



Methodist
Church

Partnership News

30 December 2007

First Sunday after Christmas



Church of
England

Partnership Church Services Today

First Sunday after Christmas

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

9.30am St Mark's - Holy Communion with prayer for Christian Healing

Preacher - Mr Richard Wycherley

Leadership Team - Mrs Delia Shephard

Intercessions - Mrs Delia Shephard

11.00am Putnoe - Holy Communion with prayer for Christian Healing

Preacher - Mr Richard Wycherley

Leadership Team - Mrs Linda Hoar

Intercessions - Mrs Claire Peck

Epiphany

9.30am St Mark's - Family Worship

Preacher - Rev Dr S Cappleman

Leadership Team - Mrs Linda Parry

Intercessions - Mr Warwick Holden

11.00am Putnoe Heights - Family Worship

Preacher - Rev Dr S Cappleman

Leadership Team - Mrs Linda Hoar

Intercessions - Mrs Claire Peck

Bible Readings. 1. Isaiah 60: 1-6

2. Ephesians 3: 1-12 3. Matthew 2: 1-12

Thank You

The flowers at Putnoe Heights have been given by Jill Richards in loving memory of her husband Barry.

The flowers at St Mark's have been given by Margaret Standley and family in memory of her husband John "Compliments of the season".

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

Prayer for Sunday

Lord Jesus, at this time we can look back to the old year, and forward to the new. We give thanks for the blessings of the past year, and we place into your hands the mistakes we have made. As you are "the Light of the world", take away the darkness in our lives. As you are "the Way", lead us in the year ahead. As you are "the gate of the sheepfold", protect us from danger. We entrust the past to your mercy, Lord, the present to your love, and the future to your providence. Amen.

Contact Details

The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman

107 Dover Crescent, Bedford MK41 8QR

266952 Fax- 402624 NSM@ThisisChurch.com

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

The Reverend Dr. Joan Crossley (Day off Friday)

30 Cutcliffe Grove, Bedford. MK40 4DD.

Home 344536 Crossley@thisischurch.com

The Reverend Charles Royden (Day off Thursday)

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For Data Protection Purposes

Please note that any items submitted for inclusion in Partnership News will automatically be posted on our website.

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

Partnership Pastoral Support Team Co-Ordinator & Churchyards Administrator

Mrs Mary Stubbs 406784 Mary@Thisischurch.com

Please inform us if you know of anyone who is ill, bereaved, housebound, requires a visit, home communion or counselling services.

Please also ask us if you would like a home visit for any reason.

Putnoe Heights Church Centre

Open 9am—5pm Monday to Friday

Tel/fax & Answering Service 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com

Centre Manager Mr Barry Snelson 365630 & 344417

Leadership Team Mr Alan Cooper 365302 Mob 07989367604

Treasurer Mr Ian Morse 216428 treasurerph@thisischurch.com

Gift Aid Administrator - Mr John Hitt 404186

Youth & children's worker - Mrs Spavins 302349

youth@thisischurch.com

St. Mark's Church Centre (Open 9am - 5.00pm)

Tel/fax & Answering Service 342613 office@thisischurch.com

Centre Manager Miss Wendy Rider 342613

Leadership Team - Mrs L Parry 216724 Mobile 07922053740

Treasurer - Mr Ian Farthing 210892 treasurer@thisischurch.com

Gift Aid Administrator Mr Williams 360605

Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

Monday

9.30-12.00pm Mon-Fri Putnoe Heights Pre-school

Headteacher Mrs Janet Smith ☎326685

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

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin ☎312634

(See website for more details)

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

10.00am Bakers Barn Art Group. St Mark's

Mr Kellie ☎721063

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

12.00pm Story box We welcome the under 5's and their carers to join them between 12noon and 1pm for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based story and singing. ☎Liz 302349

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

4.00pm Storybox Plus Putnoe Heights for 4-9 year Old. Meet at 3.30 for refreshments & games. Then till 5pm 'follow the year' through stories, drama, singing & craft activities. We then make a short presentation in church on first Sunday in each month. ☎Liz Spavins 302349

4.15pm Rosemary Conley Diet & Fitness. Putnoe Heights. Margo Needham 843747

4.15pm Kumon Maths Putnoe Heights. Mrs Raksha Mistry ☎01908 392698

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

6.15 pm Brownies Putnoe. Sharon Tanner ☎07720712735

6.15 Pilates at Putnoe Heights Jane Butcher 300859

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

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

7.15pm Yoga. Putnoe Heights Lena Holland ☎244970

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

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

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

Tuesday

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wednesday

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

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

9.30am Body Control Pilates. Putnoe Heights. Stephanie Smith ☎07973174430.

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

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

10am Sewing & Chat. Putnoe Heights Valerie Russell ☎01462 815966

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

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

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

1.00-3pm Police Surgery at Putnoe Heights .

1.15pm Bridge Club for the Retired. St. Mark's. Mr Barnes ☎261811

1.45 Scots Society Whist monthly .All welcome Nancy Barr 268147

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

2.15pm - Fifty plus Keep Fit. Putnoe Heights Mrs Webster ☎856966

4.15pm Kumon Maths. Putnoe Heights Mrs Raksha Mistry ☎01908 392698

6.00 pm Brownies. St Mark's. Mrs Carol Warden ☎219731

6.15pm Yoga and Relaxation Putnoe Heights Racheall Monton ☎01234 297138

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

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

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

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

7.00pm Yoga St Mark's Dorothy Turner ☎721763

7.00pm Putnoe Guild Putnoe Heights monthly Janice ☎Loxley 347073

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

Mr Farish ☎824984

7.45pm Badminton Club Putnoe Heights All welcome.

Ken Marriott ☎214867

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

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

Thursday

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

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

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

9.45am Yoga Putnoe Heights Lena Holland ☎244970

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

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

12pm Storybox weekly at St Mark's welcome the under 5's and their carers to join them between 12 noon and 1pm for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based story and singing. Lots of fun. Contact Emma Strangwick ☎211070

1.30pm Toddler Playtime. Putnoe Majella Atkinson ☎325293.

2pm Putnoe Bridge Club. Gerald Palmer ☎345991

5.30pm Police Surgery. St Mark's Foyer.

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

6.15pm Brownies. Putnoe Heights Helga Nash ☎218521

6.15pm Bedford Junior Chess Club. St. Mark's

Mr C Hill ☎772922

7.00pm Club 2000 Putnoe Heights

Nina Ovenden ☎825059

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Friday

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

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

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

2.00pm U3A Gardening Group Putnoe Heights Eve Whitehead ☎356875

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

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

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

Contact PC Dave Hawkey ☎349179

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

Mr Kenworthy ☎402792

Saturday

9.00pm Stars School of Dance. Putnoe

Esther Sancto ☎295862 or ☎07917 582468

10.00am Theatretrain St Mark's. Dancing acting, singing.

Kate Randle ☎01234 782414

1.30pm Young Embroiders bi monthly Terry Fletcher Tel 357198

7.00pm Duplicate Bridge. St Mark's Mrs Pillinger ☎212066

Sunday

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

11.00 - 12.00 Church and Junior at Putnoe Heights for the under 9's and Young Peoples Fellowship (Y.P.F) for our young adults. A crèche is also available.

1pm Tabernacle of Truth Church Putnoe Heights Revd. Tarr ☎360188 or ☎07866775515

6pm T.N.T. Putnoe. For 9-12 year olds (fortnightly) join us for fellowship, fun, games & outings. Liz ☎302349

Diary Dates

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

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

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

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

Putnoe Heights Centre Management -

Putnoe Church Council - 28 January 2008

Pastoral Group Meeting – 4.30pm 15 January

Churchyard Committee - 16 January 2008

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

Partnership Council -

Brickhill Parish Council Meetings 10 January

Deanery Meeting -

Circuit Meeting - 10 March 2008, 12 June 2008

Woodland Burial Trustees - January 21st 2008

Putnoe Heights Children & Youth-

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

First Sunday of Christmas

Opening Verse - Psalm 148:11

Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendour is above the earth and the heavens.

Collect Prayer for the Day

Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so we may share 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. *Common Worship*



First Bible Reading - Isaiah 63: 7-9

I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the LORD has done for us— yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses. He said, "Surely they are my people, sons who will not be false to me"; and so he became their Saviour. In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

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

Second Bible Reading - Hebrews 2: 10-18

In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." And again, "I will put my trust in him.

And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (This is the word of the Lord - **All: Thanks be to God**)

Third Reading -- Matthew 2: 13-23 All: Glory to Christ our saviour

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son." When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead." So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."

(Reader: This is the Gospel of Christ, **All: Praise to Christ our Lord.**)

Post Communion Prayer

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home: help your Church 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.

Commentary

Having been to Bethlehem and seen the cave which Christians venerate as the birthplace of Jesus, I am struggling this year trying to understand what happened that first Christmas night. We are told that Mary and Joseph had to leave Nazareth and go to Bethlehem, because it was the **home town** of Joseph and the Romans were conducting a census. So off they trekked south, across the desert from Nazareth. When they arrived, Mary was about to give birth to the baby Jesus. Imagine that you were Joseph in this position. Your wife is about to give birth, what do you do? I suspect that we would all go to the home of our friends/relatives and beg a favour. We are told that there was no room for them at the inn. The word used by Luke, which we choose to translate in this instance as 'inn' is 'katalumati.' Later in the Gospel (22:11) Luke will use the same word to describe the place where the last supper will be held, there it is often translated as 'guest room.' We all have pictures in our minds of nativity scenes in which a friendly hotelier takes pity on Mary and Joseph and finds them a place. The truth is probably very different. The phrase 'there was no room' might be intended to convey a much more cruel fact, that not even the friends and relatives of Joseph wanted to provide shelter for him and his disgraced wife. Had the news of the pregnant Mary reached Bethlehem before the couple arrived? There is nothing juicier than a bit of gossip about an unmarried mother, such news travels faster than pregnant women, even in an age deprived of the telephone. The fact that there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the 'katalumati' whatever one of those was, gives a huge insight into the attitudes of their friends and family. We can be sure of the fact that the place of birth was one which was not desirable, it was chosen because there was 'no room' in the place where Joseph and Mary would have chosen. This was a place devoid of the usual comforts, because we know the baby Jesus was laid in a manger. Babies are not normally put into feeding troughs, a mother would only do this out of necessity. It is a striking point and no wonder therefore that Luke mentions the manger three times in his nativity story. Small detail - big point.

So here we have a rejected couple, giving birth in an undesirable place, finding no suitable hospitality in the home town of Joseph. Little wonder that in the passage from Matthew today we read that Joseph then decides to escape to Egypt. Given the lack of hospitality which Joseph has received in Bethlehem there is little reason to suppose that the couple will find protection. Any protective father would feel equally fearful for the family, even without a mad king who decides to be sure that Jesus dies by killing babies in and around Bethlehem. Those of you who know your Old Testament will remember that Pharaoh gave orders to kill male Hebrew infants because he was warned in a dream of a new born Hebrew who would be threat to his kingdom. If were to examine the language used in the Exodus story and in Matthew we would see remarkable similarities. There can be no doubt that Matthew has in mind the story of Moses as he now tells us the story of the escape of Jesus from the butchering of the innocents. Pharaoh becomes Herod, whilst Moses becomes Jesus. Moses saved the people from bondage and slavery, now Jesus will save the people from their sins.

Such similarities between Old Testament passages and the nativity stories in Matthew have resulted in the passage from Matthew being seen as Christian midrash. Midrash was a way in which rabbis at the time of Jesus interpreted scripture in manner very different from our literal understanding of truth. It involved story telling and interpreting truth in new ways from previous events. This is not to say that these events never took place. We know that killing babies was exactly the kind of thing which Herod would have done. Herod was enraged that the Magi hadn't "reported" back to him and he was prone to fly into a rage. Herod ruled from about 37BC until 4BC, (*due to errors in the calendar we believe that Jesus was born about 6BC!*), the Jewish historian Josephus records that Herod's later years were full of attempts to defend his throne against the Jewish Hasmoneans, the descendants of the Maccabees. This was a man who executed his own wife Mariamne and three sons Alexander, Aristobulus and Antipater. He had an elaborate network of spies, and he often executed people for real or imagined conspiracies against his throne. Josephus (*Jos. Ant 17.6.6*) even talks about a plan, never carried out, to have all the Jewish nobility slaughtered at the time of his own death to ensure that everyone would be mourning at his death. So we read in Matthew that Herod had a fit of rage and ordered that all of the male infants in Bethlehem under two years of age be killed. Early Christians tradition reported that perhaps 14,000 (Byzantine) or 64,000 (Syrian) babies might have died. The number is actually much smaller. Bethlehem was a small town of only perhaps 500-1,000 people, so it is possible that about 20 babies might have been killed. Nevertheless such a slaughter was a most dreadful action which would have brought enormous fear and mourning to the town. We need to

remember that this is the reality of that first Christmas. It will never appear on our Christmas cards and yet it is much more a feature of the birth of Jesus than the idyllic scene of 'cattle lowing' and a waking baby Jesus who doesn't cry. Mary and Joseph are refused hospitality, they and their baby are now in real danger of being killed in the ensuing bloodbath. It was a very brutal Christmas and in the present context of daily slaughter in places like Darfur, Zimbabwe and Iraq, perhaps it has more to say to our world than we are prepared to allow.

We are told by Matthew that eventually the family return and go to live in Nazareth. Such a detail is also important. I love the fact that wherever I go I bump into people with whom I have an instant affinity, because we immediately recognise our origins in Merseyside. Being born in Liverpool means that you belong to a very exclusive and easily identifiable group, the cheery disposition and charming accent are just two of the qualities inherent in the Scouser. Liverpoolians love nothing better than sharing their good nature and friendly humour with others who have not had the benefit of such a birthplace. However there is also a flip side, there are those who think that anybody who comes from Liverpool must be horribly vulgar, steal cutlery and can't pronounce 'grass.' We are seldom intimidated by this behaviour and we have expressions which characterise these ignorant people, these would be most inappropriate to describe in Partnership News. I say this because if Jesus was born in England, I think that he would have been born in Liverpool. For this reason alone the 'Liverpool Nativity' which was on television over Christmas was very appropriate. Jesus grew up in the north, in Nazareth in Galilee. Nazareth was not far from the major commercial trade routes, only several miles from Sepphoris an important city. Yet this was a place despised by many Jewish people at the time. It was just as unlikely that a Messiah would come from Nazareth as it was for Anakin Skywalker to come from Tatooine. If a Messiah was to come from anywhere it should be Jerusalem, not the uncultured North.

Quite a few things about Jesus and the Gospels start to make sense when we understand this fact. In John 1:46 we read that Philip found Nathanael and told him, 'We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote, it is Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' The response of Nathanael was 'Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?' People from this northern region stood out. When Jesus was arrested and Peter was accused of being with him by the servant girl, (*Mark 14:67*) she said 'You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus'. We all know that Peter denied any contact with Jesus, but as soon as he opened his mouth he gave himself away, because he would have spoken with a Northern accent! So we are told that Peter is then accused himself of being 'a Galilean.'

Jesus never argued about the title, he would never shake it off, and presumably people would know where Jesus came from every time he said 'grass.' Jesus seemed to bear the disdain of others about his roots throughout his adult life. So it was that Pilate would have thought it a kind of joke to write over the head of Jesus on the cross, 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews' So the hopeless scene of an asylum seeking Joseph and Mary wandering around the streets of Liverpool is not too far from the truth. How could Jesus be born anywhere else, a messiah from Tunbridge Wells would just be too ridiculous.
Charles Royden

Hymns (*Please distribute Holy Communion Prayer for Christian Healing and Mission Praise*)
Come Down O love Divine 89, Unto us a boy is borne 714, O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder 506, Go tell it on the mountain. 179

Meditation

"When I die I shall see myself as I've never seen myself before, I shall see myself in the light of God's truth. That may not be very comfortable at all. Sometimes I feel afraid of it . . . All can do is trust that God already sees that truth and already loves me. So even when I see myself in the most unattractive light, God is still love. Can I accept that? We'll see when I die." *Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury and head of the Church of England.*

Prayers for Sunday and the Week Ahead.

Let your mighty hand and your outstretched arm, O Lord, be our defence. Let your mercy and loving-kindness in Christ Jesus be our protection. May your true and faithful Word be our instruction and guide; and may the grace of your life-giving Spirit be our comfort and strength, to the end and in the end, now and for ever. Amen. *John Knox, 1513-1572*

O most loving Shepherd, in the deepest of all waters we will trust you. In the darkest of all valleys we will rejoice in your presence. In the worst of our days we shall rest at peace in your arms. In the most troubled of our nights we shall be comforted by your saints. Amen.
Archibald Campbell Tait, 1811-1882

Preserve us, O God, in the faith of your saints, a faith both tried and trusted. May we enjoy both now and for ever the eternal love of the Father, the abiding love of the Son and the indwelling of love of the Holy Spirit, one God in glory and majesty, world without end. Amen ; *Hilary of Poitiers, 315-367*

O Lord, whose way is perfect, help us always to trust in your goodness, to walk in the way of faith, and to follow in the path of simplicity. Teach us to cast our cares on your providence, that we may possess a quiet mind and a contented spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen *Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830-*

Pray for Bethlehem

Munther Ishaq, director of the choir at Bethlehem Bible College, has been leading carol concerts in Manger Square, but attendance has been poor, with just 20-30 people present. "People are not in a celebratory mood," he said this week. Despite the sombre mood, Mr Ishaq said that the Christian presence in the Holy Land would endure. "Those here by choice are determined to bear witness. I will take my choir to sing wherever I can. As for the future, we have to keep the faith; there is nothing else we can do but hope."



An olive-wood nativity scene, including a removable separation wall, has been made by Bethlehem craftsmen. It is available from www.amostrust.org



Methodist response to the killing of Benazir Bhutto Christine Elliot, World Church Secretary for Asia and the Pacific, says;

'Thursday 27 December was a very sad day, especially for the people of Pakistan. The shocking killing of Benazir Bhutto has been a desperate blow for the fragile hope of a new democratic government in the elections planned for 8 January 2008.

'The situation in the country over the next hours and days will be very precarious, particularly in the Sindh province. Our partners in Pakistan are concerned that civil war may erupt and that military rule will be re-imposed further - there is a desperate feeling that it will be really difficult to recover from this tragedy. We have been asked to pray with and for the people of Pakistan, for peace and stability, and hope that others will join us in this task.'

The Revd Jonathan Kerry, Coordinating Secretary for Worship and Learning, has written this prayer for Pakistan;

**With her people we pray for peace in Pakistan.
With her people we mourn the dead.
With her people we long for stability.**

**When violence and terror confront us: Turn our outrage into action for justice and peace;
Turn our horror into deeds of practical compassion;
And turn our lust for revenge into a determination to work for a world in which all are equally valued.**

Remove every violent prompting from people's hearts

And let it begin right here and now.

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

Footprints Walking Group— New Years Day Walk. Tuesday 1st January 2008 at 10.30am. All friends and families welcome to join us on our traditional start to the New Year. Park at Emmaus Village, Carlton (Signposted from Carlton - Turvey Road) for easy walk. Optional lunch afterwards at “the Swan” in Radwell.

Putnoe Heights Women’s Fellowship. The next meeting will be on 8 January 2008. “Reflections on the New Year”

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

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

Anyone who wishes to donate flowers for a particular Sunday during the next few months is invited to enter their name(s) on the rota on the notice board in the welcome area at Putnoe.

Hall Refurbishment Plans Underway. St Mark’s were delighted last week to receive news of a £50,000 grant from WREN towards the refurbishment of the Large Hall. The hall will now have roof repairs, new ceiling, lighting, doors, windows and a new floor. This will bring the hall up to the same high standard as the rest of the premises.

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

Rest In Peace. Members of our churches will be saddened to hear news of the death of Sylvia Yockney who worshipped at Putnoe Heights Church. Sylvia was a long standing member of our church known to many. She has recently been living at Crossways nursing home following a period of ill health. Her funeral will take place at Putnoe Heights Church on Tuesday 15th January at 12pm followed by woodland burial. *Crossley*

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

Sylvia Yockney

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



The funeral of Ivy Edith Channon will take place at Bedford Crematorium on Friday 4th January at 11.30 *Royden*

The funeral of Sylvia Yockney will take place at Putnoe Heights Church on Tuesday 15th January at 12pm followed by woodland burial.