



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

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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

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

4th January 2015

FAITH IN FOCUS: NOT OVER YET

All that preparation for Christmas and only ten days later it seems so far away. Gone are the Christmas adverts for food, drink and presents and we're all rushing to buy that last leather sofa on offer (hurry, sale must end next Monday only to start again Friday!) or drooling at the adverts for our luxury cruise around the world, or maybe just the camping holiday . . . But the Church recognises Christmas as a season, not just a bank holiday. And we have two echoes of the Christmas event that keep it alive in our hearts and minds: Epiphany (today) and the Presentation of the Lord (in about a month's time). The word epiphany is a most uncommon one. What it actually means is manifestation or showing. It recalls the day when the glory of God was made visible and accessible through the birth of the child Jesus. The wise men, coming from virtually the edges of the then-known world, represent the fact that the glory of God has been revealed to every corner of the globe: from the Great River to earth's bounds, as today's psalm tells us. Epiphany is about universalism. No one has a monopoly on God and Christ did not come for some sort of elite group but for every single human being of all time. The three wise men came to do homage to Jesus because they felt he was special to them and to their people. Even people who have no evident outward religious expression often indicate that the simple message of Christmas is one that still appeals to the human heart. In fact, St Leo the Great was fond of saying that there can be no strangers at Christmas because God has graced us all, saints and sinners, with the gift of his own Son. But like every liturgy, Epiphany does not leave us simply looking at the past. It coaxes us to change and renewal in our daily life of faith and to make a difference to the future. If we celebrate Epiphany as the making visible of God's gift of true humanity in the person of his Son, then we are also agreeing to be "epiphanies" ourselves, to be thankful people who never cease praising God for his many gifts and who show God's graceful presence in our world by the way we ourselves live. Christmas may have come and gone, but Epiphany reminds us that it's not over yet. We've a lot of showing to do.



THANK YOU Fr Geoff and Deacon Cyril send best wishes for a Holy and Happy and a peaceful New Year. Thank you so much to all those who have contributed 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 and our property over the year. ❁ **PARISH POST** Parishioners wondering why they didn't receive a Christmas card from 'so and so' might find it in the box marked PARISH POST in the porch at St Peter's.

MARY TATE Please pray for the repose of the soul of Mary Ursula Tate who died 10th December. Her funeral will be at St Peter's Wednesday 7th January at 11am. Her body will rest in church overnight Tuesday 6th January following a short service of reception at 6pm. Sorry but there will be no Mass this Wednesday at Good Shepherd.

ADVENT APPEAL 2014 The recent Advent Appeal was for the **Maidstone Churches' Winter Shelter**. They are aiming to provide shelter for homeless people in Maidstone right now 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. We are still collecting envelopes.

**DIARY for the WEEK BEGINNING 4th JANUARY 2015
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)**

✕ THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD ✕

Sun 4th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Molly and David McCafferty RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Ray Smith RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		12.30pm	Baptism: Charles Harris
Mon 5th	Feria of Christmas Time	7.00pm	✕ Mass
Tues 6th	Feria of Christmas Time	10.00am	✕ Mass
		6.00pm	To receive the body of Mary Tate
Wed 7th	Feria of Christmas Time	11.00am	✕ Requiem Mass: Mary Tate
Thu 8th	Feria of Christmas Time	7.00am	✕ Mass
Fri 9th	Feria of Christmas Time	10.00am	✕ Mass
Sat 10th	Our Lady	5:00-5:30pm	Confessions

✕ THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD (B) ✕

Sun 11th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Susan Newman
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Michael Ashdowne

THANK YOU Fr Geoff thanks everyone for their customary generous offering at Christmas.

READERS at GOOD SHEPHERD Will readers please now introduce the entry antiphon at the beginning of Mass, and also the communion antiphon. We plan to have a parish readers' day in March.

GRAND CHRISTMAS DRAW List of winners on notice board. Thank you to all our supporters. If you are a winner and have not yet collected your raffle prize from the office to be sure to do so this weekend. We raised a very creditable **£1, 016** for parish funds. Our thanks to Ian and all our promoters and prize donors.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2015 Preparations begin 16th 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.

PLEASE PRAY...

- *With the Holy Father for January: that in this year dedicated to consecrated life, religious men and women may rediscover the joy of following Christ and strive to serve the poor with zeal.*
- *For all the sick and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes, especially Cyril Adam, Arthur Hogben, John Kilby and Barbara Casey; for those recently dead; for all those whose anniversaries occur about now; and for all our relatives and friends.*
- *For all those who have been affected by recent tragedies on land, sea and in the air, that the bereaved might be comforted, the dead might receive eternal life and the missing might be found. We pray that the friends and relatives of those who were on the missing AirAsia plane might find closure in their heartbreak.*
- *That our young people will learn to open the treasure of their unique vocation through prayer, and adore Christ the King by their faithfulness to his call.*

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£254.11** (Gift Aided, **£157.31**). ♦ The **St Peter's Christmas card collection** raised **£248.17**.

CRIB COLLECTION Following the Archbishop's suggestion it has been agreed to designate the Crib Collection at Christmas to help the work of the "Friends of the Holy Land" in supporting individual families in Bethlehem. The Friends offer help to the poorest families in Bethlehem, contributing to their medical costs and paying for school and university fees.

CHRISTMAS The Church's liturgical celebration of Christmas (the Nativity of the Lord) continues until next Sunday, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Ordinary Time before Lent begins on Monday 12th January, the First Week in Ordinary Time, ferial cycle 1 (weekday readings at Mass), psalter week 1 (Divine Office). Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 18th February.

CHURCHES TOGETHER There is to be a service for Christian Unity at St Peter's at **2pm on Sunday 18th January** (the beginning of the Church Unity Octave of Prayer) preceded by a shared lunch in the hall.