



Partnership News

**Putnoe Heights & St Mark's Church
28 December 2014
First Sunday of Christmas**



Sunday Services

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

28 December - First Sunday of Christmas

**9.30am St Mark's - Morning Worship with
Thanksgiving for Emelia Grace Seymour**

Preacher - Mr Richard Ledger
Leadership - Mrs Jean Bank
Intercessions - Mr Warwick Holden
Organist - Mr Clive Simmonds

11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Worship

Preacher - Mr Richard Ledger
Leadership - Mr Martin Fannon
Intercessions - Ministers
Organist - Mr. Clive Simmonds

4 January - Epiphany

9.30am St Mark's - Family Worship with Baptism

Preacher - Rev. Canon Charles Royden
Leadership - Mr. Edward Parry
Intercessions - Ministers
Organist - Mr Clive Simmonds

11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Family Worship

Preacher - Rev. Canon Charles Royden
Leadership - Mrs. Veta Hudson-Rae
Intercessions - Young People
Organist - Mr Clive Simmonds

Readings 1 Isaiah 60:1-6 **2.** Ephesians 3:1-12
3. Matthew 2:1-12

Prayer of Intercession for Sunday

William Barclay 1907-78

O God our Father,
help us all through this day so to live
that we may bring help to others,
credit to ourselves and to the name we bear,
and joy to those that love us, and to thee.

Help us to be cheerful
when things go wrong;
persevering when things are difficult;
serene when things are irritating.
Enable us to be helpful to those in difficulties;

kind to those in need;
sympathetic to those whose hearts
are sore and sad.

Grant that nothing may make us
lose our tempers;

nothing may take away our joy;
nothing may ruffle our peace;
nothing may make us bitter towards anyone.
This we ask for thy love's sake. Amen.

Midweek Holy Communion at St. Mark's Chapel every
Wednesday at 10am and at Sir William Harpur House on
first Monday of every month at 10.00am.

The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman

107 Dover Crescent, Bedford MK41 8QR
Tel: 266952 nsm@thisischurch.com

Deacon Jane Mills

c/o Putnoe Heights Church Centre
Tel. 348091 Mobile 07807 146535
jane@thisischurch.com

The Reverend Canon Charles Royden

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

Partnership News is sent out by email every Saturday
in a colour edition. If you would like to receive a copy
please send an email entitled 'Partnership News' to
vicar@thisischurch.com. Please note that any items
submitted for inclusion in Partnership News will
automatically be posted on our website and may appear in
other local media sources.

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

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Partnership Pastoral Support Team Co-ordinators

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

Churchyards Administrator

Mrs Avril Williams 01234 342613

Putnoe Heights Church Centre

Open Monday to Thursday 9am - 5.30pm, Friday 9-1pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Geoff Gypps 365630
Leadership Team Mrs Jenny Snelson 344417
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 - Mrs Jean Bank 355698
Treasurer - Mr Ian Farthing 210892
treasurer@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator Mr Jim Williams 360605

Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

Monday

Hazeldene Heights Pre-school. Sessional and Full Day care available—open Mon.—Fri. Full Day Care 8.30am to 5pm Sessional times 9am—12noon and 12.45pm - 3.45pm

For more info please contact Laura Leggett 01234 326685 or www.hazeldeneheights.com

8.30-12.30pm St Mark's Pre-School Nursery

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634

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

9.00-3.45pm 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 M. Berry 211955

10.30am U3A Play reading Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

11am-12noon Pilates St. Mark's. Liz Mason

07816522200 (starts 8 Sept.)

1.30pm Chat & Make. Term time for babies and

toddlers 0-5. Crafts, toys, songs, story and refreshments

£1. More details contact St Mark's Church Office on 01234

342613 or Janine 01234 297481 Restarts 12 January

12.00 noon Storybox Putnoe Heights We welcome the

under 5's and their carers to join them between 12noon

and 1pm for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based

story and singing. Contact Carolyn Morris

youth@thisischurch.com 365630

2pm U3A Music Appreciation Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

2.00pm U3A Italian Putnoe Heights— fortnightly

4.15pm Kumon Maths Putnoe Heights. Mrs Raksha

Mistry 01908 392698

5.30 - 8.30 NHS Eat Smart Think Active at Putnoe

Heights. For more details contact Emily Taverner 01234

792013

6.00pm Brownies St Mark's. Mrs C Mathew 826190

6.15 pm Brownies Putnoe. Sharon Tanner

01767699399 or 07720713738.

6.15 Pilates at Putnoe Heights Jane Butcher 300859

6.15pm-8.15pm Fit for Life Yoga - Putnoe Heights

Contact Jane Butcher 07891879571

6.30pm-8pm Cubs at Putnoe Ages 8 –10.5

Email:phxg.enquiries@gmail.com Tel Tom 07974566509

6.30pm Boot Camp Putnoe Heights – Laura Amor

341152 / 07976259081

7.00pm Sugarcraft Guild St Mark's (1st week in month)

Pat Nicholson 353518

7.00pm Cancer Care Society. St Mark's. (1st week in

month) Mr J Dewhurst 01908 377020.

7.00-8.00pm Laughter Club at St. Mark's 2nd week each

month) Cheryl Green 07729187399

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

7.30pm Whist Drive. St Mark's (Weeks 3 & 5 in the

month).. Next meeting— 19 January Judith Stanton.

823313

7.30pm No Fear Bridge Club St. Mark's Mrs. Susan Ford

300218.

7.30pm House group 30 The Ridgeway. The home of

Eddy & Margaret Peck 267567

7.45-9.15 Get Fit Keep Fit at Putnoe Heights Diane

Field 01234 404976

Tuesday

9.30am Candlewicking (Needlework). Putnoe Heights.

Pat McCart 365507

9.30am -12.30 & 4-9pm Slimming World St. Mark's.

Lorrie Pearson 01234 340473

11.15am U3A Keep Fit Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

1.15pm U3A Cinema Group. St Mark's Contact Janet King 313946

1.30pm U3A Choir. St Mark's Contact Janet King 313946

2.00pm U3A Book Group 1 St Mark's (3rd Week in

month) Contact Janet King 313946

2.00pm U3A Book Group 2 St Mark's (2nd Week in

month) Contact Janet King 313946

2.00pm Library Walk W.I. Putnoe Heights, meets

monthly. Morag Tomkins 356895

2pm U3A Photography Group 3 St. Mark's (1st Week in

month) Contact Janet King 313946

2.30pm Mother Teresa Support Group. St Mark's (1st & 3rd week in month). Wool and knitting needles provided. Mrs Maureen Watling 262225

2.15pm Tuesday Afternoon Housegroup. St Mark's (2nd & 4th week in month) Mary Stubbs 406784.

4.00pm-6.15pm Stars School of Dance at Putnoe

Heights. Esther Richardson 295862 or 07917582468

7.15-8.15pm Pilates St Mark's Church Jane Butcher

07891879571

7pm - 8.30pm Daisy Birthing Putnoe Heights Susie

07980447390

7.30pm Ladies Tuesday Club at Putnoe Heights (Meets monthly Next meeting 6 January Afternoon Tea 2-3pm. Details Diane Bayliss 268101

8.00pm Hearts in Beds Committee St Mark's (week 4 in month) Mrs N Aspey 309816

Wednesday

9.30am Body Control Pilates. Putnoe Heights.

Stephanie Smith 357787 or 07973174430.

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 Janet

King 313946

10.00am Holy Communion. St. Mark's Chapel. A half hour service followed by coffee. All welcome.

10am U3A Card Making, St Marks Contact Janet King 313946

10am U3A Diet and Nutrition- Putnoe Contact Janet

King 313946

11.15am U3A Keep Fit at Putnoe Heights

12.30pm –4pm St Mark's Nursery

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634

12.30pm Luncheon Club. Putnoe fortnightly. Next

meeting 14 J anuary Putnoe Heights Office 365630

1.15pm Bridge Club for the Retired. St. Mark's.

Mr Barnes 261811

2.00-4.00pm U3A Craft at St Marks.Contact Janet King 313946

2pm U3A Gilbert and Sullivan Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

2.15pm - Fifty plus Keep Fit. Putnoe Heights

Mrs Webster 856966

3.45.- 5.30pm Messy Church. St Mark's (3rd Week in month). for children of lower school age and their carers. Bible-based story, crafts, singing and a meal. Next

meeting 21 January.

2014 Wendy Waters 401834 Jean Bank 355698

4.15pm Kumon Maths. Putnoe Heights Mrs Raksha

Mistry 01908 392698

5.00–6.00pm Rainbows at Putnoe Heights Mrs Gill

Lake 218091

6.00pm Brownies. St Mark's. Mrs C Warden 219731

6.15pm Yoga and Relaxation Putnoe Heights Racheall

Monton 01234 297138 or 07910835994

6-7pm ATSK Karate at Putnoe Height Kevin Stark Tel. 01234 353865

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

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

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

7.00pm Putnoe Guild Putnoe 3rd Wednesday in every month except August Mrs Jo Street 3446008

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

8.00pm Bedford Wine and Social Club St Mark's (Week 1 in the month) Greta Cansfield 215016

Thursday

8.30am-12.30pm St. Mark's Pre School Nursery

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634

9.30am Thursday Prayer Group. Putnoe Heights. Will meet again on 8 January 2015

Valerie Capon 356306. Request for prayer can be written in the prayer diary on the information table.

9.15am Spanish for beginners Plus. at Putnoe Heights

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

9.45am Chat and Play St.Mark's. A term time group for Mums & toddlers.0-5 Contact St Mark's Church Office 01234 342613 or Janine 01234 297481 Restarts 15 January 2015

12pm Storybox . St Mark's welcome the under 5's and their carers to join them between 12 noon and 1pm for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based story and singing. Lots of fun. Contact Jaana Swaby 342613 Restarts 8 January 2015

1.30 - 3.00pm NHS Baby Clinic at St Mark's (Weeks 1 & 3 in the month)Contact 897401

1pm-2.30pm Drop in (small hall) Next Steps 9-24months Putnoe Children's Centre.Please call Trudy Hamilton (centre assistant) for more information 340552. 2pm - **Friendly Chicago Bridge** at Putnoe Heights £2 per session inc. refreshments. New members welcome. Contact Pat 01234 294220.

2pm U3A Current Affairs - Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

2-4pm U3A Indoor Games. St.Mark's Contact Janet King 313946

2.30 - 4.30pm Bedford Art Society St Mark's Jean Paterson 307210

3.15-5.15pm Social Care Solutions Drama Group Claire Creek 262650

5.45pm Weightwatchers. St. Mark's. Clare Martin 07805408811.

6.15pm Brownies. Putnoe Heights Lou Brenna. 07919402797.

7.00pm Club 2000 Putnoe Nina Ovenden 825059

7pm U3A Folk & Poetry St Marks (2nd and 4th week in month)Contact Janet King 313946

7.15pm Putnoe Art Group Bob Wardale 406094

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

Bedford Folk Dancers (formerly Barn dancers) Meet weekly at Putnoe Heights Different guest callers each week.Except August. All welcome, cost £2.50 Including refreshments. More details Ron 825574 or Shirley 01767 651767

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

7.30pm Magpies Women's Group St Mark's (2nd & 4th week in month) Mrs Marie Cotchin 402089

8.00pm Brickhill Ladies Group St Mark's (1st and 3rd week in month) Susan Perugi 300219

Friday

8.30am—12.30pm St. Mark's Nursery

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin 312634

8.30am Diabetic Centre St Mark's (1st week in month) Deborah Hennessey 792013

9am -1pm Machine Knitting group at Putnoe Heights, fortnightly . Contact Marion Sutton 217647 (9.30 am— 3.30pm from January.)

10am -12.00 U3A Photography St Marks.(4th week in month) Contact Janet King 313946

10am - 12 & 1.15 - 3.15pm U3A Beginners French St. Marks Contact Janet King 313946

2.00-4.00 pm U3A Whist St Marks. (2nd week in month) Contact Janet King 313946

2pm U3A Gardening - Putnoe Heights Contact Janet King 313946

4.50pm-8.15pm Stars School of Dance Esther

Richardson 295862 or 07917582468

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

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

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

Saturday

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

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

Young Embroiderers bi monthly Putnoe Heights Terry Fletcher 357198

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

Sunday

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

10 - 5.30pm Bedford Stamp Fayre. 1st Sunday Feb/Apr/ Jun/Aug /Oct/Dec. Contact P Harris 01623 621143

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.

2- 4.30pm Indoor Bowls at St. Mark's 2nd & 4th Sunday. Ray Seymour 305695 or church office.

Messy Church Dates 15 Oct,19 Nov,10 Dec



Diary Dates



St Mark's Church Council – 10 February 2015

St Mark's Leadership Team - 26 January 2015

Annual Congregational Meetings - 26 April 2014

Putnoe Heights Leadership Team -

Putnoe Heights Management Meeting -

Putnoe Church Council - 20 February 2015

Pastoral Group Meeting -

Churchyard Committee -

Commemoration Service -

Circuit meeting –

Deanery meeting -

Woodland Burial Trustees–

Putnoe Heights Children & Youth Meeting - Monday 19 January 2015

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

First Sunday of Christmas

Sentence of Scripture - Matthew 1:21

"You shall call his name Jesus,
for he will save his people from their sins"

Collect Prayer for the Day *Before we read we pray*
God of glory, who wonderfully created us in your own
image and yet more wonderfully restored us in your Son
Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our
humanity, so we may share in the life of his divinity; who is
alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one
God, now and for ever. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

First Bible Reading - Isaiah 61:10-62:3

I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God.
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and
arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom
adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself
with her jewels. For as the soil makes the shoot come up and a garden causes seeds to grow,
so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations. For
Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her
righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. The nations will see
your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of
the LORD will bestow. You will be a crown of splendour in the LORD's hand, a royal diadem in
the hand of your God.

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

Second Bible Reading - Galatians 4:4-7

But when the appropriate time had come, God sent his Son, born by a woman, born under the
Law, in order to redeem those who were under the Law, and thus to adopt them as his children.
Now because you are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our] hearts to cry out,
"Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if you are a child, then you are
also an heir because of what God did. (This is the word of the Lord-- **Thanks be to God**)

Gospel Reading - Luke 2:15-21

When the angels had left them and gone back to heaven, the shepherds told one another, "Let's
go to Bethlehem and see what has taken place that the Lord has told us about." So they went
quickly and found Mary and Joseph with the baby, who was lying in the feeding trough. When
they saw this, they repeated what they had been told about this child. All who heard it were
amazed at what the shepherds told them. However, Mary continued to treasure all these things
in her heart and to ponder them. Then the shepherds returned to their flock,] glorifying and
praising God for everything they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

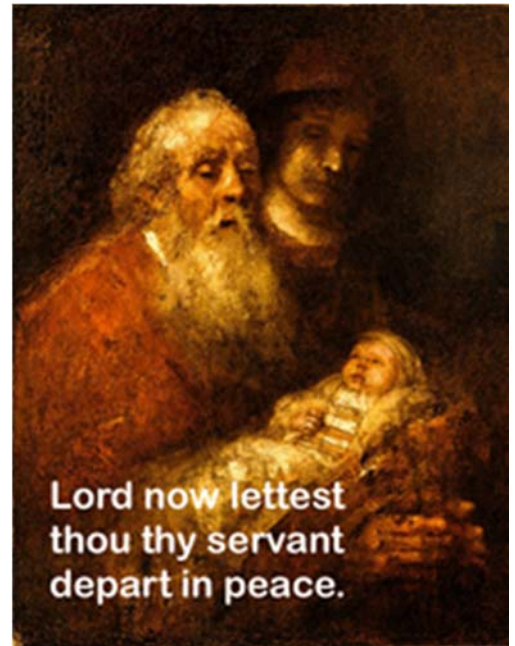
After eight days had passed, the infant was circumcised and named Jesus, the name given him
by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. (This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be
to God**)

Post Communion Prayer

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home: help your
Son to live as one family, united in love and obedience and bring us all at last to our home in
heaven through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymns (Please distribute Morning Worship & Mission Praise)

1. Come now with awe 98MP
2. Shepherds watch and wise men wonder On Partnership News (Tune Festival)
3. While shepherds watched 764MP
4. Joy to the world 393MP
5. Thou who wast rich 700MP



Commentary

Our readings today give us an insight into the nature of God – what he is like and how he deals with us. The Christian writer Adrian Plass says “God is nice and he likes me” as a summary of his faith. Of course if God is not nice he might be neutral and not care about us at all. Or he could be nasty and vindictive in which case we should be very afraid! There are people who believe that this is really what God is like: they say he sends disease and disasters indiscriminately as punishment for various aspects of modern life. Floods as punishment for legislation on sexuality and the tsunamis because of “moral degeneracy”. The innocent suffer so God really ought to be locked up for crimes against humanity if this is so. In Old Testament times people believed that God was very distant, revealing himself in terror and awe, moving among the clouds of Sinai or dwelling in silence behind the curtain of the holy of holies in the temple shrine. No wonder the people of Israel made sacrifices to him, though even in the Old Testament we read that this isn't what God wanted.

But all this is pre Christian and sub Christian. In our gospel reading we see the wonderful truth about God. He is inclusive love. When God wanted to reveal himself to us he chose a human family and a baby in a crude shelter, and shepherds were the first to know! Yes- shepherds (who were despised by the orthodox good people of the day). Shepherds were quite unable to keep the details of the ceremonial law; they could not observe all the meticulous hand-washing and rules and regulations. They had to look after their flocks – and so the orthodox looked down on them as very common people. Luke is trying to show us that in Jesus the \neg excluded were included. They were invited to be in the case of the shepherds (or at least they were told about what was happening) saw the glory, heard the angels – and they went and saw for themselves. It changed their lives forever. And no doubt it changed the lives of those they shared the experience with. It was amazing. It remained amazing and good news – in Jesus' ministry. Tax collection, sinners, women, the poor, marginalised and, ultimately, Gentiles (hated by the orthodox religious Jews) were all included in the embrace of God's love. One of our hymns today has the words “God surprises earth and heaven coming here on Christmas Day”. The surprise is God's transforming love. He loved the world so much that He gave Jesus so that whoever believes may have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge but to be its Saviour. In the language of Adrian Plass he is really nice – and loves us to bits. There is real hope here for all. God's love which is inclusive and embraces all can be active and change things, Michael Ball sings;

Love, love changes everything
Hands and faces, earth and sky
Love, love changes everything
How you live and how you die

Love, love changes everything
Days are longer, words mean more
Love, love changes everything
Pain is deeper than before
Love will turn your world around
And that world will last forever
Yes love, love changes everything
Brings you glory, brings you shame
Nothing in the world will ever be the same

Yes love, love changes everyone
Live or perish in its flame
Love will never, never let you be the same

Yes, love, love changes everyone –as well as everything.

It always has. In Isaiah the people of Israel, who often got it spectacularly wrong are promised not rejection- but a new name, a symbol of intimacy with God. And the Galatians, who had got it so wrong that Paul calls them foolish – are told that they are sons and heirs of God through His love shown in Jesus, and that they can know God as “Abba” – the word that Jesus used when he talked to God. It means “Dad” – a word of relaxed, confident love. Yes- love casts out fear

and welcomes us home – at Christmas and forever.

Charles Wesley ends a hymn with the words "Write your new name upon my heart, your own great name of love". In the light of Christmas may that be our prayer to God and experience.

Richard Ledger

Meditation

Living God may the worship we have shared this Christmas lead to acts of service which transform people's lives; may the carols we have sung this Christmas help others to sing, even in their sadness; may the gifts we have exchanged this Christmas deepen our spirit of giving throughout the year; may the candles we have lit this Christmas remind us that you intend no one to live in darkness; may the new people we have met this Christmas remind us that we meet you in our neighbours; may the gathering together of family and friends this Christmas make us appreciate anew the gift of loved ones; may the stories we have told again this Christmas be good news of great joy to us and all people on our lips and in our lives; may the ways you have come close to us this Christmas not be forgotten but hidden in our memories be a rich resource to lift us when times are painful and humble us when things go well, for you are our life, our light and our salvation this season and always, because of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayers for Sunday and the Week Ahead

The Child of glory, The Child of Mary, Born in the stable the King of all. Who came to the wilderness and in our stead suffered; Happy they are counted who to him are near.

Celtic prayer

O sweet Child of Bethlehem, grant that we may share with all our hearts in this profound mystery of Christmas. Put into the hearts of men this peace for which they sometimes seek so desperately and which you alone can give them. Help them to know one another better and to live as brothers, children of the same Father. Reveal to them also your beauty, holiness and purity. Awaken in their hearts love and gratitude for your infinite goodness. Join them all together in your love. And give us your heavenly peace. *Pope John XX111 (1881-1963)*

Compassionate and holy God, we celebrate with joy your coming into our midst; we celebrate with hope your coming into our midst; we celebrate with peace your coming into our midst; for you have come to save us. By your grace we recognise your presence in men and women in all parts of your world.... through your strength our lives can proclaim joy and hope; through your love we *can work peace and justice. You are the source of our being; you are the light of our lives.*

Based on lines from a Latin American prayer

Hymn for Sunday

Shepherds watch and wise men wonder,
Monarchs scorn and angels sing;
Such a place as none would reckon
Hosts a holy helpless thing;
Stabled beasts and passing strangers
Watch a baby laid in hay;
God surprises earth with heaven
Coming here on Christmas Day.

Who would think that what was needed
To transform and save the earth
Might not be a plan or army,
Proud in purpose, proved in worth?
Who would think, despite derision,
That a child should lead the way?
God surprises earth with heaven,
Coming here on Christmas Day.

Iona Community



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

Christmas closure at St Mark's Church office. The office will be closed from 1pm Wednesday 24 December and will reopen 9am Tuesday 6 January

Christmas closure at Putnoe Heights Church office. The office will be closed from 1pm on Friday the 19 December and will reopen at 9.00am on Monday 5 January 2015

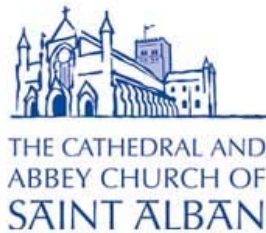
The Christian Aid Christmas Appeal: The government will match pound for pound all donations sent to Christian Aid this Christmas to further support the work being done in Kenya with mothers and newly born children.

Junior Church at Putnoe Heights will have a break on the 28 December. We will meet again at Family service on January 4 2015. Carolyn

Lent 2014 Oscar Romero - Blood and Sweat

We are running a trip to St Albans Cathedral to participate in an evening lecture 'Witness of Oscar Romero's Life and Death'. This is being offered by the Abbey, as part of the Dedication 900 lecture series.

The event takes place on Monday 23 March and we will need to be in St Albans for 7.30pm - so expect to leave Bedford around 5.30pm. Tickets will cost £5. The lecture will take place in the crypt and will be given by Jan Graffius who is Curator of the extraordinary collections held at the Jesuit College at Stonyhurst in Lancashire, which has good claim to be the oldest museum in Britain. Her work with their unique collection of English Catholic relics and artefacts led directly to her involvement in the Romero Trust project to conserve the relics and possessions of Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was murdered by Salvadoran death squads in 1980, and who appears among the new martyr statues being installed at St Albans Cathedral. Romero's poignant bloodstained clothing and his simple possessions are preserved today in his tiny house in San Salvador, where they are a focus for pilgrims worldwide. Jan's work has revealed some startling insights into Romero's life and the last few seconds before his death. Such insights are valuable in a world where truth and justice are all too often clouded by powerful vested interests, and, with the likelihood of Romero's imminent beatification by the Vatican, this is a story with deep relevance for our own times. Tutor: Jan Graffius, Curator of Stonyhurst College



Please give your name to Charlie if you wish to join this event

BELIEF have the following events confirmed in 2015

The Very Reverend Dr Jeffrey John will be speaking to BELIEF on The Book of Revelation On Saturday 21 February 2015 at St Andrews Church Kimbolton Road Bedford MK40 2PF From 10am to 1pm £10 per person (including refreshments) Payable on the day – No advance booking



Alistair Burt MP for North East Bedfordshire will be talking to BELIEF about Being a Christian in politics. On Saturday 14 March 2015 at Priory Methodist Church Newnham Avenue Bedford MK41 9QJ From 10am to 1pm £10 per person (including refreshments) Payable on the day – No advance booking

Andrew Bradstock National Secretary for Church and Society at United Reformed Church will be speaking to BELIEF on How should we as Christians be approaching a general election? On Saturday 18 April 2015 at Priory Methodist Church Newnham Avenue Bedford MK41 9QJ From 10am to 1pm

For more see beliefbeds.org

Sale Shopping ?



Please can you make a point of always going to Amazon through the link on www.ThisIsChurch.com. If you look at an item through Amazon direct they put a cookie on your machine and we don't get any commission! Please make it a habit to always go through the church website. This costs you nothing and we get a bit of commission. For some reason very people have registered for www.easygiving.com. This works exactly the same when you shop with John Lewis, M&S and a whole host of other shops. This has an added benefit that you will also get some special offers - you can't lose !

Please always shop through www.thisischurch.com

The Archbishop of Canterbury has sent a Christmas message to ecumenical partners and heads of churches around the world.

Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem saying,
Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so I may also go and pay him homage. (Matthew 2.8)

The deceit and cruelty of governments and rulers has not changed in the 2000 years since King Herod. 2014 has been a year of desperate suffering for many Christians, unparalleled for centuries. Christian communities have been uprooted from the places that they have dwelt since within living memory of the time of Jesus. Along with them, others have been harried and hunted, blown up, tortured, beheaded, raped and have seen their families, their livelihoods, their futures destroyed. Indeed, the cry of the martyrs rises across the earth, 'How long, oh Lord, how long?'



At the same time we have seen the scourge of Ebola sweep across three countries of West Africa, striking people down above all when they exhibit their deep compassion for the human dignity of others through touching and holding them, or through washing their bodies after death. The acts of love have become the means of infection and death.

In other places, immense economic poverty continues to spoil the lives and diminish the dignity of human beings. In Europe, migration across the Mediterranean has reached extraordinary levels, and the countries of Europe have ceased to see the common good as obliging them to support each other in loving and receiving those who have fled through such horrors, such dangers, and such privations. Rightly, Pope Francis has said that the Mediterranean must not become a vast cemetery. Individualism and selfishness is causing countries to withdraw into themselves and look only after their own interests.

And yet, in the midst of the raging of hunger, disease and want we continue to rejoice in the love of God seen in the helpless, unknown baby in Bethlehem 2000 years ago. In that birth we see God taking on humanity, living every aspect of human life from birth onwards. How can we not be captured by this news? People have been called to worship Jesus in their billions through the centuries, so that with them and the angels we rejoice at the presence of Christ, the promised Saviour, and the hope that he brings to the world.

He comes as the unique Saviour for the world and yet we find ourselves separated by history, creeds, cultures and habits into a church that does not respond to him with one voice. This is not lack of mutual love. In the past year, traveling to 26 countries, I have been overwhelmed by the ecumenical love I have received, as well as by my reception in the Anglican Communion. One of the most moving meetings of the year was that of Christians from all over the middle-east and the Levant coming together at Lambeth Palace to pray for the future of their communities and to testify to their suffering and yet to their hope in Christ. The impressions of that day will not leave me.

Christ our Light is our common source of strength and hope. I pray for a renewed and united spirit among all Christians to follow even more closely our Lord Jesus Christ, to bring this light to our troubled and tough world. During this season, let also the humility of the child Jesus draw us afresh into humble love into one another, a willingness to die to our preferences and privileges so that the people of God may live and reflect the unity in trinity of the God who held nothing back, not even his own son. Let us love the world as he loved it, so that the world may know that he is indeed, 'God with us'.

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



For many people Christmas is a difficult reminder of lost friends and family. We commend them to God's mercy.

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

In the peace of Christ.
The Most Reverend and Right Honourable
Justin Welby Archbishop of Canterbury
Primate of all England and Metropolitan

Forthcoming Funerals



The funeral of Derick Alan Butterfield will take place at Bedford Crematorium on Monday 29 December at 1.45pm