



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

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

13th JANUARY 2019

FAITH IN FOCUS: Preparing To Change

What does Jesus' baptism say to us? Jesus' thirty years of preparation before his public baptism remind us that it takes time to get ready for God's mission. How many countless hours did Jesus spend in prayer? What study, what thought, what agony must he have undergone before appearing in front of John to ask him to baptize him. It is never too late for any of us to say, "yes" to God. January is a time for new beginnings and fresh resolution. John the Baptist was an expert on this. John's ministry was all about repentance and life changing reform ... that's what his baptism was all about. But anyone who has ever seriously tried to change themselves will know how difficult change really is. Can we really entertain any hopes of becoming braver if we have spent our whole lives avoiding confrontation? Can we really become kinder if we have spent our whole lives only thinking of our own needs? All of us can point to parts of our life that remain stubbornly unchanged year in and year out. Those who were baptized by John were baptized as a sign of their intent to change from their old ways, but knowing how difficult change can be, we can't help wondering how successful they must have been. Perhaps John appreciated this too when he said, "I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

We are told that the same Holy Spirit that empowered Jesus at the outset of his ministry, is the same Holy Spirit that is given to us in our baptism. This is an inspiring thought. Validating our baptism anew every day, knowing that we are filled with the Holy Spirit perhaps change isn't beyond us after all. (*Chapel Bell*)

CHRISTMAS The Church's liturgical celebration of Christmas concludes this weekend with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Ordinary Time before Lent begins this **Monday, 14th January**, the First Week in Ordinary Time, ferial cycle 1 (weekday readings at Mass), psalter week 1 (Divine Office). It lasts **7½ weeks** ☉ before Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, **6th March**.

PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY From **18th until 25th January** the Church observes eight days' prayer for Christian Unity. Last year we were invited to reflect upon the continuing impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade upon Caribbean society and upon Christian unity and witness. **This year** we are reminded again that our prayer for unity is offered up amidst injustice, and that Christian disunity is in so many ways related to the divisions in our world. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland suggest that we 'Go and Do' (www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo). Resources are also available on their website (<https://ctbi.org.uk/>) along with prayers for each day of the octave. A votive Mass for Christian Unity will be celebrated during the octave. ✠ There will be a united service at Bearsted Methodists next **Sunday, 20th January** at 3pm. Parishioners are **urged to support** this event.

BEARSTED CHURCHES TOGETHER Committee meeting, 7pm **this Tuesday** at St Peter's.

COMING UP:

- **PEACE SUNDAY** *Good politics serves peace. 20th January.*
- **OCTAVE of PRAYER for CHRISTIAN UNITY 18-25th January:** 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 (see above).



DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 13th JANUARY 2019
(Masses and Devotions marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **THE BAPTISM of THE LORD (C)** ✕

Sun 13th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Peter Fraser RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Michael Ashdowne RIP
Mon 14th	Feria	7.00pm	✕ Mass: Doreen Cox RIP
Tue 15th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: Charlotte Kelly RIP
Wed 16th	Feria	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass: Anne Hamilton (FM)
Thu 17th	St Anthony	7.00am	✕ Mass: Holy Souls
Fri 18th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: For Unity
Sat 19th	Our Lady	<i>5-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>

✕ **SECOND SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME (C)** ✕
Peace Sunday

Sun 20th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Anne Leonard's intention
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass: For Unity and Peace
		12noon	Baptism: Henry Michael Barrow
		3.00pm	Unity Service at Bearsted Methodist Church

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.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **For those in Europe suffering the effects of the severe winter weather; and for those in the United States of America struggling as a result of the partial government shutdown.**
- **With the Holy Father for January** – May 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; those who have died recently especially Charles Flynn; 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, remembering especially Terry as he prepares for his operation.**
- **Anniversaries (St Peter's Chapel memorial):** ✕ Gillian Alcock, David Hyndman, Marjorie Boyden, Anne Hamilton and Rosalia Daes Vanbreedam. ✕

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£430.52** (Gift Aided, **£209.00**; in addition, weekly standing orders paid direct into our bank, amount to **£158.00**). ♦ The Advent Appeal netted a further **£40.00** ♦ Crib offerings have so far amounted to **£23.95**. ♦ And we banked **£652.00**, the profit from of our Christmas Raffle.

PEACE ACTIONS for JANUARY

- Make a visit to another Christian church in your area as part of your commitment to **Christian Unity Octave, (18th-25th January)**. The Christians of Indonesia prepared the resources for this year's celebration. They found this year's theme in the words of Deuteronomy, '**Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue...**' (see Deut. 16:18-20).
- Mark **Peace Sunday on 20th January**. The theme is "**Good politics serves peace**".
- Take time to learn about someone else's religion on '**World Religion Day**' (17th January).
- **Mark Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January**. Resources are available from Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre (www.bethshalom.com).

CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY (CAP) *Debt Counselling*. Around 7.9 million of people say they are likely to fall behind with their finances in January after spending too much at Christmas. 'Christians Against Poverty' exist because nobody should be held hostage by debt and poverty. But the truth is that they are rife in the UK. In a society where people live behind closed doors, thousands are desperately poor. Unable to feed their children, incapable of paying to heat their homes in winter, the grip of poverty is relentless. The website is a good starting point for those looking for debt counselling. The charity is always looking for donations to set up more centres across the UK. Visit CAP at www.capuk.org. "**If money and material things become the centre of our lives, they seize us and make us slaves.**" Pope Francis