



Partnership News

Putnoe Heights & St Mark's Church
3 May 2015
Fifth Sunday of Easter



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

3 May - Fifth Sunday of Easter

9.30am St Mark's - Morning Family Worship and Baptism

Preacher - Revd. Canon Charles Royden
Leadership - Mr. Jim Williams
Intercessions - Mr. Richard Ledger
Organist - Mr Bill Fudge

11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Family Worship

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

10 May - Sixth Sunday of Easter

9.30am St Mark's - Morning Worship

Preacher - Mr. Michael Carr
Leadership - Mr. Edward Parry
Intercessions - Mr. Warwick Holden
Organist - Miss Marion Prior

11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Worship

Preacher - Mr. Michael Carr
Leadership - Mrs. Sue Allen
Intercessions - Mrs. Sam Ware
Organist - Mr. Alan Bunker

Readings 1. Acts 10: 44-48 2. 1 John 5: 1-6
3. John 15: 9-17
Mid Week Holy Communion at 10.00am at St Mark's Chapel every Wednesday and at Sir William Harpur House on first Monday of every month.

Thank You

The flowers at Putnoe Heights have been given by friends of Jenny Cooper on her birthday.

Welcome

You are all most welcome to our services today. At St Mark's we make a special welcome to the friends and family of Leia and Bethany Wheeler who have been brought for baptism.

Prayer for Sunday

Accept, O Father, the sacrifice of our thanksgiving: of praise, for your great mercies; of prayer, that we may grow in grace; of penitence, that our sins may be forgiven; and of love, that only gift which you seek in us or desire; and this we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Banns of Marriage

We publish the banns and pray for the marriage of Dale Jeremy Jones and Kelly Samantha Knott to be married at St Edmunds St James Church Blunham (*third time of asking*)

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

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Partnership Pastoral Support Team Co-Ordinators

Mrs Wendy Waters 342613 office@thisischurch.com
Please inform us if you know of anyone who is ill, bereaved, housebound, requires a visit, home communion or counselling services. Please also ask us if you would like a home visit for any reason.

Churchyards Administrator

Mrs Avril Williams 01234 342613

Putnoe Heights Church Centre

Open Mon-Thur 9-5.30pm, Friday 9-1pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Geoff Gypps 365630
Leadership Team Mr Barry Southam 403417
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 Charity No 1160981.

Open Monday - Friday 9am - 5.00pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 342613 office@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Miss Wendy Rider 342613
Leadership Team - Mrs Margaret Appleton 354708
Treasurer - Mr Ian Farthing 210892
treasurer@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator Mr Jim Williams 360605

Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

Monday

Hazeldene Heights Pre-school. Sessional and Full Day care available—open Mon.—Fri. Full Day Care 8.30am to 5pm Sessional times 9am—12noon and 12.45pm -
3.45pm For more info please contact Laura Leggett 01234 326685 or www.hazeldeneheights.com
8.00am-5.30pm Pre-school Mon-Fri St Mark's
8.00am-5.30pm Top Marks Mon-Fri St Mark's Manager Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634
(See website for more details)
9.00am-12noon St Mark's Pre-School Nursery Manager Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634
9.30-10.30am - Body Control Pilates –Putnoe Heights Stephanie Smith 357787 or 07973174430
10.00am Bakers Barn Art Group. St Mark's Mrs M. Berry 211955
10.00am-12 U3A Play reading Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946
11.00am-12noon Pilates St. Mark's Liz Mason 07816522200
12.00 noon Storybox Putnoe Heights We welcome the under 5's and their carers to join them between 12noon and 1pm for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based story and singing. Contact Carolyn Morris youth@thisischurch.com 365630
1.30pm Chat & Make. Term time for babies and toddlers 0-5. Crafts, toys, songs, story and refreshments £1. More details contact St Mark's Church Office on 01234 342613 or Janine 01234 297481 Restarts On April 20
2.00pm 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 Zoe Wilcox 07767311424
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-8pm Cubs at Putnoe Ages 8 –10.5 Email:phxg.enquiries@gmail.com Tel Tom 07974566509
6.30pm Fit For All Putnoe Heights – Laura Amor 341152 / 07976259081
7.30pm Sugarcraft Guild St Mark's (1st week in month) Mary Daly 217127
7.00pm Cancer Care Society. St Mark's. (1st week in month) Mr J Dewhurst 01908 377020.
7.00-8.00pm Laughter Club at St. Mark's 2nd week each month) Cheryl Green 07729187399
7.15pm Guides. St Mark's. Mrs Gill Lake 218091
7.30pm Whist Drive. St Mark's (Weeks 3 & 5 in the month).. Next meeting– 18 May Judith Stanton. 823313
7.30pm No Fear Bridge Club St. Mark's Mrs. Susan Ford 300218.
7.30pm House group 30 The Ridgeway. The home of Eddy & Margaret Peck 267567
7.45-9.15 Get Fit Keep Fit at Putnoe Heights Diane Field 01234 404976

Tuesday

9.30am Candlewicking (Needlework). Putnoe Heights. Pat McCart 365507
9.30am -12.30 & 4-9pm Slimming World St. Mark's. 9.30, 11.30, 3.30, 5.30, 7.30. Lorrie Pearson 340473

11-12.15am U3A Keep Fit Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946
1.15pm U3A Cinema Group. St Mark's Contact Janet King 313946
1.30pm 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
2.00pm 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.
3.30-6.30pm Stars School of Dance at Putnoe Heights. Esther Richardson 295862 or 07917582468
6-7pm Supple Strength Yoga St Mark's Amanda Alcock 07769747393
7.15-8.15pm Pilates St Mark's Church Jane Butcher 07891879571
7.00pm - 8.30pm Daisy Birthing Putnoe Heights Susie 07980447390
7.30pm Ladies Tuesday Club at Putnoe Heights (Meets monthly Next meeting 19 May Flower Event Details Diane Bayliss 268101
8.00pm Hearts in Beds Committee St Mark's (week 4 in month) Mrs N Aspey 309816

Wednesday

9.30am Body Control Pilates. Putnoe Heights. Stephanie Smith 357787 or 07973174430.
10.00-2pm Open House at St Mark's for those with learning disabilities., their friends, family , carers and supporters 342613.
10.00am U3A Gardening Group 3 St Marks. Contact 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
11.15am U3A Keep Fit at Putnoe Heights
12.30pm Luncheon Club. Putnoe fortnightly. Next meeting 6 May Contact Putnoe Office 365630
1.15pm Social Bridge Club St. Mark's. Mr Barnes 261811
2.00-4.00pm U3A Craft at St Marks.Contact 1st week of the month. Janet King 313946
2.00pm U3A Gilbert and Sullivan Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946
2.00pm - Fifty plus Keep Fit. Putnoe Heights Mrs Webster 856966
3.30-4.30pm Vita Fit St Mark's starting 29 April for 6 weeks Liz Roe 07901684538
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 20 May 2015 Wendy Waters 401834 Jean Bank 355698
4.15pm Kumon Maths. Putnoe Heights Mrs Raksha Mistry 01908 392698
5.00–6.00pm Rainbows at Putnoe Heights Mrs Gill Lake 218091
6.00pm Brownies. St Mark's. Mrs C Warden 219731
6.15pm Yoga and Relaxation Putnoe Heights Racheall Monton 01234 297138 or 07910835994

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

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

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

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

7.15pm Putnoe Guild Putnoe 3rd Wednesday in every month except August Mrs Jo Street 3446008.00pm

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

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

Thursday

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

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

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

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

1.00-2.30pm Wiggles & Jiggles Putnoe Heights. Drop in.

1.00 - 2.30pm 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 07768481499

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

6.15pm Brownies. Putnoe Heights Lou Brenna. 07919402797.

7.00pm Club 2000 Putnoe Audrey Halford 407284

7.00pm U3A Folk & Poetry St Marks (2nd and 4th week in month)Contact Janet King 313946

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

7.15pm Putnoe Art Group Bob Wardale 406094

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

7.00pm Brickhill Ladies Group St Mark's (1st and 3rd week in month) Linda Stephen 409493

8.00pm Bedford Folk Dancers (formerly Barn dancers) Meet weekly at Putnoe Heights Different guest callers each week.Except August. All welcome, cost £2.50

Including refreshments. More details Ron 825574 or Shirley 01767 651767

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

Friday

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

10am -12.00 U3A Photography St Marks.(4th week in month) Contact 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-7.00pm Stars School of Dance at Putnoe. Esther Richardson 295862 or 07917582468

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

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

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

Saturday

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

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

Young Embroiderers bi monthly Putnoe Heights Terry Fletcher 357198

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

Sunday

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

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

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

2- 4.30pm Indoor Bowls at St. Mark's 2nd & 4th Sunday. Closed for summer break. Re opens 13 September. Ray Seymour 305695 or church office.

Diary Dates



St Mark's Church Council – tba

St Mark's Leadership Team -

Annual Congregational Meetings -

Putnoe Heights Leadership Team – 2nd June

Putnoe Heights Management Meeting – 28 May

Putnoe Church Council - 11 June

Pastoral Group Meeting– 15 September 2015 4.00pm

Churchyard Committee - TBA

Circuit meeting – 16 June at Putnoe Heights

Deanery meeting -

Woodland Burial Trustees –

Putnoe Heights Children & Youth Meeting - 1 June 2015 2pm

St Mark's Car Boot Sales 2015, 4 May, 25 May and 31 August.

Harvest Festival service will be on Sunday 27 September.

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

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Sentence of Scripture 1 John 4:7

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Collect Prayer for the Day

Before we read we pray

Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life: grant us to walk in his way, to rejoice in his truth and to share his risen life; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

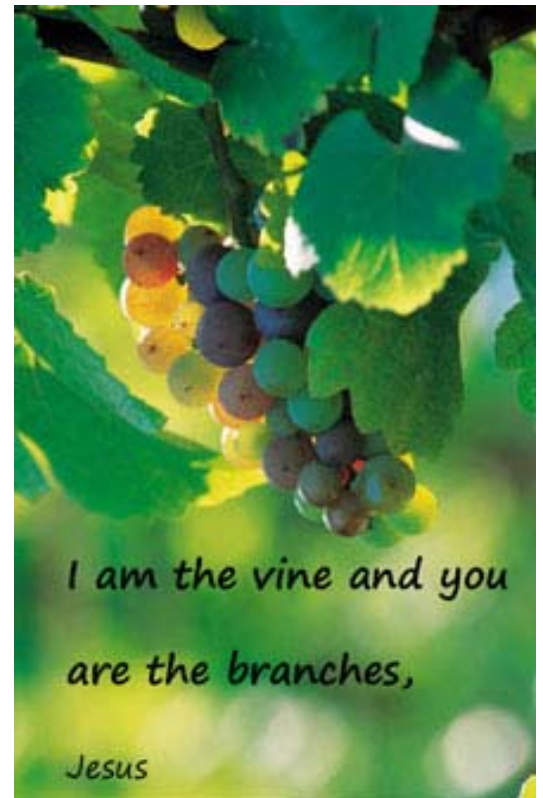
Amen. *Methodist Worship*

First Bible Reading - Acts 8:26-40

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth." The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they travelled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and travelled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea. (This is the word of the Lord—**Thanks be to God**)

Second Bible Reading - 1 John 4: 7-21

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. (This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**)



Gospel Reading - John 15:1-8

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**)

Post Communion Prayer

Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life: grant us to walk in his way, to rejoice in his truth, and to share his risen life; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen

Hymns for Sunday (*Please distribute Morning Family Worship booklet & Baptism Booklet at St Mark's, there are a limited number of hymn sheets for those who need them*)

1. I know that my Redeemer lives!
2. Jesus put this song into our hearts,
3. Now the green blade riseth
4. And can it be that I should gain
5. I will sing the wondrous story

Commentary

When Jesus said that he was the true vine it was a metaphor which had meaning for Jewish people. Down through Jewish history the vine became the symbol of Israel.

During the Macabees period of history, the symbol of the vine was on the coins of Israel. It was also over the main doors of the synagogues.

Josephus in describing Herod's Temple in Jesus' day says, "*Under the crown work was spread out a golden vine, with its branches hanging down from a great height, the largeness and the workmanship of which were an astonishing sight to the spectators*" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 5.5.4).

"The gate opening into the building (Temple) was, as I say, completely overlaid with gold, as was the whole wall around it. It had, moreover, above it those golden vines, from which depended grape-clusters as tall as a man" (*Jewish War* v.210-212).4

Several other passages from the prophets, including Isaiah 27:2-6, Jeremiah 2:21, Hosea 10:1-2; Ezekiel 15:1-5, 17:1-21, 19:10-15, all support this theme.

In Psalm 80 Psalm 80:7-19. God's people Israel are pictured as the vine which "God brought out of Egypt." God took great care driving out the nations, clearing the ground, and planted the vine. The result—a thriving vineyard whose borders spread from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River. But the vineyard is here pictured as broken down and destroyed, a result of the judgment of God.

Isaiah 5:1-7. Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard (chap 5) is much like a parable, depicting a man who planted a vineyard on a fertile hillside, perfectly prepared to produce good crops and wine. But the vineyard produced only bad fruit, and is now destined to be destroyed. Again, these passages identify Israel with the vine motif, and like Psalm 80, associate it with God's discipline. Israel is depicted with great optimism and potential, but ultimately judged because of moral and spiritual failure.⁶

Therefore the word which is so crucial to our understanding in the passage today is the word 'true.' Jesus is making a clear point that the old vine of Israel had been replaced by him. Jesus was the 'true vine', which Israel has failed to be. In John 15 not only is Jesus the vine, but the Father is the gardener. Jesus is offering to help nourish and sustain us and give us life.

Jesus is the New Israel, it is in him that people will find God and find meaning for their lives.



A coin from the time of Herod Archelaus, 4 BC - AD 6
Bronze, 16 mm.
Cluster of grapes on a branch with Herod's name above in Greek



Eastern Orthodox Icon of
Jesus as the True Vine

How do we remain close to Christ as he calls us to do in the reading today? How do we remain or stay in union with Him? This is a question which many people often ask? We are told that it is love which unites the believer to Christ, as a branch is grafted to the vine. Often when people speak about their faith they complain they feel far from the love of God. If by love we mean the emotion which is often spoken of as 'being in love' then this is perhaps not surprising. However what John means by abiding in the love of Jesus is shown in verse 10

"If you obey my commands you will remain in my love"

It might seem disappointing to be told that the love of Christ is about obedience, but the two go very closely together. The effect of Christ's love is obedience from the believer. The example of this is found in verse 10 in the relationship which Jesus had with God the Father, *"even as I have kept my Father's commandments"*

Jesus remained in God's love by keeping the commandments and if this is how Jesus remained close to God - then this is how we must also seek to draw close to God.

This may all seem very mundane, but it is also reassuring. The love of God is continuous even when we feel that we are far from God. If we remain obedient then we will enjoy God's love, it is not subject to the vagaries of life. So it was that Paul would have known the love of

God when he was shipwrecked, Peter when he was imprisoned, Stephen when he was stoned to death. They all had something which was capable of carrying them through the emotional up's and downs of life, so that their faith was not tossed to and fro like a leaf on a pond. They had a faith which was built upon the rock of their obedience to God. Surely is this not true of any human relationship? Is our love not shown in commitment irrespective of all else? Even when we think we feel more strongly for another we know that love does not follow such feelings. Instead we are obedient to the promise we have made and the commitment which has been promised.

Prayer is also important in this. Jesus says

'If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.'

Jesus is saying that prayer is not asking God for things for ourselves. It is about being in fellowship with Christ and able to discern His will so that our will becomes one with the will of God. So it is that whatever we ask or wish, it will be given. *Charles Royden*

Meditation

What was the difference between the wise man who built his house upon the rock and the foolish man who built his house upon the sand? The answer is obedience. Both men heard the word. This is not a parable about the believer and the unbeliever- both build houses. The difference is obedience. The wise man is obedient and so his faith works. The fool is not obedient. Our love is synonymous with obedience and if we are obedient, then we will begin to know the presence of God ever more deeply in our lives.

Prayers for Sunday and the week ahead

By this power of the Spirit, God's children can bear much fruit. He who has grafted us onto the true vine will make us bear "the fruit of the Spirit: . . . love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." "We live by the Spirit"; the more we renounce ourselves, the more we "walk by the Spirit." Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of heaven, and adopted as children, given confidence to call God "Father" and to share in Christ's grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory. (736) From the *Daily Roman Missal*, Introduction to the Fifth Sunday of Easter, Cycle B

As we continue to celebrate the Resurrection, may the hope fulfilled sustain us to be fruitful disciples. May we see the spirit of discipleship in others, to collaborate with them and not fear their involvement.

Let us be receptive to diversity to sustain discipleship in all the families of nations, now and for future generations. Only with the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we know this is possible. For apart from you, Jesus, and your Father, we cannot bear fruit. Thank you for letting us be a branch on your true vine. In your name, Jesus, we pray, Amen.

Visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to St Albans Diocese: June 2015

Sustaining Ministry and Personal Faith - Thursday
18 June 2015 at 7.15pm.

I invite you to come and hear Archbishop Justin speak to clergy, lay ministers, ordinands and congregation members on Thursday 18 June in the Cathedral. Archbishop Justin will draw on his experience and life, as well as his interest in Benedictine spirituality, as he explores the wells which sustain his faith in his demanding role. I know that his insights will be relevant to us all as we seek to fulfill our various ministries and grow in our personal faith. The format for the event will be:
7:15pm Arrive at St Albans Cathedral and mingle with friends from across the diocese over drinks
8:00pm Talk by Archbishop Justin
8:45pm Period of quiet reflection
8:55pm Compline
9:15pm Leave the Cathedral in silence
Bishop Alan

If you are interested in going then please speak with Charlie or Sam as we will arrange transport to the Abbey for those who need it.

Details of Hustings organised by Hope, Bedford Sunday 3 of May, 8pm at Bedford Pentecostal Church, The Hustings will be run under the leadership of the Bishop of Bedford, Bishop Richard. The plan would be for folk to gather at or after 7:30pm, to have tea or coffee, then start promptly at 8pm. Bishop Richard would have the questions before hand, and would allocate a fair amount of time to each candidate. Please send your questions

simon.mushonga@threeriversbedford.uk glayne.worgan@methodist.org.uk by Friday 1 May.

Mother Teresa Support Group meet at St Mark's on 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 2.30pm to knit and natter. (Wool and needles provided.) Please call Maureen Watling Tel.262225. New people always welcome. Next meeting Tuesday 12 May.

Action for Children An invitation to all to join box holders for tea and cake at Ladyslaude, Bramley Way, Woodlands on May 13 at 2—4 p.m. Either give Margaret Standley your box beforehand or bring it on the day. We shall be opening the boxes, and help with counting the money will be welcome. Last year box holders raised £429.95. Thank you to all who help this worthy cause.

Open Day at St. Mark's Church Pre-school and All day Childcare. Saturday 9 May 2pm - 4pm. Activities for the children, face painting. Coffee and cakes. Families welcome. Ofsted 2015 "Good" We now welcome 2 year olds.

Putnoe Men's Group I have arranged a meal at the Pheasant Public House on Wednesday 13 May at 7:30pm. Please see Barry Southam for booking forms & Menu details.

Footprints: The next Footprints walk is today (Sunday, 3 May) and will be to Kings Wood near Ampthill to see the bluebells and various woodland flowers. It starts at 2.30pm and we suggest parking at Houghton House at the top of Ampthill Hill. Parking there can be somewhat restrictive so car sharing is a good idea. For more information, call Jo and Alan Wooding (01234 363771).



Do you have a skill or something which you do which you could share with open House. It might be singing or making things or you may have some special photographs which you could show from a trip. Open House would like to welcome you

along. Open House provides a relaxed café style environment where people are free to meet and make friends, enjoy themselves and perhaps try a new activity or learn a skill. Please get in touch with Charlie if you could offer to along one Wednesday.



Car Boot tomorrow

Monday 4 May Anything for the stall can be left in the foyer on Sunday. The church will be open all day. Cakes and traybakes can be left in the kitchen or brought Monday morning. Any offers of help would be

gratefully received. Please contact Linda Parry.

John Lewis Double Sofa Bed (Pale Green) - bought October 2013 for £650 used twice - now surplus to requirements, will accept £150 please contact Ian Farthing 210892

St Albans Woodland Burial Ground Open Day

will be on Saturday 16th May from 2-5pm. Do come along and join us for tea and cake and a chat. Offers of cake would be gratefully received. Many thanks. Linda.

Brownies. Holly is a Brownie Leader at St Andrews Church, she has been selected to represent the Anglia region on a service project to Romania. Our Putnoe Brownies are trying to help her with her fundraising (she needs to raise \$2,500) by making friendship bracelet kits for her to sell. Each kit needs 7 strands of wool 50cm long. We are looking for as much pretty coloured wool as we can so that our Putnoe Brownies can make the kits. Thank you. Carolyn Morris.

Clear out your wardrobe St Mark's have installed a textile clothing bank in the car park and we want your old clothes, curtains, sheets, soft toys, belts, handbags and shoes. Every kilo which you give us will help raise money for church funds



Christian Aid Week: 10 – 16 May

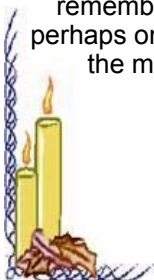
Both the St. Mark's and Putnoe Heights Leadership teams have made decisions not to have a house to house collection in the areas of Brickhill and Putnoe. In recent years it has become increasingly difficult to recruit volunteer collectors from our congregations and the general public are much more wary about giving money to unfamiliar charity collectors. We will put out the collection envelopes in the churches on the 3 Sundays of 3, 10 and 17 May for those who wish to use them. You may wish to take extra envelopes for friends or relatives to raise money that way. Your Christian Aid contributions can be placed in the offertory at the Sunday services or be handed in to either St Mark's or Putnoe Heights offices during the week. Please Gift Aid your gift if you are entitled to do so, as this adds 25% to the value of the donation. In addition, there is to be a sponsored abseil at Elstow Abbey on Saturday 2 May, which is being organised by the Christian Aid regional office at Oxford. If you'd like to have a go, please see the displayed poster and contact 01865 246818 for details. It's not too late! Thank you.

Every year, Christian Aid organise 'Count Your Blessings' during the whole of Lent, where the challenge is for us to consider people in other parts of the world by, for example, giving small daily donations, praying for them, petitioning our MP, or some other positive action. Carolyn and I know that quite a number of people from our two congregations took away the brochures at the beginning of Lent and have since sent their donations to Christian Aid head office. Thank you very much for faithfully counting your blessings for six weeks. As soon as we have a total amount collected sent to us, we'll publish it in Partnership News. Jean Bank, St. Mark's & Carolyn Morris, Putnoe Heights

Putnoe Heights "Missions knitting and crochet group". Knit-a-square for KasCare, providing comfort for orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa. <http://www.knit-a-square.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



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

mission project for everyone. We could meet once a month; knit at home; donate wool or postage to send the items we have made. KasCare likes knitted and crochet 8 inch squares sent to them to make blankets to keep children warm. For more details speak to Carolyn Morris or visit their website for patterns and instructions.

Intercessions

Bidding You are the vine, we are the branches
Response May we bear the fruits of love

Annual Congregational Meetings 2105

Thank you to everybody who came to our Annual Congregational Meetings last week. Each year we try to publish accurate figures of membership. If you have never completed a membership form, or if any details have changed then please do tell us. Some of these numbers will need to be refined but the following were presented to the meetings.

St Mark's Church

St Mark's Anglican 67
St Mark's Methodist 13
St Mark's Joint 3
St Mark's Other 12

Putnoe Heights Church

Putnoe Anglican 73
Putnoe Methodist 56
Putnoe Joint 17
Putnoe Other 18



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www.easyfundraising.com. This works exactly the same when you shop with John Lewis, M&S and a whole host of other 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



Forthcoming Funerals

The funeral of Beryl Boness will take place at Bedford Crematorium at 1.45pm on Thursday 14 May