



# Partnership News

6 January 2012

Epiphany

Putnoe Heights & St Mark's Church



## 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

### Today 06 January

#### 9.30 St Marks – Family Worship

Preacher – Revd Charles Royden  
Leadership - Mrs Morag Stewart  
Intercessions – Deacon Jane Mills

#### 11.00 am Putnoe - Family Worship

Preacher – Revd Charles Royden  
Leadership – Mr Barry Southam  
Intercessions - YPF

### Sunday 13 January 2013

#### 9.30 St Marks – Morning Worship

Preacher – Mrs Wendy Waters  
Leadership - Mr Mick Ovenden  
Intercessions – Mr Mike Elliot

#### 11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Worship

Preacher – Mrs Wendy Waters  
Leadership – Mrs Jenny Snelson  
Intercessions - Dr Tim Wilkes

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

**Midweek Holy Communion** at St Mark's Chapel every  
Wednesday at 10.00am and at Sir William Harpur House on  
first Monday of every month at 10.00am

## Thank You

The flowers at Putnoe Heights Church this week have been given by Gwen Beswick in loving memory of her husband Peter, by Irene McKenzie in loving memory of her husband Eddie, and by Veta Hudson-Rae in loving memory of her parents.

The flowers at St Mark's this week are donated by Margaret Standley and family in memory of John.

*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 on the foyers*

## Prayer for Sunday

Dispel, O Lord, O Father of lights, all clouds of doubt, and the darkness about our earthly course, that in your light we may see light, and come both to know you as we are known, and to love as we are loved; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*John Donne (1571-1631)*

### The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman

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

### Deacon Jane Mills

12 Hartop Close, Bedford MK41 8HE  
348091 Mobile 07807 146535 jane@thisischurch.com

### The Reverend 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.ThisChurch.com](http://www.ThisChurch.com)

### Partnership Pastoral Support Team Co-Ordinator

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

### Churchyards Administrator

Mrs Avril Williams 01234 342613

### Putnoe Heights Church Centre

**Open Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm, Friday 9am - 1pm**  
**Tel/fax & Answering Service** 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com  
**Centre Manager** Mr Geoff Gypps 365630 mob 07947 902846  
**Leadership Team** Mrs. Jean Kirk 317699  
**Treasurer** Mr John Hitt 404186 treasurerph@thisischurch.com  
**Gift Aid Administrator** Mr Lawrence Wyatt 350188  
**Youth Team Leader** Carolyn Morris youth@thisischurch.com

### St. Mark's Church Centre

**Open Monday - Friday 9am - 5.00pm**  
**Tel/fax & Answering Service** 342613 office@thisischurch.com  
**Centre Manager** Miss Wendy Rider 342613  
**Leadership Team** - Morag Stewart 360103  
**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 –3.45 pm Mon and Wed/ 9.15-12.15pm Tues/ Thurs/Fri. Hazeldene Heights Pre-school.** See website for more details [www.ThisChurch.com](http://www.ThisChurch.com)  
Head teacher Mrs Laura Leggett 326685  
**8.30-5.30pm Pre-school** Mon-Fri St Mark's  
**9.-3.45pm Top Marks** Mon-Fri St Mark's  
Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin **312634**  
(See website for more details)  
**.9.45am - Body Control Pilates** –Putnoe Heights  
Stephanie Smith 357787 or 07973174430  
**10.00am Bakers Barn Art Group.** St Mark's Mrs Berry 211955  
**10.30am U3A Play reading** St Mark's (see contact details below)  
**2.00pm U3A Calligraphy** at St Mark's 2nd week (see contact details below)  
**2.00pm U3A Relaxation & Meditation** at St Mark's 1st & 3rd week starting 1st October (see contact details below)  
**12.15pm Story box** Putnoe Heights We welcome the under 5's and their carers to join them between 12.15 and 1.15 for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based story and singing. Contact Carolyn Morris [youth@thischurch.com](mailto:youth@thischurch.com) 365630  
**1.30-2.45pm Chat & Make** For babies and toddlers 0-5. Crafts, toys,songs,story and refreshments £1. More details email– [chatandplay@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chatandplay@hotmail.co.uk) . Restarts on 10 September  
**2pm U3A Music Appreciation** (see contact details below)  
**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 01767699399 or 07720713738.  
**6.15 Pilates** at Putnoe Heights Jane Butcher 300859  
**6.15pm-8.15pm Fit for Life Yoga** - Putnoe Heights Contact Jane Butcher 07891879571  
**6.30pm Boot Camp** Putnoe Heights – Laura Amor 341152 / 07976259081  
**7.00pm Sugarcraft Guild** St Mark's 1st week Pat Nicholson 353518  
**7.00pm Cancer Care Society.** St Mark's. 1st Week. Mr J Dewhurst 01908 377020  
**7.15pm Guides.** St Mark's. Mrs Gill Lake 218091  
**7.30pm Whist Drive.** St Mark's 3rd & 5th week . Next meeting– 21 January Judith Stanton. 823313  
**7.30pm House group** 30 The Ridgeway. The home of Eddy & Margaret Peck 267567  
**7.45pm Opus Choir** at St Mark's Mrs Sutherland 269100  
**8pm 'Get Fit, Stay Fit'** at Putnoe Diane Field 404976

## Tuesday

**9.30am Jo Jingles.** St. Mark's. Music & movement for pre-school children. Renu Elston 07790206016  
**9.30am Candlewicking** (Needlework). Putnoe Heights. Pat McCart 365507  
**9.30am -12.30 & 4-9pm Slimming World** St. Mark's. Helen Skinner 07989080389  
**10am Autism Beds Adult Support Group.** St Mark's. Sally Cripsley 350704  
**11.15am U3A Keep Fit Putnoe Heights** (see contact details below)  
**1pm –2.30pm Drop in Wiggles and Jiggles** 0-5 years, Putnoe Children's Centre. Please call Trudy Hamilton (centre assistant) for more information 340552  
**1.15pm U3A Cinema Group.** St Mark's (contacts below)  
**2.00pm U3A Book Group 1** St Mark's (3rd Wk) (see

contact details below)

**2.00pm U3A Book Group 2** St Mark's (2nd Wk) (see contact details  
**2.00pm Library Walk W.I.** Putnoe Heights, meets monthly. Morag Tomkins 356895  
**2pm U3A Photography Group 3** St. Mark's (1st Wk) (contact details below).  
**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.  
**4.00pm-6.15pm Stars School of Dance.** Esther Richardson 295862 or 07917582468  
**6.15pm Pilates** St Mark's Church Jane Butcher 0789187957  
**7pm—8.30pm Daisy Birthing** Putnoe Heights Susie 07980447390  
**6.00-7.00pm Zumba at St Mark's.** Contact Denise Worker 07900 232648  
**6.30pm MT Karate** (all ages) Karen King 07941264885  
**7pm Keep Fit.** St. Mark's Jan Gregory 328455  
**7pm Tabernacle of Truth Church** Putnoe Heights Bible study & prayers. Sacha Ojo 07590597891 or [www.tabernacleoftruth.co.uk](http://www.tabernacleoftruth.co.uk)  
**7pm Putnoe Heights Ladies Tuesday Club** (Meets fortnightly). Janet King 313946 Next meeting 8 January 2.30pm Afternoon. Details Janet King 313946  
**8.15pm - 10.15pm Bedford Advanced Dancers Workshop** St. Mark's 1st Tuesday in month. Shirley Sadler 01767 651767

## Wednesday

**9am -1pm Machine Knitting** group at Putnoe Heights, fortnightly. Contact Marion Sutton 217647  
**9.30am Body Control Pilates.** Putnoe Heights. Stephanie Smith 357787 or 07973174430.  
**9.30am Discovery & Do** (Childminders) St. Mark's. Clare Simmons 328380 or 07788824666  
**10am-2pm Open House** at St Mark's for those with learning disabilities., their friends, family , carers and supporters 342613.  
**10am U3A Gardening Group 3** St Marks. (contact below)  
**10.00am Holy Communion.** St. Mark's Chapel. A half hour service followed by coffee. All welcome.  
**10am U3A Card Making,** St Marks (see contact details below)  
**10am U3A Diet and Nutrition-** Putnoe (contact below)  
**11.15am U3A Keep Fit**  
**12.30pm Luncheon Club.** Putnoe fortnightly. Next meeting 16 January 2013 Putnoe Heights Office 365630  
**1.00-3pm Police Surgery** at Putnoe Heights (Fortnightly)  
**1.15pm Bridge Club for the Retired.** St. Mark's. Mr Barnes 261811  
**2.00-4.00pm U3A Craft** St Marks.(see contact details below)  
**2.00pm Fifty Plus Keep Fit** Mrs Webster 856966  
**2pm U3A Gilbert and Sullivan**  
**2.15pm - Fifty plus Keep Fit.** Putnoe Heights Mrs Webster 856966  
**3.45.- 5.30pm Messy Church.** St Mark's (3rd Wk). for children of lower school age and their carers. Bible-based story, crafts, singing and a meal. Next meeting January 16 Wendy Waters /401834  
**4.15pm Kumon Maths.** Putnoe Heights Mrs Raksha Mistry 01908 392698

**6.00 pm Brownies.** St Mark's. Mrs C Warden 219731  
**6.15pm Yoga and Relaxation** Putnoe Heights Racheall Monton 01234 297138 or 07910835994.  
**6-8pm 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. Sylvia Woods 365095  
**7.00pm Putnoe Guild** Putnoe monthly Mrs O Holt 266004  
**7.00pm Line Dancing** Putnoe Mike Del-Boyer 348378  
**8.00pm Badminton Club** Putnoe Heights All welcome. Ken Marriott 214867  
**8.00pm Tudor Reeds Folk Dance Club** at St Mark's 1st,3rd & 5th Wednesday in month. Next meeting will be 16 January Everyone welcome. All dances called, only £1 including refreshments. Valmai 219555 Rosemary 405594 or Graham 406359 for more details.  
**8.00pm Bedford Wine and Social Club** St Mark's 1st week in the month. Jean Ross 771870

### 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.*  
**9.45am Yoga** Putnoe Heights Denise Green 244970  
**9.45am Chat and Play** St.Mark's. A term time group for Mums & toddlers.0-5 Jo Garner 400071 or 07719670624  
**110-11.30am Gentle Yoga** For more details contact Helen Nicholson Tel.03003004305  
**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 363283  
**1.30 - 3.00pm NHS Baby Clinic 1st and 3rd Thursdays** St. Mark's 267444  
**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  
**2-4pm U3A Indoor Games.** St.Mark's (contact below)  
**2.30 - 4.30pm Bedford Art Society** St Mark's Mary Rich 272470  
**6.15 pm Weightwatchers.** St. Mark's. Clare Martin 07805408811.  
**6.15pm Brownies.** Putnoe Heights Lou Watkins .  
**7.00pm Club 2000** Putnoe Nina Ovenden 825059  
**7pm U3A Folk & Poetry** St Marks (2nd and 4th week) (see contact details below)  
**7.15pm Putnoe Art Group** Bob Wardale 406094  
**7.00pm Bedford Embroiderers' Guild** St Mark's 3rd week in month. Carol Plant 01832710504  
**8 -10pm Bedford Folk dancers** (formerly Barn dancers) Meet weekly at Putnoe Heights Different guest callers each week. All welcome, cost £2 Including refreshments. More details Ron 825574 or Shirley 01767 651767  
**8.00pm Bedford Writers Circle.** St Mark's 1st week in month. Mr Newton 01525 378193  
**8.00pm Magpies Women's Group** St Mark's 2nd & 4th week Pat Cass 294220  
**8.00pm Brickhill Ladies Group** St Mark's 1st and 3rd week in month Kay Logan 01234 309105.

### Friday

**10am -12.00 U3A Photography** St Marks.(4th week) (see contact details below)  
**10am - 12 & 1.15 - 3.15pm U3A Beginners French** St. Marks (see contact details below)  
**2.00-4.00 pm U3A Whist** St Marks. (contact details below)  
**2pm U3A Italian**-Putnoe Heights (contact details below)  
**2pm U3A Gardening** - Putnoe Heights 4.50pm-8.15pm Stars School of Dance Esther Richardson 295862 or 07917582468  
**6.00-7.00pm Zumba at St Mark's.** Contact Denise Worker (07900 232648  
**6.15pm Yoga and Relaxation** Putnoe Heights. Racheall Monton 297138 or 07910835994  
**7.45 - 10.45pm Bedford Astrology Club.**St Marks(2nd week) 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 357198  
**2.15pm Society of Recorder Players** at Putnoe Heights. G Parry 01462 674792  
**6.45pm 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.  
**7-9pm Tae Kwon Do** St Mark's Adrian Felice www.bedfordtkd.com 07964356355

**U3A** For information on the U3A groups meeting at St Mark's and Putnoe Heights Church please contact Yvonne Francis ☎405119

## Diary Dates

**St Mark's Church Council** – 19 Feb,11 June  
**St Mark's Leadership Team** - 22 January  
**Putnoe Heights Leadership Team** - 5 February  
**Putnoe Heights Management Meeting** 24 January  
**Putnoe Church Council** - 19 February  
**Pastoral Group Meeting** - 5 February  
**Churchyard Committee** -  
**Brickhill Parish Council Meetings** -  
**Commemoration Service**  
**Circuit meeting** - 7 February  
**Deanery Meeting** -  
**Woodland Burial Trustees**—  
**Putnoe Heights Children & Youth Meeting** -  
*Please advise St Mark's Church Office of the dates of your meetings.*



# Epiphany

## Opening Verse of Scripture

### John 8:12

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he 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

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.

*Common Worship Shorter Collect*

## 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.

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

## Second Bible 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. (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. "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

What can I give him poor as I am  
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb  
If I were wise man I would do my part  
So what can I give him ? Give my heart



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. (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.

### Hymns *(Please distribute Morning Worship and Epiphany hymn Sheets )*

1. As with gladness *(Tune Dix)*
2. The wise may bring their learning *(Tune Tyrolese)*
3. Every star shall sing a carol *(Tune Every Star)*
4. The silent stars shine down on us *(Tune Kingsfold)*
5. Brightest and best *(Tune Epiphany Hymn)*

### Commentary

On January 6 western Christians celebrate the feast of Epiphany. Epiphany takes its name from the Greek word 'epiphaneia', meaning disclosure, manifestation, unveiling or appearance. On this date we remember the "appearance" of the Magi from the east. Last week we were reminded about how Jewish the upbringing of Jesus was, with his parents travelling to the temple every year. This week we are reminded that the Magi represent visitors to Jesus from outside the confines of the Jewish faith. It is a time when Jesus is shown to the world. It is about God making know salvation outside what had been the chosen few. Now all people could share in God's grace, salvation was shared with other races and creeds. God cared about all creation and no longer could it be thought that his favour was restricted to any one group.

The Magi show the fulfilment of that promise to Abraham that all nations would be blessed. The new king Jesus abolishes not only the barriers of nation, race and ethnicity. He also transcends the boundaries of gender, religion, economics and social stratification.

On the face of it then, the visit by the Magi is a great news story. Good news for all people. However the visit of the Magi has an extremely dark side. Searching for the baby Jesus, understandably they go to Jerusalem the home of the King. Their statement of seeking a new king arouses the jealousy and rage of Herod. After visiting Jesus we know the Magi return safely by another way. However such good fortune is short lived. We learn that Herod orders the death of male children in a desperate attempt to ensure that there will be no challenge to his throne. Suddenly the joy of Christmas is replaced by a bloodbath.

Whilst the stable in Bethlehem was a poor place for a baby to be welcomed into the world, it had at the least given the family a degree of security. However facing the wrath of Herod the family must now take flight and seek refuge in a foreign land. Mary, Joseph and the baby go to Egypt to escape the murderous intentions of the King.

The Magi bring with them clues as to this future trouble for the baby Jesus. They bring gold, a worthy gift for a king, and Frankincense, worthy of priest and Temple. In Isaiah 60, gold, frankincense, and camels are listed among the tribute of nations and kings. In Psalm 72, kings bring gifts to Israel's king and fall down before him. However they also bring with them Myrrh. In the film 'The Life of Brian', which attracted mixed reviews from the Christian community, in the opening scene, the mother of the baby welcomes with enthusiasm the gift of Gold and Frankincense, but understandably advises the Magi not to bother bringing Myrrh with them on their next visit. Myrrh is a costly ointment and yet it was closely associated with death. Myrrh reminds us that all is not well for this family. In Mark's Gospel we read

*'Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him...'* (Mark 15:22-24a).

In John's Gospel we read about Nicodemus who brings Myrrh to anoint the crucified body of Jesus *"a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds"* (Jn. 19:39)

The Magi follow the star and it brings them to Jesus. Much has been made of what this special star might have been. We will never know, however it is clear that their study of astrology led the Magi to discover God's gift. It is interesting how this episode challenges us to consider how God speaks through other means to people of different faiths, creeds and cultures. Of course it would have been hard to identify a place where the star was over. The Magi were clearly skilled to be able to get anywhere close.

Understandably they went to Jerusalem the palace of the king. Bethlehem is of course 9 miles to the south of Jerusalem. Only nine earth miles, but an entire world away from the court of Herod. Not for Jesus any of the power, wealth and earthly authority of Herod.

The stars are fascinating and of course the places to observe them are located in extreme places away from any sources of light pollution. It is in the midst of the darkest sky that the light of the stars shine most brightly. We would all love to be able to have lives without darkness, sadly this is not to be. Yet in the darkness we too can discover the light of Christ.

The visit of the Magi marks the beginning of a very difficult time for Jesus and his family. They are not

immune from the toil and trouble of this life and Christmas soon gives way to a more difficult time. As we draw to a close of this Christmas season we might want to hold on to some of the beautiful and enjoyable times which we have experienced. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the peace and goodwill which we have shared could last throughout the year. Wouldn't it be nice if there were no bad news, no sadness of sickness, no stress, no heartaches, no switching on of the news to hear about another senseless murder.

In real life there is always the presence of both sweet-and-sour, joy and mourning, health and sickness, light and darkness. However as Christians our focus is not upon the darkness but rather upon the light. Like Jesus we will have sorrows and setbacks however we recognise that in the darkness Christ is our light. There is therefore no need to become depressed or despair at the futility of the world around us. Like the Magi as we go into 2013 we must concentrate upon the light which God has given to us. As we put Christmas back into the box until next year, we must resolve to follow his light along that path which will guide us when we face danger. We do not know what the future will bring us this year, undoubtedly we will all face challenges and testing times. So it is imperative that our minds are set firmly focussed like the Magi, on discovering Jesus and worshipping him. A week ago we experienced the shortest day of the year, winter solstice; from now on each day will contain more light for us with each new dawn. This season encourages us to follow the light of Christ, to bring all our gifts, no matter how humble, to honour Jesus and all that Jesus stands for in our lives and the world.

### **Meditation May Christ Bless This House!**

Epiphany tradition tells us that the Magi were three wise men called Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. They brought gifts of gold because the Child was a King, frankincense because the Child was God, and myrrh to symbolise the death to which Jesus was destined at birth. One Epiphany tradition involves blessing doorway and inscribing the lintels, perhaps with chalk, with the initials of the imaginary three kings. This tradition is seen as demonstrating a commitment to making the dwelling or whatever kind of premises, a place of hospitality and a recognised special space where the name of God is hallowed. The year and initials of the Magi are inscribed above the doors with the first two numerals of the year preceding the C and the last two numerals of the year placed after the B, so this year would be 20 + C + M + B + 13. The initials of the Magi are also the first letters in Latin of 'Christus Mansionem Benedicat' - 'May Christ bless the house'. You may not want to inscribe your doors but it is good to consider how God may bless your house and all who live there with goodness of heart, gentleness and the following of his ways, throughout the coming year.

**Prayer** Lord Jesus, who found no other hospitality in Bethlehem, but a home with the animals, and no place for a bed other than a feeding trough. Bless our home throughout this coming year. You welcomed the Magi who were visitors from a different faith, race and culture, so may we be always ready to greet others from your earthly family with appropriate kindness and may our doors be always open to show a loving welcome in your name.

**Prayers for Sunday and the Week ahead** Lord God you made known your salvation for the world by the shining of a star, which shone to all people. Grant us grace that your love and peace would shine forth from our lives proclaiming the good news of your Son our Saviour, born for us this Christmas time. As the Magi came and brought gifts, so may we offer all that we are to your service, and through the offering of ourselves may you become flesh again in us. We pray that your wonderful Gift may be manifest to us, and that we in our turn may discover our own gifts and use them to your glory. We pray for your church across the world and here in Bedford. At your birth you welcomed people from other nations, culture and faith, so may we learn to live in harmony and mutual respect with others, recognising our similarities and celebrating our differences. May we resolve to throughout this year to be faithful in our Christian lives, to let our love shine forth and to live less for ourselves and more for others. We pray for all in authority, that they may seek wisdom, mercy and respect for all humanity. We pray that new democracies which have emerged or are still struggling to emerge may go forward in peace and fulfil the hopes of their peoples. We pray for all who suffer indignity, deprivation, starvation, fear or loss of freedom at the hands of others. We pray people who live with war may find peace and those who suffer oppression may find freedom. May lessons be learned by all of us from the mistakes and misfortunes of the past year. We pray for all who are without faith, hope or love. We pray for those who are sick, desperate or bereaved and for those who care for them and seek to bring them relief from their suffering. Give them the strength and courage to carry on, and hope for the future.





## Another Fabulous Concert at St Mark's Church

Concert on Saturday, 9 February 2013 at 7.30pm in St Mark's Church given by Taylor Wilson, Stewart Kempster and Clive Simmonds.

Entrance is free and there will be a retiring offering in aid of the St Mark's piano fund.

We were delighted that you were all so enthusiastic after

our concert last February to

celebrate the arrival of the new organ at St Mark's.

I'm delighted that Tracey (Taylor Wilson) and Stewart have agreed to join us for a second concert next

February. This year we also have a new piano at St Mark's to enjoy and this will widen the range of items which we can include in our programme.

**Stewart** was a student at the Royal Academy of Music and has sung operatic roles in many venues both in this country and abroad. He and Tracey live now in a cottage just south of Glasgow and he has sung with most of the major choirs and orchestras in Scotland. He has made CD's with the National Youth Choir and the Scottish National Orchestra and been involved in performances and broadcasts from the Wexford Festival Opera and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. He was involved in the Academy Award winning soundtrack of "Lord of the Rings" and has sung operatic roles in music festivals in France, Switzerland and Russia. He recently sung a recital on the Danish island of Bornholm. In 2012 he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

**Putnoe Heights New Year Lunch.** Sunday 20 January 2013 at 1.00pm. Tickets available from Putnoe Office and at coffee time after church on Sundays. Adults £8.00, children under 10, £4.50. Three courses with drinks included. Book early to secure tickets.

**The Bedford and District Christian Aid Committee** have been granted a collecting day at Tesco Cardington Road store on Saturday 12 January 2013. If you would like to volunteer to help on this day please speak to Carolyn for further details.

**Putnoe Heights Church Children and Youth** meeting on Monday 28th January 2013 at 1.30pm

**Unwanted Gifts?** If you would like to re-gift your unwanted Christmas gifts we will be having our annual stall after the service on Sunday 3 Feb 2013. Please leave things in the office.

**Christmas Cards** at Putnoe Heights. The total raised for Kisiizi Hospital from the Greetings Card in the welcome area and the donations in the Post Box amounted to £138.50. Thanks to all who participated.

**Christmas Gifts** If you would like to re-gift your unwanted Christmas gifts we will be having our annual stall after the service on Sunday 3rd February

2013. Please leave things in the office. Thank you. Liz and Carolyn

**Want to know what's going on?** You may find the following link helpful. It is put together by Church of England Communications and presents a daily digest of stories from the media which are of interest to church folks. This is a way of keeping in touch with what's going on without the need to trawl !

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2013/01/daily-digest-friday-4-january-2013.aspx>

## Silent Conspiracy of Silent Dedication

In the BBC message in 2002, Archbishop Rowan drew on the experience of the London Olympics to illustrate what made the games so successful:

"everyone who visited the Olympic site or watched the broadcasts will have been made aware of the army of volunteers who cheerfully gave up their free time and worked away, without complaint, all hours of the day and night to make these great events happen. They were the key people who translated the Olympic vision into reality for the rest of us."

Similar things are happening in many communities, he says, and points to the work of churches in caring for the disadvantaged:

"over twenty local churches are combining to offer food and shelter to homeless people in London. Religion here isn't a social problem or an old-fashioned embarrassment, it's a wellspring of energy and a source of life-giving vision for how people should be regarded and treated."

This kind of contribution, he says, explains why so many of the things which work well in communities come from the hard work and selfless generosity of ordinary people who want to make things happen:

"If you have the good fortune to live in a community where things seem to be working well the chances are that if you slip backstage you'll find an army of cheerful people making the wheels go round - and don't forget just what a huge percentage of them come from the churches and other faith groups"

"So let's recognise this steady current of generosity that underlies so much of our life together in this country and indeed worldwide. It's all based on one vision - to make our society, our whole world, work for everyone, not just the comfortable and well off."

And he challenges people to ask what they can do: "We should be prompted to ask the tougher question: what can I do to join this silent conspiracy of generous dedication? There'll be those who have time and skill and strength to offer; there'll be those who have less of these, but can support in prayer and goodwill."

All of this, he says, gives us joyful glimpses of the quiet, unfailing generosity of God.

**Putnoe Heights Carol Singers** raised £124 at Library Walk last weekend (in aid of BECHAR) Thank you to the singers, musicians and providers of very welcome refreshments.

**Chat and Play at St.Mark's** restarts on Thursday 10 January at 9.30am

**Chat and Make** restarts Monday 14 January 2013 at 1.30pm.

**Storybox at St Mark's** restarts on Thursday 10 January at 12 noon

**Footprints Walks.** Copies of the 2013 programme of walks now available. Next walk - Sunday 13th January. Meet at 2.00pm at Mowsbury Golf Club. Short circular walk in the Cleat Hill area and Mowsbury Hill Fort. Details from Sue & Gerry.

**Storybox at Putnoe Heights Church** will begin their new term on Monday 14th January 2013. Thank you to all our volunteer and teams who help with this group.

### Thoughts and Prayers

Members of our churches will be saddened to hear the news of the sudden death of Brian Keighley one of our regular worshippers at Putnoe Heights. The details of the funeral are in partnership news, our thoughts and prayers are with Barbara and the family.

PV



## Services in Bedford

**FRIDAY 18 JAN AT 12.30 PM**

Salvation Army, Commercial Road

**SUNDAY 20 JAN AT 6.30PM**

Russell Park Baptist Church

Preacher : The Bishop of St. Albans

**MONDAY 21 JAN AT 12.30PM**

Bunyan Meeting, Mill Street

**TUESDAY 22 JAN AT 12.30PM**

Bedford Hospital (South Wing) Chapel

**WEDNESDAY 23 JAN AT 12.30PM**

St. Andrews, Kimbolton Road

**THURSDAY 24 JAN AT 12.30PM**

Friends Meeting House,

Lansdowne Road

**FRIDAY 25 JAN AT 12.30PM**

Miracle Church of God,

Alexandra Road



Please register with easy fundraising by clicking on this link on our church website. It is a great way for you to save money and we receive a donation every time you buy online. There are great offers to all who register!



### St Mark's Messy Church

Future dates: all 3.45 to 5.30pm ,

Wednesday 16 January,

Wednesday 20 February

### 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.

### Christine Ann Phillips

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



### Forthcoming Funerals

Please remember these families and friends in your prayers.

**The funeral of Maureen Rose Paul** will take place at Bedford Crematorium on Tuesday 8 January at 4.00pm

**The funeral of Nikolai Vivian Murray** will take place at the Crematorium at 1.45pm on Monday 14 January

**The funeral of Rosaline Greta Baines** will take place at the Crematorium at 12.15pm on Wednesday 16th January

**The funeral of Brian Keighley** will take place at Putnoe Heights Church at 11.00am on Friday 25 January