



Parish of St Peter & The Good Shepherd Bearsted & Harrietsham

A Member of Bearsted Area Churches Together



Newsletter

St Peter's Church, Button Lane, Bearsted, Maidstone, ME15 8NJ

Church of The Good Shepherd, Rectory Lane (off East Street), Harrietsham, ME17 1HS

Parish Priest: Father Geoffrey Pointer: 01622 736100, email: parishpriest@catholic-bearsted.org.uk

Parish Deacon: Reverend Cyril Durbin: 01622 630055

St Peter's Hall Bookings: 07919 084730

Catholic Schools in our local area:

St Francis Primary, Queen's Road, Maidstone ME16 0LB (Telephone: 771540)

The Holy Family Primary, Bicknor Road, Park Wood, Maidstone ME15 9PS (Telephone: 756778)

St Simon Stock Catholic Secondary, Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 0JP (Telephone: 754551)

Parish Website and YouTube:
www.catholic-bearsted.org.uk

Year B

SECOND SUNDAY of ADVENT

10th December 2017

FAITH IN FOCUS: FINDING 'YOU' TIME. How prepared are you? Have you ordered all the presents and put up the tree? Preparation is one of the most important parts of Christmas, but Advent was never supposed to be about fixing the fairy lights. Advent is about spiritual preparation. In all the whirlwind preparations for the Christmas celebrations, we need to prepare a way for the Lord, and this preparation begins with a call from an eccentric man living alone in the desert over two thousand years ago. John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance. Today we might easily dismiss the rantings of a strange man who dressed in camel hair and fed on locusts, but interestingly, people travelled miles into the desert to be baptised by him, so charismatic a man was he, and so important his message. Two thousand years later, his message is just as relevant to those of us who want greater meaning in our lives. The repentance that John teaches means so much more than being sorry for our sins. Repentance means changing the direction of our lives away from poor and ungodly choices. Was the direction of our life decided by what exams we did or didn't pass at the age of seventeen? Has the direction of our life been determined by arbitrary decisions and random circumstances? Advent is a time to decide what sort of a person we would really like to be, and in what direction we would really like to be heading.



"Prepare the way of the Lord," John tells us, "make straight his paths." To allow God into our lives, we are asked to remove any obstacles in God's path. How can we open our minds to God's will if our time is consumed in filling the freezer and making Christmas puddings? Advent is an opportunity for us to make some quiet time to contemplate and prioritise. What is it exactly that is preventing God's work in our lives?

"One mightier than I is coming after me," John tells us, "I have baptised you with water, he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit." In the desert of commercialism, we are reminded that the reason for the season is not turkeys and baubles. Preparation is a time of reflection; a little 'You' time.

Chapel Bell.

PARISH SOCIAL Thank you to those who supported our splendid pre-Christmas Quiz Night last Saturday. A grand time was had by all. Our thanks to our Quiz Master, MC and song-leader and those who organized publicity and catering. Any profits and beneficiaries will be announced when known.

BIBLE SUNDAY Available in over 400 languages, written thousands of years ago by over 40 authors, a book which, 500 years ago, men and women gave their lives to translate and distribute in this nation, and upon which the social and moral foundations of western civilisation were built, is today very sadly seen by many people in the UK today as irrelevant. The Church sets aside the Second Sunday of Advent to pray for the '**Openness to God's Word**'. In an increasingly secular society we are encouraged to read the Bible and apply it to our lives. † We will be asking our Ministers of the Word (Readers) to renew the commitment to their ministry at Mass today. If you feel you would like to offer your service as a Minister of the Word, please let Fr Geoffrey or Deacon Cyril know.

RECOMMENDED for ADVENT The season of Advent has a twofold character: it is a time of preparation for Christmas, when Christ's first coming is remembered; and it is a time to direct mind and heart to await his second coming. Advent is, therefore, a time of devout and expectant delight. In the second phase of the season of Advent, from **17th December** (next Sunday), the liturgy is more directly addressed to preparing to commemorate and celebrate the birth of Our Lord, and the readings at daily Mass reflect this. Try then to get to Mass during the week: there is so much beauty in the readings of this season. ♦ Celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation (confession): there will be a penance service at Maidstone on Monday **18th December** at 7.30pm.

THIS WEEK Carols on the [Bearsted] Green, **Wednesday 13th December**, 7.30pm. After there will be soup and bread at the Methodist Church. (All at Holy Cross if the weather is poor.) ★ Raffle draw **next Sunday**.

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 10th DECEMBER 2017
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **SECOND SUNDAY of ADVENT (B)** ✕

Sun 10th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: For Marie
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Brian Smith RIP
		12.00noon	Baptism: George Jacob Pearce
Mon 11th	Feria	7.00pm	✕ Mass: The Holy Souls
Tues 12th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: Elsie Hampshire RIP
Wed 13th	St Lucy	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass: The Holy Souls
Thu 14th	St John of the Cross	7.00am	✕ Mass: The Holy Souls
Fri 15th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: The Holy Souls
Sat 16th	Our Lady	5.00-5.30pm	Confessions

✕ **THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT (B)** ✕

Sun 17th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: The Holy Souls
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Dec'd of McGrath & Roche families

BEARSTED CHORAL SOCIETY CHRISTMAS CAROLS and MORE at St Peter's, next Saturday, **16th December**, with audience participation, conducted by Andrew Lowen. Tickets £10, students free. See posters.

ADVENT APPEAL This year's Advent Appeal will be in aid of The Maidstone Churches' Winter Shelter. We hope to welcome a speaker at the 10.30 Mass next Sunday. The Shelter offers a warm welcome overnight for homeless people during the coldest months. Envelopes still available. Please return by the end of Advent. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS SERVICE TIMES Details of the times of the Christmas services across all the Christian churches in the Bearsted locality are ready for distribution. **Volunteers please!** Thank you to those who helped last week.

COFFEE MORNING at GOOD SHEPHERD After Mass, next Sunday, **17th December**: back by popular demand, a rare chance to linger awhile, drink coffee and meet fellow parishioners.

St PETER'S CHOIR Practice: **Tuesday 19th December**, 7.30 - 9.00pm (*note early start*).

CAROL CELEBRATION Thursday **21st December**, **6pm** at St Peter's. All are welcome to this family and light-hearted event. Children are encouraged to dress up as their favourite Nativity character (sadly no Paddington Bears). We will as usual be collecting wrapped gifts for the Women's Refuge - toys for children and toiletries for women. If anyone would like to accompany the singing with Pete and Bob, please come along at about 4.30 on the day for a quick practice. You will be very welcome. Any instrument!! *Bob*.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for December** – that the elderly, sustained by families and Christian communities, may apply their wisdom and experience to spreading the faith and forming new generations.
- **For our broken world of today**, for all those who have lost lives and property in the California wild fires; and for stability in the Middle East.
- **For all the sick and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes** especially Joan Hardings and David Smith; for George Jacob, being baptized today and for his family; for those who have died recently; and for all those whose anniversaries occur about now (see below); for all our relatives and friends and for the intentions on the notice board; for the new priest who is to take up his appointment at Holy Family soon.
- **Anniversaries this week** (St Peter's Lady Chapel memorial): ✕ Frank Sanity, James Brennan, Edward Kinsman, Reginald Boncey, Florence Fountain, Hannah Haden, Anne Murray and Bernard Brennan. ✕

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£327.43** (Gift Aided, **£186.50**; weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to **£149.00**). ♦ **This Sunday** there is a retiring collection to help with the **cost of flowers and decorations at Christmas**.

CHRISTMAS in OUR PARISH This year, for the first time in 11 years, Christmas Day falls on a Monday. After consultation among parishioners and parish groups it has been agreed that there will be no 'Mass During the Night' for this year only. This decision has not been reached lightly. Given that the 4th Sunday of Advent (23rd and 24th December) is a 'stand-alone' celebration with the usual Vigil and 2 Sunday Masses; given that the Mass during the night (10.30pm Christmas Eve) last year attracted just 27 communicants, compared to the 132 at the 6pm Vigil Mass; and given that the 3 Masses of the Sunday and the 4 Masses of Christmas would otherwise be celebrated within a 40½ hour time frame, it was felt that parishioners would be sympathetic. Mass during the Night (actually *Midnight* Mass) will be celebrated at St Francis', Maidstone, that is served by 3 priests. Thank you. ★ **CHRISTMAS**

POSTER Pick up a Knights of St Columba Christmas poster and display it in your window or other prominent position.

JUSTICE & PEACE A list of Prisoners of Conscience whom you may wish to send Christmas Cards to this year is now available. Pick one up after Mass.