

Methodist
Church

Partnership News

8 January 2012

The Baptism of Jesus



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

8 January - Baptism of Jesus

9.30 am St. Mark's - Morning Worship

Preacher - Mr Richard Ledger
Leadership – Morag Stewart
Intercessions – Mr Ian Farthing

11.00 am Putnoe - Morning Worship

Preacher – Mr Richard Ledger
Leadership - Mrs Sam Ware
Intercessions - Mr Alan Bayliss

15 January - Covenant and Renewal of Baptism

9.30am St Mark's - Family Worship

Preacher - Mrs Liz Little
Leadership – Mrs Laura Farthing
Intercessions - Mrs Morag Stewart

11.00 am Putnoe - Family Worship

Preacher - Mrs Liz Little
Leadership - Mrs Jean Kirk
Intercessions - Mrs Sue Allen

Bible Readings

Exodus 24:3-11, Jeremiah 31:31-33, Romans 12:1-2, Mark 14:22-25

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

Thank You

We are grateful when people make donations towards flowers perhaps to celebrate a special occasion such as an anniversary or in memory of a loved one. Please contact Miss Marion Prior 303254 (St Mark's) or Ann Hitt 404186 (Putnoe Heights) or add your name to the rota in the foyers.

Welcome

We welcome especially to our service at St Mark's Church the family and friends of Harry Rowan Matthews who has been brought for baptism

Prayer for the Week

Living God,
draw us deeper into your love;
Jesus our Lord,
send us to care and serve;
Holy Spirit,
make us heralds of good news.
Stir us, strengthen us, teach and inspire us
to live your love with generosity and joy,
imagination and courage;
for the sake of your world
and in the name of Jesus,
Amen.

Living God's Love Prayer

The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman

107 Dover Crescent, Bedford MK41 8QR
266952 Fax- 402624 nsm@thisischurch.com
(Sam also works full time as a Vice President for Hewlett Packard)

Deacon Jane Mason

12 Hartop Close, Bedford MK41 8HE
348091 Mobile 07807 146535
jane@thisischurch.com

The Reverend Charles Royden

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

For Data Protection Purposes

Please note that any items submitted for inclusion in Partnership News will automatically be posted on our website and may appear in other local media sources.

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

Partnership Pastoral Support Team Co-Ordinator & Churchyards Administrator

Mrs Mary Stubbs 406784 Mary@ThisChurch.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 Geoff Gypps 365630 mob 07947 902846
Leadership Team Mrs. Linda Hoare 782717
Treasurer Mr Ian Morse 21428 treasurerph@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator John Hitt 404186
Youth Worker Emma Gordon email - 07593266091 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 - Laura Farthing 210892
Treasurer - Mr Ian Farthing 210892 treasurer@thisischurch.com
Gift Aid Administrator Jim Williams 360605

Regular Weekly Activities - A Guide To Our Churches

Monday

9.15 –3.45 pm Mon and Wed/ 9.15-12.15pm Tues/Thurs/ Fri. Putnoe Heights Pre-school. See website for more details www.ThisChurch.com

Head teacher Mrs Janet Smith ☎326685

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

9.30-3.15pm Top Marks Mon-Fri St Mark's

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Harpin ☎312634

(See website for more details)

.9.45am - Body Control Pilates –Putnoe Heights

Stephanie Smith ☎ 357787 or 07973174430

10.00am Bakers Barn Art Group. St Mark's Mrs Berry

☎211955

10.30am U3A Play reading St Mark's (see contact details below)

12.15pm Story box Putnoe Heights We welcome the under 5's and their carers to join them between 12.15 and 1.15 for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based story and singing. Contact Emma Gordon ☎07593266091

2.00pm U3A History Group St Marks.(see contact details below)

2pm U3A Music Appreciation - (see contact details below)

4.15pm Rosemary Conley Diet & Fitness. Putnoe Heights. Margo Needham ☎843747 or 07881730747

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

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

6.15 pm Brownies Putnoe. Sharon Tanner

☎01767699399 or 07720713738.

6.15 Pilates at Putnoe Heights Jane Butcher 300859

6.15 - 8.15pm

6.30pm Weightwatchers. St. Mark's Sam Thompson

☎07766421000

7.15pm Fit for Life Yoga - Putnoe Heights Contact Jane Butcher ☎07891879571

7.00pm Sugarcraft Guild St Mark's 1st week Pat Nicholson ☎353518

7.00pm Cancer Care Society. St Mark's. 1st Week. Mr J Dewhurst ☎01908 377020

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

7.30pm Whist Drive. St Mark's 3rd & 5th week . Next meeting– 16th January Judith Stanton. ☎823313

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

8pm 'Get Fit, Stay Fit' Putnoe Heights. Mrs Diane Field ☎404976

Tuesday

9.30am Jo Jingles. St. Mark's. Music & movement for pre-school children. Renu Elston ☎07790206016

9.30am Candlewicking (Needlework). Putnoe Heights. Pat McCart ☎365507

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

10am Autism Beds Adult Support Group. St Mark's. Sally Cripsley ☎350704

11.15am U3A Keep Fit Putnoe Heights (see contact details below)

1.15pm Toddlers Playtime/Sing & Stomp - Putnoe Heights for toddlers and their carers.Run by Putnoe Childre's Centre Trudy Hamilton ☎340552

1.15pm U3A Cinema Group. St Mark's (see contact

details below)

2.00pm U3A Book Group 1 St Mark's (3rd Wk) (see contact details below)

2.00pm U3A Book Group 2 St Mark's (2nd Wk) (see contact details

2.00pm Library Walk W.I. Putnoe Heights, meets monthly. Morag Tomkins ☎356895

2pm U3A Photography Group 3 St. Mark's (1st Wk) (see contact details below).

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

2.15pm Tuesday Afternoon Housegroup. St Mark's Fortnightly. Mary Stubbs ☎406784.

3.45pm-6.15pm Stars School of Dance. Putnoe Heights. Esther Richardson ☎295862 or 07917582468.

6.30pm Creative Card making. Putnoe Heights Church. Carol Houghton ☎346718

6.15pm Pilates St Mark's Church Jane Butcher ☎07891879571

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

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

7pm Tabernacle of Truth Church Putnoe Heights Bible study & prayers. Sacha Ojo ☎07590597891 or www.tabernacleoftruth.co.uk

7.30pm Putnoe Heights Ladies Tuesday Club - Meets fortnightly. Next meeting January 3 Afternoon Tea at 2.30pm at Putnoe. Details call Janet King 313946

8.15pm - 10.15pm Bedford Advanced Dancers St. Mark's 1st Tuesday in month. Shirley Sadler ☎01767 651767

Wednesday

9.30am Body Control Pilates. Putnoe Heights. Stephanie Smith ☎357787 or 07973174430.

10am-2pm Open House at St Mark's for those with learning disabilities., their friends, family , carers and supporters ☎342613.

10am U3A Gardening Group 3 St Marks.(see contact details below)

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

10am U3A Card Making,St Marks (see contact details below)

12.30pm Luncheon Club. Putnoe Heights fortnightly. Next meeting 4 January 2012 Putnoe Heights Office ☎365630

1.00-3pm Police Surgery at Putnoe Heights (Fortnightly)

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

1.45 Scots Society Whist Putnoe monthly .All welcome Nancy Barr ☎268147

2.00-4.00pm U3A Craft St Marks.(see contact details below)

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

3.45.- 5.30pm Messy Church. St Mark's (3rd Wk). for children of lower school age and their carers. Bible-based story, crafts, singing and a meal. Next meeting 18th January Jean Banks 355698.

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

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

6.00pm Shooting Stars. Youth Group for 9-13yrs at Putnoe Heights fortnightly. Contact Emma Gordon 365630.

6.15pm Yoga and Relaxation Putnoe Heights Racheall Monton ☎01234 297138 or 07910835994.

6-8pm Karate. St Mark's Karen King ☎079412 64885

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

7.00pm Archaeological & Local History Society Putnoe Heights monthly. Vanessa Aykac 268098 or 07917385987

7.00pm Putnoe Guild Putnoe Heights monthly Janice Loxley ☎347073

7.00pm Line Dancing Putnoe Heights Mike Del-Boyer ☎348378

8.00pm Badminton Club Putnoe Heights All welcome. Ken Marriott ☎214867

8.00pm Tudor Reeds Folk Dance Club meet at St Mark's 1st,3rd & 5th Wednesday in month. Next meeting will be 4th January 2012. Everyone welcome. All dances called, only £1 including refreshments. Ring Valmai 219555 Rosemary 405594 or Graham 406359 for more details.

8.00pm Bedford Wine and Social Club St Mark's 1st week in the month. Jean Ross ☎771870

Thursday

9.30am Thursday Prayer Group. Putnoe Heights. Valerie Capon ☎356306 .

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

9.45am Yoga Putnoe Heights Denise Green ☎244970

8.00am Chat and Play St.Mark's. A group for Mums & toddlers. Jo Garner 400071 or 07719670624 Restarts on 12 January 2012

12pm Storybox . St Mark's welcome the under 5's and their carers to join them between 12 noon and 1pm for a sandwich lunch followed by a Bible based story and singing. Lots of fun. Contact Jaana Swaby ☎363283

1.30 - 3.00pm NHS Baby Clinic 1st and 3rd Thursdays St. Mark's ☎267444

1.30pm Toddler Playtime. Putnoe Majella Atkinson ☎325293

1.45 Friendly Chicago Bridge at Putnoe Heights £2 per session inc. refreshments. New members welcome. Contact Pat 01234 294220.

2pm Putnoe Bridge Club. Gerald Palmer ☎345991

2-4pm U3A Indoor Games. St.Marks.(see contact details below)

2.30 - 4.30pm Bedford Art Society St Marks Mary Rich ☎272470

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

6.15pm Brownies. Putnoe Heights Lou Watkins

6.30-7.30pm Bootcamp/Circuits. (Fitness) St Marks. Laura Amor.341152. 07976259081.

7.00pm Club 2000 Putnoe Heights Nina Ovenden ☎825059

7pm U3A Folk & Poetry St Marks (2nd and 4th week) (see contact details below)

7.15pm Putnoe Art Group Bob Wardale ☎406094

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

8 -10pm Bedford Folk dancers (formerly Barn dancers) Meet weekly at Putnoe Heights . Different guest callers

each week. All welcome, cost £2 Including refreshments. More details Ron Law 825574.

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

8.00pm Magpies Women's Group St Mark's 2nd & 4th week Pat Cass ☎294220

8.00pm Brickhill Ladies Group St Mark's 1st and 3rd week in month. Ann Pallister ☎272906

Friday

10am -12.00 U3A Photography St Marks.(4th week)((see contact details below)

10am - 12 & 1.15 - 3.15pm U3A Beginners French St.Marks (see contact details below)

2.00-4.00 pm Whist St Marks.Patricia Holland.☎262823

5-8pm Stars School of Dance Putnoe Heights Contact Esther Richardson ☎295862 or ☎07917 582468

6.00-7.00pm Zumba at St Mark's. Contact Laura Harrow ☎07834529833

6.15pm Yoga and Relaxation Putnoe Heights. Racheall Monton ☎297138 or 07910835994

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

Saturday

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

Young Embroiderers bi monthly Putnoe Heights Terry Fletcher ☎357198

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

6.45pm Duplicate Bridge. St Mark's Mrs Pillinger ☎212066

Sunday

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

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

1pm Tabernacle of Truth Church Putnoe Heights

U3A For information on the U3A groups meeting at St Mark's and Putnoe Heights Church please contact Yvonne Francis ☎405119



Diary Dates



St Mark's Church Council – 21 February 2012

St Mark's Leadership Team - 16 February 2012

Putnoe Heights Leadership Team - 25th Jan 2012

7.30pm at 24 Loring Rd. Sharnbrook.

Putnoe Heights Management Meeting - Mon. 23rd

Jan 2012 7.30 Putnoe Meeting Room

St Mark's Forum Meeting - NA

Putnoe Church Council - 13 February 2012

Pastoral Group Meeting -

Churchyard Committee -

Brickhill Parish Council Meetings -

Circuit meeting - 8 February 2012 @ Kempston East

Deanery Meeting

Woodland Burial Trustees – 5th February 12.30pm

Putnoe Heights Children &

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

Baptism of Jesus

Opening Verse of Scripture Mark 1

A voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Collect Prayer *(Before we read we pray)*

Heavenly Father, at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son: may we recognize him as our Lord and know ourselves to be your beloved children; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen. *Common Worship shorter form*

First Bible Reading Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning--the first day. (This is the Word of the Lord **All: Thanks be to God**)

Second Reading - Acts 19:1-7

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all. (This is the Word of the Lord **All: Thanks be to God**)

Gospel Reading - Mark 1:4-11

And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (This is the Word of the Lord **All: Thanks be to God**)

Post Communion Prayer

Lord of all time and eternity, you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son: by the power of your spirit complete the heavenly work of our rebirth through the waters of the new creation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hymns *(Please distribute Morning Worship, Hymns and Psalms and Baptism at St Mark's)*

1. Thou who was rich (on Partnership News)
2. Come let us sing of all wonderful love 691
3. Christ when four rows you were baptised 129
4. There is a spirit in the air 326
5. We are called to be God's people *(Tune Festival on Partnership News)*

Commentary

Our three readings today all show the activity of God's spirit, active and starting something near that begins a process of transformation. In Genesis 1 creation begins with order being brought out of chaos. Light replaces total darkness. In our gospel reading we see that as Jesus is baptised, God's spirit settled

on him affirming his identity and mission.

Mark writes from the standpoint that in the life of Jesus the Jewish hope had found fulfilment. He saw in the earthly life of Jesus the beginnings of God's final intervention in history, the first but decisive stage in the overthrow of the powers of evil and the establishment of God's rule. (*Nineham*). Again this is the start of something new and it began a process of transformation in the lives of people who met Jesus then and now.

The Act's reading describes how a group of people are brought into a new and closer experience of God. When they are baptised in the name of Jesus, the Holy Spirit fills them and God's love is shed abroad in their hearts and lives to change them. So, a break from the past, a new start, a process of transformation. God wants to bring order out of chaos.

Concentrating on today's Sunday theme, 'the baptism of Jesus', this is some of what Tom Wright has to say

'the whole Christian gospel could be summed up in this point, that when the living God looks at us, every baptised and believing Christian, he says to us what he said to Jesus on that day. He sees us, not as we are in ourselves, but as we are in Jesus Christ. It sometimes seems impossible, especially to people who have never had this kind of support from the earthly parents, but it's true. God looks at us and says you are my dear, dear child, I am delighted with you. Try reading that sentence slowly, with your own name at the start, and reflect quietly on God saying that to you both at your baptism and every day since.

Mark tells the story in quite a solemn language, echoing the old Testament 'this is how it happened', 'he saw the heavens open'. If we go back to the biblical roots we will realise what 'seeing heavens opened' means. It doesn't mean that Jesus saw a little door ajar miles up in the sky. Heaven in the Bible often means God's dimension behind ordinary reality. It's more as though an invisible curtain, right in front of us, was suddenly pulled back, so that instead of the trees and flowers and buildings, or in Jesus' case the river, the sandy desert and the crowds, we are standing in the presence of a different reality together.

A good deal of Christian faith is a matter of learning to live by this different reality even when we can't see it. Sometimes at decisive and climactic moments, the curtain is drawn back and we see, or hear, what's really going on. Most of the time we walk by faith, not by sight. One of the things Mark is saying to us, in the way he's written his gospel, is that when we look at the whole life of Jesus that is how we are to understand it. Look at this story, he says, look at this life, and learn to see and hear it in the heavenly vision, the heavenly voice. Learn to hear these words are addressed to yourself. Let them change you, make you somebody new, the new person God wants you to be. Discover in this story that normally hidden heavenly dimension of God's world.

Mind you, if we start the journey imagining that God is a bully, and angry threatening parent ready to yell at us, slammed the door on us, or kick us out into the street because we haven't quite made the grade, we will fail at the first whisper of temptation. But if we remember the voice that spoke those powerful words of love we will find a way through. For it was love that came down at Christmas. *Richard Ledger*

Prayers for Sunday and the week ahead

You keep us looking. You, the God of all space, want us to look in all the right and wrong places for signs of hope, for people who are hopeless, for visions of a better world which will appear among the disappointments of the world we know. So thank you, for the looking time. And in all this you keep us. Through hard questions with no easy answers, through failing where we hoped to succeed and making an impact when we felt we were useless. Through the patience and the dreams and love of others and through Jesus Christ and his Spirit you keep us. So thank you for the keeping time, and for now, and forever, Amen. *From the Iona community worship book*

Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth. Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust. Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace. Let peaceful fill our hearts, our world, our universe. Amen. *Prayer placed on the peace table in Durham Cathedral, during the Gulf War*

Goodness is stronger than evil, love is stronger than hate, light is stronger than darkness, life is stronger than death, victory is ours through him who loved us. *Bishop Desmond Tutu*

Lord, create in me a love for peace, not peace that is the absence of struggle, nor peace that is blind to injustice, but peace that makes whole what now is broken. *From Further Everyday Prayers*

Epiphany Sermon for Living God's Love by the Bishop of St Albans 8th January 2012. Mark

1. 4-11 The following is a transcript of the Bishop of St Albans video sermon 'Living God's Love one year in, The Baptism of Christ': From the Baptism Liturgy:

We thank you, almighty God, for the gift of water to sustain, refresh and cleanse all life. Over water the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through water you led the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt to freedom in

the Promised Land. In water your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us from the death of sin to newness of life.

This is the year of the London Olympics. The Lee Valley in Waltham Cross is where the canoe slalom is going to take place, the only event in the Olympics in the Diocese of St Albans. As you can see this is not a sport for the faint hearted. However, the Bishop of Hertford and the Archdeacon of St Albans have been testing the course out and preparing the way for the Olympic athletes getting ready for the real thing. I am reliably informed that on present form neither is being tipped to win a medal.

Surging waters are both fascinating and at the same time terrifying. In recent years we have watched our televisions in awe and terror at the footage of tsunamis destroying miles of coastline. We have seen terrible floods in Louisiana, Australia, Pakistan and recently in Thailand causing unimaginable damage and death. Part of the reason that waters cause fear is because of their unpredictability. In Old Testament times, there was a belief that the chaos of the surging water personified the powers which were in opposition to God. The sea is depicted as the place of ultimate threat, where we find ourselves in the power of forces outside our control. It's why water is so often the stuff of our nightmares, when we dream of drowning. This is hinted at in the opening words of the bible, which are one of the set readings for today:

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth
was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep.

Later in Genesis, Chapter 1 we find God separating the waters to create dry land and in today's Psalm we have a powerful declaration that God is stronger than any surging waters:

The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king for ever.

This, then, is the background to our gospel reading about the Baptism of Christ by John the Baptist in the Jordan. I guess if we were asked what the actual event would have looked like, most of us would describe some scene similar to the famous painting by Piero della Francesca in the National Gallery. It's a picture of serenity and peace as a trickle of water is delicately poured over the head of Jesus. At the same time the dove, representing the Holy Spirit, hovers

over him. That's certainly one image of baptism. But there is another in the bible. It is of the people of God being led out of the land of Egypt through the raging waters of the Red Sea. They find themselves trapped between the rapidly approaching Egyptian army threatening them with death and the powerful currents of the Red Sea. God commands them to go through the waters of chaos. It looks daunting and they fear that they will lose control and die in the swirling waters. Yet God tells them that this is the only way into the Promised Land, the land flowing with milk and honey.

This is a much more dramatic image of baptism than Piero della Francesca's. Perhaps the nearest we get to it today is in baptism by full immersion. At the heart of baptism, is this call to place our trust in God in a radical way – trusting Him even when we are facing chaos and uncertainty. We go under the waters, as if being buried, and then we are raised to new life.

It is said that some of the early Celtic saints lived out this radical faith by setting sail in a coracle – one of the most light-weight and insecure sorts of boats. They would simply put out from the shore and allow the currents, the tides and winds to propel them to a new place. They believed that the spot where they came ashore was the place that God, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, had called them for his mission.

As we begin the second year of Living God's Love as a diocese, John reminds us that the baptism of Jesus is about being filled with the Holy Spirit: 'I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.' The gift of the Holy Spirit at Jesus' baptism was to lead him into the wilderness and then into many demanding situations. Later, the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Christians in Corinth – as described in the reading set for today from the Acts of the Apostles - was to empower them and send them out in to their communities to be people of good news. The same is true for us today. God gives us the Holy Spirit in baptism and calls us to venture out into the places that feel chaotic and where we may feel insecure. Yet these are the very places where we will discover the Holy Spirit already at work. Like Jesus, it is when we are in a vulnerable place – when we feel like 'dying to self' - that we will hear afresh God's word of affirmation to us 'You are my beloved son or daughter'. The question I ask myself each day and which I want to ask you as you prayerfully prepare your Mission Action Plans, is 'Where is God calling us to venture forth in faith?' Over the past year, I've heard of many examples where this has already happening.

Last April, a group of young people from St Luke's in Watford joined a group of others from around Britain and travelled to Mexico to build a house for a local family. It was costly and risky, they had to raise money themselves for their trip and they had to work when they got there.

St Swithun's church in Sandy runs a drop in centre on Wednesdays and Saturdays to provide a meeting place for people in the local community. Hot lunches are provided and a room is set aside for mums and toddlers to meet. Like some other congregations, the people of St Francis church in Luton each year sends shoe boxes filled with items to bring humanitarian aid to communities in the Ukraine and Moldova at Christmas. St Michael's in Woburn Sands serves a community of only 3,500 people. Yet members of the congregation have been working with other Christian churches in the area to support a winter shelter for homeless people over Christmas and the New Year. This coming year provides many opportunities to venture out – among them the public celebrations of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in June, and the Olympics and Para Olympics over the summer. Alongside these there are countless other opportunities to be found in each parish and chaplaincy as together we seek to live out our baptism and Live God's Love. *Bishop Alan +*

Putnoe Heights New Year Lunch. Sunday 15 January 1.00pm. Tickets available from Putnoe Office or from Sue on Sundays after morning service. £8.00 adults, £4.50 children. Festive three course lunch with drinks included. Book early for this popular event.

Footprints New Year's Day Walk. Monday 2 January 10.30 am. Meet at Aspects (Cinema) Car Park (park on far side nearest the river). Easy 3 mile riverside stroll, no stiles, followed by lunch at Putnoe Heights. All welcome to join our traditional start to the New Year

Christmas Closures St Mark's Church office re-open Monday 9 January. **Putnoe Heights** will reopen 9am on Tuesday 3 January.

Brickhill Community Safety Forum, The next meeting which is also the Annual General Meeting, will be held on Monday 9 January 2012 at 7.30pm at St Mark's Church, Calder Rise.

Women's Network / MWiB The annual Daffodil Day celebration will be held on 5 March 2012 at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster. Corinne Thomas is organizing a coach- cost is £11. Anyone wishing to go please phone Corinne ASAP on 01525 403936.

St Mark's Church Craft Stall Thank you all for your support. We made over £570 .If anyone would like to come and join us you would be very welcome. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday January 10 at 1 Hailes Close at 7.30pm. Contact Maureen 262225 or Rosemary 405594

Story Box would like to thank all their volunteers. Story box restarts on Thursday 12 January

Bishop of Bedford Farewell Service. Please would you let us know if you would like to attend the special service to say thank you and farewell to Bishop Richard who is retiring. The service will take place at St Paul's on Saturday 3rd March 2012 at 4.00pm. Please tell Charlie as soon as possible.

A Concert to Celebrate the new organ at St Mark's Church Sunday February 12 at 6.30pm From Clive Simmonds. I have asked two friends of mine to join me on Sunday, 12 February 2012 at 6.30pm for a concert to celebrate the arrival of our new organ at St Mark's. They are both professional musicians and singers and they live in the Scottish lowlands in almost the highest village in Scotland. Stewart Kempster is a bass who sings both solo and chorus work professionally in a wide range of venues. He has sung in a number of Covent Garden productions and is frequently involved as soloist in oratorios and a wide range of other solo

performances both in this country and abroad. His wife, Taylor Wilson (Tracey to her friends) is a mezzo-soprano and has, for many years been involved in Scottish Opera. She performs regularly as soloist in a wide range of different styles – from cabaret and jazz to many varied classical styles - in many different countries. She is also often involved in Scottish Opera's Educational projects taking suitable productions into schools. We plan to share a time together at St Mark's of very varied music - songs from many styles, plus a few organ lollipops (Bach – Toccata and Fugue in D Minor and Widor's Toccata) and a couple of favourite hymns, so that there is plenty for all to enjoy. Please book the date in your diary and bring others with you who might appreciate the occasion.

A New St Mark's rota is on display in the foyer, please make ammendments and we will print out for next week. It is also online for the next quarter at http://www.thisischurch.com/ourchurch/stmarks_church_centre.htm

Please note 15 January will be a Covenant and Renewal of Baptism Vows Service. Will all readers please look out for new readings.

Footprints Walk Takes place today January 8th. Meet at 2.00pm at Willington Dovecote (small car park available) for circular walk. Details from Sue.

Our "Annual Unwanted Gift Stall" will take place at Putnoe following Morning Worship on 5th February.

Please bring in your items for us to sell in aid of Church funds. Always a bargain to be had!! Thank you for your support. Liz and Carolyn.

Much appreciation to Putnoe Heights Church, Sally and John for the delicious homemade Christmas pudding, especially with Kevin unemployed for so long. Also thank you for all the beautiful Christmas cards. God bless. Love Deborah and Kevin Wallace and sons.

A Huge Thank You to all who helped me clear the church of Christmas decorations, flowers, helped sorting the loft out and spring cleaning the flat. I really could not have done it on my own! *Wendy*

Room at the Church. Brickhill Parish Council have decided to move their office to the Brickhill Community Centre. This leaves us with a spare office facility in the flat which was occupied by Bedfordshire Police. It is a bright and airy facility with a bathroom and kitchen. Any ideas?

St Mark's Rotas available now in the foyer

Meditation

We praise and bless Thee, gracious Lord,
Our Saviour, kind and true,
For all the old things passed away,
For all Thou hast made new.

Thou, only Thou, must carry on
The work Thou hast begun;
Of Thine own strength, Thou must impart,
In Thine own ways to run.

Finish then thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in thee:
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Hymns for Sunday

Thou who wast rich beyond all splendour,
all for love's sake becamest poor;
thrones for a manger didst surrender,
sapphire-paved courts for stable floor.
Thou who wast rich beyond all splendour,
all for love's sake becamest poor.

Thou who art God beyond all praising,
all for love's sake becamest man;
stooping so low, but sinners raising
heavenwards by thine eternal plan.
Thou who art God beyond all praising,
all for love's sake becamest man.

Thou who art love beyond all telling,
Saviour and King, we worship thee.
Emmanuel, within us dwelling,
make us what thou wouldst have us be.
Thou who art love, beyond all telling,
Saviour and King, we worship thee.

We are called to be God's people
showing by our lives his grace,
one in heart and one in spirit,
sign of hope for every race.
Let us show how he has changed us,
and remade us as his own;
let us share our life together
as we shall around his throne.

We are called to be God's servants,
working in his world today;
taking his own task upon us,
all his sacred words obey.
Let us rise, then, to his summons,
dedicate to him our all,
that we may be faithful servants,
quick to answer now his call.

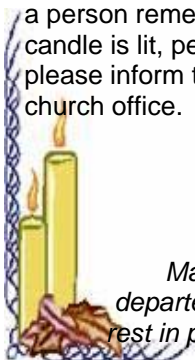
We are called to be God's prophets,
speaking for the truth and right;
standing firm for godly justice,
bringing evil into light.
Let us seek the courage needed,
our high calling to fulfil,
that mankind may know God's blessing
in the doing of his will.

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.

**Sheila Neville
Gladys Hoyte**

*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 Gladys Mary
Judd** will take place at Bedford
Crematorium at 12.15p.m. on
Monday 23 January