



Methodist
Church

Partnership News

4 January 2009

Covenant and Renewal of Baptism



Church of
England

Partnership Church Services Today

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

9.30am St. Mark's
Covenant and Renewal of Baptism Vows
Preacher - Revd Charles Royden
Leadership Team - Mr Mike Cooper
Intercessions - Mrs Mary Stubbs

11.00am Putnoe Heights
Covenant and Renewal of Baptism Vows
Preacher - Revd Charles Royden
Leadership Team - Mrs Sam Ware
Intercessions - Dr Tim Wilkes

Sunday 11 January

9.30am St Mark's- Morning Worship
Preacher - Rev Charles Royden
Leadership - Mrs Linda Parry
Intercessions - Mrs Alison Holden

11.00am Putnoe Heights
Morning Worship with Baptism
Preacher - Mr Paul Fricker
Leadership - Mrs Linda Hoar
Intercessions - Mrs Claire Peck
Readings
1 Genesis 1: 1-5 .2. Acts 19: 1-7
3. Mark 1: 4-11

Thank You

The flowers at Putnoe Heights Church this week have been given by Veta Hudson-Rae and her husband on the occasion of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary, and by Gwen Beswick in loving memory of her husband Peter.

A Prayer for Sunday

Stars cross the sky, wise men journey from pagan lands,
earth receives its saviour in a cave.
Let there be no one without a gift to offer, no one without
gratitude as we celebrate the salvation of the world, the
birthday of the human race.

Now it is no longer,
"dust you are and to dust you shall return",
but, "you are joined to heaven
and into heaven you shall be taken up".
Basil the Great (AD 330 - 379)

Thank You

Charlie and Sam would like to express their gratitude to all of those people who have sent cards, kind gifts and good wishes over Christmas. It has been a great pleasure to share with you all in our special services over Christmas in the Partnership.

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 Charles Royden (Day off Thursday)
The Vicarage, Calder Rise. MK41 7UY
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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 Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm, Friday 9am - 1pm
Tel/fax & Answering Service 365630 putnoe@thisischurch.com
Centre Manager Mr Barry Snelson 365630 & 344417
Leadership Team Mrs. Wendy Nash 357119
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 - Mr Mike Cooper 306751
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.

9.45am - Body Control Pilates –Putnoe Heights Stephanie Smith 07973174430

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

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

11am - 12. The Right Track at St Mark's. Signpost information for people with learning difficulties. Gina Barton

☎07999859980

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 ☎07720713738.

6.15 Pilates at Putnoe Heights Jane Butcher 300859

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

7.30pm Cancer Care Society. Meets monthly at St Mark's. Contact Mr J Dewhurst ☎01908 377020

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 meeting 19 January 2009 Judith Stanton. ☎823313

7.30pm House group 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

9.40 -12.30 Jo Jingles. St. Mark's. Music & movement for pre-school children. Jayne Philips 01582 485333

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 6 January 2009 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

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

7.30pm Putnoe Heights Ladies Tuesday Club - Meets fortnightly. Next meeting 6 January 2009 Afternoon tea. Details from 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 7 January 2009 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 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 7 January 2009 Everyone welcome. Graham ☎406359 or Alan 345312.

8.00pm Bedford Wine and Social Club St Mark's 1st week in the month. Mrs Gansfield ☎215016
7.45 for 8pm God talk—women's group monthly meeting for worship and friendly chat at Wendy Nash's Contact Majella Atkinson ☎325293

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.

9.45am Yoga Putnoe Heights Lena Holland ☎244970

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

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

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

1.30pm Toddler Playtime. Putnoe Majella Atkinson ☎325293.

2pm Putnoe Bridge Club. Gerald Palmer ☎345991

5.30pm Police Surgery. St Mark's Foyer.

2.30—4.30pm Art Society at St Mark's

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

6.15pm Brownies. Putnoe Heights Helga Nash ☎218521
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 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 Jean Birks ☎219607

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 -7.30pm Line Dancing. Beginners 7-8pm Improvers St Mark's Christine Rushton ☎782360

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

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 Howard ☎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

4pm B.A.M.A.A. at St Mark's. Chinese soft martial arts. Mr Chris Butcher ☎07886894922

6pm T.N.T. Putnoe. For 9-12 year olds (fortnightly) join us

Diary Dates



St Mark's Church Council –,
2 February, 22 June,
9 November 2009

St Mark's Leadership Team –
24 February

Putnoe Heights Leadership Team –

Putnoe Heights Management Meeting- 19 January, 20

April, 13 July

St Mark's Church Forum Meeting -
21 January 2009

Putnoe Church Council - Monday 26 January,
Monday 15 June, Monday 5 October

Pastoral Group Meeting - Tuesday 20 January
4.30pm

Annual Congregational Meetings 26 April

Churchyard Committee -

Putnoe Heights Mission Group –

Partnership Council -

Brickhill Parish Council Meetings -

Deanery Meeting

Circuit/Deanery Meeting

Woodland Burial Trustees

Mission Group Meeting - Weds 7th January 2009 at
7.30pm Sylvia 14 Flint Way 343424

Putnoe Heights Children & Youth –

Epiphany

Readings this week will be for the Methodist Covenant and Renewal of Baptism Vows

Opening Verse -John 8:12

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Collect Prayer -Before we read we pray

God of grace, through the mediation of your Son, you call us into a new covenant. Help us therefore to draw near with faith and join ourselves in a perpetual covenant with you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Bible Reading – A Reading from the Law Exodus 24: 3-11

When Moses went and told the people all the LORD's words and laws, they responded with one voice, Everything the LORD has said we will do. Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the LORD. Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey. Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words. Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.

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

Second Reading - A Reading from the Prophets Jeremiah 31: 31-34,

"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, " declares the LORD. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their mind and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Third Reading - A Reading from the Epistles Romans 12: 1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

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

Fourth Reading - Gospel Reading -

Reader: This is the Gospel from John 15:1-10 All: **Glory to Christ our Saviour**

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a

branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love

Reader: This is the gospel of Christ **All: Praise to Christ our Lord**

Hymns (*Please distribute Covenant and Renewal of Baptism Vows*)

1. Hail to the Lord's anointed 206
2. Father God I wonder 128
3. Come let us use the grace divine
4. God of the covenant Lord God Almighty

Commentary on the Epiphany reading Matthew 2:1-12

The Bible reading shown above is that set for this Sunday by churches around the world as they celebrate the Sunday of Epiphany, the revelation of who Jesus is to the Magi. It is also particularly appropriate for us today as we share in the Methodist Covenant Service at the start of a new year

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel."

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

I do love the sound of the Authorised King James, version of the Bible being read out aloud in church. Especially perhaps at Christmas, those old familiar words have a special resonance. Sadly it does not serve us well in the episode from Matthew Chapter 2 which we read today in our lectionary for Epiphany. It recalls,

'Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem.'

The Feast of the Epiphany, on the 6th January, remembers and celebrates the adoration of Jesus by the Magi from the East. However the original greek text just calls them 'Magi'. The story of these 'Magi' is shrouded in much legend and the description used in the Authorised King James does not help us, as the words 'wise men' are without justification. Since there were three gifts we have often thought that there were three Magi . Often we think of them as three wise men, surely their actions do show them to be wise, but there is nothing to suggest that there were only three or that they were only men. We might just as easily assume that since they brought rich gifts, they were also kings and have them wearing crowns, and we could also imagine that they travelled by ship, (I saw three ships.!) Legend has gone so far as to name them Melchior, Caspar and Balthasar.

What we do know is that pagan astrologers existed whose divinatory skills were widely respected in the Graeco-Roman world. Astrology had become popular as the 'science' of the East, and everybody agreed that the best astrologers lived in the East. The Old Testament was not kind to this interpretation of signs (Deut 18:11, Is 2:6), so it is perhaps surprising in some ways that Matthew includes the story. However the fact remains that many people are firm adherents to the notion that we can consult with astrologers

to best determine our path in life. Throughout the ages we can remember famous people and world leaders such as Queen Elizabeth or the Reagan's who would not take important decisions without first being advised by astrologers.

The story of the Magi has provided material not only for countless school plays but also for centuries of prolific Christian art and paintings. The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem is said to have been saved from destruction by invading Persians because they saw representations of the Magi on the walls and recognised them as fellow countrymen in the portrayal of them.

What we do know is that these Magi recognise Jesus for who he is, and give him their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Their learning leads them to the destination of their searching into the presence of the infant Christ.

Christians have understood these gifts to be profoundly symbolic and prophetic.

1. Gold represents the kingship of Jesus.
2. Frankincense is a fragrant resin which is burned as incense to symbolize the presence of God, it therefore acknowledges the divinity of Jesus.
3. Myrrh is a precious oil used for anointing the body, which serves to foretell the death of Jesus.

Perhaps that gift of gold would be used to help pay for the subsequent flight of Jesus and the holy family to Egypt.

The Greek word 'epiphany' is about 'manifestation', 'making known', and it has been used for the last two thousand years to describe God coming closer to the people, revealing himself in his Son, Jesus. At Christmas the light is born, at Epiphany that light is made known to all people. Such universalism is enshrined in the story of the Magi, Jesus is for all people not just one religious group. No longer will salvation be seen in terms of the hereditary principle 'we are children of Abraham.'

Epiphany Eve is twelfth night and we are encouraged to make sure that we have removed the Christmas decorations. As Jesus, the light, has been born into the world, so that light is surrounded by darkness. In a sense this is a time for getting back to reality. If they haven't already, then now the tinsel and the glitter must give way to real life. ;

The gifts remind us of the wonder of who Jesus is, but they also proclaim that his life is one of suffering and death. Soon the holy family must flee an attempt on the life of the child and innocent babies will be slaughtered by Herod, jealous of the one born to be King of the Jews.

At Epiphany the light of the world is made manifest in Christ, visible to good and bad alike, to the wise men and to Herod. Each of these reacts differently one with joy and one with confrontation. Each of us must measure our own reaction and the gifts which we bring.

Jewishness had been the principle upon which salvation rested until Jesus. The children of Abraham were marked by circumcision to show that they belonged to the chosen few. This symbol of exclusiveness set them apart as belonging to God's family. This circumcision was soon to be replaced with a new symbol, baptism would proclaim to the world that a person had died to sin and was alive in the new kingdom which Jesus proclaimed and established. This would no longer be restricted to a certain people by birth, it would be available freely to all people.

The visit of these Magi at Epiphany is the beginning of this new understanding of the wideness of God's revelation of himself. The Magi were gentiles and they would be the first to represent the new inclusion of the many nations of the world. Just as the Magi were guided by a star that was brighter than all of the others, from this time on all the nations would see in Jesus a revealing of God's love which was greater in magnitude than had ever been seen before. The Magi might have been very wise, they might even have been men, we will never know. However in the very mystery of their background lies some of their most enduring attraction, for they have come to symbolise not only the opening of the entire geographic world to the revelation of Jesus, but also the entire intellectual world as their astronomy, science and learning brings them close to Christ. Charles Royden

Prayers for the week

Holy Jesus, before your infant form sages bowed the knee and acknowledged your Lordship over all power and wisdom. Grant us also clear vision and courage, that in the light of your light, we may devote our power and potential to your service even when that requires us to go home by another way. Amen.

Church of Scotland

Almighty and everlasting God, you have revealed the incarnation of your son by the bright shining of a star, which the wise men saw, and offered costly gifts in adoration; let the star of your justice always shine in our hearts; that we may give as our treasure all that we are and all that we possess, to your service; through Jesus Christ our lord. Amen. *Gelasian Sacramentary*

Hymns for Sunday

1 Hail to the Lord's Anointed,

Great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
His reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free,
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity.

He comes, with succour speedy,
To those who suffer wrong;
To help the poor and needy,
And bid the weak be strong;
To give them songs for sighing,
Their darkness turn to light,
Whose souls, condemned and dying,
Were precious in his sight.

He shall come down like showers
Upon the fruitful earth;
Love, joy, and hope, like flowers,
Spring in his path to birth;
Before him, on the mountains,
Shall peace the herald go;
And righteousness, in fountains,
From hill to valley flow.

Kings shall fall down before him,
And gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore him,
His praise all people sing;
To him shall prayer unceasing
And daily vows ascend,
His kingdom still increasing,
A kingdom without end.

O'er every foe victorious,
He on his throne shall rest;
From age to age more glorious,
All-blessing and all-blest.
The tide of time shall never
His covenant remove;
His name shall stand for ever,
His changeless name of Love. *Cruger (204 MP)*

2 Father God, I wonder how I managed to exist

Without the knowledge of Your parenthood
and Your loving care.
But now I am Your child,
I am adopted in Your family,
And I can never be alone,
'Cause Father God, You're there beside me.

I will sing Your praises, I will sing Your praises,
I will sing Your praises, forever more.
I will sing Your praises, I will sing Your praises,
I will sing Your praises, oever more.

3 Come, let us use the grace divine,

And all, with one accord,
In a perpetual cov'nant join
Ourselves to Christ the Lord:

Give up ourselves, through Jesu's power,
His name to glorify;
And promise, in this sacred hour,
For God to live and die.

The cov'nant we this moment make
Be ever kept in mind:
We will no more our God forsake,
Or cast his words behind.

We never will throw off his fear
Who hears our solemn vow;
And if thou art well pleased to hear,
Come down, and meet us now.

To each the cov'nant blood apply,
Which takes our sins away;
And register our names on high,
And keep us to that day.
Charles Wesley (1707-1788) Tune: Dundee

4 God of the covenant, Lord God Almighty

Marvels of mercy adoring we see;
Calling from sin and from darkness a people,
Bonded to Christ by a timeless decree.

Not now by words bringing death to transgressors,
Life giving grace the new covenant brings;
Jesus our surety, our kinsman redeemer,
Round us the robe of his righteousness flings.

Blessings on blessings through ages unending,
Covenant fulness in glorious flood;
Ours is a hope which no mortal can measure,
Brought in by Jesus and sealed in his blood.

God of the covenant, changeless eternal,
Father, Son, Spirit, all-blessing, all-blessed;
Yours is the greatness, the power and the glory:
Lord God on you we forever shall rest.
Jessie F Webb Epiphany Hymn 11 10 11 10

Chat and Play at St Mark's restarts on 8th January 2009 after church alterations.

Putnoe New Year Lunch Sunday 11 January 1.00 pm. Tickets now available from Putnoe Office or Sue Allen (407264). Adults £8.00, Children under 10 £4.50. 3 courses all inclusive of wine, coffee and all the trimmings. Vegetarians please pre-order. This year all proceeds to Church Funds.

Sir William Harpur House A service of Holy Communion takes place on the first Monday of each month at 10.00am. All welcome.

Joan and her family send Christmas and New Year Greetings to all their friends at Putnoe Heights and St Mark's. I wanted to thank everyone who sent us lovely cards and notes this Christmas. I am settling well into my new job at Westminster School. The boys and girls are very clever and fun and I have a huge number of delightful and interesting colleagues (though no-one as delightful as Charlie and Sam, naturally!). In addition to the School, I have a great deal to do with the life of Westminster Abbey, which is an unexpected privilege. The Dean and Chapter have been most welcoming and I have been presented with a very smart red cassock to wear in Abbey services! Bishop Christopher and I are now taking bookings for our art gallery tours company and it is nice to keep seeing him in his retirement. The family are all well. I am enjoying being in London with Paul during the week and we are back home in Bedford for some weekends and holidays. Kate is studying English and History at Goldsmiths College in London and Nick is in his second year at UCL. I am hoping to see you in 2009. My thoughts and prayers are often with you and I send my love. *Joan*

Putnoe Tablecloths Putnoe Heights are missing six of their peach cotton tablecloths (possibly borrowed for an event and not returned) - these will be needed for next week's New Year Dinner. Please contact Putnoe Office if you have any ideas as to where they are?

2008 sees the "Year of the Child" marking the 30th anniversary of the United Nations International Year of the Child in which we celebrate children and young people in the church and community. We will be joining with many other churches through out Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire on Saturday 8th May at St Albans Cathedral for a day of worship,

stories, music and crafts as we invite our children to "travel around the world" There are many more exciting things booked such as a planetarium and is going to prove a great day for the young and not so young . I have been representing Putnoe and St Marks with this project and together with St Mary's we are going to cover the Europe crafts so now I am looking for anyone who can support us on the day as we are expecting up to 500 children. Thank you.. Liz

Diary Date. We are planning an after Christmas Table Top Sale at Putnoe on Saturday 28th February. Tables can be pre booked if you would like to sell your own items or there will be a church table. Please come along and support us and enjoy some lunch refreshment. Help on the day would be appreciated. Further details to follow please see Liz or Linda, thank you.

Putnoe Winter Grapevine. Following the success of the summer edition I am looking for articles for the next issue please let Liz have your news by Sunday 25th Jan.

Stella Brooks was in hospital for some time before Christmas and is now in Lloyd Lodge Residential Home, 2 St George's Road. Her sister Alwynne and friend Connie have sent cards and letters to the people listed in Stella's address book and apologise if church members have been inadvertently missed out. Stella has asked us to pass on her thanks for all cards and good wishes sent to her and to send her best wishes for the year ahead to all at Putnoe Heights and St Mark's Churches. Correspondence should still be sent to her Little Headlands Address

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.

**Jessie Pink
Tony Tatum
Michael Trevor Hardiman**

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

Forthcoming Funerals



The funeral of Mr Donald Charles Rich will take place at Bedford Crematorium at 1.45p.m Monday 5 January

The funeral of Mrs Elizabeth Wren will take place at St Mark's Church on Wednesday 7 January at 3.15pm

The funeral of Mrs Phyllis Eveline Jones will take place at Bedford Crematorium on Wednesday 7 January at 11.00am followed by burial at Foster Hill Road.

Tributes left in n the Garden of Remembrance at St Mark's will be left out and then removed on twelfth night, evening of the 5th January.