



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

Contact us:

Parish Priest: Reverend 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

More information:

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

Diocesan Website: www.rcsouthwark.co.uk

The Catholic Church in England and Wales: www.catholicchurch.org.uk

Prayer: www.life4seekers.co.uk; www.holyspiritinteractive.net

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)

Year B

THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT

14th December 2014

FAITH IN FOCUS: SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT That the gospel should be opposed, someone once remarked, is inevitable; that the gospel should be disbelieved, is to be expected; but that it should be made dull, is intolerable. Yet we are often guilty of treating the good news as if it were a rather disappointing weather forecast. "Gaudete" (Rejoice!) Sunday, the 3rd Sunday of Advent, is a reminder to us of the explosive fact at the heart of the gospel message: a call to rejoice that our God, who promises us a happiness without end, is very near and will return to set us free from whatever threatens to drag us down. No one expects us to go around with a fixed cosmetic smile on our faces, like some bible enthusiast who has only got hold of half the story. Nor are we required to act like Christian Cheshire cats, pretending that our faith means that we no longer experience the downs as well as the ups of life. But what we can smile about is the secure hope that what God has promised to us will not be withdrawn. The God who comes to us day by day, often unknown to us, the God of surprises and disguises, comes not to point out our human frailty but to save us and raise us up. This is our "blessed hope". The Advent good news is about bandaging what is hurt, binding up what is broken, and making the small seeds of trust into a forest of faith. Paul exhorts us to be happy at all times, but with that deep-down happiness which comes from knowing that we belong to a God whose love for us never fails, and whose coming among us is designed not for our punishment but for our support. Our God comes each day and stands among us. Today is the day of our salvation. If we find that to be dull, then what do we make of the weather forecast?



Author unknown

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** (this coming Wednesday), 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.

RECOMMENDED for ADVENT ♦ Try 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 St Francis', Maidstone, on **Monday 22nd December at 7.30pm**.

YOUTH GROUP Mondays **15th December, 7 - 8.30pm:** Christmas play rehearsals. *Family Christmas Celebration on Sunday 21st December at 6pm (final rehearsal at 4.15).* We welcome young people aged 10 – 15; older teenagers welcome to join in as young leaders.

ADVENT APPEAL The Advent Appeal this year is for the **Maidstone Churches' Winter Shelter**. They are aiming to provide shelter for homeless people in Maidstone from 8th December until 1st March. They are using seven churches in Maidstone between 7pm and 8am. They hope to support homeless people to move on to appropriate accommodation. This is a continuation of the successful project from last year. Please collect an envelope and return at one of the Christmas Masses.

CHOIR NEWS Next rehearsal: **this Sunday** after our 10.30am Mass. **All are welcome!** If you play any musical instrument please join us for our Family Christmas Celebration next Sunday (21st) at 6pm and again at our Christmas Day Mass at St Peter's at 10.30 (meet at 10 for warm-up). For more information speak to Bob or Erika.

COFFEE MORNING at GOOD SHEPHERD After Mass next Sunday, **21st December:** back by popular demand, a rare chance to stay awhile and meet fellow parishioners.

DIOCESAN DIRECTORIES A few are available for those interested in diocesan information; includes a weekly liturgical calendar.

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 14th DECEMBER 2014
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✠ **THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT (B)** ✠
Gaudete Sunday

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| Sun 14th | Saturday | 6.00pm | ✠ Vigil Mass: Bernard Brennan RIP |
| | Sunday | (H) 8.45am | ✠ Mass: Pro Populo |
| | | 10.30am | ✠ Mass: Fr Philip de Putron RIP |
| Mon 15th | Feria | 7.00pm | ✠ Mass |
| Tues 16th | Feria | 10.00am | ✠ Mass |
| Wed 17th | Feria • <i>O Sapientia: O Wisdom</i> | (H) 10.00am | ✠ Mass: Donor's Intention |
| Thu 18th | Feria • <i>O Adonai: O sacred Lord</i> | SORRY, NO MASS | |
| Fri 19th | Feria • <i>O Radix Jesse: O Root of Jesse</i> | SORRY, NO MASS | |
| Sat 20th | Feria • <i>O Clavis David: O Key of David</i> | 5.00-5.30pm | Confessions |
| ✠ FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT (B) ✠ | | | |
| Sun 21st | Saturday | 6.00pm | ✠ Vigil Mass: Jim Kelly RIP |
| | Sunday | (H) 8.45am | ✠ Mass: Ray Smith RIP |
| | | 10.30am | ✠ Mass: Pro Populo |
| | | 6.00pm | Family Christmas Celebration |

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for December:** *Christmas, hope for humanity: that the birth of the Redeemer may bring peace and hope to all people of good will; and that parents may be true evangelizers, passing on to their children the precious gift of faith.*
- **For all the sick** and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes, especially Cyril Adam, Arthur Hogben, Margaret Moses and Barbara Casey; for those recently dead especially Mary Tate and Father Philip de Putron; for all those whose anniversaries occur about now; and for all our relatives and friends.
- **For peace, understanding and reconciliation in the Middle East**, that the lands where the Gospel message was first sown might see an end to the hostilities which have so often divided people. We pray especially for the Christians who have been forced to leave their homes.
- **That men and women called by the Lord to be messengers of his Word** as priests, deacons and in the consecrated life will zealously proclaim the good news of salvation.

Thank you: the sum received last weekend at Mass was **£451.70** (£156.14 was Gift Aided). • **This Sunday** there is a retiring collection to help with the **cost of flowers and decorations at Christmas**. ☺ The **collection at all Masses on Christmas Day** is parishioners' personal offering to their parish priest. In this diocese priests rely for most of their personal income on the offerings made at Christmas and Easter, so please be as generous as your means allow. Envelopes are available for this. Thank you. • **Crib offerings** throughout the season are for the "Friends of the Holy Land", offering help to the poorest families in Bethlehem.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS at St PETER'S ☺ *An Alternative:* Why not sign up on our big poster at St Peter's as an alternative to sending Christmas Cards, donating the cost you save to support the Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter? ☺ *Christmas Card Exchange:* For those preferring to send cards, you can still donate to the Shelter if you wish, but put your parish cards in the 'Christmas Card Exchange' box in the parish room. But keep looking in it for cards for you - any cards not taken out by 31st December will be sent for recycling! ✨ Please take a 'Peace and Joy' poster to display in your window reminding passers-by that Christmas begins with 'Christ'.

GRAND CHRISTMAS DRAW 1st Prize: **£100 Cash** + 2nd Prize: **Turkey and Vegetables Voucher** + 3rd Prize: **Luxury Christmas Hamper** + 4th Prize: **£40 Oak on the Green Voucher** and other magnificent prizes. Tickets are still on sale. The draw will take place at the Family Christmas Celebration next Sunday, **21st December**.

CAROLS ON THE GREEN 7.30pm this Wednesday, **17th December**. Join the whole village in a great way to start Christmas – Carols on the Green with all the Churches represented, singing to the Salvation Army band. Please come and make our Catholic voices heard! Hot soup after at the Methodist Church. ★ Please help distribute Christmas service timetables around the locality at Bearsted, with times of services in all the local churches.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2015 Preparations begin in January. Application forms are **now available**. Parents who live in the parish with children who are baptized and in school Year 3 or above are invited to apply. A meeting will be called once we have received back the applications.

CHRISTMAS MASSES:

Christmas Eve: Vigil Mass at **St Peter's, 6pm.**

Mass during the Night [popularly termed **Midnight Mass**] at **St Peter's, 10.30pm.**

Christmas Day: • **8.45am at Good Shepherd.** • **10.30am at St Peter's.**

