

# Partnership News

## 9 December

### Second Sunday of Advent Christingle



#### 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 9 December – Christingle

##### 9.30am St Mark's – Family Worship - Christingle

Preacher - Richard Ledger/Wendy Waters

Leadership - Mr Mick Ovenden

Intercessions - Part of service

##### 11.00 am Putnoe - Family Worship - Christingle

Preacher - Richard Ledger/Wendy Waters

Leadership – Mrs Linda Hoar

Intercessions - Part of Service

#### Sunday 16 December

##### 9.30 St Marks Church – Holy Communion

Preacher - Revd Dr Sam Cappleman

Leadership - Mrs Laura Farthing

Intercessions –Mrs Morag Stewart

##### 11.00 am Putnoe - Holy Communion

Preacher - Revd Dr Sam Cappleman

Leadership –Mrs Jean Kirk

Intercessions—Mrs Sue Allen

**Readings** 1. Zephaniah 3: 14 –20 .2. Philippians 4:4-7  
3. Luke 3: 7-18

**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** Pearl James in loving memory of her husband Vin on their wedding anniversary; by Davina Latter in memory of her mother Mary Britton on her birthday; by Julia Bailey in memory of her husband Bill on his 70th birthday; and by Sylvia Cohen in memory of her dear husband Ken.

*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

Grant us, O God,  
in all our doubts and uncertainties,  
the grace to ask what you would have us do,  
that the spirit of wisdom  
may save us from all false choices,  
and that in your light we may see light,  
and in your path we may not stumble;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*William Reed Huntingdon (1838-1909)*

#### 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

# 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@thisischurch.com](mailto:youth@thisischurch.com) 365630  
**1.30-2.45pm Chat and 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– 17 December 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 December 11 - Christmas Celebration - Hand Bells - Open to all. Collection for Keech Hospice. 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 12 December. 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 19 December. 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 No meeting on 1 November.

*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 Law 825574

**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.

**1pm Tabernacle of Truth Church** Putnoe Heights Sacha Ojo 07590597891 or w.tabernacleoftruth.co.uk

**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.*

## 2nd Sunday in Advent

### Opening Verse of Scripture—Mark 1:2,3

It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"-- "a voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'

### Collect Prayer

Almighty God, purify our hearts and minds, that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as judge and saviour, we may be ready to receive him, who is our Lord and our God.

*Common Worship Shorter Collect*

### First Bible Reading – Malachi Chapter 3:1-4

"See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me.

Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

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

### Second Bible Reading - Philippians Chapter 1:3-11

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ--to the glory and praise of God.

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

### Gospel Reading - Luke Chapter 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar--when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Tracoonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene--during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God's salvation.'"

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

**Post Communion Prayer** Holy and blessed God, you have fed us with the body and blood of your Son and filled us with your Holy Spirit: may we honour you not only with our lips but in our lives dedicated to the service of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**Hymns** (*Please distribute Special Hymns Sheets*)

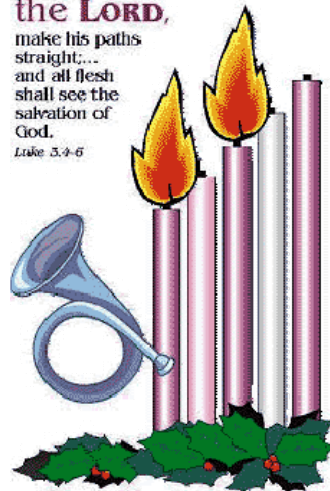
**Meditation** 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'

The quotation is from Isaiah 40:3-5, where the prophet is calling people to prepare for the Lord's visitation. If a king were planning to travel, work crews would be dispatched to repair the roads. Ideally, the roads for the king's journey would be straight, level, and smooth. John calls people to repent as a way of preparing their hearts and lives for the Lord's visit. A smooth road means nothing to God, but a repentant heart means a

Prepare the way of  
the LORD,

make his paths  
straight...  
and all flesh  
shall see the  
salvation of  
God.

Luke 3:4-6



great deal. In our churches, we must take care lest we give people the impression that the most important work of the church is meeting a budget, constructing a building, or developing a successful program. Those are all worthy goals, and there is no reason not to pursue them. The truly important goal, however, is preparing hearts to receive the Lord. It is a difficult goal to measure, and we cannot draft charts that track souls saved per hours preached. Nevertheless, as we build buildings and implement programs, we must remember that the really important work of the church happens at some other, less visible, less measurable, level. It is the work of the Spirit. Our most important contribution to this most important work is prayer and the development of our own devotional life. If we have prepared our hearts to receive the Lord's visit, we are ready to help others to do the same.

## Commentary

Today we read about John the Baptist who stood in the desert and proclaimed that the Messiah was coming; he wanted people to make ready their lives for the coming of Jesus. In Advent we are encouraged to remember not just that Jesus came as our Saviour born a baby in Bethlehem, but also that Jesus has promised that he will come again as our judge.

It is because Jesus is coming again that we need to be prepared, in a sense we are all called to be like John the Baptist, proclaiming the Advent of Jesus and calling for his way to be made ready.

In 1944, the Germans started their last major counter-attack of the Second World War. They took advantage of heavy mists that lay over the Ardennes region on Germany's border with Belgium and Luxembourg. The Germans were thought no longer capable of launching a major offensive, yet they managed to reach 50 miles within the Allied lines before they had to retreat. One of the leaders of the American forces of this "Battle of the Ardennes" (also called "The Battle of the Bulge") was General Omar Bradley. Some years after the end of the Second World War, and as some nations were spending vast amounts of money on stock-piling nuclear and other weapons, General Omar Bradley spoke the following words:

*"We have too many men of science, too few men of God. We have grasped the mystery of the atom, and rejected the Sermon on the Mount. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we do about peace; more about killing than we do about living."*

General Omar Bradley mentioned the "Sermon on the Mount". Those words of Jesus include the "Beatitudes", which are a set of 8 statements of choices which lead to a person being happy or blessed.

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
- Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
- Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.
- Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.
- Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

In a way General Omar Bradley was being like John the Baptist. He challenged people to think differently. The Beatitudes for example are a complete reversal of normal human standards: God's ways are different from many of the accepted norms of society, and that has always been the case. Society has never thought that the meek were blessed, or that there was blessing in mourning or poverty.

This Christmas we must all try to think of ways in which we can be prepared and help prepare the way of the Lord; be modern day John the Baptists. It may be that we have to ring somebody up and try and rebuild broken relationships. It might be that we can offer some of our time to support community groups or a charitable organisation.

John had a message directed very forcefully towards the religious people, it was for them that he saved his most vehement statements. Everybody had to 'make straight paths for the Lord.' We are tempted sometimes to think that scriptures are directed at people outside the church, to imagine that we are the good ones and that the challenge is to people who are outside the church. The teachings of Jesus were always strongest to those who were most religious. So we ask ourselves this morning whether we have paths which are suitable for the coming of our Lord this Christmas?

Is our religion lifeless and boring? How many Christians have slipped into a non-threatening cosy religion, like an old pair of slippers which fits us nicely. How easy it is for us to become accustomed to our Christianity, so that the words of Jesus no longer challenge and frighten us. How else could our churches find themselves so full of our intolerance, bigotry, envy, argument, etc.. John the Baptist would be speaking to us this morning, to ask how our religion was changing us and making a real difference. If it is not doing this then sing no more hymns, say no more prayers, God does not desire your religion he wants much more. As Christians we are challenged this morning to look at our spiritual nature and ask to what extent God's likeness is apparent in us. If people looked at us would they be reminded of God? This is what John the Baptist means when he tells us to make our paths straight. The Kingdom is not a far off event, as caricatured in the jokes of the pearly gates. The kingdom is here and now. It breaks into our lives every day and we do not need to ask when it will come. The kingdom seizes us, embraces us, challenges us, in the ordinary events of life. A sick friend, a discouraged spouse, a troublesome person on the telephone, a demand which is made on us which we think to be unfair. Situations which cause us to question how we will respond. Times when we can perhaps do much good with very little effort. How we react determines and tests our faith and questions our membership of the Kingdom. These are the places where we really show God's loving power coming through in our lives. It is as we do this of course that we become like John the Baptist in declaring God and proclaiming the coming of our Lord. Our life, our deeds our words, all speaking of the Kingdom of God. It is when we do this that are perhaps the most powerful advertisement for our Lord, in so doing we make straight paths which perhaps allow others to see more easily the living Lord, the worship of whom transcends human religion.

### Prayers for Sunday and the Week ahead

**An Advent Prayer** Lord Jesus forgive us when we live our lives without trusting in your promise that you will come again. Help us to be watchful and prayerful, and living in such a sense of expectation that we use our time modelling our lives on your example. Help us to hear afresh the challenge of John the Baptist to make our lives ready for your coming. May we be filled with an expectancy which causes us to make ourselves ready this Christmas for you to make your home with us. We seek afresh to straighten our crooked paths and may our lives holy places fit for our King.

**A prayer for our world** Heavenly Father, our world is facing enormous problems which seem of such magnitude that we cannot easily imagine how we can live at peace. Global terrorism, economic crisis, environmental challenge and poverty and suffering which in some countries we seem powerless to bring to an end. We pray for those who have no daily bread and we are humbled when we seek to possess more, when so many have so little. When we are faced with world problems which are of such enormity, help us never to give up hope, but to place our trust in you for the future.

**A prayer for our communities** Lord Jesus you lived an ordinary life in Nazareth, with human parents, brothers and sisters. You understand the difficulties faced in families. We pray for all of those involved in providing support for troubled families and strengthening our community life. Especially we pray this week for those engaged in supporting families. We pray for social workers, those who struggle often with poor resources and lack of adequate funding to provide social welfare. Help us to care more for each other so that the vulnerable are supported and protected. As we draw closer to Christmas we think of those who are concerned about money worries, those who have no homes or who fear losing their homes through lack of finance. In whatever difficulties we face, may our eyes be drawn to your presence and may we seek your strength to provide the answer to our needs.

---

### The Christingle 'Christ Light'

**The Christingle orange** represents the world, John reminds us that 'Jesus was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognise Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him'. (John 1 v 10 – 11).

**The red ribbon of the Christingle** represents the blood of Jesus which was shed for us so that our sins may be forgiven. 'But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from every sin'. (1 John 1 v 7).

**The fruits and sweets on the four skewers** represent God's gifts to us, the fruits of the earth and the four seasons. 'As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease'. (Gen 8 v 22).

**The lighted candle**, pushed into the centre of the orange, represents Christ, the light of the world. 'He [Jesus] said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life".' (John 8 v 12).



## Mission Update



The generosity of our churches this year has been amazing. Firstly thank you to everybody who worked hard to fill many more shoe boxes than we could have hoped possible. These will make a real difference to deprived children.

This week we counted up the money which Putnoe Heights and St Mark's have raised for our project to support Kisiizi Hospital in Uganda. We set ourselves a target of £4000, and, with the proceeds of this week's Putnoe Provender stall and some other sums still to be added, to date we have not only raised this amount but gone past it and reached the amazing sum of over £5,000.

This is a truly stunning total and will be hugely appreciated by those working so hard in Kisiizi and engaging in the work there. Thank you so much for your outstanding generosity. Thank you too for your prayers for Kisiizi which are greatly valued too and an equally important element of our support for this critical work. *Sam Cappleman*

---

**Tuesday Club** on Tuesday 11 December at 7.30pm invite everyone to join them in their Christmas celebrations. The Hand Bell Ringers will be playing. There will be a collection for Keech Hospice.

### Advent Course

Our final Advent Course evening takes place on Thursday and will start with refreshments at 7.30pm with the main meeting 8.00pm - 9.00pm. For our second session we will be joined by The Reverend Jennie Cappleman.

#### Thursday 13 December

Rev Jennie Cappleman  
Coffee served in Chapel 7.30 - 8pm  
Session in Church from 8pm.

**Christmas Presents** Now is the time when many of us will be going online to buy gifts. Please always only ever access Amazon by clicking on the logo on [www.thischurch.com](http://www.thischurch.com). Please be careful to make sure that you never access Amazon direct but always use the link on ThisChurch.com, this ensures we get a donation every time you make a purchase. Even if you use a computer and go to Amazon and have a look first without clicking we will lose our

referral, because they put a secret cookie on your computer! .This is really a very good way to shop as it has lots of voucher codes and discounts which can save you a fortune on purchases and help raise money.

**Make Way for Christmas** On 16 December at 6pm – Make Way for Christmas. Do you fancy a change from the usual nativity plays and Christmas Carols? If so, then 'Make Way for Christmas' could be just what you're looking for this Christmas time. It's a modern musical written by the Christian song-writer, Graham Kendrick, with songs that in the short time since Kendrick wrote them have become firm favourites as alternatives to the more traditional Christmas Carols. Add to that a slightly less conventional take on the Christmas story with drama from the Wild Goose Worship Group and you have a completely different, yet no less meaningful, version of the events surrounding the birth of Jesus.

It will be performed by the choir and drama group of Kempston East Methodist Church on Sunday 16 December at 6pm. So, if you fancy something a bit different, come along and listen. Admission is free and everyone is welcome.

**Kempston Musical Society** present their annual Christmas concert on Saturday 15 December at Kempston East Methodist Church at 7.30pm, with guests Goldington Green Lower School Choir. This promises to be a most enjoyable evening and includes audience participation. Admission £6.00. For more details contact [kempstonmusicalsociety@hotmail.com](mailto:kempstonmusicalsociety@hotmail.com) or telephone Bedford 781010

**Bedford Town Band** will be holding a Christmas Concert at Putnoe Heights Church on Friday 21 December at 7.30pm. Tickets £8, Conc £6, available from Frescoes Coffee House, Mill St or on the door on the night.

**Christmas Cards** A board will be available at the back of the Church for anyone who wishes to send Christmas Greetings to their friends at St Mark's.

**St Mark's Messy Church** Future dates: all 3.45 to 5.30pm, Wednesday 12 Dec, Wednesday 16 January, Wednesday 20 February

**The Putnoe Office will be closed** from Friday 21st December 1:00pm and will re-open Wednesday 2nd January 9:00am

**Carol Singing. Putnoe Heights Church** will be singing carols at Library Walk on Saturday 15 December 11.00-12.00noon. All are welcome to come and sing in aid of BeChar. Meet at Putnoe Heights Church at 10.30 for tea/coffee beforehand. Refreshments will be served in the small hall afterwards.

**Methodist Women in Britain** The Daffodil Day celebration will be on Monday 4 March 2013 at Westminster Hall. To book a place on the coach leaving Kempston East Methodist Church at 8.45am contact Corrine Thomas a.s.a.p. Tel 01525 403936.

**Christmas closure at St. Mark's Church Office**—The office will be closed from Monday 24 December and will reopen Monday 7 January.

**Putnoe Provender Sunday 9 December** Sales of the ever popular Christmas puddings, cakes, mince pies, jam, marmalade, chutney and much more in the Welcome area after morning service. Proceeds In aid of Kisiizi. All contributions gratefully received. John & Sally Gunning 305925.

**Putnoe Heights** Communal Christmas Card will be up from Sunday 2 December. Wish your friends at Church a Merry Christmas and donate to our charity.

**Date for your diary:** The New Year Lunch at Putnoe Heights will be held on Sunday 20 January 2013. Tickets will be on sale before Christmas.

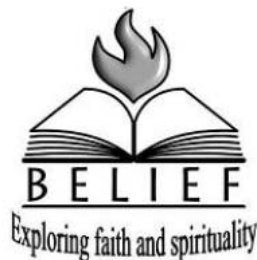
**The Bedford and District Christian Aid Committee** have been granted a collecting day at Tesco Cardington Road store on Saturday 12 January 2013. If you would like to volunteer to help on this day please speak to Carolyn for further details.



### Christmas News

We have newspapers for deliver from each of our churches. Please help us get them out inviting people to our

Christmas services with a Christmas message. Available **NOW**



Following his previous highly popular sessions

## THE VERY REVEREND DR JEFFREY JOHN DEAN OF ST ALBANS CATHEDRAL

returns to BELIEF to speak on

# MAKING SENSE OF SALVATION

Saturday, 16th February, 2013

10.00am to 1.00pm

St Andrew's Church Centre, Kimbolton Road,  
Bedford MK40 2PF

£10 per person payable on the day

To book a place, register using the 'Contact' section of the BELIEF website: [www.beliefbeds.org](http://www.beliefbeds.org)  
Or ring 01234 212164 or 01525 860875

### Prayer of Stillness – Contemplative Prayer.

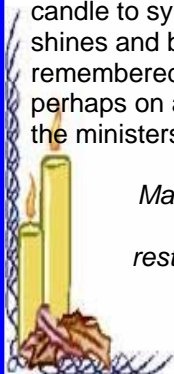
“Be still.....

A group meets in the Quiet Room at Putnoe Heights at 1.45pm on the second and fourth Fridays of each month. The prayer is structured on a brief Biblical extract,. Beginning with a short period of thoughtful reflection, we move to settling into stillness of mind and body so that the Word may speak within each one of us in the silence. This period is followed by silent personal intercession. Experience is better than description. Should anyone like to taste the Prayer of Stillness the meetings for early 2013 will be January 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>; February 8<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Eileen Brown 01234 267909 <[eileenpeter@btinternet.com](mailto:eileenpeter@btinternet.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.'*



### Forthcoming Funerals

Please remember these families and friends in your prayers.

**The funeral of Barbara Joan Austin** will take place at St Mark's Church at 3.00pm on Friday 14 December 2012



**The funeral of June Ann Atkins** will take place at Bedford Crematorium at 1:45pm on Thursday 13 December 2012