



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 A)

THE EPIPHANY of THE LORD

6th JANUARY 2020

FAITH in FOCUS: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO GUIDING STARS God reaches out far and wide to announce the birth of his Son. He reaches out to simple shepherds in the fields around Bethlehem, and to great intellects from the East. He reaches out to those of different religions, to politicians and to scientists. The revelation that a saviour has been born is bigger than anybody. The story of the Magi, who followed the star and sidestepped the evil Herod, is tempting in its appeal to romanticise, but if we are to learn anything we have to focus on the nature of God's revelation.



It mightn't feel much as though God is reaching out to us. The stable with its shepherds and kings might seem very far away as we take down our Christmas decorations and recycle our Christmas cards. There's a sense of 'back to normal', and for most of us that means a hum drum cycle of boring jobs and making ends meet. Today's story tells us that it doesn't have to be that way. To follow the star is to make a conscious decision to cut out everything that is unimportant. The rules are simple. We have to make the right choices on a daily basis no matter what the consequences. In the light of poor decisions, we must learn to ask forgiveness and move away from regret. We must find time in a world full of distractions to listen to our inner voice. Most importantly we have to ask God to guide us as he guided the Magi.

Most of us get through life relying on the knowledge we already have. Today's challenge is to look for something new. Knowing where to look for our own guiding star is up to us, but one thing is for sure, if we are not looking for revelation, we will never find it. If we carry on doing the same things, we will only get the same results.

Chapel Bell

THANK YOU to all those who put so much effort into making our Christmas services really special: to those who arranged the beautiful flowers and decorations at both churches, to those who cleaned, those who served, those who led the music and those who took Communion to the housebound; indeed to all those who make our parish such a welcoming community, thank you! And thank you to those who do much of the background work in the parish throughout the year, helping it to function efficiently - work which is largely unnoticed but very much valued. God bless you all! ✨ The numbers attending Mass for Christmas were encouraging; we didn't count heads this year, but the Christmas Vigil Mass was packed, and there was an increased attendance at the Mass during the Night. Both Christmas morning Masses were very full. ☺ Whilst we're maybe cutting out meat for January, or even going vegan. why not let's see if we can fill our church on into the New Year! ✨ **PARISH POST** Parishioners wondering why they didn't receive a Christmas card from 'so and so' might find it in the box marked PARISH POST in the porch at St Peter's.

GOOD SHEPHERD Water problems: like many others we are having trouble with drainage at Good Shepherd. A new soakaway will have to be dug (and paid for). Please be careful!

THURSDAY MORNINGS Mass on a Thursday morning has now been discontinued. Apologies for any inconvenience. The church will be open as usual.

FRIDAY COFFEE 5 of us stayed for coffee last Friday at St Peter's. We will do it all again **this Friday and for the foreseeable future**. Do join us!

FIRST COMMUNION MEETING The first meeting this year will be **this Friday at 4.15pm at St Peter's**.

MAIDSTONE DAY CENTRE ♦ In **January** there is a collection of toiletries for men and women. Please leave any donations in the parish room. ♦ In **February** we will be collecting new and good used clothing for men and women.

CLERGY SUPPORT FUND Those who supported this fund a couple of years ago will have received a Christmas Newsletter. Anyone else interested can pick up a copy.

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 5th JANUARY 2020
(Masses and Devotions marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✠ THE EPIPHANY of THE LORD ✠

Sun 5th	Saturday	6.00pm	✠ Vigil Mass
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✠ Mass
		10.30am	✠ Mass: Pro Populo
Mon 6th	Monday after Epiphany	12.30pm	✠ Requiem Mass: Gretl Bignell
		7.00pm	✠ Mass: Baby's safe delivery
Tuesday 7th	Tuesday after Epiphany	10.00am	✠ Mass: Private Intention (JG) <i>Followed by Adoration until 12noon.</i>
Wed 8th	Wednesday after Epiphany	(H) 10.00am	✠ Mass: Carol Ball RIP
Thu 9th	Thursday after Epiphany	<i>No Mass. Church open as usual</i>	
Fri 10th	Friday after Epiphany	10.00am	✠ Mass: Catherine's Intention <i>Coffee after Mass</i>
Sat 11th	Saturday after Epiphany	<i>5-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>
✠ THE BAPTISM of THE LORD (A) ✠			
Sun 12th	Saturday	6.00pm	✠ Vigil Mass
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✠ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✠ Mass

MARGARETHA (GRETL) BIGNELL RIP Gretl's funeral will be **tomorrow** (Monday), 12.30 at St Peter's. Please remember David and the family in your prayers. ✠ May she rest in peace.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **For the parish of St Thomas', West Malling** threatened with the loss of their presbytery, church and pre-school following the collapse of part of the priest's accommodation.
- **With the Holy Father for January:** for the promotion of world peace, that followers of other religions, and all people of goodwill may promote peace and justice in the world.
- **For all the sick and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes,** especially Sidonia Banyard; for those who have died recently; for all those whose anniversaries occur about now (see below); for all our relatives and friends and those who have asked for prayers.
- **Anniversaries (St Peter's Chapel memorial):** ✠ Joseph Sanders, Lilian Roome, Thomas Power, Jane Kinsman, Robert Arnold, Kathleen Carter, Bert Nutley, Albert Murray and Herbert Walton. ✠

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£343.99** (of which, **£152.00** was **Gift Aided**; in addition, weekly standing orders paid direct into our bank amount to **£185.00**). ♦ Fr Geoffrey is very grateful for the generous offerings he received on **Christmas Day:** the total more than matched inflation. ♦ **Crib offerings** throughout the 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. Gift Aid envelopes are available.

CONGRATULATIONS (and commiserations) to Fr Peter Soper, reappointed Dean of Maidstone.

A DAY WITH MARY The next Day with Mary will be on **Sunday 18th January** at Our Lady of the Rosary, Brixton, SW9 0TQ. It begins at 9.30am with a procession of Our Lady, and ends at 5.15pm. See poster for details.

THE YEAR OF THE WORD In partnership with Bible Society, the Year of the Word focuses on celebrating, living and sharing God's word throughout the Catholic Church in England and Wales until the end of December 2020. Pick up a booklet 'The God who Speaks' for more information, or visit: <http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/>.

COMING UP:

- **JUSTICE and PEACE** Meeting **this Tuesday, 7th January**, 7.30pm at St Peter's.
- **FIRST COMMUNIONS** The next session for the children will be **this Friday** at St Peter's.
- **PEACE SUNDAY, 19th January.**
- **OCTAVE OF PRAYER for CHRISTIAN UNITY: 18-25th January 2020:** This year's theme will be a reflection on the shipwreck of St Paul and the obligations of generosity and hospitality. ✠ There will be a united service at Holy Cross on **Sunday 19th January** at 3pm.
- **New Episcopal Vicar for Kent:** Canon John O'Toole will take up this post in **February**.