Beavers** Ages 6-8 Michelle Davis 07711916870 email: michelle@putnoescouts.org

## Saturday

**Young Embroiderers** bi monthly Terry Fletcher 357198  
**2.15pm Society of Recorder Players** at Putnoe Heights. G Parry 01462 674792

## Sunday

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

## Diary Dates



**St Mark's Church Council** - 26 September, 22 November & 21 February 2018  
**St Mark's Leadership Team**-18 September, 6 Nov  
**Annual Congregational Meetings** - 15 April 2018  
**Putnoe Leadership Team** – 9 Oct.  
**Putnoe Management Meeting** – 11 Oct  
**Putnoe Church Council** - 17 October  
**Pastoral Group Meeting** – 12 September 4pm  
**Churchyard Committee** -  
**Circuit Meeting** —  
**Deanery meeting** -  
**Woodland Burial Trustees** –  
**Putnoe Heights Children & Youth Meeting** -  
**St Marks Messy Church** - 20 September

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

# Regular Weekly Activities - St Mark's Church

## Monday

**7.30am-6.00pm Pre-school** Mon-Fri St Mark's  
**7.30am-6.00pm 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  
**10.00am Bakers Barn Art Group.** Mrs M. Berry 211955  
**10.00am U3A Playreading** Chris Fordham 217396  
**9.45am - 10.45am & 11.00am-12noon Pilates** Liz Mason  
07816522200  
**6.00pm Brownies** Mrs C Mathew 826190  
**7.30pm Sugarcraft Guild** St Mark's (1st week in month)  
Mary Daly 217127  
**7.00pm Cancer Care Society.** (1st week in month)  
Mr J Dewhurst 01908 377020.  
**7.00-8.00pm Laughter Club** on 2nd week each month  
Cheryl Green 07729187399  
**7-9pm Rangers.** Nikki Lake 07584028653  
**7.15pm Guides.** Mrs Gill Lake 218091  
**7.30pm Whist Drive.** Weeks 3 & 5 in the month. Next  
meeting- 21 August Judith Stanton. 823313

## Tuesday

**9.15am-11.15. Chat & Make** A term time group for  
Mums and toddlers 0-5. For more details ring St Mark's  
Church Office 01234 342613 or Janine 01234 297481  
**9.30am -12.30 & 4-9pm Slimming World**  
9.30, 11.30, 3.30, 5.30, 7.30. Lorrie Pearson 340473  
**1.15pm U3A Cinema Group.** Chris Fordham 217396  
**1.30pm U3A Choir.** Contact Chris Fordham  
217396  
**2.00pm U3A Book Group 1** (3rd Week in month)  
Contact Chris Fordham 217396  
**2.00pm U3A Book Group 2** (2nd Week in month)  
Contact Chris Fordham 217396  
**2.00pm U3A Photography Group 3** (1st Week in month)  
Contact Chris Fordham 217396  
**2.30pm Knit & Natter Group.** (Alternate Tuesdays)  
Wool and knitting needles provided. Mrs Maureen Watling  
262225  
**2.00-3.30pm Tuesday Afternoon Housegroup.** A social  
and Bible Study group. Meets alternate Tuesdays. Mrs  
Jean Bank 355698  
**6-7pm Supple Strength Yoga** Amanda Alcock  
07769747393  
**7.15-8.15pm Pilates** Jane Butcher 07891879571  
**7.30-9pm Faith Community Church** Audua Ogilvie  
01234 308644  
**8.00pm Hearts in Beds Committee** (4th week in month)  
Mrs N Aspey 309816

## Wednesday

**10.00-2pm Open House** for those with learning  
disabilities., their friends, family , carers and supporters  
342613.  
**10.00am U3A Gardening Group 3** Chris Fordham  
217396  
**10.00am Holy Communion.** St. Mark's Chapel. A half  
hour service followed by coffee. All welcome.  
**10am U3A Card Making,** Chris Fordham 217396  
**10-4pm Sewing group** 4th week of the month. Contact  
Sue Sewell 07979797747  
**1.15pm Social Bridge Club** Mr Barnes 261811  
**2.00-4.00pm U3A Craft** 1st week of the month Chris  
Fordham 217396  
**3.45.- 5.30pm Messy Church.** (3rd Week in month). for  
children of lower school age and their carers. Bible-based  
story, crafts, singing and a meal. Next meeting 20th

September. Wendy Waters 401834 Jean Bank 355698  
**6.00pm Brownies.** Mrs C Warden 219731  
**7.00pm Bunyan Bridge.** Colin Jackson 363398 or Brian  
Sallows 407725.  
**8.00pm Tudor Reeds Folk Dance Club** at St Mark's  
(1st,3rd & 5th Wednesday in month). Next meeting will be  
6 September Everyone welcome. All dances called, only  
£1 including refreshments. Call Rosemary 405594 or  
Graham 406359 for more details or come and join our  
friendly group and have a try.  
**8.00pm Bedford Wine and Social Club** ( Week 1 in the  
month) Jill Cooper 357960

## Thursday

**9.45am Chat and Play** A term time group for Mums &  
toddlers.0-5 St Mark's Church Office 01234 342613 or  
Janine 01234 297481  
**12pm Storybox** . We 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  
**2-4pm U3A Indoor Games.** Chris Fordham 217396  
**2.30 - 4.30pm Bedford Art Society**  
**5.15-6.45pm Weightwatchers** Jodi Henderson  
07449890830  
**6-7pm Supple Strength Yoga** Amanda Alcock  
07769747393  
**7.00pm U3A Singing for Fun** (1st & 3rd week in month)  
Chris Fordham 217396  
**7.00pm Bedford Embroiderers' Guild**  
(3rd week in month). Carol Plant 01832710504  
**7.30pm Magpies Ladies Group** St Mark's (2nd & 4th  
week in month ) Next meeting 14 September - Our Annual  
Charity Sale in aid of B.O.L.D.Call Rosemary 405594 for  
more details and visit our friendly group.  
**7.30pm Brickhill Ladies Group** St Mark's (1st and 3rd  
week in month) Rose Beal 212157  
**8.00pm Bedford Writers Circle.** St Mark's (1st week in  
month). John Broadhouse 01525 404014

## Friday

**10am -12.00 U3A Photography** (4th week in month)  
Contact Chris Fordham 217396  
**10.45am - 12 U3A Poetry & Literature** St. Marks  
Contact Chris Fordham 217396  
**2.00-4.00 pm U3A Whist** (2nd week in month) Contact  
Chris Fordham 217396  
**7.00pm-9.00pm Meditation** Cheryl Green  
07729187399  
**7.45 - 10.45pm Bedford Astrology Club.** St Marks(2nd  
week in month )Carol Brown 01438 233385  
**6.30 -8.30pm Pakua Martial Arts** John Waugh  
07802755914

## Saturday

**9.00am Faith Community Church** (1st week in month)  
Audua Ogilvie 01234 308644  
**10.00-1pm Theatretrain** Dancing acting, singing. Kate  
Howard 01234 782414

## 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 August. P Harris 01623 621143  
**11.30-2.30pm Faith Inspired Ministry.** Pastor James  
Mudokwani 07411154809

# Ordinary 17

## Opening Verse of Scripture - Romans 8:38-39

Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Collect Prayer for the Day - *Before we read we pray*

God, you have poured the Spirit of your Son into our hearts so that we call you father. Give us grace to devote our freedom to your service that we and all creation may be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For the kingdom the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.



*He found one of great value  
and sold all he had to buy it*

## First Bible Reading - 1 Kings 3: 5-12

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. "Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. (This is the word of the Lord -- **Thanks be to God**)

## Second Bible Reading - Romans Chapter 8: 26-39

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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

## Gospel Reading - Matthew 13: 31-33,44-52 - **Glory to you O Lord.**

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is

the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches." He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough." The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. "Yes," they replied. He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

(This is the Gospel of the Lord -- **Praise to you O Christ.**)

**Hymns** (*Please distribute Holy Communion Booklets with Prayer for Christian Healing and hymn sheets*)

1. Come ye faithful, raise the anthem (Neander)
2. My Jesus
3. Break thou the bread of life (Lothbury) - Putnoe Heights - The Lord's my Shepherd
4. Now let us from this table rise (Soluthum)

### **Post Communion Prayer**

Holy Father, who gathered us here around the table of your Son to share this meal with the whole household of God: in that new world where you reveal the fullness of your peace, gather people of every race and language to share in the eternal banquet of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

### **Commentary**

Jesus loved teaching people in parables and when we read the words which we have this morning in Matthew's Gospel '*The kingdom of heaven is like....*' then we know to expect another parable. Of course because Jesus is speaking in the language of parable we need to suspend our normal rational thinking, in the same as we would if somebody began a story with '*Once upon a time...*' It is a parable and as such it should not be taken literally, parables were supposed to use language to engage and move people, not to be scientific or historically correct. Neither were the stories to be used to subsequently formulate theological doctrine! For this reason Jesus is free to say that the mustard seed is the smallest seed, even though strictly speaking it is not. In the Jewish and the Greco-Roman world mustard seeds were proverbially known for their small size, even though seeds such as the orchid or the cypress were known to be smaller. Mark is more correct in referring to it as a vegetable because it is not really a tree but Jesus knew that birds would have been attracted to it by the seeds and the shade provided by the large leaves.

One reason why Jesus might have chosen the mustard seed was because the seed germinates within five days and it grows quickly to a height of about ten feet and have large leaves. The seed therefore speaks of contrast, of the ability of small things to grow and become more than might be expected. God's kingdom is like the seed, it is far from obvious that anything substantial can come from such beginnings which are fragile and insignificant by the standards of the world. However the loving rule of God can take place in an amazing way and it happens in ways which are very unexpected.

I suspect that this was not the kind of thing the disciples really wanted to hear and if we are honest it is not what we want to hear either. We are more comfortable with the obvious symbols of power, we like the big flashy trees and not the tiny seeds. Yet just because the kingdom is more subtle does not mean that it is not all around us, it is just that we have to look harder. The kingdom is seen in the ordinary things of life, just like the things which Jesus used in his stories, fields, cooking and fish and if we do not open our eyes to look differently then we will miss it. Jesus speaks to us today about the kingdom being like yeast, which continues this theme of the kingdom at work all around us, albeit imperceptibly, yet even though we might not see it, nevertheless it permeates the whole.

Jesus also tells us that the kingdom of God is like a person who finds buried treasure in a field. The person does not seem to us to be particularly worthy of commendation. Buying a field which we secretly know to have buried treasure sounds like a get rich quick scheme, benefitting from the misfortune of others, rather than the reward for hard labour. In all cultures people have hidden money in the ground

and people with metal detectors still find it today. Josephus told of the wealth hidden by the Jews in the ground and the efforts of the Romans to find it. (*J.W. 7.113-115*). The Copper Scroll at Qumran (3Q15) is made of copper leaf and tells of various treasures mostly gold and silver and where they are hidden under stones in fields and burial mounds. Not long ago a jar containing almost 20lb of silver was found which had been buried since about the 11c BC. You could compare such finds to a person winning the lottery today. The person who finds the treasure comes across it by surprise, has the potential to possess what he does not deserve. Yet for all that the message is clear and it is the message which Jesus wants his listeners to hear, the kingdom is not a reward for hard labour, it is not earned by the sweat of ones own brow, it is not deserved in any way. The kingdom is about a discovery, a free gift and the only satisfactory response is to sell up and give everything in response to it.

There we have it in a nutshell, or a mustard seed. You and I are saved by God in a gracious act of such generosity that many folks miss it just because they get hung up on how the precious love of God can best be measured and restricted to the special few who work hard to earn it. The human caveats and restrictions, barriers and preclusions which declare one group worthy and another not are washed away by a Jesus who tells us that it is just there for the taking. It just seems so unfair and of course it is, but love is never rational it is given to those who just don't deserve it and the greater the love the more unreasonable it is. Those we do not love have to work very hard to get into our good books, those we love find their names at the top of the page. The interesting equation is that whilst we lavish our love on them in such great measure, we ourselves are not diminished, indeed it is a source of growth and enjoyment. Why is it then to us such a great mystery that the love of God can be so freely given without God being out of pocket !

The kingdom then belongs to those who discover this treasure and embrace it, knowing it to be unmerited. Possessing such treasure they then share freely with others of a love which grows as it is passed on. It is like the feeding of the 5,000, from a small packed lunch thousands are fed and the miracle is that there really is enough to go round because even at the end when all have fed there are leftovers.

The parable of the net and the fish tells of fishermen who gather up all kinds of fish in their net and when they pull it ashore there is a separation of good and bad fish. It is interesting that the judgement placed upon what is good and bad is made by angels - at the end of time.

The parables are invitations not threats. Jesus uses them to draw us in and to remind us how close to us God is and encourage us. The message which we need to hear is that whilst we all spend our lives trying to get on and get by, our sense of purpose is frequently completely off course. It is as if our compass has a great big magnet which pulls the guiding needle in the wrong direction. What matters is our relation to God and all else is false promise and wasted journey. If our destination is not to draw closer to our Lord then all the other things which claim our time and devotion are trivial and futile. Our most significant possession is Christ and he is so valuable that we might as well just give everything else up. This is not something for the future, the time to buy the field is now, before somebody else gets their hands on it !

### **Meditation**

One parable today speaks of the Kingdom as like a treasure buried in a field. To many people outside the Christian church looking in, there is no appearance of a people who have discovered a treasure. They might therefore and perhaps will be forgiven by God for thinking that there was none worth looking for. Our Christian community throughout the ages has most frequently not given the message that we have discovered something to be joyful about. Frequently the church has done little to challenge cultural and political power and appeared more concerned with worldly kingdoms than God's. What do we do to show that God's kingdom really is worth us sacrificing everything for and how do our lives express the joy of knowing Jesus?

### **Prayers for Sunday and the week ahead**

In penitence and faith let us make our prayer to the Father and ask for his mercy and grace.

Almighty and everlasting God, we thank you that you have brought us safely to the beginning of this day. Keep us from falling into sin or running into danger, order us in all our doings and guide us to do always what is righteous in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We thank you for those who have brought wholeness through the medicine of the gospel: give skill to all who minister healing and reconciliation in your name, and comfort all who cry out to you from any sort of distress; for the needy, that they may not be forgotten nor the hope of the poor be taken away, for the sick in body, mind and spirit, that they may know your power to heal, for the poor in spirit, that they may inherit the kingdom of heaven and see you face to face. We commend the world, for which Christ suffered, to the mercy and protection of God. (*Continued page 8*)

**Footprints Walk** Sunday 6 August at 2.30pm. A 2.7 mile circular walk through Howe Park Wood and Tattenhoe Valley Park in Milton Keynes. To get to the start point, turn off Chaffron Way [H7] between the Westcroft [V2] and Kingsmead [V1] roundabouts into Portishead Drive, Tattenhoe. In 350 metres turn left towards the free car park in front of St, Giles' Church. For more information contact Barry or Jenny Snelson 344417.

**Cleaner St Andrew's, Kimbolton Road, Bedford.**  
12 hours per week - equivalent to £5,100 per annum. St Andrew's wishes to appoint a Cleaner to work alongside the Church Centre Manager and Caretaker to assist with the day to day cleaning of the Church Centre, Monday to Saturday.  
A job description and application form is available via the Church Website [www.standrewsbedford.org](http://www.standrewsbedford.org) or from the Church Centre Office.  
[Centremanager@standrewsbedford.org](mailto:Centremanager@standrewsbedford.org).  
Closing date: Wednesday 16 August.  
Interview date: Thursday 24 August.

**Bedford Food Bank** are very grateful for all the donations given via St Mark's. They are running low on the following items Tinned Vegetables, Tinned Tomatoes, Tinned Spaghetti Hoops, UHT Milk, UHT Fruit Juice, Tinned Tuna, Tinned Soup, Tinned Rice Pudding, Jam, Cup-a-soup, Tinned Meat eg Beef, Chicken). Twice a year we like to contact our regular contributors to advise them how much they have helped us over the past few months. I am delighted to tell you that so far this year St Mark's Church have donated 185.3 kg of non-perishable items. Your donations will help us to carry on providing a nutritionally balanced supply of food to individuals and families in and around Bedford who are facing really tough times, and who would otherwise struggle to put food on the table. It is sad that help like this is needed, but great that individuals, organisations and communities can come together to meet the increasing need in Bedford and the surrounding villages With our very best wishes to you all, and thanks for your support.  
Kind regards Mrs Chris Hubbard Admin Support

### **St Mark's Holiday Arrangements**

**Junior Church** restarts on Sunday 10 September.

**Chat and Play** will take place on 3, 17, & 31 August from 9.30 - 11.30 during the holidays and restart on 14 September.

**Story Box** restarts 7 September 2017

### **Putnoe Heights Holiday Arrangements**

**Junior Church** will not be meeting during August. We will meet again on Sunday 3 September for our All Age Service at 11am.

**Storybox** will start next term on Monday 11 September at 12 noon.

**Thursday Prayer Group** will meet again on Thursday 17 August at 9.30am.

**St Mark's Country and Western Night** with live band Nine Blind Ravens. Tickets go on sale this week for a great night out on Saturday 2 September. It is a little while since we had one of themed nights so expect this to be a fantastic night. Tickets at £8 include all entertainment and food. Please bring your own drinks

**Putnoe Heights Fairtrade Stall.** We are now on Facebook - find us at /FairtradeGoldingtonPutnoe and follow for stall news, Traidcraft campaign updates, Fairtrade events in Bedford and beyond, sneak peeks at new lines and much more. The next stalls will be 3 September and 5 November 2017.

### **St Albans Woodland Burial Ground Keysoe**

We are currently recording the GPS coordinates for every burial which has taken place at the woodland. This is a pleasurable way to spend time in the countryside but it does take time and our administrator Linda has been extremely busy recently with lots of burial taking place. It is a straightforward exercise and we would very much value the help of a volunteer, training will be provided.

### **Putnoe Heights Church Centre Manager**

(Redadvertised)

To manage all aspects of Putnoe Heights Church Centre, including managing lettings, arranging maintenance of buildings and equipment and maintaining our policies on safety and security. You will need a great sense of humour, be able to meet and greet all service users and be proficient in Microsoft office. Flexibility is required, including some locking up duties as part of a team.

Closing date: 5pm Monday 7 August 2017

Details can be downloaded from the church website [www.putnoechurch.org.uk](http://www.putnoechurch.org.uk)

**Congratulations** to the committee of Putnoe Scout Group for their excellent work reported at their AGM on 22 July. Scouts, Cubs and Beavers groups are all growing with waiting lists and there are some 150 children involved and 25 leaders. For details see their website [www.putnoescouts.org](http://www.putnoescouts.org) .

### **Data Protection**

Please note that if you hold any data on behalf of St Mark's or Putnoe Heights Church you must read the policy and complete the data protection form. The church councils have notified the Information Commissioner (A8185767) in respect of their activities in relation to the Data Protection Act. We are therefore lawfully registered to hold data but we must do so in accordance with the legal requirements of the Act.

It may be that you have questions about the process or the method of handling data, if you do wish to have any support then please contact me and we I go through this process with you and offer all the help required.

Thank you once again for all that you do and for helping us keep data safe. Charles Royden

We commend the whole world for which Christ suffered to the mercy and protection of God. We pray that the nations of the earth may seek after the ways that make for peace. That the whole creation, groaning in travail, may be set free to enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God,

Everlasting Father, you call us to live together in unity: protect by your mercy all your children, bless our families and renew our communities. Prince of Peace, you bring reconciliation through the cross: by your healing power give to all who suffer your gift of wholeness and peace.

Conqueror of death, remember for good those whom we love but see no longer. Help us to live this day in the sure and certain hope of your eternal victory.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of God and we ask that you would hasten, Lord, the day when people will come from east and west, from north and south, and sit at table in your kingdom, and we shall see your Son in his glory.

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### Partnership News by Email

As part of our move to implement better Data Protection in our churches, Partnership News is now being sent out by Mailchimp a programme which also allows you to subscribe and unsubscribe easily. This has involved building a new subscriber list so if you have stopped receiving partnership news please email me and let me know - vicar@thisischurch.com  
Alternatively just subscribe by visiting the partnership news page on [www.thisischurch.com](http://www.thisischurch.com)



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**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 online via **ThisisChurch.com.**



### 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.

#### Iris Pauline Perry

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



### Forthcoming Funerals

*All funerals at Bedford Crematorium can be found @ [www.bedford.gov.uk/obituaries](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/obituaries)*

**The funeral of Ronald Frank Elford** will take place at St Mark's Church on Thursday 3 August at 1.00pm

**The funeral of William Thomas John Agar** will take place at 3.15pm on Wednesday 9 August at Bedford Crematorium