



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

SECOND SUNDAY of ADVENT

6th December 2015

FAITH IN FOCUS: BACK TO THE FUTURE

If "things ain't what they used to be", then Christianity makes no bones about proclaiming that one day they surely will be once more. For in Advent we walk in the shadow of a wonderful promise, that one day the rule of God will hold sway over all creation and life will be restored to that perfect balance that God intended us to have from the beginning.

That's why Advent carries with it a tremendous sense of yearning and longing. We look back to the initial peace and tranquillity of God's creation (as symbolised in the story of the Garden of Eden) and we remember the coming of the Messiah in Bethlehem with the powerful promise of a kingdom where the meek and the humble shall rule.

But Advent is not locked in the past. It's about now. We look around at ourselves and at our world and ask whether we can play a more active role in establishing the justice of God's kingdom in our lives, on our street, in our family, in the place where we work. For Advent is also about change, changing ourselves and our world, and it beckons us to be renewed.

And like all feasts and seasons Advent has a future dimension to it. We look forward, beyond the Christmas scene, to the coming of Christ as he takes possession of this world once more and subjects all creation to the rule of God. None of us knows how or when this will happen, but Christians eagerly await the blessing that God's coming again will bring.

Advent asks of us that we never lose sight of what God has offered us in Christ. It demands a rebuilding programme in our lives as we straighten our ways and smooth our roads for God. And it invites us to watch joyfully for the day, that day when the salvation promised us will be ours, when Christ will come again in his glory.

Author unknown.

BIBLE SUNDAY is today, the Second Sunday of Advent. 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 **this weekend**. This simple ceremony takes place before the Liturgy of the Word.

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 Maidstone on **Monday 21st December**. ♦ Pick up a copy of 'Walk With Me', a journey of prayer for Advent and Christmas. ♦ Download a daily meditation from the diocese: <http://eepurl.com/bF0b6P>.

THE ANNUAL MISSION APPEAL Fr John Roche from the St Patrick's Missionary Society has written in appreciation of last week's appeal: "I had a pleasant return journey. Thank you so much for your hospitality and generosity." See below the amount raised.

JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY The Holy Year begins **this Tuesday**, the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. The northern parishes of our deanery will mark this with a Mass at St Francis' at 7.30pm, this Tuesday, **8th December**. Please make every effort to attend.

IN ADVANCE ★ 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. Please return the envelopes attached to the newsletter last weekend by the end of Advent. Thank you.



CHRISTMAS SERVICE TIMES Details of the times of the Christmas services across all the Christian

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 6th DECEMBER 2015 (Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)			
✧ 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
Mon 7th	St Ambrose	7.00pm	✧ Mass: Makhdoom Arin Fahim RIP
Tues 8th	IMMACULATE CONCEPTION	10.00am	✧ Mass: In honour of Immaculate Conception
Wed 9th	Feria	(H) 10.00am	✧ Mass: For Peace
Thu 10th	Feria	7.00am	✧ Mass: William Cannon RIP
Fri 11th	Feria	10.00am	✧ Mass: Holy Souls
Sat 12th	Our Lady	5.00-5.30pm	Confessions
✧ THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT (C) ✧ <i>Gaudete Sunday</i>			
Sun 13th	Saturday	6.00pm	✧ Vigil Mass: Pauline Sexton RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✧ Mass: In honour of St Lucy
		10.30am	✧ Mass: Pro Populo

churches in the Bearsted locality are ready for distribution. **Volunteers please!**

PARISH SOCIAL Thank you to those who supported our splendid Pre-Christmas Quiz Night last Saturday. A grand time was had by all (including Fr John, our visiting appeal missionary). Our thanks to our Quiz Master, MC and song-leader and those who organized publicity and catering. Delicious fish and chips appeared in between rounds and a memorable evening unfolded. We made **£150.20** for The Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter.

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 female toiletries and children, toys.

FINANCE MEETING This Monday, 7.30pm in the presbytery.

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.*
- **As we begin the Holy Year of Mercy,** *that through this coming year we may take to heart the Gospel call to be merciful like the Father, and be inspired to practise forgiveness and mercy in our lives.*
- **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 the nations,** and all those in positions of authority, that their hearts may be turned to put aside the weapons of war, and seek the path of peace.

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£415.82** (Gift Aided, **£238.50**; weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to **£134.00**). ♦ The collection for the Kiltegan Fathers amounted to **£466.56**. ♦ **Next Sunday** there will be a retiring collection to help with the **cost of flowers and decorations at Christmas**.

COFFEE MORNING at GOOD SHEPHERD After Mass, Sunday, **20th December**: back by popular demand, a rare chance to linger awhile, drink coffee and meet fellow parishioners.

CHRISTMAS DRAW Tickets will continue to be available after all Masses: various magnificent prizes. All proceeds to parish projects.

GREETING CARDS CAMPAIGN Amnesty International has launched its annual *Greetings Card Campaign* encouraging people across the UK to send a message of hope and support during the festive sea-

son to people facing persecution around the world. If you are interested there will be some printed information available at the back of the church or please look on the parish website. Thank you.

MISSIO See the letter acknowledging our donation of **£266.58** to World Mission Sunday.