

The Partnership

28 March 2004

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Methodist
Church

The Methodist Church & the Church of England in Partnership at both
Putnoe Heights Church & St. Mark's Church

Church of
England

Church Services Today

8.30am Service of Holy Communion

Held at both churches

9.30am St Mark's Church – Holy Communion

Preacher – Rev Jim Gorringe

Leadership Team - Mrs Janet Day

Intercessions – Mrs Pat Leusby

11.00am Putnoe Heights - Holy Communion

Preacher – Rev Jim Gorringe

Leadership Team - Mr Peter Bayliss

Intercessions - Ministers

By popular request we have Holy Communion today

Sunday 4th April

8.30am Service of Holy Communion

Held at both churches

9.30am St Mark's Church – Family Worship

Preacher – Rev Dr Sam Cappleman

Leadership Team - Jim Williams

Intercessions – Mike Elliott

11.00am Putnoe Heights -Family Worship

Preacher – Rev Dr Sam Cappleman

Leadership Team - Peter Bailey

Intercessions - Margaret Massey

Thank You

The flowers at Putnoe Heights Church this week have been given by Eileen and John Marriott on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary, and by Dorothy Billingham in memory of her husband, Ridley.

We are extremely grateful when donations are made for the flowers. This may be as a celebration of a happy occasion such as an anniversary or in memory of someone who has died. Contact Miss Marion Prior 303254 (St. Mark's) or Miss Jennie Cooper 404950 (Putnoe Heights).

Prayer for Sunday

Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breathe upon us with the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in holiness and righteousness all our days. Amen.
Methodist Worship

Contact Details

The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman

107 Dover Crescent, Bedford MK41 8QR

266952 Fax- 402624 Sam_Cappleman@hotmail.com

(Sam also works full time as a General Manager for Hewlett Packard)

The Reverend Neil Bramble-Chapman BA, CTM

(Day off Friday)

12 Hartop Close, Putnoe. MK41 8HE

326643 Minister@ThisisChurch.com

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

Time for God Volunteer Kasia Pieczyk

St Mark's Flat - 315455

Partnership Website - 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.

Putnoe Heights Church Centre (Open 9am - 1.00pm)

Tel/fax & Answering Service 365630 www.ThisisChurch.com

Centre Manager Miss Wendy Rider 342613

Wendy@thisischurch.com

Leadership Team - Mr Stephen Clare 308299

Treasurer Mrs Kathryn Morse 216428

treasurerph@Thisischurch.com

Gift Aid Administrator - Mr John Hitt 404186

Junior Church Co-ordinator - Mrs Samantha Ware 304058

St. Mark's Church Centre (Open 9am - 5.pm)

Tel/fax & Answering Service 342613 www.ThisisChurch.com

Centre Manager Miss Wendy Rider 342613

Wendy@thisischurch.com

Leadership Team - Mr Jim Williams 360605

Treasurer - Mr John Day 295592 treasurer@Thisischurch.com

Gift Aid Administrator Mr Jim Williams 360605

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Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

Monday

9.30 - 12.00 pm Pre-school (See website for more details) Mrs Janet Smith 326685 (Putnoe Heights) or Mrs. Helen Harpin **312634** (St. Mark's).
10.00 am Day Care Centre at St. Mark's Church for those with Learning Difficulties.
12.00pm - 1.00pm Storybox at Putnoe Heights Church. Service for parents/carers & children under 5. Sandwich lunch, Bible Stories Children's activities songs and prayers, all in one hour from 12-1pm!
4.15 - 5.45pm Kumon Maths at Putnoe Heights. Contact Ms R.Mistry 01908 217555
6.00pm Brownies St Mark's. Mrs Gill Lake 218091
6.15 pm Brownies Putnoe. Alison McEwen 358583
7.30pm Sugarcraft Guild meets first Monday every month at St. Mark's Mrs. Jill Williams 357020
7.15 m Guides -St. Mark's. Mrs Gill Lake 218091
7.30- 9.30pm Creative Needles at Putnoe Heights. Mrs Hayward 307648
7.30pm Whist Drive - At St Mark's each month. Next 19 April Contact Mrs. Judith Stanton. 823313
7.30pm Housegroup 30 The Ridgeway. The home of Eddy & Margaret Peck 267567.
8.00 - 9.00 pm 'Get Fit, Stay Fit' at Putnoe Heights. Mrs Diane Field 404976

Tuesday

9.30am - 12.30pm Candlewicking (Needlework) at Putnoe Heights - Mrs Olive Shotbolt 267203
9.30am - 11.30pm Jo Jingles at St. Mark's. Music & movement for pre-school children. Contact Renu Elston 01908 282866
10.00am - 11.00am - Keep Fit at Putnoe Heights. Contact Mrs Stileman 822230
12.30 -3.00pm Putnoe Heights Church Toddlers Playtime Contact Geraldine Skeel 406828
12 noon - 10.00 pm Slimming World at St. Mark's. Sessions start at 12, 1.30pm, 4pm, 5.30pm & 7.15pm Contact Val Careless 345213.
2.15pm Putnoe Heights Women's Fellowship - Next meeting - March 30 YMCA Contact Mrs Betty Wyatt 350188
2.15pm Putnoe Heights Men's Fellowship. Next meeting 6 April Members Afternoon Contact Lawrence Wyatt 350188.
2.30pm Mother Teresa Support Group. Meets fortnightly at St. Mark's. Wool and knitting needles provided. Contact Mrs Joan Gravett 356911 and Mrs Marjorie Taylor 305709
2.30pm Tuesday Afternoon Housegroup. Meets fortnightly at St. Mark's Church. Mary Stubbs 406784.
3.30 - 4.30pm Putnoe Heights Church Essential Stretch Contact Caroline 07778 898135 or 326096
6.30 - 7.30pm Yoga at Putnoe Heights. Contact Rachel Leontyne 01234 783129
6.45pm Guides at Putnoe Heights - Liz Rix 363607

7.00 - 8.00 pm Keep Fit at St. Mark's Church.

Contact Mrs Jan Gregory 214107.

7.30 - 9.30pm Bibleway Church at Putnoe Heights - Bible study & prayers. Contact Pastor Tarr 348438 or 07773354129

7.45 pm Putnoe Heights Ladies Tuesday Club - Meets fortnightly . Next meeting 30 March Games Evening. Contact Mrs C Davies 219130

8.00pm Tuesday Housegroup will resume after Easter. Meeting is at 16 Swindale, Contact Alison 403551 or Brian 305347.

8.30-9.30pm St. Mark's - Qi Gong (Self help healing) group) - Contact Mr F Steele 355937

Wednesday

10.00 am Childminding Support Group at Putnoe Heights. Mrs S Longman 313949

10.00 am Day Care Centre Putnoe Height Church for those with Learning Difficulties.

10.00 am Holy Communion at St. Mark's Chapel. This is a half hour service followed by coffee. All welcome.

10am Sewing & Chat Putnoe Heights Contact Valerie Russell 01462 815966

12 - 1pm Putnoe Height Church Total Boding Toning Contact Caroline 07778 898135 or 326096

Luncheon Club at St. Mark's meets fortnightly. Next one 31 March Contact St. Mark's 342613

1.30 - 4.00pm. Bridge Club for the Retired - Meets weekly at St. Mark's. Mrs Truss Boyce 781133

4.15 - 5.45pm Kumon Maths at Putnoe Heights Contact Ms R Mistry 01908 217555

6. - 7.00pm Self Defence at Putnoe Contact Mr James 07711 687449

6.00 -7.30 pm Brownies at St Mark's Contact Mrs Carol Warden 219731

7.00pm St. Mark's Church Bunyan Bridge. Contact Brian Sallows 407725

7-10pm Putnoe Guild - Putnoe Heights 3rd Wednesday each month. Contact Mrs Dallas 212609

7.45 - 8.45pm Kick Boxing Junior classes St. Mark's. Mr James 07711687449 or 07810234890

7.45pm Badminton Club at Putnoe Heights - all welcome. Contact Ken Marriott 214867

Thursday

9.30am Thursday Prayer Group at Putnoe Heights in the side chapel. Sylvia Cohen 343424 *Request for prayer can be written in the prayer diary on the information table.*

10.30am - 12.00am Brickhill Clinic at St Mark's with **Fledglings 2.00pm—3.00pm** Contact 267444

10.00am - 11.30am Yoga at Putnoe Heights Contact 244970

12 - 1.00 pm Storybox at St Mark's Church. Service for parents, carers & children under 5. Sandwich lunch, Bible Stories, Children's activities,

songs & prayers, all in one hour from 12-1pm.

1.30 - 3.00 pm St. Mark's Church Toddler Group.
Contact Debbie Coppenhall 356828.

12.30 -3.00pm Putnoe Heights Church Toddlers
Playtime Contact Geraldine Skeel 406828

2.30 Bedford Arts Society at St. Mark's. Contact
Celia Maddison 782901

6.15 pm Weightwatchers at St. Mark's.
Contact Mrs Margaret Ralph 01767 224978.

6.15pm Brownies at Putnoe Mrs S Lewis 300198

7.30 - 9.30pm Club 2000 Putnoe 2nd Thursday of
the month. Contact Mrs Moreton 771261

6.15 - 7.30pm Bedford Junior Chess Club. St.
Mark's Contact Mr & Mrs Pike 823795

7.30pm - 11.00pm Bedford Senior Chess Club at
St Mark's Contact Mr Hatton 824988

7.30 - 9.30pm Embroiderer's Guild St Mark's- 3rd
Thursday month. Contact Mrs K Sage 771525

7.45pm. Housegroup-Meets fortnightly at 3 Little
Headlands. Newcomers always welcome. Contact
Betty Wyatt 350188

8.00 - 10pm Bedford Writers Circle meets at St
Mark's Church 3rd Thursday each month. Contact
Mr John Broadhouse 740271

Friday

10.00 am Day Care Centre at St. Mark's Church

6 -7.00 pm Self Defence at Putnoe Contact Mr
James 0771 687449 or 07810 234890

7. 30 - 9.30pm Young Peoples meeting Contact
Pastor Tarr 376841

7.30pm Music Group St. Mark's Church/monthly

6.30pm -8.30 pm Dog Training Classes at St.
Mark's Contact Mrs L. Laton 365601

Saturday

10.00am - 1.00pm & 2 - 5pm Theatre Train at St
Mark's -dancing acting, singing,- Kate Randle
304865

7.15pm - 10.30pm Duplicate Bridge at St Mark's
Contact Ann or Peter 212066

Sunday

1- 3pm & 7-9pm Bibleway Church at Putnoe
Heights - Worship. Contact Pastor Tarr 348438
Mob. 07773354129

11.45am Yoga at St. Mark's Church. Contact
Rachel on 783129 or 07703 300969.

News, Views and Information

Forthcoming meetings. Please check!

Partnership Council 8 June

Putnoe Centre Management

26 Apr, 7 Jun, 26 Jul,

St Mark's Centre Management

Church Council at St Mark's

Wednesday 16 June in the Chapel

Churchyards Committee

Next meeting

Putnoe Leadership Team Meeting

Wednesday 5 May. Putnoe Heights Church

St Mark's Leadership Team

28th April at Jim Williams, Thursday 27 May,

Tuesday 7 September

Annual Congregational Meetings Sunday 9 May

3.00pm at St Mark's and 4.00pm at Putnoe

Putnoe Church Council

Monday 14 June

Future Event The Fun Run June 13th at 2.30pm

St Mark's More details to follow

Pastoral Group The following dates have been
proposed for our next meetings

Tuesday 20 April 4.30pm Pastoral Group Meeting

at St Mark's Would team members please advise

Mary Stubbs is you are not able to make the
meetings.

Help Needed for Good Friday Storybox.

A special Good Friday event from 12.30 -1.45.

There will be a story, music & Easter activities. Offers
of help with party lunch to Margaret Peck please !
Offers of help to Joan Crossley, Liz Spavins & Sam
Ware (Junior Church).

British Red Cross Open Gardens. There are more
gardens open this year in this area. For details
please refer to the booklet which can be found on the
notice board. If you wish to help with these events
contact Jo Whitney 36106

Coffee Time Cards New stocks of Easter cards are
on sale from today, after morning service. Usual
reasonable prices. Commissions still taken.

MHA I have available from Sutton's catalogues for
Spring and Summer plants and seeds. If interested
please contact me. 20% of the value of each order is
passed to The Methodist Homes. This is a great way
to raise funds for this worthwhile charity and to make
your garden beautiful. Thank you Graci
Foster215053

Ramblers Please also note that details of the
Ramblers week-end away in September are now
available in the welcome area

Continued on page 6



Bible Notes, 5th Sunday in Lent (Year C, Purple)

Opening Verse of Scripture Isaiah 53:5 He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Collect Payer for the Day - Before we read we pray

Merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

First Bible Reading Isaiah Chapter 43 v 16 – 21

This is what the LORD says- he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick: "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.(This is the word of the Lord -- Thanks be to God)

Second Reading Philippians Chapter 3 v 4b – 14

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus. (This is the word of the Lord -- **Thanks be to God**)

Gospel Reading John Chapter 12 v 1 – 8 (When the reading is

announced - **Glory to Christ our Saviour**) Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honour. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages. He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. Leave her alone, Jesus replied. It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me. (This is the Gospel of Christ—**Praise to Christ our Lord**)

Post Communion Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters we do also for you: give us the will to be the servant of others as you were the servant of all, and gave up your life and died for us, but are alive and reign, now and for ever. Amen

Hymns (Please distribute Hymns and Psalms and communion booklets)

804 The church of Christ in every age (Tune: Heronsgate)

250 Alleluia, Alleluia

713 If thou but suffer God to guide thee

315 I will sing the wondrous story (Tune 272 Hyfrodol)

Commentary

Those of you who watch 'Friends' and who are up with the latest series, will have watched the episode recently where Phoebe and Mike are planning their wedding. It is all going to cost so much that Phoebe decides that they should write out a cheque for the full amount and take it as a gift to a children's charity. The extravagant cost of the wedding is saved and the money can do so much for the poor children. Then after a time to consider what she has done, Phoebe returns to the charity and asks for her cheque back. She has a terribly torn conscience because although she really wants to help the children, she also wants to be able to celebrate her wedding. She wants the day to be extravagant because it is an important day for her and Mike, even though she knows how much good the money could do if spent elsewhere. Fortunately for Phoebe, the man in the charity office forces her to take back the cheque and she promises she will give to the children at another time.

The truth is that we all find it much easier to accept generosity and to justify extravagance when it is shown towards us. We can convince ourselves that we really do need an expensive holiday, a new car or private health care. However the Puritan within us all is much more critical when it comes to the expenditure of others. We find it easy to be dismissive of the financial priorities of other people. Surely there is no need for people to waste money on fripperies like Gucci scarves or a couple of thousand pounds on a case of Chateau Lynch Bages.

But then we have to deal with the Gospels, where Jesus makes it just so difficult to be sensible about expenditure. He seems to delight in waste and extravagance, like the time when he not only fed the hungry crowds, but he went and made too much food and there were basket left over. Or the time when Jesus turned water into wine, not just a little wine but 180 gallons of it, when everybody had already been drinking too much and it was good wine!

So too in the lesson today we have another example of a generosity too far. Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. Bethany is a small village only a couple of miles from Jerusalem, and it would have been crowded with pilgrims who had come to observe Passover in Jerusalem. Bethany means 'place of the poor.' At Bethany Jesus is in the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, who he raised from the dead. Mary, the same Mary who had sat at the feet of Jesus as her sister Martha had been, 'distracted with much serving,' is once again centre stage. Once again Martha is serving, and once again Mary is rapt with love and devotion, sitting at his feet. But now Mary springs into action. In one spontaneous, reckless and, some would say wasteful gesture of extravagance, she anoints the feet of Jesus with expensive perfume and wipes them with her hair. It's a very sensual, a very intimate, and a very shocking scene. For a woman to let her hair down in public in this way and behave towards Jesus with such physical intimacy must have aroused considerable attention.

It is a curious human trait that we so often criticise in others, behaviour which we secretly find exciting ourselves. Read the tabloids and you see page after page of editorial exposing the shameless behaviour of those caught out, especially in sexual indiscretions. And it is all told in full detail with pictures! Are we all such obvious hypocrites? So we can imagine this scene when Mary started performing such overtly sensual and improper gestures over the body of Jesus. To let down her hair and massage the feet of Jesus with perfume is quite a highly charged act in any culture, but at the time it was positively outrageous. It might not have been the done thing to criticise Jesus, but how the disciples must have all wanted to have a go at Mary for being such a tramp and behaving in this shameless fashion.

We are told that it was Judas who spoke out, he challenged Mary and did so on the grounds of extravagance. But we can be sure that all of the others there that night must have wanted to say something, even if some of them felt legitimately embarrassed. We know from Matthew's Gospel that all of the disciples disliked the waste of perfume being used on Jesus! Matthew in his Gospel tells us (Matthew 26:8)

When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked.

In Mark's Gospel too he records that it was "some who were there" who protested. (Mark 14:4). It was not just Judas.

Yes, we can criticise Judas, but none of the disciples would have approved and truthfully all of us would be appalled when we heard about this lewd behaviour and flagrant waste. Everybody except Jesus Jesus defends Mary: "*Leave her alone, " he says. "She is anointing me, making preparations for my death. "*

Jesus knows how much Mary loves him, and he recognises the goodness in her devotional act of extravagant love. She loved Jesus, and she poured out her love like priceless perfume, like there was no tomorrow, without ever counting the cost. The perfume Mary poured out was worth a year's wages, would we be prepared to pour out that kind of money on somebody we love? Would we be prepared to pour it out on Jesus?

If we let our heads rule our hearts, we would never build beautiful churches with spires and steeples, never have stained glass or a silver chalice. There is a part of us all which is begrudging and miserly and which can always suggest a better way to spend money.

What this woman did was outstanding. She gave Jesus not just words or promises about her love. She put those words into direct action. She did not consider the cost because her love was greater than financial considerations. We need so very much to learn the lesson which Jesus understood about generosity when he publicly approved of what she did.

Mary had much to be thankful to Jesus for, he had raised her dead brother Lazarus from his stinking, how could she deny Jesus her best perfume? What Mary did was highly provocative, but she was highly motivated and her spontaneous act of loving gratitude could not be inhibited by social etiquette. Her affection for Jesus is an example to us all.

Perhaps she knew also that Jesus had but days to live, wouldn't we all use our resources differently if we knew that we or our loved ones would be dead within the week? Funerals are a time when people are often criticised for lavish expenditure. How many times have I heard that 'if all the money spent on flowers had been given to charity it would have been put to much better use.' But this is to miss the point, they were given out of love for somebody precious and sometimes in the face of death it is all that we can do, because no words can offer comfort or console in presence of such overwhelming loss. We can never be critical of those who spend money on funeral flowers, oak coffins with silk lining or limousines to carry the mourners. This is not the time to be sensible with expenditure.

But sometimes people at a funeral do wish that they had chance to go back and say something or do something. They regret that they failed to tell show their real love and appreciation. The day of the funeral is too late. The opportunity has passed. Mary, however inadvertently, has seized the moment. She made her grand gesture while Jesus was still alive to enjoy it.

So what of us, what are the lessons which we have learn?

To be less critical of how other people assess their priorities?

To be less eager to gloat at the behaviour of others and more willing to understand and appreciate their motives?

Perhaps also to recognise that with every passing day we have less opportunity to demonstrate our love for others, and so we have to make the most of the opportunities of every day. So often when we give to people and to God we do count the cost, we measure the time and make sure that we are not 'going over the top.' When we are responding to the love of God in Christ Jesus we cannot afford to be less than extravagantly generous. *Charles Royden*

Meditation Sometimes we hear people say: "It is hopeless and difficult and it cannot be done. It will always be that way. Things cannot change." They might be referring to something in their personal life or they might be referring to something in their place of business or church or government or world. Isaiah encourages us to think things can change. Where do you want to start ?

Prayers for Sunday and the Week Ahead

God our Father, we come today to worship you and confess that devotion to you is often far from our minds. This morning may we refocus our attention upon our love for you and how we show that love. Help us Lord to be more willing to pour out our lives as fragrant offerings of love. We lay our lives before you and ask that we might know that love which does not count the cost.

Lord God, as we wait upon you now, as we listen for your voice in the silence of hearts and as we offer our prayers to you we think of those people in our lives who have loved us with a generous love we think of those who like Mary have not counted the cost of what they have given us; of those who given all of themselves to us as Christ gave himself for the world; and we thank you for them - and ask you to bless them and for you to make us like them.

As we go into this week, O God, help us to have a focus, a purpose that is beyond that of just getting by; beyond that of just trying to make it through another week; show us we pray what you would have us do; reveal to us our own personal and unique ministry—and help us to do it.

Bless O God those in our midst and those around the world whom we name in our hearts before you at this time; we especially ask for those who are poor in the basic needs of daily living; and for those who are poor in love; hear too the prayers we ask for those who need healing or hope in their lives, those who need justice, and those who require mercy.

News, Views and Information

Saturday 3rd April 2004 All day walk incorporating a short train ride (Bedford to Ridgmont £2.70) and 8½ mile walk from Ridgmont station to Millbrook. Lunch 12.30—1.00pm at “The Swan” Cranfield. Meet 10.10am St John’s station for 10.17 train. Free car parking behind ‘Kid’s World’ and St. John’s station. Any queries contact Margaret or Alan 327219.

Putnoe Ramblers. Saturday 17 April. A cruise & Ramble (‘Cramble’), based on the Grand Union Canal & Ouse Valley Park. Picnic lunch at Great Linford (liquid refreshments on board) Meet at the Barley Mow, Cosgrove, at 10 am. (Parking Opposite) Contact Margaret & Alan Massey (07788 504637) or Sally & John Gunning (305925)

Fun Run & Sponsored Walk 5KM & 3KM. on Sunday 13 June .in Mowsbury Park, 2.30pm start. Prize giving at St Mark’s at 4pm. BBQ, Bouncy Castle, Balloon Race. Entry forms available from St. Mark’s Church.

Easter cards. Our Easter cards for circulation around the churches, friends and community are now ready. Please do take these and distribute them freely. Please remember that the very best way to get somebody along to church is to give them a card and then bring them.

Spring Arts and Crafts Fair at Priory Methodist Church on Saturday 3rd April from 11a.m. to 3p.m. A wide variety of craft stalls, paintings, cards, books, cakes and home produce and children’s activities will make your visit very pleasurable. Admission is 50p (children free) Do come and bring your friends. In

aid of the Church Development Scheme.

Services for Highfleds . A group from St Mark’s conducts a simple service there every third Sunday in the month. If you feel that you would like to help in some way, singing, chatting to the residents, choosing hymns etc., we shall be pleased for you to join us. Thank you. Vera Pearson & John Standley

The late Joyce Cox has bequeathed £1,000 to Putnoe Heights Church in gratitude for all the happy times she enjoyed at church and for the kindness and support she received from the congregation. Joyce wanted to contribute to the continuation of God’s work at Putnoe Heights and this bequest will be put towards the chapel development.

Easter Offering envelopes will be available on Palm Sunday to raise funds for the Methodist Fund for World Mission. All proceeds go to support the work of the fund in providing grants for Partner Churches overseas, training for Mission Partners, funding for the work of nationals in mission appointments, World Churches in Britain and various other mission projects. A special service will be held at Clapham Methodist Church on 16 May with the theme of “A stranger in a strange land” all are welcome. Contact Margaret Standley or Pam Seymour.

Fred Pratt Green. Those people who were unable to receive a copy of the notes from the talk last week can obtain them after church this morning. We have been asked to provide an opportunity for people to make a donation towards the photocopying of our Lent booklets. A plate will be provided for offerings after the course this week. *Thank You*

Partnership Lent Course 2004 7.30pm at Putnoe Heights Church

Great Hymn Writers

This year our Lent Course will be looking at the lives and theology of four great hymn writers.

Our Ministers will speak about a separate hymn writer each week in Lent. This would be an excellent event to bring along a friend or somebody who does not come to church.

Last Night!

29 March Wesley Neil Bramble Chapman

Important Notice

We were all disappointed to hear that GOLD was closing. We are however able to report that starting from Monday 29 March a new provision will be offered covering all of the usual times. It will operate on the same days at the same times and the same place and be led by Social Services to take over the work of GOLD.

We hope that volunteers will come forward who will continue to support this important work and help provide an ongoing resource in our community. Please do contact Wendy Rider if you are able to help.

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

Paul Watson

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

Rotas for the next quarter are available this morning at both churches, changes having been incorporated from last week. There are some vacancies which we would appreciate more volunteers for - welcoming at St Mark's Church and leading intercessions at Putnoe Heights. Please contact one of the ministers or Leadership Teams if you are able to help.

Easter Cards from our churches are ready for collection and delivery. Please do assist us with getting the cards out to invite people to our services.

Thank You. Hannah Farthing, Kate Crossley and Alexandra Royden would like to say thank you to everybody who bought cakes from the cake stall, enabling them to raise £87.06 for World Vision. They would also like to thank the kind people at Putnoe Heights Church who gave money, without receiving any cakes.

Easter Chicks & Rabbits containing a Cadbury crème egg are on sale from the card table today at St. Mark's at 70p each. Marion

The Passion of the Christ. A group from the Partnership went to this amazing film yesterday. Many thanks to Gill Robinson for arranging the special tickets. It was a bloody film and not for the faint hearted. But I think most of us felt that if Jesus went through all of this, the least we can do is to try and understand what happened. The film is very biblical and it cannot be said to be anti-Semitic, indeed I found it to be less so than the Biblical record itself.

We all had a lot to think about, not least how brutal crucifixion was. It is hard to imagine how the Romans once crucified hundreds in a single day. There were one or two artistic moments, the unrepentant thief crucified alongside Jesus, has his eyes pecked out by a crow! But this is a powerful film, probably the most accurate portrayal of the Passion people have ever seen. The violence is placed firmly within the Biblical with the opening frame of the film a quote from Isaiah 53:5

He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

After the film most of us wanted time to digest what we had seen. No doubt the Easter readings will be heard in a different way this year.

We publish the banns and pray for the marriages of Geoffrey Charles Gypps and Lynne Burr of the parish of St Mary's Goldington, on the electoral roll of this parish. This is for the third time of asking (21,28,4)