



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

SECOND SUNDAY of ADVENT

7th December 2014

FAITH IN FOCUS: DESERT EXPERIENCE Most people shy away from deserts. They seem to be threatening places where nothing but harm can come to a person. So at first sight it seems odd that John the Baptist should start his preaching not in a high street or market place, but in a desert. But Advent invites each of us to take a trip into the desert, no matter where we may live. For the desert is the place in our lives where we make space for the things that really matter, for the real issues of life. We don't need a vast expanse of sand. Any place of quietness will do. What a desert doesn't have is clutter; there's plenty of space to think and reflect on where our lives are leading.



It's not surprising, then, that the Israelites first met God in the desert where they were free from distraction. The desert wilderness was the place where their faith was tested. It was there that God swore to lure them back to and seduce them when they proved unfaithful. And in the Bible there are countless references to the desert blossoming when God finally redeems his people. Only those who were brave enough to venture out into the desert were able to hear John's message of baptism for forgiveness of sins. It's a message that needs to be pondered over. It's not something that we undertake lightly and then forget about. To give one's life to Christ, to spend one's days actively waiting for the coming of the kingdom in its fulness is something that requires continual renewal. We need to create the space to deepen our relationship with God, to fan into a flame that first fire of faith we had when we accepted Jesus. Jesus spent 40 days and nights in the desert when he had to sort out in his own mind what his mission was all about. It was a time of preparation and dedication. Advent is our opportunity to find our own desert place. As Christmas approaches we too can set our sights on the coming of Jesus and recommit ourselves to making him present in our world. If you do not cross the desert you will not find the crib.

Where is your own desert and when did you last visit it? *Author unknown*

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. Delicious fish and chips appeared on schedule (and probably under budget) and a memorable evening unfolded. We made **£200+** for the Homeless Shelter. ✕ And thank you to those who turned out for our Benediction and devotions last Sunday afternoon; copies of the service are available for those who were unable to join us.

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): the time of the penance service at Maidstone will be announced in due course. ♦ Pick up a copy of 'Walk With Me', a journey of prayer for Advent and Christmas.

WEB STREAMING SURVEY Please let us have your thoughts and comments; thank you.

YOUTH GROUP Mondays **8th and 15th December**, 7 - 8.30pm: Christmas play rehearsals. *Carol Service 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.

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 7th DECEMBER 2014
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **SECOND SUNDAY of ADVENT (B)** ✕
Bible Sunday

Sun 7th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Special Intention
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		2.00pm	Baptism: Gloria Hernandez
Mon 8th	The IMMACULATE CONCEPTION of THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY	7.00pm	✕ Mass
Tues 9th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: Holy Souls (November lists)
Wed 10th	Feria	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass: Donor's Intention
Thu 11th	Feria	7.00am	✕ Mass
Fri 12th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
Sat 13th	St Lucy	5.00-5.30pm	Confessions
✕ THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT (B) ✕ <i>Gaudete Sunday</i>			
Sun 14th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Bernard Brennan RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass

CHOIR NEWS Next rehearsal, this **Sunday, 7th December** after 10.30 Mass. ☼ **MULLED WINE** and **CAROLS**: this **Tuesday, 9th December**, 8pm at St Peter's; *all are welcome!*

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 Ray Smith (funeral in London); for all those whose anniversaries occur about now; and for all our relatives and friends.
- **For expectant mothers during this Advent season**, that their waiting might also be a time of wonder and of peace.
- **That all baptized Catholics** will recognize their responsibility to discover their vocation in Christ and follow Him, especially those chosen for the unique calling to the priesthood or consecrated life.

<p>Thank you: the sum received last weekend at Mass was £314.46 (£160.00 was Gift Aided). • Next Sunday there will be a retiring collection to help with the cost of flowers and decorations at Christmas.</p>
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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 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!

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 Children's Carol Service on **Sunday 21st December**.

CAROLS ON THE GREEN 7.30pm 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, as usual, at the Methodist Church. ★ Please help distribute Christmas service timetables around the locality at Bearsted, with times of services in all the local churches.

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



CHRISTMAS MASSES Vigil Mass at **St Peter's, 6pm** on Christmas Eve. • Mass during the Night [popularly termed **Midnight Mass**] at **St Peter's, 10.30pm** on Christmas Eve. • **8.45am at Good Shepherd**. • **10.30am at St Peter's** on Christmas Day.

