



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

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 B

FIRST SUNDAY of ADVENT

3rd December 2017

FAITH IN FOCUS: WAKE UP CALL A man goes on a journey leaving his slaves in charge, each with a job to do. A doorkeeper keeps watch to alert the slaves as to his master's return. The story illustrates the time of waiting between Jesus' first coming as a little baby at Christmas to his second coming on Judgement Day. Did the slaves really need a doorkeeper to alert them to the master's return? After all, waiting for the second coming shouldn't be a big cosmic game of 'Dixie'. The point is not to wait for the master's return before hurling ourselves into great busy-ness. We're not waiting for Jesus' return in the same way we would wait for a bus, we have to spend our waiting time in preparation and constant readiness. "Keep alert," we are told "keep awake." We are asked to keep alert and awake not for fear of being caught out like naughty school children, but in a spirit of 'keeping our eye on the ball.' We all know how we would like to contribute. Each of us is aware of our unique place on the planet and how we would like to be remembered. Sadly, all too often it is easy for us to 'take our eye off the ball' and get caught up in other concerns. The news is full of people who have reached the end of their life unexpectedly. None of us have been afforded an exact time and date for our final preparations. Instead we are asked to live in a permanent state of readiness, seizing every opportunity on a daily basis to prepare for God's Kingdom. Our Advent goal needs to be about waiting in readiness from this day until our last.



Chapel Bell.

THE SEASON of ADVENT (From the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*) Advent has a twofold character, for it is a time of preparation for the Solemnities of Christmas, in which the First Coming of the Son of God to humanity is remembered, and likewise a time when, by remembrance of this, minds and hearts are led to look forward to Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. For these two reasons, Advent is a period of devout and expectant delight.

ADVENT APPEAL This year's Advent 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 available this weekend. Please return by the end of Advent. Thank you.

PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE Meeting **this Monday** at the presbytery.

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!**

COMING UP † Bible Sunday is next Sunday, **9th and 10th 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 next 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. • Carols on the [Bearsted] Green, **Wednesday 13th December**.

BEARSTED CHORAL SOCIETY CHRISTMAS CAROLS and MORE at St Peter's, Saturday **16th December**, with audience participation, conducted by Andrew Lowen. Tickets £10, students free. Tickets from Bob Piggott after Mass or bob_piggott@hotmail.co.uk or 736661. See posters.

CAROL CELEBRATION Thursday **21st December, 6pm** at St Peter's (not 7pm: fake news from parish ecumenical Christmas card with service times). All are welcome to this family and light-hearted event. Children are encouraged to dress up as their favourite Nativity character (sadly no Paddington Bears). We will as usual be collecting wrapped gifts for the Women's Refuge - toys for children and toiletries for women. If anyone would like to accompany the singing with Pete and Bob, please come along at about 4.30 on the day for a quick practice. You will be very welcome. Any instrument!! *Bob.*

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 3rd DECEMBER 2017
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **FIRST SUNDAY of ADVENT (B)** ✕

Sun 3rd	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Alan Flynn RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Elsie Hampshire RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
Mon 4th	Feria	7.00pm	✕ Mass: The Holy Souls
Tues 5th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: Bärbal Milautzki RIP
Wed 6th	Feria	<i>(H) 10.00am</i>	<i>Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion</i>
Thu 7th	St Ambrose	7.00am	✕ Mass: The Holy Souls
Fri 8th	IMMACULATE CONCEPTION	10.00am	✕ Mass: The Holy Souls
Sat 9th	Our Lady	<i>5.00-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>

✕ **SECOND SUNDAY of ADVENT (B)** ✕

Sun 10th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: For Marie
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Brian Smith RIP
		12.00noon	Baptism: George Jacob Pearce

COFFEE MORNING at GOOD SHEPHERD After Mass, Sunday, **17th December**: back by popular demand, a rare chance to linger awhile, drink coffee and meet fellow parishioners.

CHRISTMAS in OUR PARISH This year, for the first time in 11 years, Christmas Day falls on a Monday. After consultation among parishioners and parish groups it has been agreed that there will be no 'Mass During the Night' for this year only. This decision has not been reached lightly. Given that the 4th Sunday of Advent (23rd and 24th December) is a 'stand-alone' celebration with the usual Vigil and 2 Sunday Masses; given that the Mass during the night (10.30pm Christmas Eve) last year attracted just 27 communicants, compared to the 132 at the 6pm Vigil Mass; and given that the 3 Masses of the Sunday and the 4 Masses of Christmas would otherwise be celebrated within a 40½ hour time frame, it was felt that parishioners would be sympathetic. Mass during the Night (Midnight Mass) *will* be celebrated at St Francis', Maidstone, that is served by 3 priests. Thank you.

FLOWER FAIRIES NEEDED St Peter's has become short of flower arrangers. Is anyone (or two or three) willing to join us? No experience necessary and help provided if needed. Flower costs reimbursed. For more information ring Shelagh (01622 861160) or Beatrice and Andy (01622 730492).

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for December** – *that the elderly, sustained by families and Christian communities, may apply their wisdom and experience to spreading the faith and forming new generations.*
- **For our broken world of today**, *for all those caught up in violence and disasters at this time; we pray for mercy and justice for rich and poor alike; for freedom from tyranny and oppression, and for a time of peace and tranquillity for all people.*
- **For all the sick and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes** *especially Joan Hardings and David Smith; for those who have died recently; and for all those whose anniversaries occur about now (see below); for all our relatives and friends and for the intentions on the notice board.*
- **Anniversaries this week** (St Peter's Lady Chapel memorial): ✕ *Edward Roome, John Arbuthnot, Rose Brennan, Frank Reilly, and Millicent Weightman.* ✕

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£339.51** (Gift Aided, **£179.00**; weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to **£149.00**). ♦ The Youth Sunday collection for the **Catholic Youth Services** amounted to **£103.64**. ♦ **Next Sunday** there will be a retiring collection to help with the **cost of flowers and decorations at Christmas**.

DPC meeting at Holy Family this Monday, **4th December**, 7.30pm.

JUSTICE & PEACE A list of Prisoners of Conscience whom you may wish to send Christmas Cards to this year is now available. ★ J & P meeting this **Tuesday** at St Peter's.

OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS A message from Archbishop Peter: "Do you support Catholic Schools and the right of Catholics to send their children to them? Then we need you to make your voice heard. The government is making a critical decision on whether to overturn the admissions cap which prevents Catholic schools from allowing all Catholic pupils to attend. They have acknowledged that this policy discriminates against

Catholics and promised to abandon it; now we need you to tell them not to U-turn on their promise to Catholics. Visit <http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/> or search for Catholic Education in your search engine to write to the government and urge them to drop their policy which bans new Catholic schools.”