



Parish of St Peter, Bearsted
and
The Good Shepherd, Harrietsham
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 C

FIRST SUNDAY of ADVENT

29th November 2015

FAITH IN FOCUS: Christians seem to have lost any sense of expectation that Christ's second coming should feature in their daily lives. The Jews longed for the "anointed one of God" who would come and lead them into prosperity, but we're detached from any sense of urgency when it comes to Christ, the Messiah, returning among us. Is this because we think the odds are stacked against it happening during our lifetime? Is it because we just don't care? Or is it perhaps because we haven't really understood what the coming of Jesus really means?

It's easy to think that Advent is simply a time for contemplating the end of the world. But, of course, it isn't. It's about preparing for the definitive establishing of God's kingdom on earth. When we celebrate the liturgy of Advent we are not simply recalling the first coming of Jesus in Bethlehem and vaguely acknowledging that he will come again. This is not true worship. It's simply cosy remembrance of the past and insurance brokering for the future of our souls. It's not worship from the heart.

Our Advent liturgy demands that we take our baptismal promises seriously and that we act. What are we doing to bring Christ into our world? How do we make him present in the little worlds of our existence: family, work, friends, etc? All our Advent prayers and songs are discordant if they do not reflect what's going by the way we live. Instead of thinking about fanciful scenes in the moon and stars, ought we not to realise that Christ comes again when his kingdom is established? And if we're not wholehearted about being part of this then what value do our prayers and songs have?

We can sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel" till the cows come home, but it will be empty worship if we are not pledged to co-operate with God's Spirit in ushering in the kingdom by the way we live. Liturgy is about life.

And Advent liturgy is about the kingdom coming. Now.

Author unknown.

THE ANNUAL MISSION APPEAL This weekend we welcome Fr John Roche from the St Patrick's Missionary Society (Kiltegan Fathers <http://www.kilteganfathers.org/>). Fr John worked in Malawi for many years, as well as Nigeria and Kenya. He will be promoting their magazine AFRICA; please give him a warm welcome!

IN ADVANCE We begin to webcast our Sunday Masses from St Peter's (technology permitting) **this weekend**. † Bible Sunday is on the Second Sunday of Advent, **5th and 6th December**. It highlights the importance of the sacred scriptures in Christian living. We will be asking our Ministers of the Word (Readers) to renew the commitment to their ministry that weekend. If you feel you would like to offer your service as a Minister of the Word please let Fr Geoffrey or Deacon Cyril know. • DPC **this Wednesday** at St Peter's. • **Year of Mercy:** Mass at St Francis' for the opening of the Holy Year, 7.30pm, Tuesday **8th December**. *Walk with Me* and a *Pilgrimage Companion* available - £1 each. ★ Carols on the [Bearsted] Green, 7.30pm, Wednesday **16th December**. ★ **Christmas Mass During the Night** ('Midnight Mass') will again be at **10.30pm** this year on **24th December**.

ADVENT APPEAL 2015 This year's appeal will be in aid of The Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter. The Winter Shelter offers a warm welcome overnight for homeless people during the coldest months. Envelopes are attached to the newsletter this weekend. 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!

CAROL CELEBRATION At St Peter's, **Sunday 20th December at 6.00pm**. Come and join us for this festive get-together, aimed at all members of the parish, young and old. If you would like to contribute in any way, please speak to Bob Piggott. If you play an instrument, talk to Bob Piggott or Daniel Cram and bring it along at 4.30pm on the day for a bit of a practice. Young parishioners are encouraged to get dressed up for a church parade as a nativity figure (cow, Mary, angel, shepherd, King, whatever you like) and all parishioners



are asked to bring our traditional offering: a wrapped gift for the Women's Refuge in Maidstone, adults, bring

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 29th NOVEMBER 2015 (Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)			
✕ FIRST SUNDAY of ADVENT (C) ✕			
Sun 29th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Ann Dower RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Carmel McCarthy RIP
Mon 30th	St Andrew	7.00pm	✕ Mass: Dec'd members Hayden family & friends
Tues 1st	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: Irena Harrison RIP
Wed 2nd	Feria	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass: Welfare of Phil Schuler
Thu 3rd	St Francis Xavier	7.00am	✕ Mass: Fr Martin Breen RIP
Fri 4th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: Holy Souls
Sat 5th	Our Lady	5.00-5.30pm	Confessions
✕ SECOND SUNDAY of ADVENT (C) ✕			
Sun 6th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: James Stevens RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Dec'd members Murtagh family & friends

female toiletries and children, toys.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2016 Preparations will be on Friday afternoons, and will begin with a session for both parents and children at 3.45pm on **4th December**. Application forms are now available from Fr Geoffrey and must be returned by **THIS WEEKEND**. Parents with children who are baptized and in school Year 3 or above are invited to apply.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for December:** that families, and especially those families who suffer, may find in the birth of Jesus a sign of certain hope.
- **For those who are in positions of authority in our world and nation;** that they may act with wisdom and justice.
- **For all the sick** especially Barbara Casey and all who are unwell at home or in our care homes; for those recently dead, for all those whose anniversaries occur about now and for all our beloved dead; for all our relatives and friends; and for the intentions on the notice board.
- **For the leaders of all Christian churches;** that they may lead their people towards Christ and towards greater love for one another. We pray for the work of the St Patrick's Missionary Society.

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£440.25** (Gift Aided, **£268.20**; weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to **£134.00**). ♦ The Youth Sunday collection amounted to **£148.37**. ♦ The retiring collection **this week** is for the Kiltegan Fathers (see above).

WORLD AIDS DAY This **Tuesday**. In the UK there are 108,000 people living with HIV. *Catholics for AIDS Prevention and Support* provides pastoral ministry to those infected with HIV in the UK. For further information visit www.caps-uk.org and www.positivecatholics.com or call 07505 608655. 35 million people are now living with HIV/AIDS across the world. Although medicines have become more available, only 32% of children and 41% of adults who are eligible actually receive treatment, care and support, especially in Africa, a continent that cries out for justice.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY The dioceses is looking for a new Financial Secretary to replace Monsignor Canon Martin Lee who will be retiring in the spring of 2016. To get more information and to apply please visit the diocesan website www.rcsouthwark.co.uk.

PREPARING FOR GOD'S COMING 5 minute daily thoughts for Advent. Our diocese has developed a series of daily reflections featuring the scripture of the day and a related thought and prayer drawn from the spirituality of *Stewardship*. If you would like to receive these daily emails and encounter Advent in this way please subscribe via <http://eepurl.com/bF0b6P>.

THE PASSAGE working with homeless people. **If you donate through The Big Give website just after 12.00noon on 4th or 5th December every £1 is worth £2 due to matched funding.** There is an element of competition for full matching from The Big Give so if possible please give just after 12.00noon on Friday 4 December or Saturday 5 December. The Big Give site is quieter on the Saturday and the

matched giving remains open throughout that day and potentially until 14th December if sufficient funds are available. [http://new.thebiggive.org.uk/project/The Passage 2015](http://new.thebiggive.org.uk/project/The_Passage_2015).

CHRISTMAS DRAW Tickets will continue to be available after all Masses.