



# 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**

**Parish Priest: Father Geoffrey Pointer: 01622 736100, email: [parishpriest@catholic-bearsted.org.uk](mailto: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](http://www.catholic-bearsted.org.uk)

**THE NATIVITY of THE LORD**



**25th December 2016**

**FAITH IN FOCUS: CHRISTMAS SPIRIT** You've done it! The hysteria is over and you have arrived at Christmas Day without too much physical or psychological harm. It's all too easy at this point to collapse in a heap with the Radio Times and an overly large sherry feeling that Christmas is safely over for another year. But Christmas is more than just the culmination of Advent; it's the beginning of the Christmas Season, in which we are invited to contemplate on salvation "made flesh". As children, we visited church on Christmas day to sing Christmas carols and peep in at the cosy crib scene. As adults, we are invited to contemplate the deeper and long lasting meaning of Christmas.



How many times have we been guilty of thinking of God as a distant figure? How often have we wandered how to develop a relationship with a God who is supposed to love us, yet remains stubbornly silent and invisible. But on this day over twenty centuries ago, there was something of a miracle. God was no longer somebody we couldn't see or hear, God became "flesh" in the form a small child in a stable. God came into the world that he had created to save us. Jesus is the face and voice of God. Jesus became the blueprint of how we should live our lives. His life and work is there for us all to read and remember. He has left the Holy Spirit as his legacy to help and guide us. Our acceptance of Jesus is key to our relationship with God.

For children, the excitement of Christmas comes once a year. As adults, we learn to live the true meaning of Christmas not on this one day but every day. As Ebenezer Scrooge promises in the in final pages of Dickens' 'Christmas Carol' as he leaps out of bed on Christmas morning, the time before him his own to make amends in, "I will live in the past, the present and the future. The spirits of all three shall strive within me." *Chapel Bell*

**NEWSLETTER** There is no newsletter next week so Fr Geoff and Deacon Cyril send best wishes for a Holy and Happy Christmas thanking parishioners for cards and gifts sent in. Fr Tim sends good wishes to us all, as does Fr Joseph from Ghana, who is currently in Rome as chaplain to the African community there. ✨ Thank you so much to all those contributing to the music (especially the carols last Sunday), 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.

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2017** Applications have now closed. Preparations for those parents who have enrolled their children begin **6th January**. Parents will be informed of the details by email.

**ADVENT APPEAL 2016** This year's appeal has been 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 still available. Please return by the end of Advent. Thank you. ★ Please see the notice about donations of **clothes** to the **Maidstone Day Care Centre**. Marie Quarman will collect throughout December.

**St PETER'S CHURCH TREES** When the church was built 30 years ago, a very nice screen of trees was planted round the perimeter to give some character to the bare site. However, 30 years on, the scene has changed dramatically: you can no longer even see the church through the forest which has grown up around it, and many of the trees themselves are either stunted in their growth, or growing so vigorously that they are damaging the roadways (see particularly the one at the top left corner which has heaved up the concrete). We need to take remedial action before further damage occurs, and have engaged tree surgeons who will be working on **Wednesday 11th** and **Thursday 12th January** to thin down and, in some cases, remove the excess of trees, leaving the good trees (such as the oaks) freedom to grow correctly. Please avoid parking in the church grounds on these days and take care to follow the warning signs.

**DIARY for the TWO WEEKS BEGINNING 25th DECEMBER 2016**  
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **The NATIVITY of THE LORD** ✕  
*Christmas Day*

Sun 25th	<b>Saturday</b> • <i>Christmas Eve</i>	5.00-5.30pm	Confessions
		6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Jim Kelly RIP
	<b>10.30pm</b>	✕ Mass during the Night: Celebrant's Intention	
	<b>Sunday</b> • <i>Christmas Day</i>	(H) 8.45am	✕ Dawn Mass: Pro Populo
10.30am		✕ Day Mass: Rose Julia Greenrod RIP	
Mon 26th	St Stephen	<b>10.00am</b>	✕ Mass: Margaret and Len Richardson RIP
Tues 27th	St John	10.00am	✕ Mass
Wed 28th	The Holy Innocents	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass: The Holy Souls
Thu 29th	St Thomas of Canterbury	7.00am	✕ Mass: James and Mary Murtagh RIP
Fri 30th	The Holy Family	10.00am	✕ Mass
Sat 31st	Christmas Feria	5.00-5.30pm	Confessions

✕ **MARY, The HOLY MOTHER of GOD** ✕

Sun 1st January 2017	<b>Saturday</b>	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass
	<b>Sunday</b>	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: John Fitzgerald RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
Mon 2nd	SS Basil and Gregory	<b>10.00am</b>	✕ Mass
Tues 3rd	Christmas Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
Wed 4th	Christmas Feria	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass: The Holy Souls
Thu 5th	Christmas Feria	7.00am	✕ Mass
Fri 6th	Christmas Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
Sat 7th	Christmas Feria	5.00-5.30pm	Confessions

✕ **The EPIPHANY of THE LORD** ✕

Sun 8th	<b>Saturday</b>	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	<b>Sunday</b>	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass
		10.30am	✕ Mass

**PLEASE PRAY...**

- **With the Holy Father for December:** that the peoples of Europe may rediscover the beauty, goodness and truth of the Gospel, which gives joy and hope to life.
- **With the Holy Father for January:** that all Christians may be faithful to the Lord's teaching by striving to restore ecclesial communion through prayer and fraternal charity by working together to overcome the challenges facing humanity.
- **For all the sick** and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes; for those who have died recently, especially Canon Jack Madden, and for all those whose anniversaries occur about now; for all our relatives and friends, and the intentions on the notice board.
- **For peace throughout the world;** let us remember especially those murdered and injured in the Christmas market massacre in Berlin.

**Thank you** for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£444.53** (Gift Aided, **£250.50**; weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to **£134.00**). ☺ 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 will be shared 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.

**CHRISTMAS RAFFLE** Results are on the notice board. We made **£571** for church music. Thank you to all our supporters. Congratulations to our winners!