



Methodist  
Church

# Partnership News

## 6 January 2008

### Epiphany



Church of  
England

#### Partnership Church Services Today Epiphany

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

**9.30am St Mark's - Family Worship**  
Preacher - Rev Dr S Cappleman  
Leadership Team - Mrs Linda Parry  
Intercessions - Mr Warwick Holden

**11.00am Putnoe - Family Worship**  
Preacher - Rev Dr S Cappleman  
Leadership Team - Mrs Linda Hoar  
Intercessions - Mrs Claire Peck

#### Second Sunday of Epiphany

**9.30am St Mark's - Morning Worship**  
Preacher - Mr Paul Fricker  
Leadership Team - Mrs A Williams  
Intercessions - A Holden

**11.00am Putnoe Heights - Morning Worship**  
Preacher - Mr Paul Fricker  
Leadership Team - Mrs Jenny Emsley  
Intercessions - Mr Eddy Peck

#### Bible Readings.

1. Isaiah 42: 1-9
2. Acts 10: 34-43
3. Matthew 3: 13-17

#### Thank You

The flowers at Putnoe Heights this week have been given by Gwen Beswick and family in memory of Peter.

We are always grateful for any donations for flowers perhaps to celebrate a special occasion, an anniversary or in memory of a loved one. Please contact Miss Marion Prior 303254 (St Mark's) or Miss Jennie Cooper 404950 (Putnoe Heights) or add your name to the rota in the foyers.

#### Prayer for Sunday

Lord, let nothing stand between us and your kingdom. May our souls be strengthened through our suffering, our lives clothed with your humility, and our desires purified by your holiness. As we show mercy may we receive it. As we embrace peace may we become your children and in our single-mindedness may we see you, face to face; through Christ our Lord. Amen

*Dorothy L. Sayers, 1893-1957*

#### Contact Details

**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)

**The Reverend Dr. Joan Crossley** (Day off Friday)  
30 Cutcliffe Grove, Bedford. MK40 4DD.  
Home 344536 Crossley@thisischurch.com

**The Reverend Charles Royden** (Day off Thursday)  
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](http://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 9am—5pm Monday to Friday**  
**Tel/fax & Answering Service** 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com  
**Centre Manager** Mr Barry Snelson 365630 & 344417  
**Leadership Team** Mr Alan Cooper 365302 Mob 07989367604  
**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 L Parry 216724 Mobile 07922053740  
**Treasurer** - Mr Ian Farthing 210892 treasurer@thisischurch.com

# Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

## Monday

**9.30-12.00pm Mon-Fri Putnoe Heights Pre-school**  
Headteacher Mrs Janet Smith ☎326685

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

**10.00am Bakers Barn Art Group.** St Mark's  
Mr Kellie ☎721063

**10.45am U3A Playreading** St Mark's C Birks ☎219607

**12.00pm Story box** 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

**1.45pm U3A History Group** St Mark's 2nd & 4th week of the month. ☎ David Fowler 824474

**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

**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 ☎07720712735

6.15 Pilates at Putnoe Heights Jane Butcher 300859

**7.30pm Sugarcraft Guild** St Mark's 1st week every month  
Pat Nicholson ☎353518

**7.15pm Guides.** St Mark's. Mrs Gill Lake ☎218091

**7.15pm Yoga.** Putnoe Heights Lena Holland ☎244970

**7.30pm Whist Drive.** St Mark's 3rd & 5th week each month. Next one January Judith Stanton. ☎823313

**7.30pm Housegroup** 30 The Ridgeway. The home of Eddy & Margaret Peck ☎267567.

**8.00pm 'Get Fit, Stay Fit'** Putnoe Heights. Mrs Diane Field ☎404976

## Tuesday

**9.30am Candlewicking** (Needlework). Putnoe Heights.  
Judi Staughton ☎341821

**9.30am -12.30 & 4-9pm Slimming World** St. Mark's.  
Helen Folbigg ☎351223

**10am -Bedford Arts Society** starting at St Mark's on the 11th September. ☎Mrs Brown 771676

**1.30pm Toddlers Playtime.** Putnoe Heights Majella Atkinson ☎325293.

**1.30pm U3A Cinema Group.** St Mark's last Tuesday of the month. Mr Austin ☎365184

**2.00pm U3A Book Group.** St Mark's 3rd Tuesday of the month Mrs Berman ☎364723

**2.00pm Library Walk W.I.** Putnoe Heights, meets monthly. Mrs C Allen ☎363878

**2-5pm Police Surgery.** St Mark's Foyer.

**2.15pm Putnoe Heights Women's Fellowship.** Next meeting 8 January 2008 'Reflections on the New Year' Betty Wyatt ☎350188.

**2.30pm Mother Teresa Support Group.** St Mark's alternate weeks. Wool and knitting needles provided. Mrs Maureen Watling ☎262225

**2.30pm Tuesday Afternoon Housegroup.** St Mark's alternate weeks. Mary Stubbs ☎406784.

**3.45pm Stars School of Dance.** Putnoe Heights. Esther Sancto ☎295862 or ☎07917582468.

**7.00pm Hearts in Beds Cardiac Support Group**  
St Mark's 1st Tuesday ☎Parsons 351150

**7pm Keep Fit.** St. Mark's Jan Gregory ☎328455

**7pm MT Karate** [all ages] Putnoe Heights. Karen King ☎07941 264885

**7.30pm Tabernacle of Truth Church** Putnoe Heights Bible study & prayers. Revd.Tarr ☎360188 or 07866775515

**7.30pm Chartered Management Institute** St Marks 3rd week of the month. Mrs Dimmock ☎01525 862374

**7.30pm Putnoe Heights Ladies Tuesday Club** - Meets fortnightly. Next meeting 15 January 'Talk about Acorn Vets. Audrey Wilkins ☎365068 or Margaret Gentle ☎309043

## Wednesday

**9.15am Paint Tots** St Mark's Jacqui Hanahan ☎824475

**9.30am Childminding Support Group** Putnoe Heights.  
Mrs S Longman ☎313949

**9.30am Body Control Pilates.** Putnoe Heights. Stephanie Smith ☎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

**10.30 am U3A Art Appreciation** Putnoe Heights Fortnightly. Audrey Hancock ☎365915.

**Luncheon Club.** Putnoe Heights fortnightly. Next meeting 9 January 2008 Putnoe Heights Office ☎365630

**12.30pm Men's Fellowship Lunch** St Mark's 2nd week each month. Chris Izzard ☎212164

**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** monthly .All welcome Nancy Barr 268147

**2pm U3A Whist Group** St Mark's 3rd week of the month  
Ken Silvester ☎400584

**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

**6.30pm Karate.** St Mark's Karen ☎079412 64885

**7.00pm Bunyan Bridge.** St. Mark's Brian Sallows ☎407725

**7pm U3A Whist Group** St Mark's 4th Wednesday of the month. Ken Silvester ☎400584

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

**7.00pm Yoga** St Mark's Dorothy Turner ☎721763

**7.00pm Putnoe Guild** Putnoe Heights monthly Janice ☎Loxley 347073

**7.00pm U3A Sky at Night** 2nd Wednesday of the month.

Mr Farish ☎824984

**7.45pm Badminton Club** Putnoe Heights All welcome.

Ken Marriott ☎214867

**8.00pm Tudor Reeds Folk Dance Club** St Mark's, 1st, 3rd & 5th Wednesday. Next meeting 16 January 2008  
Graham ☎406359 or Danny ☎401668.

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

### Thursday

**9.30am Thursday Prayer Group.** Putnoe Heights in the quiet room. Sylvia Cohen ☎343424

*Request for prayer can be written in the prayer diary on the information table.*

**9.30am Jo Jingles.** St. Mark's. Music & movement for pre-school children. Jayne Phillips ☎01582 485333

**9.45am Yoga** Putnoe Heights Lena Holland ☎244970

**9.45am Chat and Play** weekly at St. Mark's. A group for Mums & toddlers. £1.75 for first child. More details from St. Marks Office ☎342613 or Emma Strangwick ☎211070

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

**12pm Storybox** weekly at 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 Emma Strangwick ☎211070

**1.30pm Toddler Playtime.** Putnoe Majella Atkinson ☎325293.

**2pm Putnoe Bridge Club.** Gerald Palmer ☎345991

**5.30pm Police Surgery.** St Mark's Foyer.

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

**6.15pm Brownies.** Putnoe Heights Helga Nash ☎218521

**6.15pm Bedford Junior Chess Club.** St. Mark's Mr C Hill ☎772922

**7.00pm Club 2000** Putnoe Heights  
Nina Ovenden ☎825059

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

**7.00pm British Cardiac Patients Assoc.** at Putnoe bi monthly Mrs. E. marriot 303834

**7.30pm Bedford Senior Chess Club** St Mark's Mr P Housden ☎376597

**7.30pm Bedford Embroiderers' Guild** St Mark's 3rd Thursday of the month. Mrs C Smith ☎344544

**8.00pm Bedford Writers Circle.** St Mark's 1st week each month. Mr Newton ☎01525 378193

**8.00pm Magpies Women's Group** St Mark's 2nd & 4th week Mrs Cotchin ☎402089

**8.00pm Brickhill Wives** St Mark's 1st and 3rd week Next meeting Mrs Woods ☎404702

### Friday

**9.30-12.30pm & 12.30 - 2.30pm U3A Photography Group** St Marks 4th week Joyce Fildes ☎353086

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

**1.30pm Stars School of Dance** Putnoe Heights Contact Esther Sancto ☎295862 or ☎07917 582468

**2.00pm U3A Gardening Group** Putnoe Heights Eve Whitehead ☎356875

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

**7pm Bedford Arts Society** fortnightly Putnoe Heights from 8 September. Malcolm Smith ☎01234 400741

**7pm Youth Club for age 10-15.** St Mark's Church.

Contact PC Dave Hawkey ☎349179

**7.45pm Astrology Group** St Mark's as from 11th January.

Mr Kenworthy ☎402792

### Saturday

**9.00pm Stars School of Dance.** Putnoe

Esther Sancto ☎295862 or ☎07917 582468

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

1.30pm Young Embroiders bi monthly Terry Fletcher Tel 357198

**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, games & outings. Liz ☎302349

## Diary Dates

**St Mark's Church Council** – 29th Jan 08, 17th June 08

**St Mark's Leadership Team** – 5 February 2008, 13 May 2008

**Putnoe Heights Leadership Team** – 4 February  
**Putnoe Heights Management Meetings** 14th Jan., 14th April and 14th July.

**St Mark's Church Forum Meeting** - 12noon 15 January

**Putnoe Heights Centre Management -**

**Putnoe Church Council** - 28 January 2008

**Pastoral Group Meeting** – 4.30pm 15 January

**Churchyard Committee** - 16 January 2008

**Putnoe Heights Mission Group** Next meeting Weds 16 Jan 2008 at 14 Flint Way 7.30pm

**Partnership Council -**

**Brickhill Parish Council Meetings** 10 January

**Deanery Meeting -**

**Circuit Meeting** - 10 March 2008, 12 June 2008

**Woodland Burial Trustees** - January 21st 2008

**Putnoe Heights Children & Youth-**

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

# Epiphany

Stars cross the sky, wise men journey from pagan lands, earth receives its saviour in a cave. Let there be no one without a gift to offer, no one without gratitude as we celebrate the salvation of the world, the birthday of the human race. Now it is no longer, "dust you are and to dust you shall return", but, "you are joined to heaven and into heaven you shall be taken up".

Basil the Great (AD 330 - 379)



## Opening Verse - John Chapter 8:12

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 for the Day

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

## Second Bible Reading - Ephesians 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**)

## Third 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 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.

### **Commentary**

The story of the wise men has been widely reported in the media this year following the remarks of the Archbishop of Canterbury when he said that we should be careful and not read into scripture what is not there, whether it be about the number and nature of the wise men or the weather conditions in Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth. The story of the wise men, he went on to say, seemed to work well as a legend, certainly with the accretion of the stories and traditions which have built up around it. Indeed, the Greek historian Herodotus (500 BC) says that the Magi were a caste of priests from Persia who could interpret dreams – and interestingly there are five dreams in Matthew's birth narrative, with four of them warning of the murderous intentions of King Herod and his son Archelaus who succeeded him.

Whoever the Magi were, and we may never know for certain, we should follow the Archbishop's guidance and not over emphasise details of which we are not sure and have little basis in scripture. Equally importantly neither should we under-estimate the truth of what is contained in scripture and, in particular, the Christian message of Christmas; the message that when Christ was born, God himself came down and dwelt among us. And it was to that Christ that the wise men travelled, guided by the star. However they travelled, however long it took, it must have been quite a surprise when they found the Messiah in surroundings that they would not normally associate with a Messiah King. But in the story of the kings and in their response to the infant Jesus we begin to see the changes that were occurring on earth through God's cosmic intervention. Whilst we know relatively little about the wise men it is unlikely that they were Jews. The coming of the wise men to Jesus was symbolic of the fact that this Messiah Christ was for all people, not just the Jews. This Christ would be Lord of all who acknowledge Him and respond to His love and grace. The wise men visibly demonstrate that all who are looking for Christ can find Him and recognise Him, whatever the surprising surroundings they find Him in. And once they had found and recognised the Christ, their immediate response was to kneel before Him in silence and worship Him. Sometimes when we enter the presence of God we feel that we need to say something, to start praying or singing a hymn. The wise men remind us that sometimes all we are called to do is to come before God and be silent. Sometimes it will be the silence of awe and majesty, as it probably was with the wise men. Other times it may be more like the companionable silence that breaks out between two friends who have no need of constant conversation to sustain their friendship. In all the noise and activity of the Christmas and New Year celebrations, all the hubris of a new birth, there was a silence as the wise men knelt and worshiped Emmanuel, God with us on our earth, the Messiah, Peace on earth, the redeemer of the world. It was only after the wise men had worshiped that they brought out their highly precious and valuable gifts to offer to the infant child. Gifts that were at the same time so rare and yet so inadequate. Gifts that would foretell the destiny that the baby Jesus would have in the years ahead. The destiny of a Prophet, the destiny of a Priest and ultimately the destiny of the Suffering Servant, crucified as King of the Jews nailed to His cross. Their response to an encounter with the living God was to willingly offer gifts of great value to Christ from generous hearts. After they had seen Him, recognised Him, worshipped Him and offered Him their gifts they then journeyed on, taking the experience of that meeting with them for the rest of their lives. As we journey through our lives we too take the experience of our daily encounter with God with us. Like the wise men we need to see Him, recognise Him, worship Him and offer our gifts to Him, that the world may be changed by the God who is with us and continues to intervene in His cosmic manner. A God who continues to be Lord and Saviour for all who kneel, worship and acknowledge Him. Sam Cappleman

## **Meditation**

Many threads and stories from the Old Testament feed into the New Testament account of the wise men visiting Jesus. In the book of Numbers describes an encounter between the Israelites, who by this time after their escape from Egypt had travelled to the plains of Moab and are now camped along the Jordan just across from Jericho where they will enter the Promised Land, and Balak, the king of Moab. Balak asks Balaam to come and put a curse on the Israelites so that he can defeat them in battle. Balaam and his talking donkey reluctantly get involved, but rather than curse the Israelites, Balaam blesses them three times, much to Balak's annoyance. In their final exchange Balaam prophesies that a star will come out of Jacob, a sceptre will rise out of Israel, and a ruler will come out of Jacob. Jesus, as the Israelites before Him, would travel to Egypt before coming to live in the promised land. Herod's threat to kill the Hebrew infants has parallels with Pharaoh's attempts to do the same before him, which led to Moses being put in a basket in the river. History is repeating itself. Only this time it is Jesus Himself who is the true representative of Israel, He is the true child of God, the Messiah Himself, the Star of Israel. As the prophets would foretell, the best of the world's wise would come to Zion to acknowledge Him and creation itself would proclaim Him by the code which could be read in the sky. God had broken into our world. Curious then that Herod could not find this King of the Jews. Thirty years later others would not fail to find Him, as they nailed this very title to the cross on which He would be crucified. In the birth of Jesus God was acting powerfully to save the world from sin and Christ's birth was the first step that would lead Him to the cross. The star, the sceptre and the ruler that Balaam had foretold had come and a new chapter in the world's history had begun to unfold. Sam Cappleman

## **Hymns** (*Please distribute* )

As with gladness men of old, 39    Come and join the celebration, 83  
Brightest and best of the sons of the morning, 65    We three kings, 740  
Angel voices ever singing, 34

## **Prayers for Sunday and the Week Ahead**

With the angels and saints, each day and each night, each shade and each light, I bend my knee in the eye of the Father who created me, in the eye of the Son who redeemed me, in the eye of the Spirit who cleansed me. In love and affection, in wisdom and grace, in love and in fear, for ever and ever. Amen  
Gaelic Prayer to the Trinity

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. Amen Common Worship Shorter Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you have revealed the incarnation of your Son by a bright shining star, which led the wise men to offer costly gifts in adoration. Let the star of your justice give light to our hearts, that we might give as our treasure all that we possess and all that we are, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen Gelasian Sacramentary

Almighty God, your Son our saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world. May your people shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped and obeyed to the ends of the earth; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen Methodist Worship

In their search for the Creator of the Universe, the wise men found you not in Herod's palace, but among the dwellings of the poor and needy. Teach us to search for truth and beauty in unexpected places, to relieve poverty where we are able, and to share unashamedly in the cause of the outcast and despised. Amen

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight; and may the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen

**Putnoe New Year Lunch** - Sunday 13th January 1 pm. Tickets now available from Putnoe Office or Sue Allen (407264) Adults £8.00. Children under 10 £4.50. 3 courses including drinks Vegetarians please pre order. Proceeds 50/50 to Keech Cottage and Church Funds.

**Footprints Walking Group**— Today - Meet at Milton Ernest Garden Centre 2pm for a short circular walk followed by tea at the Garden Centre. Sue 407264

**Putnoe Heights Women's Fellowship.** The next meeting will be on 8 January 2008. "Reflections on the New Year"

**The next Children and Youth Meeting** will be held at Putnoe Heights Church on Monday 21st January at 1.10pm.

### **Another Charity Performance for Cancer**

**Research UK** Bedford Dramatic Club is performing "Habeas Corpus" a satirical farce by Alan Bennett in January and has kindly donated 50 tickets for the performance on Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January for our fundraising. They are £6 each (£5 for concessions). This will be an enjoyable evening to look forward to after the rush of Christmas and the new year. Tickets are available from Sue and Richard Butler (Tel: 354183) or Howard Lawrence (Tel: 267837).

**Belief Course**—Decisions, decisions, decisions! Sometimes life seems full of them. Is there a way or even a need to make Christian Decisions? "Which way now?" Is a belief course on Wednesdays January 9, 16, 23 and 30 from 7.45 to 9.30pm at St Andrews Church Bedford. Details from the Belief Office ( 293688)

**Music at St Andrew's** St Andrew's Church, Kimbolton Road, Bedford Saturday 8 March 2008 at 8.00pm Gamelan Lila Cita, the UK's premier Balinese Gamelan. Pre-concert supper at 6.30pm Concert tickets: £7 (£5 concessions) Concert and supper tickets £14 (£12) from: St Andrew's Church Centre Office, tel: 01234 216881 Classic Music, tel: 01234 357221 Central Box Office tel: 01234 269519

**Joan, Charlie and Sam** would like to warmly thank all those friends who sent Christmas Cards and would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year.

**Church Christmas card sales and delivery.** This year we collected £158.00 at Putnoe Heights from the sale of Church Christmas cards and the Post Box collection service. This money is being given to Keech Cottage Hospital. J & P Parker

### **Covenant and Renewal of Baptism Vows**

The Partnership Services on Sunday 20 January will be Covenant and Renewal of Baptism Vows. This is a special service of commitment including Holy Communion. Our preacher will be The Reverend Dr Joan Crossley

**Service of Holy Communion** at Sir William Harpur House on the first Monday of every month at 10.00am, led by Charles Royden. Everybody is invited to attend, not just residents. Next Service this coming Monday 7 January

**Bunyan Meeting Free Church** are holding an open morning for new stewards for the John Bunyan Museum. It will take place on Saturday 19 January at 10.30am. For further details contact Mrs Doreen Watson Bunyan Meeting free church, Mill Street, Bedford.

### **Methodist response to the crisis in Kenya**

Anthea Cox, Coordinating Secretary for Public Life and Social Justice says "The violent turmoil in Kenya following the disputed election results has come as a shock. As one of Africa's most stable democracies and most developed nations, Kenya's crisis was difficult to foresee. The Methodist Church of Great Britain is closely watching the situation so that it can respond as appropriate."

Kevin Fray, World Church Area Secretary for Africa, says: "The situation over the next few days will be very precarious. Our partners in the Methodist Church of Kenya (MCK) will be playing a vital role in helping to restore peace and stability. Their endeavour must be matched by our practical and spiritual assistance."

During 2007, the World Church Office sent more than £150,000 of Methodist Church funds to support the mission of the MCK.

Kevin Fray continued, "When deciding how best to respond, we will be guided by the MCK. Once we can establish communication, we will be better placed to understand and share the need. In the meantime, we stand alongside all who strive peacefully for a just and fair solution to this tragedy.

"We also call upon others to join with us as we remember Kenya in our daily prayers and church services."

Teach me your word, O my Lord,  
That I may walk in your righteous path,  
Narrow and trying as it may be.  
Give me grace to claim and love it as my own.  
Hold my hand and never let me go.  
Till in Zion I finally lay it all down.

## Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year message - God 'doesn't do waste'

By this stage of the holiday season, I imagine you might be looking with dismay at your overflowing rubbish bin, or the mountain of debris piling up outside your back door. Food, drink, presents – they all come with more and more packaging. Even the most eco-conscious of us is likely to have a bit of a bad conscience after Christmas.

Despite constant talk about recycling and thinking "green" - we're still a society that produces fantastic quantities of waste. From the big issues around toxic industrial and nuclear waste to the domestic questions of managing day-to-day waste and the build-up of stuff around us that can't be recycled, it's not something we can ignore. Look at the number of plastic bags flapping around by the roadside, in town and country alike - and you see what I mean. What I wonder is – how much this influences attitudes in other parts of our lives?

In a society where we think of so many things as disposable; where we expect to be constantly discarding last year's gadget and replacing it with this year's model - do we end up tempted to think of people and relationships as disposable? Are we so fixated on keeping up with change that we lose any sense of our need for stability?

One of the buzzwords of recent years has been 'sustainability' – and, like all buzzwords, it tends to be used annoyingly all over the place, often for things it doesn't really fit. But what the word points to is the sense of obligation that most of us share at some deep level - the obligation to hand on to our children and grandchildren a legacy that helps them live and flourish. Building to last is something we all understand.

And if we live in a context where we construct everything from computers to buildings to relationships on the assumption that they'll need to

be replaced before long – what have we lost?

Christians, like Jews and many other religious people too, talk a lot about God as 'faithful'. God is involved in 'building to last', in creating a sustainable world and sustainable relationships with us human beings. He doesn't give up on the material of human lives. He doesn't throw it all away and start again. And he asks us to approach one another and our physical world with the same commitment. The life of Jesus, the life in which God identifies completely with our flesh and blood is the supreme sign of that commitment.

God doesn't do waste. He doesn't regard anyone as a 'waste of space', as not worth his time – from the very beginnings of life to its end, whether they are successful, articulate, productive or not. And so a life that communicates a bit of what God is like, is a life that doesn't give up – that doesn't settle down with a culture of waste and disposability – whether with people, or with things.

Perhaps a good resolution for the New Year would be to keep asking what world we want to pass on to the next generation – indeed, to ask whether we have a real and vivid sense of that next generation. A lot of the time, we just don't let ourselves think about the future with realism. A culture of vast material waste and emotional short-termism is a culture that is a lot more fragile than it knows. How much investment are we going to put in towards a safer and more balanced future? A big question. But too big to avoid. And if we feel a bit paralysed by just how big it is – well, we can at least start by a visit this week to the nearest recycling bins.

God bless you all in this New Year; may you have patience for the long view – confident that God takes the long view of you and isn't going to give up.

Happy New Year.

### 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

### Ivy Edith Channon

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



### Rest in Peace

Members of St Mark's Church will be saddened to hear the sad news of the death of Elizabeth Lord.

Betty was a much loved members of our congregation. Details of the funeral arrangements will be published when confirmed.

**The funeral of Sylvia Yockney** will take place on Tuesday 15 January at 12 noon at Putnoe Heights Church. This will be followed by burial at St Albans Woodland Burial ground.