



# 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](mailto: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](http://www.catholic-bearsted.org.uk)

**Year C**

**FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT**

**23rd December 2018**

**FAITH IN FOCUS: JUST FOR THE KIDS?** They say that Christmas is really for the children. In a sense it is. There is nothing quite as rejuvenating as watching young children's faces wrapped in the wonder of the Christmas story. The mounting delight as the long-awaited day arrives, the shrieks of glee when opening presents, the open-handed way in which they offer gifts to others, the fluffed lines of the school nativity play - all these things put children at the centre of our Christmases. Although Christmas comes at the end of the year it is really only the beginning of the story. We sing carols about our Saviour and we dwell on the little child, the crib, the ox and the ass, the shepherds and the wise men. Peace and joy shout out from our Christmas cards.



It goes without saying that our Saviour grew up. The joy of Elizabeth and Mary, both pregnant, as they greeted each other was later to be the foundation-stone of family support. Elizabeth's child, John, was to become a laughing stock and lose his head. Mary's child, Jesus, was to become a willing victim to the system which could not cope with him and so it crucified him on a tree. In the intervening years we might speculate that Elizabeth and Mary were there for each other; that they shared their family ups and downs; that they offered each other support when their peace was shattered. For both women, some trying times lay ahead.

So as we await the birth of our Saviour, we have to recall that he was just that - a saviour. Without trying to be morbid or morose we need to keep the whole Advent/Christmas picture before our eyes. Whereas each of us is born and dies, Jesus was born to die. He was sent by God to be the lamb who gave his life to take away our sins. This is the message of Christmas. Our Christmas carols rightly focus on the joy of the Incarnation and on the heart-warming scenes of the Nativity. Yet if we are not to miss the whole point, we have to ask the simple questions that the story throws up. Who was he? Why was he born? How was he treated? What happened to him? He was Jesus, born in Bethlehem, the Son of God, sent into the world to save us by revealing what the Father had planned from the beginning of time: that we should know God and live life to the full. He was the Saviour sent to redeem us, calling us to turn from passing pleasure to deeper joys, inviting us to die with him so that we might rise to greater things. Christmas, then, is not only about the birth of a baby, but the birth of a saviour, the Prince of Peace.

Elizabeth and Mary carry with them a hint of things to come, and the Church's prayers today seem strangely preoccupied with death and resurrection so close to Christmas. This is not intended to put a damper on our festivity. It's just to remind us that there's more to Christmas than the crib. Maybe the Nativity is for children. But only adults can come close to the Incarnation. *(Author unknown)*

**CHRISTMAS DAY** Christmas is the one time we will all go to church and celebrate something that happened a long time ago, but that something that 'happened a very long time ago' is with us every day. We go to church to celebrate the wonderful Christmas message that God loves us so much that he sent his Son to be with us, to support us, to endure with us, to share life's struggles and to guide us. Our challenge is to move forward through life's joys and sorrows confident in God's love. Our challenge is to make it to next Christmas better and stronger than we are today. *(Chapel Bell)*

**DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 23rd DECEMBER 2018**  
**(Masses and Devotions marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)**

✕ **FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT (C)** ✕

Sun 23rd	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>6.00pm</b>	✕ Vigil Mass: Henry and Eliza Martin RIP
	<b>Sunday</b> <i>Day of prayer for expectant mothers</i>	<b>(H) 8.45am</b>	✕ Mass
		<b>10.30am</b>	✕ Mass: Pro Populo

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

Tue 25th	<b>Monday 24th</b> • <i>Christmas Eve</i>	<b>6.00pm</b>	✕ <b>Vigil Mass:</b> Special Intention
		<b>10.30pm</b>	✕ <b>Mass during the Night:</b> Celebrant's Intention
	<b>Tuesday 25th</b> • <i>Christmas Day</i>	<b>(H) 8.45am</b>	✕ <b>Dawn Mass:</b> Pro Populo
		<b>10.30am</b>	✕ <b>Day Mass:</b> Rose Greenrod RIP
Wed 26th	St Stephen, the first Martyr	<b>(H) 10.00am</b>	✕ Mass: for parishioner and benefactors
Thu 27th	St John, Apostle and Evangelist	<b>7.00am</b>	✕ Mass: Holy Souls
Fri 28th	The Holy Innocents	<b>10.00am</b>	✕ Mass: John Greenrod's Intention
Sat 29th	St Thomas of Canterbury	<i>5.00-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>

✕ **THE HOLY FAMILY of JESUS, MARY and JOSEPH (C)** ✕

Sun 30th	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>6.00pm</b>	✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>(H) 8.45am</b>	✕ Mass: Joe Mazzucchelli RIP
		<b>10.30am</b>	✕ Mass: Margaret and Len Richardson RIP
Mon 31st	<b>Mary, The Holy Mother of God</b>	<b>7.00pm</b>	✕ Vigil Mass: Robert, Kathleen and family
Tues 1st Jan. 2019		<b>10.00am</b>	✕ Mass: For Peace
Wed 2nd	SS Basil and Gregory	<b>(H) 10.00am</b>	✕ Mass
Thu 3rd	Most Holy Name of Jesus	<b>7.00am</b>	✕ Mass: Holy Souls
Fri 4th	Christmas Feria	<b>10.00am</b>	✕ Mass
Sat 5th	Christmas Feria	<i>5.00-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>

✕ **The EPIPHANY of THE LORD** ✕

Sun 6th	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>6.00pm</b>	✕ Vigil Mass
	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>(H) 8.45am</b>	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		<b>10.30am</b>	✕ Mass

**NEWSLETTER** There is no newsletter next week, so Fr Geoffrey 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, still in Rome as chaplain to the African community there. ✨ Thank you so much to all those contributing 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, especially those unable to get to Mass these days, and to those who keep an eye on our property over the year. ★ Pick up a Knights of St Columba Christmas poster and display it in your window or other prominent position.

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

**WEB-STREAM** Apologies that our webcasting is still a bit 'hit and miss'. This is as frustrating for us as it is for our loyal followers. Our technician, Paul, has had a tweak and hopefully it will settle down in time for Christmas.

**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.

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2019** Applications have now closed. Preparations for those parents who have enrolled their children begin on **Friday 11th January** at 4pm. Parents will be updated by email.

**COMING UP:**

- **PEACE SUNDAY** *Good politics serves peace.* **20th January** 2019.
- **OCTAVE OF PRAYER for CHRISTIAN UNITY 18-25th January** 2019: This year we pray for unity amidst injustice and disunity related to divisions in our world. We think about Indonesia, where economic injustice and religious pluralism face challenges in the face of radicalization. ✕ There will be a united service at Bearsted Methodists on **Sunday 20th January** at 3pm.

**PLEASE PRAY...**

- **For those who are facing Christmas without someone they love, that they be given strength and courage and find peace in the knowledge of God's love.**
- **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 January – evangelization;** that young people, especially in Latin America, follow the example of Mary and respond to the call of the Lord to communicate the joy of the Gospel to the world.
- **For all the sick and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes;** 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. ♦ For all **expectant mothers**, especially those who are fearful or alone.
- **Anniversaries (St Peter's Chapel memorial):** ✕ Ellen Walsh, Lilian Macklin, Rose Greenrod, Winifred Sanity, Nicholas Newman, Anna Hale, Elizabeth Honywood, Irena Harrison, Winifred Scott, Vincent Coker, Judy Robinson, Mary Jane Macklin, William Grimes, Ernie Seager, Thomas McNamee, Ronald Puttock, Thomas Gould, Kathleen Carter, William Richards, Albert Murray, Stephanie Cuming and Frank Cropper. ✕

**Thank you** for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£371.50** (Gift Aided, **£209.50**; in addition, weekly standing orders paid direct into our bank, amount to **£158.00**). ☺ 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 coming season will be donated to the Catholic Children's Society's *Southwark Crisis Fund*, which provides support to children and families of the archdiocese who are facing a crisis in their life.

**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.

**HI KENT** We've received a letter of thanks from Hi Kent for the donation we made from parish income towards their work providing care for deaf people and those with diminished hearing.

**CHRISTMAS RAFFLE** Drawn this **Sunday** (23rd) after 10.30 Mass to the accompaniment of mulled wine and mince pies. The results will be on the notice board. Proceeds to parish funds. Ian would like to thank parishioners for their generous support and those who kindly donated prizes. Our thanks to Ian for his persistence. Congratulations to our winners!

