



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

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

20th December 2015

FAITH IN FOCUS: LEAPING FOR JOY. As soon as Mary found out that her cousin Elizabeth was expecting a baby she set out to go and visit her in the hill country. And we know that as Mary greeted Elizabeth the child in Elizabeth's womb, the future John the Baptist, leapt for joy. Bringing a child into the world at any time is beset with challenges, but for the two pregnant women in Judah there was much more at stake. Mary had already had to come to terms with the fact that her child was not Joseph's son, and Elizabeth's husband Zachary had been struck dumb for not believing that his child would be special. Yet the words Elizabeth chooses to use of Mary are not words of sympathy but of joy and praise: "Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Mary and Elizabeth were open to the future and were able to trust in God's providence for them both, come what may. They saw the birth of their children not as a burden but as an opportunity to praise God for what he promised for their future.



Christmas is an invitation to us to allow God to be born in us once more, to become open to the endless possibilities that God can provide in our lives. Our ability to celebrate the heart of Christmas is linked with our ability to invite God fully into our lives, to ask God to be reborn in us and to work his wonders in whatever way he sees fit. When we think of Christmas we don't remain in the past; we call God here and now into our lives and ask him to lead us in all the future adventures of life, for Christmas celebrates life itself. The manger scene is nice and comforting, but our liturgy today challenges us to go much further: to let the Christ-child be born in each of us and to bring good news to our waiting world. Are we ready to go beyond the mistletoe and tinsel, to become pregnant with God's word, to bear Christ to others? Do we approach Christmas with fear and trembling or do we leap for joy? (Author unknown)

COFFEE MORNING at GOOD SHEPHERD After Mass today: a rare chance to stay awhile and meet fellow parishioners.

FOR EXPECTANT MOTHERS The Gospel on the Fourth Sunday of Advent focuses on the role of Mary in our salvation. Over the three-year cycle the gospel tells of the betrothal of Mary to Joseph, the Annunciation and the Visitation. The stories prepare us for the Birth of our Lord at Christmas. Traditionally on this Sunday, we pray for expectant mothers everywhere. As well as praying for expectant mothers at this time, we also pray for those who are trying for a baby but as yet have not been successful, and for those who have suffered stillbirth or a miscarriage.



DIARY for the TWO WEEKS BEGINNING 20th DECEMBER 2015
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C)** ✕

O Clavis David: O Key of David ✕ Day of prayer for expectant mothers

Sun 20th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Wellbeing of Mrs Edwards
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Mossie Brosnan RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		6.00pm	Family Christmas Celebration
Mon 21st	<i>O Oriens: O Radiant Dawn</i>	7.00pm	✕ Mass: Canon Richard Hind RIP
Tues 22nd	<i>O Rex Gentium: O King of all the nations</i>	<u>2.00pm</u>	✕ Requiem Mass: Mary Day
Wed 23rd	<i>O Emmanuel: God is with us</i>	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass: Betty Harris RIP
Thu 24th	Christmas ✕ Eve		

✕ **The NATIVITY of THE LORD** ✕

Christmas Day

Thu 24th	Christmas ✕ Eve	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Margaret and Len Richardson RIP
		10.30pm	✕ Mass during the Night (<i>Preceded by Carols</i>): Celebrant's Intention)
Friday 25th	Christmas ✕ Day	(H) 8.45am	✕ Dawn Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Day Mass: Alfredo Cannavina RIP
Sat 26th	St Stephen	12noon	Baptism: Petra Valentina Hayward
		<i>5:00-5:30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>

✕ **The HOLY FAMILY of JESUS, MARY and JOSEPH (C)** ✕

Sun 27th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: For all parish helpers
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass: For all families
Mon 28th	The Holy Innocents	10.00am	✕ Mass: For the protection of the unborn
Tues 29th	St Thomas of Canterbury	10.00am	✕ Mass
Wed 30th	Christmas Octave	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass: Cenwein Cannavina
Thu 31st	Christmas Octave	7.00am	✕ Mass
Fri 1st Jan	MARY the HOLY MOTHER of GOD	10.00am	✕ Mass: For all parishioners
Sat 2nd	SS Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen	<i>5:00-5:30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>

✕ **THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD** ✕

Sun 3rd	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo

PENANCE SERVICE at St Francis', Maidstone, 7.30pm, **Monday, 21st December.**

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS Fr Geoff and Deacon Cyril would like to thank all those who have sent Christmas cards and gifts.

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 God's blessing on all refugees** *who flee to escape intolerable situations in their homelands: may they travel safely, be treated with compassion and fairness, and given the help they need to live new lives.*
- **For all the sick** *especially Barbara Casey and all who are unwell at home or in our care homes; for those recently dead especially Mary Day and Neville Pass, for all those whose anniversaries occur about now and for all our beloved dead; for all our relatives and friends; for the intentions on the notice board; and for Daniel Weatherley, ordained deacon this weekend in preparation for ordination to the priesthood.*
- **For those who do not look forward to Christmas,** *who have no one to share it with, who are missing lost ones, or for whom the message of Jesus' birth has no meaning.*

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£400.24** (Gift Aided, **£232.00**; weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank, amount to **£134.00**). ♦ The retiring collection to help with the cost of flowers and decorations at Christmas came to **£161.84**. ☺ 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 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 this year are split between the "Friends of the Holy Land", offering help to the poorest families in Bethlehem, and "Crisis Fund in Southwark" to help support children, young people and families in immediate need.

ADVENT APPEAL 2015 This year's appeal is in aid of The Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter. The Winter Shelter offers a warm welcome overnight for homeless people during the coldest months. Please return your donations in the envelopes provided by the end of Advent. Thank you.

NEWSLETTER There is no newsletter next week so Fr Geoff and Deacon Cyril send best wishes for a Holy and Happy Christmas. Fr Tim sends good wishes to us all, as does Fr Joseph from Ghana, who remembers fondly his stay with us last Christmas. ❁ Thank you so much to all those who are contributing to the music, the liturgy and the decorations in our two churches at Bearsted and Harrietsham over the Christmas period. Mass will be offered for you all, as well as for those who give so much of their time and love to our parishioners, especially those unable to get to Mass these days, and to those who keep an eye on our property over the year.

GRAND CHRISTMAS DRAW 1st Prize: **£100 Cash** ✦ 2nd Prize: **Turkey and Vegetables Voucher** ✦ 3rd Prize: **Luxury Christmas Hamper**, and other magnificent prizes. Tickets are still on sale. The draw will take place after Mass at St Peter's this Sunday, **20th December.**

NEVILLE PASS RIP Neville's funeral will be on **6th January** at St Peter's.

IN ADVANCE There will be a service at Bearsted Methodist Church for the Church Unity Octave on Sunday **17th January** at 3pm. It will be followed by tea and cakes. A warm welcome is, as always, assured.