



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: bearsted@rcaos.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

THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT

16th December 2018

FAITH IN FOCUS: GAUDETE There is an element of spring-cleaning to Advent. Although not quite as penitential as Lent, it is nevertheless a time for taking stock, for preparing a way, for smoothing out the path of our life to let the Lord enter.

Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent, publicly marks one of the underlying themes of this season: joy! Coming from the Latin word meaning "rejoice!", Gaudete is the watermark of today's liturgy. Joy jumps out at us from today's prayers, readings, psalms, and no doubt from our songs and hymns.

Why be joyful? The sole reason is that the Christ, whose advent we await, is coming not to condemn or call us to task, but to set us free. The Jews longed for the coming of the Messiah; we are encouraged to yearn with a joyful expectation for the coming of Jesus. Jesus is coming not to judge but to save. This caused the psalmist to sing with joy: "God is my salvation, I trust - I shall not fear." Paul shares in this exuberant joy at the nearness of God and he writes to the Philippians with a recipe for happiness. Indeed, he says that happiness is exactly what he wishes for the Christian community.

Among Paul's ingredients is **tolerance**: if we know what our own weaknesses are, and if we recognise that God deals lightly with us, then we are much less ready to jump on other people for their own shortcomings. Tolerance comes from knowing the nearness of God to us. So Paul urges us **not to worry**: can we change anything at all in our lives just by worrying about it? Is worry a cure for anything? All the while God is at hand. Yet we do need things in order to live and be happy. So Paul encourages us to **pray**: by so doing we open ourselves before God and we acknowledge our complete dependence, trusting that God will never leave us wanting. Such prayer causes us to be **thankful**: we receive so much from God that our natural response is to praise God for sustaining us day in and day out. This prayerful mood of thanksgiving brings **peace**: not simply freedom from argument or stress, but the deep-down security that lets us know that we are held in the palm of God's hand.

All of which brings us full circle in Paul's scheme of things. So the mood of rejoicing and happiness is very much at the heart of Gaudete Sunday. Tolerance, freedom from anxiety, prayer, thanksgiving, peace and happiness are offered to those who turn to God today. And God is very near!
(Author unknown)

RECOMMENDED for ADVENT Advent is a time of devout and expectant delight. In the second phase of the season of Advent, from **17th December** (this Monday), the liturgy is more directly addressed to preparing to commemorate and celebrate the birth of Our Lord, and the readings at daily Mass reflect this (see <http://www.southwarkdsc.org.uk/>). Try then to get to Mass during the final days of Advent: there is so much beauty in the readings of this season. ♦ Celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation (confession): there will be a penance service at St Francis', Maidstone on Monday **17th December** at 7pm.

CHRISTMAS SERVICE TIMES A few streets' cards remain: please be generous enough to take a bundle from St Peter's! ★ Pick up a Knights of St Columba **Christmas poster** and display it in your window or other prominent position.

GRAND CHRISTMAS DRAW If you can help with donating a prize (no electrical goods, please) this would be greatly appreciated. Draw takes place **next weekend**.

DIOCESAN DIRECTORIES A few are available for those interested in diocesan information; includes a weekly liturgical calendar.

WEB-STREAM Apologies that our webcasting has failed for the last few days. This is as frustrating for us as it is for our loyal followers. Hopefully it will settle down in time for Christmas.

FAITH CLUB 3.30 – 5pm at St Peter's **this Sunday**.



DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 16th DECEMBER 2018
(Masses and Devotions marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT (C)** ✕
Gaudete Sunday

Sun 16th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Mass of the Angels, in loving memory of Sacha
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Hilary Ashdowne RIP
Mon 17th <i>O Sapientia</i>	Feria	7.00pm	✕ Mass
Tue 18th <i>O Adonai</i>	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: Fr David Goddard RIP
Wed 19th <i>O Radix Jesse</i>	Feria	(H) 10.00am	<i>Service of the Word and Holy Communion</i>
Thu 20th <i>O Clavis David</i>	Feria	7.00am	✕ Mass
		6.00pm	Family Carols
Fri 21st <i>O Oriens</i>	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
Sat 22nd <i>O Rex Gentium</i>	Feria	<i>5-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>
✕ FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT (C) ✕			
Sun 23rd <i>O Emmanuel</i>	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Henry and Eliza Martin RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Holy Souls
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo

COFFEE MORNING at GOOD SHEPHERD After Mass, Sunday, **30th December**: back by popular demand, a rare chance to linger awhile, drink coffee and meet fellow parishioners.

FAMILY CELEBRATION in ANTICIPATION of CHRISTMAS This **Thursday**, 6pm at St Peter's. All ages are warmly invited to come and have a jolly good sing to celebrate the approach of Christmas. We will be giving our usual gifts as our offering for the Women's Refuge. Can adults bring wrapped ladies' toiletries, and children wrapped toys marked girls and boys. Children are also encouraged to get dressed up as shepherds, angels, camels, what you will. The band will meet at 4.30 for a run-through. If anyone would like to play please let Bob (07594 752297), Pete or Dan know.

COMING UP: CAROLS at the Methodist Church, Bearsted, 6pm, Sunday **23rd December**.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **For those who only know Christ by chance during these holy days** through the joy they experience as they hear the message of an angel; may the love we share help them understand more fully the mystery of God's infinite perfections and unceasing love for all.
- **With the Holy Father for December – In the Service of the Transmission of Faith:** that people, who are involved in the service and transmission of faith, may find, in their dialogue with culture, a language suited to the conditions of the present time.
- **For all the sick and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes;** for those who have died recently, especially Peter Meekham; 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 (St Peter's Chapel memorial):** ✕ David Pinnington, Cindy Burrows Hollenbeck and Yvonne Murray.✕

CAFOD Play your part to renew our Common Home. A new report from a group of international scientists has been released, urging us to ramp up our efforts to fight climate change. We know that things are urgent now. Visit <https://cafod.org.uk/> for more information. • Do you want to change lives around the world and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas? If so there are some World Gifts catalogues which you can pick up in at the back of the church. Gifts range from teaching someone to read or giving enough seeds to grow a year's worth of food.

ADVENT APPEAL this year 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 will be available from the First Sunday in Advent, w/e **2nd December**. Please return by the end of Advent. Thank you.

MAIDSTONE DAY CARE CENTRE Donations of good used or new clothing for homeless men and women are needed. Toiletries would also be useful. Please bring to St Peter's in **January** and we will deliver any donations. Thank you.