



PASTORAL LETTER FROM ARCHBISHOP PETER SMITH

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today we begin a new liturgical year with the season of Advent which offers us a real sense of hope, joy and encouragement as we continue our journey of faith to celebrate the Incarnation on Christmas Day. The prominent theme of Advent is the call to conversion and renewal, as we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ at Christmas, and look forward in hope and joyful expectation to his second coming at the end of time.

Advent is a “wake up” call, expressed very well by Saint Paul in his Letter to the Romans: “You know the time has come: you must wake up now: our salvation is even nearer now than it was when we were converted. The night is almost over, it will be daylight soon – let us give up all the things we prefer to do under cover of the dark; let us arm ourselves and appear in the light.” And in today’s gospel reading we hear Jesus too calling us to “Stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming.”

In fact Christ, the light of the world, stands at the door of our hearts every day. As Saint Ambrose put it in one of his sermons, “Let your door be open to him when he comes, open your soul, throw open your inmost mind... Blessed therefore, is that man at whose door Christ knocks.” That door can only be opened from inside and he waits patiently for us to open it and welcome him in. But too often we are so taken up with our daily cares and concerns that we either fail to hear the knock, or are simply too busy to answer it. We need to make time to listen and respond to that gentle knocking.

The spirit of Advent is the spirit of renewed hope and expectancy as we long for the coming of the Saviour into our hearts and minds – not just at Christmas, but every day. Each day we are called to become more and more like the person of Jesus Christ and model our lives on him. Then we will be able to reveal to the world something of the unconditional love of God.

But we will only be able to hold fast to Christ if we are fully awake and alert to his voice: in the scriptures, in our prayer, and when we meet him in the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

So my prayer this Advent is that we will take the time to open our hearts to the gift of the Holy Spirit, asking him to deepen our faith, confirm our hope in God’s promises, and help us to be more generous in our love for God and one another, especially the poor, the sick, the isolated and the suffering in our midst.

With an assurance of my prayers and blessing for you all,
Peter Smith Archbishop of Southwark

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

Feeling lucky? Tickets go on sale this weekend for our parish Christmas Raffle at £1 per strip. Amazing prizes include a luxury Christmas hamper, a family meal out, family membership of English Heritage and many other goodies. Please support this fundraising for our Parish Development Fund.

PARISH NOTICEBOARD

CHURCH & PARISH HALL DEVELOPMENT FUND

News and figures regarding our church and parish hall development shall be brought to you on a monthly basis. We thank you for your continual support and prayers in this matter.

ST FRANCIS LOTTERY SERIES 37

There will be a small change to the Lottery from the new year as follows:

The new series will start on 5th January 2018 (week 1) and run until 29th June (week 26). However, the first prizewinning number will not be drawn until week 5. This will give the organizers time to collect payments before drawing the first winner and will be reflected in enhanced prizes for most weeks. Tickets cost £13 each which equates to 50p a week. Until members become accustomed to this new arrangement, collectors will be in the porch before 6.00pm Mass on 2nd December, after 9.00am Mass and before 10.45am Mass on 3rd and 10th December, and then one weekend in January – to be confirmed.

Series 36 comes to an end on 29th December with the jackpot prize of **ONE THOUSAND POUNDS** due to be announced that week. If you are not already a member why not join in time for Series 37 - *it could be your turn next!*

SAVING USED STAMPS

We are very grateful to everyone else who gives used stamps for the Kent Association for the Blind (KAB). With the approach of Christmas people will be receiving more post. Could you please save any stamps and put them in the box in the church porch. They are then sent to KAB who are able to sell them and support their work for the blind here in Kent. Thank you.

CHURCH DOORS

As we have arrived into the winter months the doors of the church will be opened weekdays 9am every morning and locked 4pm every afternoon.

Homeless/Winter Shelter

Thank you to all who very generously contributed to the recent appeal. We still need the weekly donations of milk, bread, cereals etc., please.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

Please have a look at what is available in our repository (shop at the back of the church) with a whole new stock of Advent and Christmas items: calendars, candles, cards, children's books, nativity sets, 2018 diaries and much more...

BAPTISM PREPARATION

**Next Date: Thursday 7th December 2017
7.00 - 8.30pm**

TO ATTEND, PLEASE SUBMIT A BAPTISMAL APPLICATION

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS



We shall be meeting this **Tuesday 5th December 7.30pm** looking at Mary.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Please note that the classes for First Holy Communion will now be **taking a break for December** and beginning again January 2018.



RITE OF ACCEPTANCE

During 10.45am Mass this Sunday our people currently on our R.C.I.A. course who are preparing for Baptism and full reception into the Catholic Church will be celebrating the Rite of Acceptance, where we as a parish recognise and welcome those who are going through their preparation. Please keep them in your prayers.

CHRISTMAS FOOD APPEAL

You may still fill Feed the Hungry bags with Christmas luxury items and bring them back throughout the week. Any bag will do. Items required for hampers for the needy include: Christmas puddings, chocolates, biscuits, crackers, cakes, toiletries etc. Please, no mince pies as we have lots of these. Your help is much appreciated.

GETTING MARRIED

We are always delighted when people of our parish wish to get married. There may be a number of you wishing to get married next year. There is a lot to do to prepare for the great day so please be aware that you need to approach a priest or deacon about this at least six months in advance. Along with the paperwork that has to be researched, there is also a course you need to attend which will be arranged for you.

Ministers for Christmas

If you are a reader or minister of Holy Communion and are able to help at Christmas, please can you take a slip of paper available at the back of the church, fill your details, which ministry you can help with and at which Mass. Please then return your completed slip of paper to the Parish Office and you will be contacted with further details. Many thanks.

PARISH COLLECTIONS AND LOTTERY

Last Weekend - All Masses:

1st Collection: £1,858-48 (not including standing orders)

2nd Collection: £ 641-95 Catholic Youth Work

Parish Lottery Winners: Week 21 - No. 55 - Mr. & Mrs. D. Henstridge - £90 ♦ Week 22 - No. 334 - Mr. B. Corcoran - £10

Many thanks for your generous support...

2ND COLLECTIONS

This Sunday: Church & Hall Development Fund

Next Sunday: Area Bishop's Fund (to defray cost of levy)

Live Nativity

On **Saturday, 16th December**, there shall be a special performance of The Birth of Christ around various parts of Maidstone town throughout the day. It starts at Remembrance Square **1pm**, journeys to Jubilee Square, Brenchley Gardens, Sessions Square then back down to Jubilee Square; all organised arranged and performed by the Christian church communities in Maidstone town. They do still need some help with stewarding and setting up etc., so if you can help with anything, it will be highly appreciated. As well as actors carrying out the various scenes there shall be live animals including lambs and donkey – and at 3pm the scene of the wise men meeting Herod will be performed outside County Hall with an actual camel. Lots of enjoyment for all the family and a effective way of bringing the meaning of Christmas to everyone.

LIGHT UP A LIFE

The focal point of the annual Light Up a Life Appeal is a beautiful candlelit evening where music, readings and reflections provide an opportunity for us to remember our loved ones.

This year's Light Up a Life event will be held on **Sunday 3rd December** – 4.30 Aylesford Priory ME20 7BX

For full details of the event or to make a donation and dedication:

www.hokh.org
01622 790195 or

Sophie.lewis@hokh.co.uk

Forms and stars will also be available at all Heart of Kent Hospice shops and at Hospice Reception. Alternatively you may make your dedication and donation by visiting bit.ly/lual2017dedication.

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS

DECEMBER 2017 - UNIVERSAL

That the elderly, sustained by families and Christian communities, may apply their wisdom and experience to spreading the faith and forming the new generations.

The FRIENDSHIP GROUP

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

First Monday (11am) of every month:

Tenpin Bowling at Lockmeadow

Second Monday (11.00am) every month:

Coffee morning in *Society Rooms*

Every Monday (1.30pm - 3.30pm):

Scrabble in *Leah's Bistro*, High St.

Every Wednesday (10am - 12noon),

Line Dancing in URC Dunning Hall (Fremlin Walk)

Having coffee on your own?

Why not join us on **Wednesdays (10 am – 12 noon)**

URC Hall, Week Street for coffee and a chat.

It's good to talk!

FFI Mary Adam 677448



PARISH GROUPS

FLEDGLINGS CHILDREN GROUP will meet on **Saturday 9th December** for the Porchlight workshop 10am-12pm in St Francis School, followed by carol singing at the care home. We will then meet on **Saturday, 16th December.**

FLAME YOUTH GROUP The junior youth group will meet in the church porch this **Saturday, 5.45-8.15pm.**

PHOENIX YOUTH CLUB for 15+ will continue to meet with the Baptist Church Youth Club in Knightrider Street, Maidstone, this **Friday, 8pm - 9.30pm.**

LIFE ASCENDING Next meeting will be the Christmas Lunch at Aylesford on **Wednesday, 6th December.** FFI please contact Keith Hunter on 01622 746792.

Fledglings Concert

The children of Fledglings Group shall be holding their Christmas Concert on **Saturday, 16th November** with readings and carols at St Francis church at **2.00pm.** Please do come along – we hope to finish in time to give you an opportunity to go and watch the Three Wise Men scene outside county hall at **3pm** for Live Nativity.

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the sick & housebound of our parish: Rachel Allen, Cody Barker, Donald Batty, Sarah Boylan, Eric Braconnier, Pauline Brown, Kathleen Buckman, Pat Cassidy, Judy Collins, Luke Collins, Marcin Czubik, Jean Farrell, Joanna Frazer, Louise Gill, Judy Henstone, Mary Holliday, Kathleen Homewood, Aneta Jankowska, Teresa Jankowska, Bridget Kearney, Patrick McKee, Perry Kemp, Xavier Lazell, Patricia Maher, Antonina Makowicz, Dorothy Marne, Margarie Morgan, Michael Munikwa, Clare Myler, Violet Nadarajah, Marcus Nicklin, Jean O'Donnel, Mark Pearson, Deidre Pennell, John Penney, Claudia Quantrill, Margaret Ruauux, Peter Ruddy, Nick Ryan, Coleen Sargeant, Rebecca Sharp, Chika Uzowulu, Mary Wallace, Claire Watts, Rosemary West and all in our local hospice, hospitals and nursing homes.

For those who have recently died:

For those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Mary Bishop, Alice Lay, Victoria Flynn, James McKinley, Teresa Harding, Tina Gilloway, Ethel Thomas, Teodor Klekot, Rosellin Gallagher, Archie Morris, Aleksander Grochowski, Maud Springett, Mary Weston, Carmena Sammut, Kathleen Waters, Elaine George, Bunty Nolan, Joan Carr, Christopher Brewer, Mary Dray, Kathleen Sturla, Cavan Buckley, Derek Jones, John Thomas, Derek Naylor, Roy Holkham, Erminio Pirozzolo, Kathleen Cochrane, Mr Zakur, Cecelia Doherty, David Brown, Nora Parry and Florence McCormack.

PARISH DIARY & MASS INTENTIONS

SUNDAY 3RD DECEMBER

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

ST FRANCIS

- 6.00pm(Sat) People of the Parish
- 9.00am David Martin – wellbeing
- 10.45am Margaret Brooks RIP
- 12.30pm Mass in Latin (Extraordinary Form)
- 6.00pm Jane Norris-Mathews RIP

THE HEART OF KENT HOSPICE, PRESTON HALL

- 9.00am Paddy Gallagher RIP

WATERINGBURY, CHAPEL OF OUR LADY

- 10.30am Ordinariate Mass: James and Mary Hurson RIP

MONDAY 4TH DECEMBER

ST JOHN DAMASCENE

- 10.30am Patrick and Annie O'Harte RIP

TUESDAY 5TH DECEMBER

- 10.30am Diamond Wedding thanksgiving
with Anniversary Blessing
for Edward & Janet Northfolk

WEDNESDAY 6TH DECEMBER

ST NICHOLAS

- 10.30am Sarah Nugent RIP
- 7.30pm Exposition, Lectio Divina & Benediction

THURSDAY 7TH DECEMBER

ST AMBROSE

- 10.30am Rebecca, Elizabeth & Elliott –
Birthday Greetings
 - 4.30pm Mass HMP Maidstone: In reparation for abortions
- WATERINGBURY, CHAPEL OF OUR LADY
- 10.30am Ordinariate Mass: Holy Souls

FRIDAY 8TH



DECEMBER

SACRAMENT of RECONCILIATION

ST FRANCIS, MAIDSTONE

MONDAY - FRIDAY 10.00AM & FRIDAY 7.30PM (FOR 15MIN)

SATURDAY 10.30 - 11.15AM; 5.30 - 5.50PM

ST LUKE'S, PRESTON HALL

BY REQUEST UNTIL THE CHAPEL IS BACK IN USE

SOLEMNITY: THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF OUR LADY

10.30am Rose Joanna Brook RIP

8.00pm Ojuolape Dada RIP

SATURDAY 9TH DECEMBER

10.00am Trudi and Fred Pound RIP

3.00pm Mass in the Syro-Malabar Rite

SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

ST FRANCIS

6.00pm(Sat) Braconnier & Richardson deceased family

9.00am Charlie Roberts RIP

10.45am People of the Parish

2.30pm Baptism of Henry & Harriette Richardson

6.00pm Mary & Alan Ashfield's intentions

THE HEART OF KENT HOSPICE, PRESTON HALL

9.00am David Cole RIP

WATERINGBURY, CHAPEL OF OUR LADY

10.30am Ordinariate Mass: Holy Souls

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Please pick up a Christmas schedule for information on Masses and services during the Christmas period.

Requiem Mass

A Requiem Mass will be celebrated for **Monica Banyard** on **Monday, 11th December 12 noon** at St Francis Church.

May she rest in peace.

MORNING PRAYER

SATURDAY AT 9.30AM

EXPOSITION of the BLESSED SACRAMENT

FRIDAY 11.00-12.00PM & FIRST FRIDAYS 8.30PM UNTIL 10.00PM

HOLY ROSARY

PRAYED AFTER THE 10.30AM WEEKDAY MASSES



The Parish of Saint Francis

Grove House, 126 Week Street,
Maidstone, Kent ME14 1RH
Telephone: (01622) 756217
Email: stfrancis_parish@yahoo.co.uk
Web Site: www.stfrancisparish.org.uk

PARISH DEACONS

Rev. Tom Coyle
Rev. Ian Black

PARISH PRIEST
Fr Liam Gallagher

ASSISTANT PRIESTS
Fr Samuel Davey
Fr Pawel Sobol

ORDINARIATE PRIEST
Fr Paul Gibbons

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday only 9.00am-12noon

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

St Francis' Catholic Primary School:

St Simon Stock Catholic School:

Queens Road, Maidstone, ME16 0LB

Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 OJP

Telephone: (01622) 771540

Telephone: (01622) 754551