



St. Mark's Church

A Partnership of the Church of England
and the Methodist Church



St. Mark's Church Community Centre
Calder Rise/Avon Drive, Brickhill, Bedford
Telephone/Fax 01234 342613
office@ThisisChurch.com

www.ThisisChurch.com

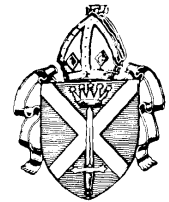
Welcome

An introduction to
St. Mark's Church
Bedford

(Abbreviated versions available in other languages,
please ask at the Centre Office).



Our Coats of Arms



St Mark's Church displays these two symbols. The first symbol is that of the Methodist Church, St. Mark's is a part of the Bedford North

Methodist Circuit in the London North West District. The second coat of arms belongs to the Diocese of St. Albans, the Parish of St. Mark is a part of the Deanery of Bedford in this Diocese. These two symbols serve to represent our parent denominations and remind us of our duty to proclaim unity to the wider church.

Our sister church, Putnoe Heights has the same Partnership and we share many things together, including our clergy. Together we are known as the North Bedford Church Partnership. Each week we publish Partnership News to keep you informed of what is going on in the Churches.

Who to Contact

Centre Office-Telephone / Fax & Answering Service (342613)

www.thisischurch.com Email office@thisischurch.com

Treasurer Mr John Day (295592)

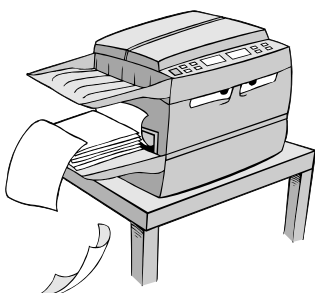
Covenanted Giving Mr Jim Williams (360605)

Sunday School—Please telephone the church office (342613)

Please telephone the Church Centre Office for more information.

Open weekdays 9.00am - 5.00pm

The Community Centre is available for hire,
booking forms with terms & conditions obtainable from the office



Fax and Photocopy facilities available at the office
A4 Photocopies 4p We will also bind, staple or fold.

Copies may be sent direct by Email
for top quality digital printing.

Send UK Fax 50p per sheet -receive free!

A personal invitation to you

At St Mark's Church we believe Christians should put differences to one side and worship together, whatever their church background, or lack of one! We welcome everybody to join us in worship and we extend to you a very warm welcome.

Increasingly people are finding faith in God important for their lives. The Christian message makes sense of life and gives meaning to our world. At times of sadness it is a great comfort to share together in God's goodness. Stress and strains from perhaps relationship, bereavement or family problems are always easier to deal with in the context of the Christian family of faith. The Church is the right place to choose for those happy occasions such as a wedding, baptism or christening of a child. We welcome all who wish to consider baptism or marriage and copies of our booklets for each are available from the Church. If you believe that there really is more to life and wish to learn about God and his love for us through sharing with others - then St. Mark's is the place for you! At St. Mark's there is no pressure to conform to a religious mould, you are free to grow and to be the kind of person that God made you to be. We are all one in Christ Jesus.

What is this church like?

St Mark's Church shares the ministry of the Church of England and Methodist Church and the congregation is mixed between these two denominations, as well as Christians from other denominations. Our services are varied and try to keep a balance between the traditional and more recent influences. Our music too includes well known hymns as well as contemporary songs and choruses. Whatever your preferences you can be sure you will find something for you.

There are many reasons why people do not come to church and if you have been away from the Church for some time, then it may take a determined effort to come back. However the effort will surely be worthwhile. Whatever the reason may have been for not coming along, we can assure you that the Church family at St. Mark's looks forward to welcoming you. This booklet contains information about times of services and some of the things that are going on during the week in the Church's community life. Please feel able to speak with us personally if you would like to know more.

The Ministers

The Story of St. Mark's Church: Reflection by Mary Stubbs

In the early 1970s, when Putnoe and Brickhill were expanding rapidly, the Church of England and the Methodist Church were in talks about closer union, and there was much encouragement and co-operation for establishing a joint church. Methodists operating a Sunday School in Scott School and Anglicans worshipping in Brickhill School were drawn together, and North Brickhill and Putnoe became an 'area of ecumenical experiment' with two Church Centres at Putnoe Heights Church and Park Wood School, Brickhill. There was a youth club in Scott School and study groups and other meetings in people's homes. We had a full time Church of England Priest- in-Charge and a Methodist Minister.

Those early days had an atmosphere of excitement and challenge. Christians were talking, writing, preaching and praying about unity - we had an opportunity to demonstrate it. In Brickhill we all made a fresh start. We had a secular school dining hall with a table, small cross, Bible, the bread and wine, people from both denominations sharing in reading and praying in Methodist and Anglican communions, all meeting round the table in a circle symbolising our unity and fellowship.

We made further progress when we moved into a dual purpose hall on the Calder Rise site in 1977. The hall was used on Sundays for worship and junior church and on weekdays for many different communal activities. The altar, chairs, tables and lectern were designed so that they could fit through a standard doorway into a side room, out of the way when necessary. The rest of the land was well used - members of the congregation cultivated allotments where the present church stands.

On Sundays we were committed to sacramental worship, preaching of the word and the development of junior church and youth activities. We sought to combine our differing traditions sensitively so that no one would feel that too much had been denied or undervalued. The nature of worship and our Sunday pattern were regularly reviewed at church councils. We agreed to use the Methodist hymn book because Methodists felt so strongly about hymns and to dedicate the church to a saint, following Church of England practice..

Through all our differing views and opinions about worship, ministry and church structures we developed understanding and trust and sharing was based on a willingness to deny ourselves. We liked the experience and enjoyed the freedom to experiment. Our first Joint Confirmation Service was in 1974. Although sometimes we felt insecure, deep down we knew that if it were God's will then this partnership church would continue..

The decision in the 1980s to build the present church was a big step in faith. It was very much needed to enable our service to the community to expand and to

cater for a larger congregation. Like the first hall it was a warehouse building, with luxuries like comfortable chairs and stained glass. We thought that meant an end to moving furniture every week after the service to make room for events during the week, but the development of community work in the Centre means the church is used again during the week. We are moving furniture again!

The last fifteen years have seen continuous growth, such as stronger partnership and planning with Putnoe Heights Church, the inter-availability of the ministers, more outreach into the community, refurbishment of our property and grounds to make them more effective and more voluntary organisations using the Centre. A Garden of Remembrance was consecrated in 1992 and in 1997 we decided to build a side chapel for quiet prayer and private meditation. The grounds include a play area for small children and a modular building at the side of the hall will extend further the space for community use. An extension was made to the Garden of Remembrance in 2002 to cope with the demand for a local place of burial and remembrance.

Over the years we had some disappointments, particularly in explaining ourselves to other churches. It seems difficult for some people to comprehend that two denominations can share two buildings, ministers, worship, pastoral care, finance, organisation and outreach. However the Church of England and Methodist Church are now well on the road towards national unity such as we have enjoyed here for many years.

People of all church backgrounds are equally welcome though we advertise our roots and our authority as parts of two national churches linked to the universal church. We are constantly seeking to deepen our faith and to find new ways of serving the people of Brickhill. We acknowledge the vision of our Ministers and leaders, many people who have given their time, talents and money and the encouragement of our parent churches. Most of all we acknowledge the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, God's grace and faithfulness. To Him belongs all praise and glory.



View of St. Mark's showing entrance to Chapel



St. Mark's Church Community Centre is a focus for the community life of Brickhill and North Bedford and a resource for community groups and individuals to enable the development of their potential. We work alongside other agencies, statutory bodies and charities to offer a partnership approach to community needs. We try to provide an efficient well managed suite of premises, conforming to the highest standards of health and safety. Our aim to provide a welcoming and safe environment is supported by regular monitoring and evaluation of those who use our services.

FACTS

Currently over 45 voluntary and charitable groups use the Community Centre on a regular basis, over 150 volunteers are engaged in helping with projects, over 300 children under 11 use the building each week, 92 young people are involved in youth groups each week, 1,478 people come to the Centre every week..

St Mark's Clubhouse

St. Mark's has always made special provision for working with people with disabilities. In 2005 we were awarded European Social Funding to operate Clubhouse. This provides services and training for adults with learning disabilities who are disadvantaged in the labour market. It is a place to meet friends, with meals, refreshments and activities available throughout the day.

Autism Bedfordshire

The offices of Autism Bedfordshire are located at St Mark's, providing services to individuals and families across Bedfordshire. We are currently fundraising to provide an extension to the Centre which will enable them to have more generous accommodation due to the expansion of their work.

The Elderly

St Mark's provides various groups throughout the week which are especially suitable for the elderly. There provide a place to meet and talk to friends.

Bedfordshire Police

The local police have an office situated in the Centre and hold regular Surgeries throughout the week in the Centre to meet with the public.

Brickhill Parish Council

Our Centre is home to the Brickhill Parish Council, and Parish Council

meetings take place regularly. The Parish Clerk will regularly use the centre for meeting with members of the community.

Community Groups

Many local charities use our facilities for counselling, courses and training events, including MacMillan Nurses. There are numerous clubs and societies taking place weekly from Sugarcraft to Weightwatchers and the Centre is often first choice by groups who appreciate our high standards of provision.

Health Clinics

St Mark's is home to the health authority clinic for mothers and babies. There is also the fledglings group for mums and babies under 6 months. We are also pleased to welcome local GP's who hold day surgeries to provide health checks and injections.

Youth and Children's Groups

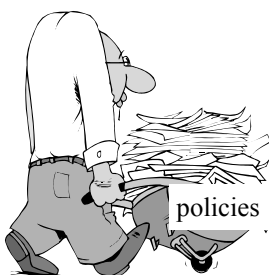
There is a programme of activities for family groups and the young. St Mark's own pre-school operates each day and our Parent Toddler group meets each Thursday afternoon at 1.00pm. There is youth work on three evenings every week and also a Child-minders support group every week. Other groups such as children's chess take place regularly.

Management of The Centre

The Centre Management Committee is responsible for the operation and supervision of the Centre. It is drawn from local people with experience in community life and also user groups. They are responsible for the development of services to ensure that vital needs in our community are met. The committee also implements health and safety, equal opportunities and training needs of the volunteers. Constant monitoring and evaluation are a priority to ensure that we are doing our best to serve users of the Centre and adapting to the changing needs of people in Bedford.

Volunteers

We currently co-ordinate in excess of 150 volunteers to resource our work. Training programmes and support for these volunteers is always a priority and we are committed to Equal Opportunities for all of our volunteers as well as users of the Centre. If you would like the opportunity to volunteer and be involved in supporting the work of the Church Community Centre, please contact our Centre Manager, Miss Wendy Rider.



Centre Policies: Copies of all policies including our Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and Child Safety can be found in the foyer, together with our insurance, child registration and entertainment licence.

Who Cares ?

The ministry of pastoral care and visiting is a central part of the life of our Church - it is one way we express our love and concern for each other, and we are pleased when someone comes to visit us. Sharing in each other's happiness and sadness is part of our fellowship together and more importantly it is a part of our witness and service as the local Church, helping and supporting people in their needs, in times of crisis, as well as in celebrations. This is a ministry for the whole Church, ministers and congregation together. A great deal of informal and spontaneous care takes place and the Church encourages this through our various groups and organisations, to reach all who have contact with the church. We have a list of those who are in touch with the Church and we regularly keep this up to date. If you would like to enrol as a member of the Church then please ask for a form from the Church Office or speak with one of the Ministers.



The Ministers

The role of the Ministers in pastoral care and visiting is vital and while they do not expect to visit all of the 16,000 people in this parish, they do appreciate being informed when people are in difficulties. It is our aim to visit all of those in hospital, the ill and housebound, the dying and the bereaved, but we do need to be told! From time to time we all have problems which are serious for us and it helps to talk. It is significant that as priests the Ministers are unique in our society in offering you the opportunity to meet and talk in absolute confidence. They are also pleased to supply information to you concerning other agencies when specialist help may be necessary. Please feel able to telephone them and they will be pleased to arrange to see you. They do appreciate being informed and can respond quickly in an emergency.

Partnership

A group of people from the Church form a team to assist the ministers in visiting those with special needs, particularly after a funeral taken by either minister. They are aware of the importance and value of visiting others and of the confidentiality involved. They have ongoing pastoral training to enable them to fulfil this role. Requests for a member of the team to visit can be made through the Pastoral Support Team Co-ordinator Mrs Mary Stubbs.

'I tell you the truth that whatever you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine you did for me.' Matthew Chapter 25:40

What about Children?

We welcome parents and want to include all of your family in the life of the Church. St. Mark's is very definitely a Church for all ages providing a health authority baby clinic, parent toddler groups, pre-school and Sunday school. We all want the very best for our children, it is important to us that they have the opportunity to grow, develop and achieve their full potential. The most important thing you can give to your child is the opportunity to learn about God and his love for them. In the early years of a child's life they need this grounding of faith which will be vital for them if they are to develop into happy and balanced adults. It is a great sadness that this opportunity is not made available to many children but at St. Mark's we will work in partnership with parents to do our best to enable children to be welcomed into the family of the Church.

During Sunday Services

On Sunday mornings all children join in the service which begins at 9.30am. It is important that children feel included in Church services from an early age and in this first part of the service we always have a hymn in which they can play instruments. Children under the age of 9 will leave after the second hymn. At Holy Communion services all the children will be brought back into Church before the administration of the bread and wine so that you can come to Communion as a family. The older children remain throughout all church services. The children will be given a blessing or alternatively at parents discretion may receive the bread and/or wine. Family services take place on the first Sunday of every month and at this service all the children remain in the Church throughout. We include the children in this service as much as we can and make them feel very welcome. Specifically this is also an occasion to welcome children brought for baptism and we have never refused any child baptism.

Crèche

A crèche operated by qualified staff is provided during all of our services and baby changing facilities are available.

Sunday School

3—9 years

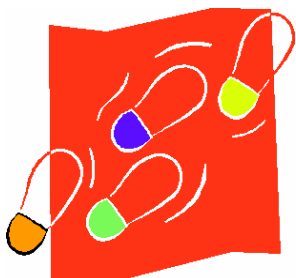
Meets every Sunday except Family Service

Children aged over 9 years are encouraged to remain in the service with their parents.



Baptism

The ministers are pleased to be contacted by parents wishing to arrange for the baptism of children. Before doing so please read the leaflet 'Baptism' produced for parents considering this important service. This is available from the Church information table. There are also leaflets for you to give to prospective godparents.



St Mark's -
A step
In the right
direction

St. Mark's Church Pre-School and Rising Fives

St Mark's Church Community Centre is home to one of the finest pre-schools in the country. St Mark's is an accredited pre-school endorsed by Investors in Children. We are delighted that all of our assessments, including OFSTED have reported on the excellent provision for children. Our facilities are first rate and we are delighted to have been able to provide an enhanced playground with safe surfacing to enable all year round use by the children.

Pre-school operates on weekdays during term time from 9.30am until noon and 12.15pm Children are taken from the age of 2 years 9 months. Details are available from the Pre-school Co-ordinator Mrs Helen Harpin (312634)

Toddlers For all parents and children. Meets on Thursdays from 1.30pm until 3.00pm. Contact the Co-ordinator Mrs Debbie Coppenhall (356828)

Uniformed Organisations

1st Brickhill Brownies – Monday evenings – Mrs C Mathews (400987)

3rd Brickhill Guides - Monday evenings - Mrs Gill Lake (218091)

4th Brickhill Brownies - Wednesday evenings -Mrs Carol Warden (219731)

Sunday School

Contact the church office on (342613)

Story Box

Every Thursday at St Mark's Church, parent and carers are invited to bring their children for an hour of activities, Bible stories and singing. Lunch is provided and it is a fun filled occasion for the children and adults. Come and join us every

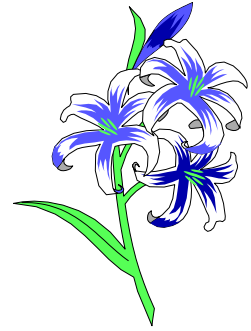
Thursday at 12noon.



Flowers in Church

See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these.

The Bible – Matthew Chapter 6 Verses 28-29.



Jesus was right to draw attention to the beautiful flowers which God has made. They are a magnificent part of creation and a wonderful way to express our feelings on significant occasions. For this reason we welcome flowers in our Church and seek to provide opportunities for the use of flowers on special occasions. If you would like to join the dedicated team of volunteers who arrange the flowers please contact Miss Marion Prior who would be pleased to place your name on the rota. She is always prepared to give help and advice even to the most inexperienced who would like to have a try.

Even if you do not wish to arrange flowers yourself you may wish to make a donation to cover the cost for a particular Sunday. Many people like to provide flowers in Church on a Sunday and this is a fitting way to remember somebody who has died or celebrate a special occasion such as a wedding anniversary. Contact Miss Marion Prior (303254)

Help in your Bereavement

Perhaps the most distressing time for any of us occurs when a loved one dies and at this time the ministry of the Church and the support of the Christian community is vital. This Church community is only a part of a wider Christian fellowship which extends to include many who have gone before us.

One of the reasons for building our chapel was to offer to people an appropriate place of quiet and prayer, open as much as possible. Following a funeral conducted by our ministers every family is visited by a member of the Pastoral Support Team and all are invited to a service of commemoration of the faithful departed each year in November. On the Sunday after a funeral service a candle is lit during the service when prayers are said in memory of a person who has died. Many local families have appreciated our beautiful Garden of Remembrance for interment of ashes. An entry in the Book Of Remembrance can be made at any time, free of charge. Any enquiries relating to the Garden of Remembrance should be referred to Mrs Mary Stubbs who will be pleased to help you (406784). Our special booklet 'Help in Your Bereavement' is full of helpful information and has been an encouragement to many people, copies are available free of charge in the Church foyer.

Christian Stewardship and Money

Our time and talents and our money are a gift from God to be used and offered back to him in service. In our church and community there are many ways that we can offer our time and energy to God and we all seek prayerfully to discover how we can serve God better. On the question of money we all have to consider how much we should give to support the church. Some people think churches are always asking for money but at St. Mark's we have no financial reserves and we need regular giving to keep paying the bills. We don't get money from the Government or angels, the only money we get comes from the generous giving of the congregation each week. From Sunday offerings we need to raise about £15,000 a year just to pay our ministers and that is where nearly all of the money you give will go. In addition we also give 10% of the offering to support Christian work especially in poor countries.

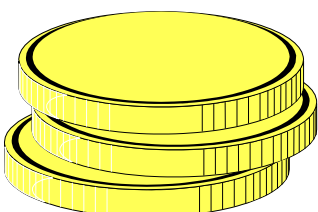
Christian giving is thanksgiving, because *'it is one way we can respond to God's love for us'*. We should give freely to God because we have known how freely He gives to us. No matter how much we do give God has already given us so much more. When we are thinking about how much to give perhaps we should remember the words of C.S.Lewis, *"The question should not be how much we give to God, but how much we keep for ourselves"*

Ways you can help

1 Plan regular giving and if you can pay direct through your bank - Each month the church has to pay regular bills, these have to be paid whether people remember to give each week or not. If you miss out your weekly giving the church is short of money. If possible please pay by standing order through the bank so that you don't forget, or at least use envelopes which are put on the plate each week. Ask the treasurer for details of how best to give.

2. Use Gift Aid. If you are a tax payer it really is vital that any money which you give to the church is gift aided. This is not difficult and it allows us to claim tax back directly from the Inland Revenue. All that we require is a record that you have given the money. You are not required to do anything else. Please speak to the covenant officer or treasurer if you have not signed a covenant form.

3. Make a Will - By including a legacy to your church or other charities you can make possible work previously only dreamed of; it can turn visions into reality. The time to make your will is **NOW** and make it count for God.



Church Services

Sunday 8.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 9.30am Morning worship

This service is an easy to follow modern pattern lasting about an hour. We seek to combine the best of favourite traditional hymns and modern worship music to provide something for all tastes. Our ministers are present at the services and occasionally we welcome a variety of visiting preachers to join with us. In each month some of these services will be celebrations of Holy Communion at which we invite all people to share in the breaking of bread at the Lord's Table.

First Sunday Every Month - Family Service 9.30am

The first Sunday of every month is a family service at which baptisms take place and the children remain in the service. This is an informal service for all ages lasting one hour with traditional hymns and modern music. Noisy children welcome! Sunday School operates at all other services.

Story Box. Thursday 12 noon

This is a half hour service for children under 5 and their carers. Lunch is provided in the church. The service has stories, games, singing and activities.

Wednesday Midweek Holy Communion

This is held in the chapel 10.00am every Wednesday followed by coffee. It is a quiet and informal service using the Partnership Communion service which has been recognised by the Methodist Church and the Church of England.

Parade Services

Church parade takes place three times a year at the 9.30am service on Mothering Sunday, Harvest and a Toy Service in December, when gifts are given for children who are less fortunate.

A hearing aid loop system is fitted for the hearing impaired. A crèche is provided for parents to use, the service is clearly audible through the PA system relay and baby changing facilities are located in the disabled toilet.

Do you want to know more?

If you would like to know more about St. Mark's, the Christian message or to discuss membership of the church then please either contact one of the ministers who will be pleased to talk with you, or complete the card asking for more information. Homegroups also meet regularly throughout the parish at different times of the day and evening and explore themes of the Christian faith. They offer a chance to learn, to build friendships and are a vital part of our pastoral care for each other.



Prayers for St. Mark's Church

*Enable this church to do your will
Make it vulnerable
that it may speak with calm humility;
Make it outward looking
that it may care deeply
Make it a community of peacemakers
and bridge builders
In the midst of turbulence
let the church make space
for the hearing of your still small voice.*

by Delia Shephard

O God make the door of this Church wide enough to receive all who need human love and fellowship, but narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and strife. Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling block to children, nor to straying feet, but strong enough to turn back the Tempter's power. God, make the door of this Church a gateway to your eternal kingdom. **Amen.**

C  **ffee**

We look forward to welcoming you to coffee after the service which is served in the back rooms of the church

Ministers

The Reverend Charles Royden (Day off Thursday)
The Vicarage, Calder Rise. MK41 7UY
309175 Mobile 07973 113861 Vicar@ThisisChurch.com

The Reverend Dr. Sam Cappleman
107 Dover Crescent, Bedford MK41 8QR
266952 Fax- 402624 Sam_Cappleman@hotmail.com
(Sam also works full time as a General Manager
for Hewlett Packard)

The Reverend Neil Bramble-Chapman BA, CTM
(Day off Friday)
12 Hartop Close, Putnoe. MK41 8HE
326643 Minister@ThisisChurch.com

The Reverend Dr. Joan Crossley (Day off Friday)
30 Cutcliffe Grove, Bedford. MK40 4DD.
Home 344536 Crossley@Thisischurch.com

The Ministers are pleased to be contacted concerning any pastoral matters including weddings and baptisms. Confidential meetings can be arranged by appointment.

What's On and Who to Contact At St. Mark's Church Community Centre.....

St. Mark's Church Preschool Meets every weekday mornings and afternoons. Contact the Pre-school Co-ordinator Mrs Helen Harpin (312634)

Parent Toddler Group Thursday afternoons. Co-ordinator Mrs Debbie Coppenhall (356828)

Weightwatchers Thursday evenings Mrs Ralph (01767 224978)

Clubhouse Day care facility for those with learning difficulties. Co-ordinator Mrs Karen Bywater (315460)

Bereavement Care and Pastoral Support Group - Mrs Mary Stubbs (406784)

1st Brickhill Brownies Monday evenings Mrs C Mathews (400987)

3rd Brickhill Guides Monday evenings Mrs Gill Lake (218091)

4th Brickhill Brownies Wednesday evenings Mrs Carol Warden (219731)

Bedford Junior Chess Club Thursday evening (children's group)
Contact Mr and Mrs Pike (823795)

Bedford Senior Chess Club Thursday evening Mr P Housden (376597)

Brickhill Clinic Thursday – all day (267444)

Qi Gong Tuesday evening Mr Fred Steele (355937)

Card Makers Club—Mrs Carol Houghton (346718)

Sugarcraft Guild meets first Monday every month 7.00pm
Mrs Pauline Parrott (768419)

Mother Theresa Support Group Tuesday afternoon fortnightly.
Wool and knitting needles provided Mrs Joan Gravett (356911)

Keep Fit Tuesday evenings Mrs Gregory (214107)

Slimming World Tuesday evenings Mrs Val Careless (345213)

Happy Dog (dog training and grooming) Friday evenings Miss Lorainne Laton (365601)

Bridge Club For the Retired Wednesday afternoons Mrs T Boyce (781133)

Duplicate Bridge Saturday evening 7.15pm – 10.30pm (Ann or Peter 212066)

Theatretrain Saturday morning Miss Kate Randall (304865)

Jo Jingles music for pre-school children Renu Elston (01908 282866)

Bunyan Bridge - Wednesday evening Mr Brian Sallows (407725)

For further information about anything connected with St. Mark's Church & Community Centre please contact the Centre Office. We will also be pleased to send you free copies of our booklets with information about weddings, baptisms and bereavement or these can be obtained from the Church Centre

