



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 LENT

24th MARCH 2019

FAITH IN FOCUS: THE GARDENER, THE FIG TREE AND THE PROMISE When people die, especially in tragic or premature circumstances, we are left with a sense of injustice. There are some who will question what kind of God we have who can allow such unfairness. But the bottom line is that life simply isn't metered out to us in equal proportions. Death simply happens. There is no intent behind a natural disaster, and because there is no intent there can certainly be no injustice. In biblical days people imagined that fatal disasters and terminal illnesses were sent as some kind of punishment from God. Had the victims brought about their own fate by living sinful lives? What will Jesus' answer be? No, of course untimely death is not sent as a punishment! But whilst we are pondering the fragility of our lives, Jesus reminds us that any one of us could die in similar circumstances. We only have to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. None of can bank on living to a ripe old age, and so we must consider how well we are prepared to live and how well we are prepared to die.



At first, today's reading feels uncomfortable. The parable of the fig tree reads like a threat. The tree is not bearing any fruit and so the master commands that it should be axed. A compassionate gardener begs that the tree be given a second chance, and so the master grants another year. It feels like a threat... bear fruit or else! But Jesus knows that threats don't bring out the best in us. Like the gardener who tends the tree and nurtures it, so Jesus is there for all who need a second chance. For those of us who make a commitment to live life in a better way, Jesus is there to support and guide us towards our goals. The parable has moved from something that sounds like a threat to something that sounds like a promise.... something inspirational!

Lent is a time to address some begging questions. How many years have we spent making the same old mistakes? What must we do to make life different? It sounds obvious, but to achieve different results, we must do something different. We are invited to ask God for help in setting new priorities, and we must achieve results that reflect God's love for us, and our love for God.

(Chapel Bell)

LENTEN LITURGY (from the directory) During Lent the Gloria is not used, except on Feasts and Solemnities; it is not permitted to decorate the altar with flowers, and the use of musical instruments is allowed only so as to support the singing (Laetare Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Lent; Solemnities and Feasts are exceptions to this rule); Alleluia is not said, even on Feasts and Solemnities: care should be taken in this respect in the choice of hymns and gospel acclamation.

RECOMMENDED FOR LENT ("Prayer : Fasting : Almsgiving") ✕ Try to get to Mass at least once during the week. ✕ Attend Stations of the Cross (this week at **Good Shepherd**) on **Friday evenings**. (If any parishioners would once again like to take a turn leading the Stations, please let Fr Geoffrey know. Our thanks to Patrick and Margaret for their input last week.) ✕ Celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation. ✕ Contribute to CAFOD, our parish Lenten Appeal. ✕ Give up a favourite luxury *but keep it between you and the Lord (don't tell people what you have 'given up' for Lent)*. ✕ Try to get to the Bearsted area **Lent Lunches** on **Fridays** from 12.15, with a talk at 1pm from the following agencies:

29th March:	Bearsted Methodists:	<i>People with Autism in Churches</i>
5th April:	St Mary's, Thurnham:	<i>Maidstone Christian Cancer Support Group</i>
12th April:	St Mary's, Langley:	<i>Anna Chaplaincy (in partnership with the Heart of Kent Hospice)</i>

GIFT AID SCHEME Members are asked to find their new set of envelopes for the coming year. We have tried to 'second guess' which church you attend, so please bear with us if your box is at another centre! Your current set of envelopes expires at the end of the month. If you do not already do so, please consider donating by standing order. Details of how to do this are included in the accompanying letter from Mark Smith, our organizer, to whom many thanks for his work in promoting this scheme.

24 HOURS for THE LORD There will be twenty-four hours of adoration and prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament at St Francis', Maidstone from 7am this Friday, **29th** until 9.45am on Saturday **30th March**.

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 24th MARCH 2019
(Masses and Devotions marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **THIRD SUNDAY of LENT (C)** ✕

Sun 24th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Joan and Thomas Lawson RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: John and Elizabeth Drummy RIP
Mon 25th	The ANNUNCIATION ✕ of the LORD	7.00pm	✕ Mass: Holy Souls
Tue 26th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
Wed 27th	Feria	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass
Thu 28th	Feria	7.00am	✕ Mass
Fri 29th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
		(H) 7.30pm	Stations of the Cross
Sat 30th	Feria	5-5.30pm	<i>Confessions</i>
✕ FOURTH SUNDAY of LENT (C) ✕ <i>Laetare Sunday</i>			
Sun 31st	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Irene and Newport Horne RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass: For all our Mothers

CAFOD Please hand in your savings at Mass, or any time during Lent. If you are a UK tax payer, fill in the gift aid slip.
MARMALADE MORNING at St Nicholas' Church, Otham, from 9.30, Saturday **13th April**. Probably the best marmalade and chutney in Kent! For more information, contact Joan Palmer, 202239.

BEARSTED CHURCHES EASTER EGG HUNT To be held before Easter on Holy Saturday (**20th April**). As usual donations of eggs gratefully received; please leave in the sacristy at St Peter's.

BEARSTED PRAYER VISITING Week commencing **29th April**. More information as we get it (or speak to Bob). Please get involved with this valuable and well-received outreach ministry to our community.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for March:** that Christian communities, especially those who are persecuted, feel that they are close to Christ and have their rights respected.
- **For all the sick and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes;** for those who have died recently especially Fr Alan Wright; and for all those whose anniversaries occur about now (see below); for all our relatives and friends; for the intentions on the notice board; and for our children preparing for First Communion in May.
- **For the victims of cyclone Idai in Mozambique;** for those who lost their lives and for stranded citizens and their families and for all who have lost loved ones.
- **Anniversaries (St Peter's Chapel memorial):** ✕ Ann Keegan, John McCarthy, Hilda Gibson and Madeleine Worsley. ✕

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£363.61** (of which, **£152.11** was **Gift Aided**; in addition, weekly standing orders paid direct into our bank, amount to **£158.00**). The collection of savings from the **CAFOD Family Fast Day** amounted to **£245.45**.

EVENTS See the notices about various productions in the locality, including Shelagh's exhibition that finishes this Thursday.

FROM THE ARCHBISHOP *Chrism Mass:* We warmly encourage all parishes to send a small group of representatives to the popular Chrism Mass in St George's Cathedral, which will take place on Wednesday **17th April** at 11.30 am. • **Lent Talks:** The CCF will be hosting Lent Talks on Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving and The Passion over four consecutive Tuesdays, continuing on **26th March** at Holy Ghost Parish in Balham. The talks will be streamed live on the CCF Facebook page.

The MYSTERY of GOD *Lent Course.* Produced by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. A course for groups or for individuals. A selection of thoughts, Divine Office of the Church. prayers, discussion, video links and actions. You can download this at <https://ctbi.org.uk/lenet>. ✕ Other useful online resources are worth investigating, e.g. <https://universalis.com/>: a powerful prayer resource that follows the traditional Divine Office of the Church and gives daily readings and reflections. There is also an app. ✕ Also <https://player.fm/series/pray-station-portable-1708778>.

THE PASSAGE is raising funds through the Big Give from 12noon Tues **19th March** – 12 noon Tues **26th March** to support its work with homeless people moving from Street to Home. Double your Donation, Double your impact. For more information ring Andrew Hollingsworth 020 7592 1856 (andrew.h@passage.org.uk). Donate at www.thebiggive.org.uk/thepassage2019. The maximum is £25,000 from any one donation. It is not a limit per person.