



Partnership News

3 January 2010

Epiphany



Partnership Church Services Today

8.30am Holy Communion every Sunday

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

9.30am St. Mark's – Family Worship

Preacher—Rev Dr Joan Crossley
Leadership - Mr Mick Ovenden
Intercessions – Mrs Alison Holden

11.00am Putnoe Heights– Family Worship

Preacher – Rev Dr Joan Crossley
Leadership – Mrs Wendy Nash
Intercessions – Mr Eddy Peck

3 January 2010

First Sunday after Epiphany

9.30am St. Mark's – Family Worship

Preacher - Deacon Jane Mason
Leadership - Mrs Avril Williams
Intercessions – Mr Chris Izzard

11.00am Putnoe Heights– Family Worship

Preacher – Deacon Jane Mason
Leadership – Mrs Wendy Nash
Intercessions – Mr Eddy Peck

Readings 1. Isaiah 43:1-7 2. Acts 8:14-17
3. Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Thank You

The flowers at Putnoe Heights Church this week have been given by Derrick Wren in loving memory of his wife Betty.

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

God, good beyond all that is good,
fair beyond all that is fair.
In you is calmness, peace and concord.
Heal our divisions,
draw us into your divine nature,
and through the embrace of your love
make us one in Spirit. Amen.

Dionysius of Alexandria (d. 264)

The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman

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

Deacon Jane Mason

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

The Reverend Charles Royden

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

For Data Protection Purposes

Please note that any items submitted for inclusion in Partnership News will automatically be posted on our website.

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

Partnership Pastoral Support Team Co-Ordinator & Churchyards Administrator

Mrs Mary Stubbs 406784 Mary@ThisIsChurch.com
Please inform us if you know of anyone who is ill, bereaved, housebound, requires a visit, home communion or counselling services. Please also ask us if you would like a home visit for any reason.

Putnoe Heights Church Centre

Open Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm, Friday 9am - 1pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Mr Barry Snelson 365630 & 344417
Leadership Team Mr. Lawrence Wyatt 350188
Treasurer Mr Ian Morse 216428 treasurerph@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator - Mr John Hitt 404186
Youth & children's worker - Mrs Spavins 302349 youth@thisischurch.com

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

Tel/fax & Answering Service 342613 office@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Miss Wendy Rider 342613
Leadership Team - Mrs Delia Shephard 273628
Treasurer - Mr Ian Farthing 210892 treasurer@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator Jim Williams 360605

Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

Monday

- 9.15 -11.45 am Mon-Fri Putnoe Heights Pre-school**
Headteacher Mrs Janet Smith ☎326685
- 8.30-5.30pm Pre-school** Mon-Fri St Mark's
- 9.30-3.15pm Top Marks** Mon-Fri St Mark's
Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin ☎312634
(See website for more details)
- 9.00am Clubhouse** at St. Mark's for those with Learning Disabilities. Karen Bywater ☎315460.
- 9.45am - Body Control Pilates** –Putnoe Heights
Stephanie Smith ☎ 357787 or 07973174430
- 10.00am Bakers Barn Art Group.** St Mark's Mrs Berry 211955
- 10.30am U3A Play reading** St Mark's J Birks ☎219607
- 12.00pm 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. ☎Liz 302349
- 1.30pm U3A History Group** St Mark's ☎ David Fowler 824474
- 2pm U3A Drama** St Mark's 1st & 2nd week. Mr Ovenden ☎ 825059
- 4.00pm Storybox Plus** Putnoe Heights for 4-9 year Old. Meet at 3.30 for refreshments & games. Then till 5pm 'follow the year' through stories, drama, singing & craft activities. We then make a short presentation in church on first Sunday in each month. ☎Liz Spavins 302349
- 4.15pm Rosemary Conley Diet & Fitness.** Putnoe Heights. Margo Needham 843747 or 07881730747
- 4.15pm Kumon Maths** Putnoe Heights. Mrs Raksha Mistry ☎01908 392698
- 6.00pm Brownies** St Mark's. Mrs C Mathew ☎826190
- 6.15 pm Brownies** Putnoe. Sharon Tanner ☎ 07720713738.
- 6.15 Pilates** at Putnoe Heights Jane Butcher 300859
- 7.30pm Sugarcraft Guild** St Mark's 1st week Pat Nicholson ☎353518
- 7.30pm Cancer Care Society.** St Mark's. 1st Week. Mr J Dewhurst ☎01908 377020
- 7.15pm Guides.** St Mark's. Mrs Gill Lake ☎218091
- 7.15pm Yoga.** Putnoe Heights Denise Green ☎244970
- 7.30pm Whist Drive.** St Mark's 3rd & 5th week . Next meeting December 21 Judith Stanton. ☎823313
- 7.30pm House group** 30 The Ridgeway. The home of Eddy & Margaret Peck ☎267567.
- 8.00pm 'Get Fit, Stay Fit'** Putnoe Heights. Mrs Diane Field ☎404976

Tuesday

- 9.30 12.30 Jo Jingles.** St. Mark's. Music & movement for pre-school children. Renu Elston ☎01908 587299
- 9.30am Candlewicking** (Needlework). Putnoe Heights. Judi Staughton ☎341821
- 9.30am -12.30 & 4-9pm Slimming World** St. Mark's. Helen Folbigg ☎351223
- 10am Autism Beds Adult Support Group.** St Mark's. Sally Cripsley ☎350704
- 11.15am U3A Keep Fit Putnoe Heights** Sally Banks ☎ 870357
- 1.30pm Toddlers Playtime.** Putnoe Heights Majella Atkinson ☎325293.
- 1.30pm U3A Cinema Group.** St Mark's 4th Week in month . Mrs Beaumont ☎261461

- 2.00pm U3A Book Group.** St Mark's 3rd Week Mrs Forrest ☎344043
- 2.00pm Library Walk W.I.** Putnoe Heights, meets monthly. Morag Tomkins ☎356895
- 2pm U3A Photography** (Group 3) St Mark's 1st Week. Janet King ☎313946
- 2.15pm Putnoe Heights Women's Fellowship.** Next meeting January 12 2010. Betty Wyatt ☎350188. **2.30pm Mother Teresa Support Group.** St Mark's Fortnightly . Wool and knitting needles provided. Mrs Maureen Watling ☎262225
- 2.15pm Tuesday Afternoon Housegroup.** St Mark's Fortnightly. Mary Stubbs ☎406784.
- 3.45pm Stars School of Dance.** Putnoe Heights. Esther Sancto ☎295862 or 07917582468.
- 6.30pm Creative Card making.** Putnoe Heights Church. Carol Houghton 346718
- 6.30pm Yoga** Putnoe Heights Veronica Lafferty ☎781466 or 07788750360
- 7pm Keep Fit.** St. Mark's Jan Gregory ☎328455
- 7pm MT Karate** [all ages] Putnoe Heights. Karen King ☎ 07941 264885
- 7.30pm Hearts & Beds. Cardiac Support Group** 1st Tuesday in the month. Brian Ibberson ☎403497
- 7.30pm Tabernacle of Truth Church** Putnoe Heights Bible study & prayers. Revd. Tarr ☎360188 or 07866775515
- 7.30pm Putnoe Heights Ladies Tuesday Club** - Meets fortnightly. Next meeting December 15 Christmas Celebrations. Details from Audrey Wilkins☎365068 or Margaret Gentle ☎309043

Wednesday

- 9.30am Body Control Pilates.** Putnoe Heights. Stephanie Smith ☎357787 or 07973174430.
- 9.00am Clubhouse** at St Mark's for those with Learning Disabilities. Karen Bywater ☎315460.
- 10.00am Holy Communion.** St. Mark's Chapel. A half hour service followed by coffee. All welcome.
- 10am Sewing & Chat.** Putnoe Heights Valerie Russell ☎01462 815966
- 10am U3A Card Making,** St Mark's Church. 4th week in the month. Contact Janet King 313946
- 12.30pm Luncheon Club.** Putnoe Heights fortnightly. Next - 6 January Putnoe Heights Office ☎365630
- 1.00-3pm Police Surgery** at Putnoe Heights .
- 1.15pm Bridge Club for the Retired.** St. Mark's. Mr Barnes ☎261811
- 1.45 Scots Society Whist** Putnoe monthly .All welcome Nancy Barr 268147
- 2-5pm Police Surgery.** St Mark's Foyer. ☎349179
- 1.30-4.30pm U3A Craft St Mark's** 1st & 3rd week. Pat Holland ☎ 262823
- 2.15pm - Fifty plus Keep Fit.** Putnoe Heights Mrs Webster ☎856966
- 4.15pm Kumon Maths.** Putnoe Heights Mrs Raksha Mistry ☎01908 392698
- 6.00 pm Brownies.** St Mark's. Mrs Carol Warden ☎219731
- 6.15pm Yoga and Relaxation** Putnoe Heights Racheall Monton ☎01234 297138 or 07910835994.
- 6-8pm Karate.** St Mark's Karen King ☎079412 64885
- 7.00pm Bunyan Bridge.** St. Mark's Brian Sallows ☎407725

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

7.00pm Putnoe Guild Putnoe Heights monthly Janice Loxley ☎ 347073

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

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

8.00pm Tudor Reeds Folk Dance Club meet at St Mark's 1st, 3rd & 5th Wednesday in month. Next Meeting 6 January 2010 Everyone welcome. All dances called, only £1 including refreshments.. Ring Graham ☎ 406359 or Alan 345312. or Rosemary 405594 for more details

8.00pm Bedford Wine and Social Club St Mark's 1st week in the month. Mrs Gansfield ☎ 215016

7.45 for 8pm God talk - women's group monthly meeting for worship and friendly chat at Wendy Nash's Contact Majella Atkinson ☎ 325293

Thursday

9.30am Thursday Prayer Group. Putnoe Heights in the quiet room. Sylvia Cohen ☎ 343424 There will be no meetings on 24 & 31 December. As usual on 7 January *Request for prayer can be written in the prayer diary on the information table.*

9.45am Yoga Putnoe Heights Denise Green ☎ 244970

9.45am Chat and Play St. Mark's. A group for Mums & toddlers. Starts again on 7 January 2010 Emma Strangwick ☎ 211070

11am-12noon Citizens Advice Bureau at Putnoe Heights.

12pm Storybox Restarts on 7 January 2010. 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 01234 363283

1.30 - 3.00pm NHS Baby Clinic St. Mark's ☎ 267444

1.30pm Toddler Playtime. Putnoe Majella Atkinson ☎ 325293.

2pm Putnoe Bridge Club. Gerald Palmer ☎ 345991

2.30 - 4.30pm Bedford Art Society at St Mark's. Mary Rich ☎ 272470 Next meeting 24 September

4 - 7.00pm Police Surgery. St Mark's Foyer. ☎ 349179

6.15 pm Weightwatchers. St. Mark's. Mrs Margaret Ralph ☎ 01767 224978.

6.15pm Brownies. Putnoe Heights Caroline Morgan ☎ 07786508351

7.00pm Club 2000 Putnoe Heights Nina Ovenden ☎ 825059

7pm U3A Folk & Poetry Group. St Mark's 2nd & 4th week in month. Doug Ovenden ☎ 825059

7.15pm Putnoe Art Group Bob Wardale ☎ 406094

7.30pm Bedford Embroiderers' Guild St Mark's 3rd week in month. Nadeen Salmon ☎ 301550

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 Jean Birks ☎ 219607

8.00pm Brickhill Ladies Group St Mark's 1st and 3rd week in month. Pat Foulks ☎ 346505

Friday

9.30-12.30pm U3A Photography (Group 1) St Marks 4th week in month Val Scrivener ☎ 346397

9.00am Clubhouse St. Mark's for those with Learning Disabilities. Karen Bywater ☎ 315460.

10am - 12 & 1.15 - 3.15pm U3A Beginners French St Mark's Joyce Fields ☎ 353086

12.15pm U3A Photography (Group 2). St Mark's 4th week in month. Sue Butler ☎ 354183

5pm Stars School of Dance Putnoe Heights Contact Esther Sancto ☎ 295862 or ☎ 07917 582468

2.00pm U3A Gardening Group Putnoe Heights Eve Whitehead ☎ 356875

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

6.30pm Line Dancing. St Mark's Christine Rushton ☎ 782360

6.30 - 7.30pm Ladies Kick Boxing weekly at St. Mark's. Parker Lake ☎ 07984427854

7.45 - 10.45pm Bedford Astrology Club. St. Mark's. Carol Brown ☎ 01438 233385

Saturday

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

Young Embroiderers bi monthly Putnoe Heights Terry Fletcher Tel 357198

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

7.00pm Duplicate Bridge. St Mark's Mrs Pillinger ☎ 212066

Sunday

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

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

1pm Tabernacle of Truth Church Putnoe Heights Revd. Tarr ☎ 360188 or ☎ 07866775515

6pm T.N.T. Putnoe. For 9-12 year olds (fortnightly) join us for fellowship & fun. Please see Liz ☎ 302349 .

Diary Dates

St Mark's Church Council –
St Mark's Leadership Team – 19 January
Putnoe Heights Leadership Team – , 8 Feb
Putnoe Heights Management Meeting 18 Jan 7.45pm
St Mark's Church Forum Meeting - 12 Jan 2010,
Putnoe Church Council - 15 February
Pastoral Group Meeting - 19 January
Churchyard Committee - 26 January 2010, 11am
Putnoe Heights Mission Group—Weds 6th Jan at 14 Flint Way at 7.30pm
Partnership Council—TBA
Brickhill Parish Council Meetings -
Deanery Meeting
Circuit/Treasurers Review meeting at St. Mark's
Circuit Meeting 8 March at Oakley
Woodland Burial Trustees –
Putnoe Heights Children & Youth – 18th Jan

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

Epiphany

Opening Verses of Scripture John 8:12

Jesus said "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

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

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. Common Worship

First Bible Reading Isaiah 60:1 - 6

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

"Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.

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

Second Reading - Ephesians Chapter 3:1-12

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

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

Gospel Reading - Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born.



Creator of the heavens, who led the Magi by a star to worship the Christ-child: guide and sustain us, that we may find our journey's end in Jesus Christ our Lord.

"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel."

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

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

Post Communion Prayer

Lord God, the bright splendour whom the nations seek: may we who with the wise men have been drawn by your light discern the glory of your presence in your Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Commentary

Matthew places the events today in the historical setting of King Herod. Herod came to power (37 BC) through an alliance with Mark Antony, who, himself, was aligned with Octavian at the time. Octavian and Antony later went to war with each other, a war which Octavian won in 31 BC, whereupon he became Caesar Augustus--literally, "the emperor who is worthy of being worshipped." Somewhere along the line, Herod switched sides to Octavian, and did so in a big way. He built monuments topped with Roman eagles. He built a whole new city and harbour in honour of Caesar. He plastered Caesar's insignia on everything. He couldn't do enough for Caesar Augustus.

Today is Epiphany, the word Epiphany means 'showing forth' or 'manifestation'. The message is that the birth of Jesus is something which is shown to all people. If anybody is any doubt, then the stories of who visited Jesus are meant to make it clear that all are included. Shepherds are invited and they were looked down because they were not properly religious. Now in today's story we read about Magi coming and the general consensus on these folks no better. The visitors to the baby Jesus were little more than a bunch of horoscope writers.

I love the sound of the Authorised King James, version of the Bible being read out aloud in church. Especially perhaps at Christmas, those old familiar words have a special resonance. Sadly it does not serve us well in the episode from Matthew Chapter 2 which we read today in our lectionary for Epiphany. It recalls,

'Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem.'

The Feast of the Epiphany, on the 6th January, remembers and celebrates the adoration of Jesus by the Magi from the East. However the original greek text just calls them 'Magi'. The story of these 'Magi' is shrouded in much legend and the description used in the Authorised King James does not help us, as the words 'wise men' are without justification. Since there were three gifts we have often thought that there were three Magi . Often we think of them as three wise men, but there is nothing to suggest that there were only three or that they were only men. We might just as easily assume that since they brought rich gifts, they were also kings and have them wearing crowns, and we could also imagine that they travelled by ship, (I saw three ships.!) Legend has gone so far as to name them Melchior, Caspar and Balthasar.

The "magi" originated in the Persian priestly class. They were sorcerers, fortune-tellers, astrologers. They represent the "wisdom of the east"--such as it was. Judaism didn't care that much for fortune-tellers. Indeed, Matthew presents them as a bit bone-headed. They seem naive about Herod, and, though they followed generally the proper trajectory--east to west--they wind up nine miles off. They come to Jerusalem instead of Bethlehem.

The magi tell Herod about the birth of a "king of the Jews"--a title which technically belonged to Herod.

The magi have seen his star "at its rising". Matthew alludes to the story of Balaam--another "magi" from the east--who was called by Israel's ancient foe, Balak, to bring a curse on Israel, but brought blessings instead. Matthew is recalling Numbers 24: 17-18: "a star shall come out of Jacob...Edom shall become a possession." (This may have been a subtle slam on Herod. Herod was from Idumea, or Edom.)

What we do know is that pagan astrologers existed whose divinatory skills were widely respected in the Graeco-Roman world. Astrology had become popular as the 'science' of the East, and everybody agreed that the best astrologers lived in the East. The Old Testament was not kind to this interpretation of signs (Deut 18:11, Is 2:6), so it is perhaps surprising in some ways that Matthew includes the story. However the fact remains that many people are firm adherents to the notion that we can consult with astrologers to best determine our path in life. Throughout the ages we can remember famous people and world leaders such as Queen Elizabeth or the Reagan's who would not take important decisions without first being advised by astrologers.

People of the day would not have been surprised at the mention of a natal star. The births of Pliny and Alexander the Great had supposedly been attended by astral events. Virgil notes that a star led Aeneas to the place where the city of Rome was to be founded. What is distinctive and interesting about this star is that it leads not to some famous personage, but rather to the child of a peasant couple living in a hick town.

The story of the Magi has provided material not only for countless school plays but also for centuries of prolific Christian art and paintings. The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem is said to have been saved from destruction by invading Persians because they saw representations of the Magi on the walls and recognised them as fellow countrymen in the portrayal of them.

We know that these Magi recognise Jesus for who he is, and give him their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Their learning leads them to the destination of their searching into the presence of the infant Christ. Christians have understood these gifts to be profoundly symbolic and prophetic.

1. Gold represents the kingship of Jesus.
 2. Frankincense is a fragrant resin which is burned as incense to symbolize the presence of God, it therefore acknowledges the divinity of Jesus.
 3. Myrrh is a precious oil used for anointing the body, which serves to foretell the death of Jesus.
- Perhaps that gift of gold would be used to help pay for the subsequent flight of Jesus and the holy family to Egypt.

The Greek word 'epiphany' is about 'manifestation', 'making known', and it has been used for the last two thousand years to describe God coming closer to the people, revealing himself in his Son, Jesus. At Christmas the light is born, at Epiphany that light is made known to all people. Such universalism is enshrined in the story of the Magi, Jesus is for all people not just one religious group. No longer will salvation be seen in terms of the hereditary principle 'we are children of Abraham.'

Epiphany Eve is twelfth night and we are encouraged to make sure that we have removed the Christmas decorations. As Jesus, the light, has been born into the world, so that light is surrounded by darkness. In a sense this is a time for getting back to reality. If they haven't already, then now the tinsel and the glitter must give way to real life. ;

The gifts remind us of the wonder of who Jesus is, but they also proclaim that his life is one of suffering and death. Soon the holy family must flee an attempt on the life of the child and innocent babies will be slaughtered by Herod, jealous of the one born to be King of the Jews. At Epiphany the light of the world is made manifest in Christ, visible to good and bad alike, to the wise men and to Herod. Each of these reacts differently one with joy and one with confrontation. Each of us must measure our own reaction and the gifts which we bring.

Jewishness had been the principle upon which salvation rested until Jesus. The children of Abraham were marked by circumcision to show that they belonged to the chosen few. This symbol of exclusiveness set them apart as belonging to God's family. This circumcision was soon to be replaced with a new symbol, baptism would proclaim to the world that a person had died to sin and was alive in the new kingdom which Jesus proclaimed and established. This would no longer be restricted to a certain people by birth, it would be available freely to all people.

The visit of these Magi at Epiphany is the beginning of this new understanding of the wideness of God's revelation of himself. The Magi were gentiles and they would be the first to represent the new inclusion of the many nations of the world. Just as the Magi were guided by a star that was brighter than all of the others, from this time on all the nations would see in Jesus a revealing of God's love which was greater in magnitude than had ever been seen before. The Magi might have been very wise, they might even have been men, we will never know. However in the very mystery of their background lies some of their most enduring attraction, for they have come to symbolise not only the opening of the entire geographic world to the revelation of Jesus, but also the entire intellectual world as their astronomy, science and learning brings them close to Christ. *Charles Royden*

Meditation

May you grow still enough to hear the small noises earth makes in preparing for the long sleep of winter, so that you yourself may grow calm and grounded deep within. May you grow still enough to hear the trickling of water seeping into the ground, so that your soul may be softened and healed, guided in its flow. May you grow still enough to hear the splintering of starlight in the winter sky and the roar at earth's fiery core. May you grow still enough to hear the stir of a single snowflake in the air so that your inner silence may turn into hushed expectation.

Peace..... the angel announced. But peace is as much task as gift. Only if we become calm as earth, fluid as water, and blazing as fire will we be able to rise to the task of peacemaking, and the air will stir with the rush of wings of angels arriving to help us. This is why I wish you that great inner stillness which alone allows us to speak, even today, without irony of "peace on earth" and, without despair, to work for it.
~*Brother David Steindalrast, OSB*

Hymns (*Mission Praise and Morning Worship*)

1. Thou didst leave thy throne. 697
2. Brightest and best 65
3. We three kings of orient are 740
4. All earth was dark 8
5. As with gladness men of old 39

Prayers for Sunday and the Week Ahead

When, good Lord, will you manifest yourself to us in bright sunshine? Yes, we are slow to understand and slow to see. But we are quick to believe that if you chose to reveal yourself to us, you could do so this very day. Dear lord, please appear to us, at dawn or at dusk or at the height of the day. Come to our table at mealtimes, that we may share our meals with you. Come to our bed, that we may share our rest with you. Come to our prayers, that we may rejoice and be glad. Gilbert of Hoyland (d. c. 1170)

O Source and Centre of all being, grant us the gifts of your grace, that walking in your way and strengthened by your life, we may journey through this world in your peace, and rest in heaven with your saints; and this we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen Gerhard Tersteegen, 1697-1769

What is this jewel that so precious? I can see it has been quarried not by men, but by God. It is you, dear Jesus. You have been dug from the rocks of heaven itself to be offered to me as a gift beyond price. You shine in the darkness. Every colour of the rainbow can be seen within you. The whole earth is bathed in your light. Infant Jesus, by being born as man you have taken upon yourself the pain of death. But such a jewel can never be destroyed. You are immortal. And by defying your own death, you shall deliver me from death.

A Hymn for Sunday

The wise may bring their learning,
The rich may bring their wealth,
And some may bring their greatness,
And some their strength and health:
We also wish for treasures
To offer to our King;
We have no wealth or greatness-
What gifts then can we bring?

We'll bring the many duties
We have to do each day;
We'll try our best to please him,
At home, at school and play:
And better are these treasures
To offer to our King
Than all the worldly splendour,
But these we all can bring.

We'll bring him hearts that love him,
We'll bring him thankful praise,
And souls for ever striving
To follow in his ways:
And these shall be the treasures
To offer to our King,
And these are gifts that ever
Our grateful hearts may bring.

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Putnoe Heights New Year Lunch Sunday 10th January 2010 at 1.00pm A festive lunch with 3 courses inclusive of drinks. All proceeds to church funds. Tickets (from Putnoe Office) £8.00 (£4.50 for children under 10)

Telecare: It is extremely helpful to the Ministers to be able to have feed back, especially if somebody is be able to have feed back, especially if somebody is poorly or in hospital. If you have not yet put your name down on the Telecare scheme, please do so

BEH Women's Network District Residential Weekend 19 - 21 February 2010 at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts. Further

details and booking form from Pam Seymour 305695

Women's Fellowship , Please note that the first meeting in 2010 will be on the 12 January - not 5th as per the 2009 programme.

St Mark's Junior Church Would appreciate the cellophane wrappers from Quality Street & any other suitable cellophane. Thank you Jaana.

Church Rotas are now available for the next three months. Please note they can also be found online on the church website.

Thank You - from the King's Arms



I asked if I could write in your parish news to say a huge thank you to you all for the tremendous support your churches have shown King's Arms Project. Two days before Christmas, we received the cheques from your appeal, showing you had raised over £5000 for the homeless here in Bedford. What a wonderful Christmas present!

The money will be shared between different areas of the Project to help us support the men and women who need it so much. It was a pleasure coming to visit your churches in November, and even since then, we have seen some amazing breakthrough in people's lives. Three more rough sleepers have been supported to move into and maintain their own flats. This includes one gentleman who we have known for a number of years and who seemed like 'a hopeless case'. Since gaining his flat, we have seen so many changes in him. He is learning to make good choices, and take responsibility for his bills and finances. He has cut down his drinking and is putting his efforts into rebuilding his life. And of course now he's off the streets, his health is improving daily and he's able to get a routine and keep appointments. Suddenly his future isn't something to be feared, but has hope! It really is a privilege to see these kinds of changes in someone's life – to know there's never such a thing as a hopeless case. And it is with support like yours that this is made possible: thank you so much for your prayers and for your giving.

On 26th February we have an event coming for the brave among you! This year we are putting on a sponsored Sleepout. We will sleep in the open air for one night to raise money for the homeless and those who have to sleep out every night. We will be sleeping in the grounds of Brickhill Lower School – so if you fancy a challenge, get sponsored and come and join us! Details can be found at www.kingsarms.org/sleepout2010.

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.

Gwen Eaton

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



Forthcoming Funerals



The funeral of Ethel Duffield will take place at 12.15pm on Friday 8 January

The funeral of Marlene Malins will take place at Bedford Crematorium at 1.45pm on Monday 18 January 2010

The funeral of Charles Boness will take place at Bedford Crematorium at 2:30pm on Tuesday 12 January 2010

The funeral of Mrs Ovenden will take place at St mark's Church at 2.00pm on Tuesday 19 January 2010