



# ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

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 Parish Priest: Canon Edward Perera  
 website: [www.saintstephens.co.uk](http://www.saintstephens.co.uk) Email: [welling@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:welling@rcaos.org.uk)  
 Secretary: Mrs. Lorraine Harris. email: [adminparish@saintstephens.co.uk](mailto:adminparish@saintstephens.co.uk)  
 School St. Stephen's Primary School, Ruskin Avenue, Welling, Kent. DA16 3QG  
 Telephone: 020 8303 9738

## DONATIONS

As the sharing of a collection bag is not permitted during Mass there will be a collection basket at the entrance and exit doors of the church to put your donation in. Any donation you are able to make will be greatly appreciated at this time to help support our church & parish. Thank you.

You can post your donation in a sealed envelope through the presbytery letterbox at anytime, place your donation in the basket in church or you can make an online donation—as a 'one-off' payment or set up a standing order to make regular weekly or monthly donations. Please consider signing up to our Gift Aid scheme. Contact the church office for more details.

Our bank details are as follows;  
 NatWest Bank  
 Sort Code: 51-70-14  
 Account No. 39013332  
 Account Name: RC Archdiocese of Southwark St Stephens Catholic Church Welling  
 Please use your name as a reference (gift aiders please add your envelope number). Thank you.

**To give online** using your debit / credit card go to <https://portal.myдона.com/assets/webPay/index.php?cid=236> Making a donation here is simple and quick. Enter the amount you would like to give and enter your card debit / credit details—you also have the option to gift aid your donation & any future donations you make using this card online or in church will also be gift aided (if eligible).

**PayPal Donate Button** on St Stephen's website—go to [www.saintstephens.co.uk](http://www.saintstephens.co.uk) and click on the PayPal donate button on the left of the page. Donations can be made as a 'one off' or regular monthly payments and will go directly to St Stephen's Church.  
**JustGiving:** Parishioners who wish to support the parish may also do so online via [justgiving.com/campaign/parishsupport](http://justgiving.com/campaign/parishsupport). Please note that parishioners need to reference their donation with the full parish name and location.

## 5th Sunday of Easter (Year B)

**Saturday 1st May**  
**5pm** Golden Book Subscribers

**Sunday 2nd May**  
**9.30am** Lisa Abreo—birthday  
**11.30am** People of the Parish

**Mon 3rd** **Sts. Philip & James**  
**7pm** Rowena Govia RIP—anniv

**Tues 4th** **English Martyrs**  
**10am** Thanksgiving (Lee)

**Wed 5th** **Feria**  
**7pm** Anthony Lobo—birthday

**Thurs 6th** **Feria**  
**10am** Hilda Johnson

**Fri 7th** **Feria**  
**10am** Harry Amalan

## 6th Sunday of Easter (Year B)

**Saturday 8th May**  
**5pm** George & Annie Jessop

**Sunday 9th May**  
**9.30am** People of the Parish  
**11.30am** Beth & Mary Allen

**Please remember in your prayers the sick and housebound; at home, in hospital or in residential care.**

### NHS TRACK AND TRACE

*"To manage the risk of the virus re-emerging."  
 Attending public worship in the Archdiocese of Southwark*

NAME:  
 ADDRESS:  
 TELEPHONE NUMBER:  
 EMAIL ADDRESS:  
 DATE: TIME OF MASS:

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My Dear People

Last Sunday we heard Jesus speaking about himself used the expression, “I am the Good Shepherd.” There are seven “I am” sayings in John’s gospel. This weekend we hear the last of the “I am” sayings, “I am the true vine.”

Jesus uses a common image in the culture of the day and also in scriptures. The Bible presents Israel as a vine and God as the vinedresser or the planter. Taking this image Jesus extends it to say something deeper—firstly about himself (the vine) and his relationship with the Father (the vine dresser) and then about his relationship with his followers (the branches). Fruit can be produced only if all three are in harmony.

Secondly vine branches that are connected to the vine thrive and grow and bear fruit, while

branches that are disconnected wither, bear no fruit and eventually burnt. Branches on a vine look very similar though in fact they are not the same. This similarity suggests a deep inner unity.

This unity of the branches is possible only because they grow out of the same vine and they produce the same fruit. Since all produce the same fruit there is no superior or inferior branch. Each is precious as the other and is needed to complete the vine. If one branch cuts itself off from the vine not only will that branch die and bear no fruit, it will result in the incompleteness of the vine.

In short the gospel speaks about choice. We can be in relationship with Jesus, or, we can choose to reject and experience the consequences. Its all down to us.

God Bless and love you.  
United in prayer. Canon Edward

### Fifth Sunday of Easter (Year B)

#### Scripture Insights

When he brought Saul to the Apostles, Barnabas told the story of how in Damascus Saul “had spoken out boldly” uses a form of the Greek *parrhesia*, often translated in the New Testament as “boldness”.

*Parrhesia* suggests not so much a talent for speaking as a habit of speaking candidly, born of honesty and simplicity. The word also came to be used for the inner attitude of confidence that lay behind this practice of plain speaking. Intimate friends and family normally speak with *parrhesia* because they can speak without shame or fear of embarrassment or recrimination.

Preaching the Gospel with *parrhesia* was prized in the early Church as strong evidence that the Holy Spirit had certified one’s authenticity as a disciple. This is what Barnabas saw in Paul. It is also something Luke himself saw and admired in the apostle. When Paul found himself poised to receive a Roman sentence of death, he wrote confidently: “with all boldness (*parrhesia*), now as always, Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death” (Philippians 1:20).

These uses of *parrhesia* help illumine the theme of confidence in prayer in today’s other texts. John’s letter says that Christians who act in love receive new assurance of God’s love that swallows

up self-condemnation. The passage from John’s account of the Gospel grounds this confident prayer in the indwelling life of Jesus (John 15:7).

#### Thoughts for Reflection

- Barnabas saw that Saul/Paul was speaking honestly, clearly, and plainly as the latter preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This new man was suspect until the Apostles realised that, through Christ, the persecuting Saul had become a follower and lover of Christ.
- Sharing the Gospel with others doesn’t require fancy words, special knowledge, or memorisation of Scripture. Indeed, when we speak plainly and show the Gospel in our lives, we are sharing Jesus with others.
- Love is more than a feeling of warmth toward another person; love is something to be lived in truth and action. Love is a choice we make each moment of our days.
- When we abide in the Word of God, namely, believing in Jesus Christ and loving one another, we are abiding in God, and it is promised that God then abides in us.

#### Live Catholic Mass Online

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/health-social-care/coronavirus-guidelines/online-mass-directory/>

Use the online directory of churches in England and Wales streaming Catholic Mass live online (web address above). This directory aims to provide links to Live Catholic Masses online. Narrow down your search results by selecting the Mass Type (Daily, Vigil or Sunday). You can also select from the available languages (including signed).

**Redemptorist Publications** is pleased to introduce **Celebrate**: a free initiative designed to help children grow in their faith. Each week we will provide a **Children’s Liturgy** in the form of a video of the week’s Gospel reading, a reflection and a final prayer. [Celebrate | Following Your Faith | Children’s Liturgy \(rpbooks.co.uk\)](#)

**Church Flowers:** If you would like to join a rota to look after the flowers in church please contact Velia Dobinson. Velia will be offering free flower arrangement training / teaching to anyone interested. Everyone welcome—no floral experience needed. Velia 07789 673747.

**Diocesan Survey:** The diocesan *Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis* has partnered with other dioceses to produce to survey which aims to find out about the experiences of Catholics during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey will help the Diocese to understand what has been happening whilst churches have been closed, or opened only for limited periods of time, and Catholics have had to practice their faith 'at a distance'. Select the '[Archdiocese of Southwark](#)' from the drop-down menu. The survey will only take 10 minutes to complete. Deadline 4th July.

[Complete the survey](#)

**Young Minds:** If you are worried about the emotional health and wellbeing of a young person *Young Minds* offer good resources, including support for young people and parents. Go to <https://youngminds.org.uk/> for more details.

**St Lawrence of Canterbury Church, Sidcup** is a busy, friendly parish with a large number of lay people assisting in various ministries, sacramental preparation and organisations that make up our parish family. We currently have an exciting opportunity for a *Parish Administrator* (part time) to provide administrative support to the parish office by implementing and maintaining office systems, processes and procedures. To be considered for the role, please send a CV and covering letter (no longer than one side of A4) to Fr Paul Kyne. Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted. Full job description is available on St Lawrence of Canterbury website <https://www.stlsidcup.org/>

**Vacancies available at CRiBS** (Christian Resources in Bexley Schools)

For more information & details of the roles please go to [www.cribsonline.org/jobs](http://www.cribsonline.org/jobs)

- Business and Fundraising Manager (full time)
- Business Manager (part time).
- Fundraiser (part time).

Closing date for all posts Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Evergreen Care Bexley – volunteering role** available as a *Service Review Officer*. For details contact Evergreen on 01322 431765 or email [befriending@evergreencarebexley.org](mailto:befriending@evergreencarebexley.org)

**Fostering Information Event** on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May at 8pm for SE London with *Home for Good*. There is an urgent need for foster carers across the spectrum of children and young people, but with teenagers making up a large proportion of looked after children in many of London’s South East Boroughs, we will take time during the event to highlight and explore the need for foster carers for this age group, the need for host and support homes and fostering more widely. *Home for Good* is working with the London Borough of Bexley, which has an urgent need for at least 20 new foster families this year. Please register to join us, we really look forward to seeing you. By registering you are not committing to fostering just to finding out more. <https://www.homeforgood.org.uk/events/fostering-04-may-21>

**Laudato Si:** One of the ways that we, as individuals or communities, can heed pope Francis' words about caring for the earth and tackling climate change, is to plant some trees. At St Stephen's, we plan to plant some small trees around the church building. If anyone would like to join us in this venture, perhaps by making a donation towards or planting and caring for a tree, we would love to hear from you. Please contact the parish office if you are interested. Many thanks to those who have already contributed to our *Tree Project*.

**Living Water Online:** Visit the parish website ([www.saintstephens.co.uk](http://www.saintstephens.co.uk)) and look for the link, or go to: [www.saintstephens.co.uk/blog](http://www.saintstephens.co.uk/blog)

**NEW: Deeper and Deeper:** Parishioner Joseph Gulliford is in his sixth year at St John's Seminary, Womersley, which sadly is closing at the end of this academic year.

**NEW: Seven Churches Walk, Spy Wednesday:** Andrew Bishop, a seminarian from St Stephen's studying at the Beda College in Rome, has written this article detailing a pilgrimage he took part in on Spy Wednesday (in Holy Week).

*Please keep Joseph & Andrew in your prayers.*

**AND: Laudato Si':** An update on how at St Stephen's have begun to plant some small trees around the church.

**AND:** Pope's Prayer for Coronavirus.

### **Churches Together for the Climate**

*Thursday 6th May, 7pm on Zoom*

2021 is an important year for churches to act together to protect God's Creation and for us, as Christians, to have a positive impact on the global emergency.

Join speakers Luke Harman of Christian Aid about the importance of climate finance, Beth Naylor-Smith of Young Christian Climate Network about the relay from the G7 in Cornwall to COP26 in Glasgow (which will pass through London 5th-8th August), and Rosh Lal of Faith for the Climate about movement building and the COP Faith Task Group.

Tangible actions and usable resources will be shared to empower participants to make a difference in changing the climate trajectory and support our neighbours around the world.

Contact [claire@ctslondon.org.uk](mailto:claire@ctslondon.org.uk) and a Zoom link will be distributed nearer the date.

### **Life in the Spirit Seminars**

**Tuesday 4th May - 1st June 2021**

The Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis and the Southwark Archdiocese Catholic Charismatic Team are delighted to offer a wonderful opportunity for personal and diocesan renewal. Through the *Life in the Spirit Seminars* you will be invited to grow in your love of the Lord, welcome the Spirit into your life afresh and pray for the renewal of our diocese. Each Tuesday evening the seminars will feature a talk from a gifted speaker and small group sharing. On Saturday 22 May, in addition to the Tuesday evenings, the series will feature a double-bill of seminars. [Register here](#)

**Dementia Connect**, from Alzheimer's Society, is a new personalised support service for anyone with dementia, their carers, family and friends. Dementia affects everyone differently, so, whether you, a loved one, a friend or neighbour needs dementia support, *Dementia Connect* is here for you. The service connects you to a whole range of dementia support, by phone, online and face to face. You are only one call away from someone who gets it. One click away from answers. One conversation away from help. It's free, easy to access, and puts you in touch with Dementia Advisers from Alzheimer's Society. They will offer you the support you need, from local help to telephone and online advice. Whether it's advice on legal documents, help understanding dementia or someone to talk to when things get tough, *Dementia Connect* can help.

The phone number for the *Dementia Connect* Support Line is 0333 150 3456 and anyone is welcome to call for information and support. If you wish to refer anyone affected by dementia for support, you can do so by following this link: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/referralform>. The first time you make a referral you will need to select 'Get a referral ID' to register your details.

If you have any questions regarding this information, or if you would like to have a chat to discuss things in more detail, please contact *Dementia Connect* Local Services Manager, Leanne Stephens, on 07484 931922 or [Leanne.stephens@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:Leanne.stephens@alzheimers.org.uk).

### **Opening of the Church for the Celebration**

**of Mass:** St Stephen's will be open for the celebration of Mass for the week 3rd May—9th May on the following days & times.

**Monday 7pm**

**Tuesday 10am**

**Wednesday 7pm**

**Thursday 10am**

**Friday 10am**

**Saturday 5pm**

**Sunday 9.30am & 11.30am**

**Many thanks to the stewards who have volunteered so we can resume our morning Masses.**

**Please note that the number of attendees in church will be limited to 55 people and face coverings have to be worn in church.**

Please note that in accordance with the strict guidelines from Archbishop's House there will be no toilet facilities open in church or the hall. Hand sanitisers will be available to use on entry and exit of the church and a 'one-way' in and out system will be in use. Many thanks to the volunteers who have enabled us to open the church.

### **Guidance for the Celebration of Mass.**

This guidance has been issued by the Bishops Conference of England and Wales for the celebration of Mass.

2m social distancing where possible.

Only those who need to be in the sacristy before Mass should attend.

The Holy water stoups should be dry.

No congregational singing at Mass.

The prayers of the faithful to be omitted.

No offertory procession.

Collection plates to be placed at the entrance and/or exits of the church.

Members of the congregation should not exchange the sign of peace.

*The Communion Rite:* The priest shows to the congregation the Host and says audibly – “The Body of Christ” and the “Blood of Christ” – and the people respond –Amen. The priest will receive Holy Communion under both kinds using his own Host and Chalice. The priest will hold a reverent silence before the Prayer after Communion, giving the Blessing and dismissal. As the people have already acclaimed the presence of the Lord, at the Priest's Communion, the distribution to the congregation of Holy Communion will be in silence with no dialogue between minister and communicant. Communion must be given in the hand only, with the communicant standing, avoiding any physical contact. People should wait in their pews until instructed to move forward in an orderly manner pew by pew by the steward, aware of the social distancing. Once you have received communion please leave the church via the side door (through the small hall) as directed by the steward. Do not return to the pew. Please use the hand sanitiser. At the end of the celebration the priest should return to the Sacristy. The Church should be closed immediately after Mass in order to clean the space and parishioners encouraged to return home. Please note there will be NO toilet facilities available in church or hall. Please scan the QR code on arrival at church, using the NHS COVID-19 app **OR** a 'NHS Track & Trace' card will be required to be completed by everyone attending Mass to manage the risk of the virus re-emerging. The information is being collected at the direction of the UK Government. It will be kept secure and will be destroyed 21 days after the Mass you have attended. A copy of the card is attached to this newsletter which you can print and complete at home to bring with you when you come to Mass. One card per individual or household group. Cards will be available in the porch at each Mass (please bring your own pen) and must be completed. *Please note a card is required to be completed for each Mass you attend.* We ask everyone to respect and follow the guidance for the celebration of Mass in church and for your cooperation and understanding.

## Donations to St Stephen's Church: Online, Contactless and Chip & Pin

In an increasingly cashless society, driven by ever changing technology, we must be able to respond to the new and innovative ways in which people can donate to St Stephen's. This is particularly true in the current COVID19 situation. Online, contactless and Chip & Pin giving are **new** mechanisms at St Stephen's for giving, that can enable a huge range of people to donate.

We are pleased to announce that we have installed 2 new **Digital Collection Plates** situated at the back of the church which parishioners can use whenever you come into church. Making a donation is simple and quick. Press one of the donation values e.g. £5, £10, £15, £20, £50 or Other Amount. Tap your card or phone on the card reader. For donations greater than £45, the card must be inserted at the top of the card reader with the chip facing downwards, enter your pin number and press the green arrow to confirm your donation. After tapping / inserting your card, the card reader will beep, and a blue light will show up, and screen will read payment approved. Your donation can be gift aided. The donor can complete a digital Gift Aid Declaration on the Digital Collection Plate screen and all future donations you make using this card will automatically be recorded—online and/ or in church. A Gift Aid Declaration is required when using the Digital Collection Plate for the first time even if you are registered for Gift Aid at St Stephen's. Once you have registered for Gift Aid you will receive a 'thank you' email with a copy of your Gift Aid Declaration.

In future, you will also be able to contribute to 2nd collections and other charity collections in this way. We cannot claim Gift Aid on behalf of other charities so a separate gift aid declaration will have to be completed if making a donation to e.g. CAFOD.

To give online go to <https://portal.mydona.com/assets/webPay/index.php?cid=236> or go the parish website [www.saintstephens.co.uk](http://www.saintstephens.co.uk) and click on the **Donate with Dona** button on the home page. Making a donation here is also simple and quick. Enter the amount you would like to give and enter your card details. If you would like to gift aid your donation please click on the 'yes' button and enter your name, address and email address. Any future

donations you make using this card online or in church will also be gift aided (if eligible).



All major payment methods accepted:

*Reminder:* To enable the church to claim the gift aid on your donation when using your debit / credit card (online or in church) you must register by entering your name, address and email address. Once registered, all future online and in church card payments will be gift aided (as long as you use the same payment card). *A suggestion to save you time in church* – you can make a small donation online (eg £1) and register your details so that when you tap your card in church you are already registered and therefore do not have to enter your details again. If you do not have an email address but would like to use the contactless / online donation device please contact the church office.

Please note that gift aid envelopes (past dated and current), loose cash, standing orders, 'one off' or regular online payments, cheques (payable to *St Stephen's RC Church*), PayPal and Justgiving donations are all welcomed at St Stephen's.

If you have any questions regarding online, contactless and Chip & Pin payments please speak to Canon Edward or contact the church office.

**Bexley Foodbank** needs strong carrier bags or bags for life please. Urgently Needed—toilet rolls. Food donations welcomed and needed too. Donations in box in porch please.

**Catholic Voices Pandemic Survey** - Catholic Voices was involved in a very successful survey and report during the first lockdown in May-July 2020. Over 2,500 Catholics in England and Wales and Scotland were surveyed, which has given us important insights into how people responded to the arrival of the pandemic. Since then a lot has changed and *Catholic Voices* would like to hear again from people about their current experiences and, crucially, what they feel about that future, so the survey is being relaunched. Repeating the survey now provides a good comparison moment. *The link is <https://www.catholicvoices.org.uk/>*

## 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion – Parents' Meeting

There will be a meeting of the Parents of the 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion children of last year on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May at 10.00am in the Church. At the meeting we will share the arrangements for their children's 1<sup>st</sup> Communion.

**Baptism Preparation Class** for parents wishing to baptise their child(ren) at St Stephen's on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May at 11.30am in church.

**Readers:** If you would like to read at Saturday 5pm Mass or Sunday 9.30am & 11.30am Masses please contact the church office with your name and number and which Mass you would like to read at. If we have sufficient numbers we can organise a rota of readers for each Mass. Many thanks to the volunteers who have already contacted the church office for the 11.30am Mass.

**National Day of Prayer for Survivors of Abuse** is on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May. Northampton Diocese will be live streaming a prayer service at 6pm led by Bishop David Oakley. The service is open to all, as a symbol of our collective sorrow and reminder of our united responsibilities in keeping all God's family safe.

National resources produced by the survivor led group, 'Let's be honest', can be found [here](#). More information can be found on the website. <https://northamptondiocese.org/national-day-of-prayer-for-victims-and-survivors-of-sexual-abuse/> We pray:

*Lord Jesus, you stand alongside all who are suffering*

*Lord Jesus, you listen to those who cry out to you*  
*Lord Jesus, you heal the wounds of betrayal and hurt.*

**Day of the Lord:** The Catholic Bishops Conference of England & Wales have issued a letter to pay tribute to all the Catholic community who have shown such courage, generosity and understanding in the face of adversity this past year. **[Download 'The Day of the Lord'](#)**

**Red Box Holders:** It is still not possible to ask you to bring your boxes in to be counted, but *Missio* are still in need of our support to carry on their work. They have suggested various ways in which you can send your donations to them. You could either:

Write a cheque to *Missio-Mill Hill* and either hand it in at the Presbytery in an envelope marked *Missio* or send it directly to them at 23 Eccleston Square London SW1V 1NU.

Bank transfer—go to <https://missio.org.uk/redbox>  
Call to donate on 020 7821 9755 (during office hours).

Donate by text to 70085: text REDBOX 5 to give £5 or REDBOX 10 to give £10 or REDBOX 20 to give £20. This costs either £5 / £10 / £20 plus your standard rate message. You will receive a confirmation text message. It includes a link that you can click if you wish to Gift Aid your donation. You will not receive further text messages from *Missio*.

They will be very grateful for any donations.

**The Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS)** course provides knowledge and understanding of theology and the Catholic faith. For more information visit [brs-ccrs.org.uk](http://brs-ccrs.org.uk) You can learn the course in person, by distance learning or online - details below:

Centres (in person learning)  
<http://brs-ccrs.org.uk/index.php/course-centres>

Life-Light Home Study Courses (distance learning)  
[info@studylifelight.com](mailto:info@studylifelight.com)  
01844 351 514

CCRS Online (online learning)  
[ccrsonline@hope.ac.uk](mailto:ccrsonline@hope.ac.uk)  
0151 291 3055

**Laudato Si' Week**, to be held between 16-24 May 2021 and the *Global Catholic Climate Movement* will be holding a series of special events to mark the Laudato Si' Anniversary Year. This will be a celebration of the progress the whole Church has made on its journey to ecological conversion. The week will include prayer gatherings, music, discussions about energy and fossil fuels, and a presentation on the Care of Creation. View the full programme and register interest here: [LaudatoSiWeek.org](http://LaudatoSiWeek.org)