



ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

26 DEEPDENE ROAD, WELLING, KENT DA16 3QL ☒ Telephone: 020 8303 4422
 Parish Priest: Canon Edward Perera
 website: www.saintstephens.co.uk Email: welling@rcaos.org.uk
 Secretary: Mrs. Lorraine Harris. email: 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.mydona.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 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. Please note that parishioners need to reference their donation with the full parish name and location.

First Sunday of Advent (Year C)

Saturday 27th November

5pm Living & Deceased Members of the Lobo / D'Souza and D'Costa/D'Silva families

Sunday 28th November

9.30am Ellen Brook RIP

11.30am Savio Rodrigues—birthday

Mon 29th Feria

7pm Cyril Fernandes RIP

Tues 30th St Andrew

10am Honor Joyce

Wed 1st December Feria

7pm Yvonne Plummer RIP (SVP Welling Conf)

Thurs 2nd Feria

10am Francis Gaiviso RIP

Fri 3rd St Francis Xavier

10am Patrick Murphy RIP

Second Sunday of Advent (Year C)

Saturday 4th December

5pm Ints of Joseph Willy & Julie Duval (Tambyapin)

Sunday 5th December

9.30am Patrick & Frances McTernan RIP — anniv

11.30am Shirley Drury RIP

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION
 Saturdays 10am—10.30am & 4pm—4.30pm

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:

This information is being collected at the direction of the UK Government. It will be kept secure and will be destroyed 21 days after the act of public worship.

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My Dear People

Today we begin a new liturgical year with the season of Advent. Our Sunday readings will be from the Gospel of Luke. Luke wrote the gospel for the Gentile converts to Christianity. His purpose for writing the Gospel is clear in the very first few sentences of the gospel— ‘that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed (v.4).’ Luke also went on to write the sequence to the Gospel, namely ‘The Acts of the Apostles.’

Today we also begin the season of Advent. Advent means ‘coming’ and the season looks firstly to the second coming of Jesus at the end of time. All our readings until the sixteenth of December are centred round the second coming. It should not be a surprise to us if we concentrate on the second memorial acclamation we pray— ‘when we eat this Bread and drink this Cup we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.’

Secondly we remember the first coming of Christ with the celebrations of Christmas. Our readings from the seventeenth December begins to focus on the immediate celebration of Christmas. At the same time we must not forget the continuous coming of Christ each day. This reminds me of the famous saying— “Christ came in history. He now comes in mystery. He will come again in majesty.”

The theme that runs through our readings and all liturgical celebrations during Advent is about waiting for this coming. It is hard to get our heads around this idea of waiting, when the commercial world outside reminds us of the Christmas with all Christmas goodies displayed and Christmas songs played in shopping malls and all around!

I invite you to join in the two Advent services we have arranged as we journey through this season of Advent .

God Bless and love you.
United in prayer.

First Sunday of Advent - (Year C)

Scripture Insights

Today our Scriptures celebrate Christ’s coming in history over 2000 years ago, his coming into our present lives and needs, and his future advent when God’s plan for our salvation reaches its fullness. Each Sunday’s readings set before us all three modes of Christ’s coming.

Jeremiah’s prophecy presents a divine promise brimming with hope for the future arrival of a just leader bringing the chosen people safety and security. God’s claim to “fulfil the promise” came at an astounding moment: Jeremiah proclaimed this word of the Lord to Judah, the only remaining Israelite kingdom, as she was facing the beginning of the end.

The Babylonians had seized political control of the kingdom, and some citizens had already been deported as captives into Babylonia. Judah’s dissolution had begun. Eleven years later, the kingdom would exist no more, its people killed or taken captive, Jerusalem and the Temple levelled.

Precisely at this dark moment, Jeremiah urged the people to have hope for their future: “The days are coming” (33:14) for God to rebuild a chosen people through a royal son of David, restoring them to “what is right and just in the land” (33:15). At the moment that Judah’s world began to crumble around her, the prophet called for trust in a God who would come into her history to set all things right, to restore right relationships, to save a dying people.

Christians today might experience dark days as well, for various reasons: illness or old age, economic struggles, weakened or broken relationships. And yet we know that God’s promise is already fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Reflections

- Plenty of Christmas imagery fills television screens and shopping malls in December. Jesus doesn’t paint such a calm scene in today’s Gospel. The Son of God and Son of Man came to redeem the world—and redemption is no cake walk. The same sweet baby wrapped in swaddling clothes will destroy evil and eradicate injustice in the end times. Will we be ready?
- Political propaganda tries to convince us to be afraid of people who are different from ourselves: people with different skin colour, different abilities, different cultures. People will die of fright, Jesus says. How can we prepare our hearts for the coming of God’s kingdom where people of all backgrounds are united in love?

LTP Sourcebook 2021

Admission arrangements for St Stephen’s Catholic Primary School for September 2022.

Please read this carefully if you have a child born between 1st September 2017 and 31st August 2018, and you wish her/him to attend St Stephen’s.

Application MUST be made on the Primary Common Application Form for the Local Authority where your child lives.

You should also complete the Supplementary Information Form. Both can be obtained from the school or from the Bexley Borough website. Please return the Supplementary form to the school once it has been signed by your Parish Priest. You will also need to provide proof of residence and your child’s baptism certificate.

Please be aware that priority will be given to practising Catholic families (i.e. attending Mass at least 3 out of 4 Sundays), who live in the Welling Parish. If you regularly attend Mass in another parish or chaplaincy you should ask that Parish Priest to verify your attendance.

On the advice of the Education Commission of the Archdiocese of Southwark the governing body of St Stephen’s school has agreed the following statement in order to clarify how its faith-based oversubscription criteria will be interpreted whilst churches are closed or attendance at church is not possible due to COVID19. This statement has been shared widely with parishes in order to ensure that determinations made by parish priests concerning regular practice of the faith are being made on a consistent basis.

The suspension of the obligation to attend Sunday Mass was announced on 18th March 2020 by Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales. If a parent/carer attended Mass at particular parish (or parishes) prior to 18th March 2020 then they will be considered to have attended Mass in that parish (or parishes) regularly since that time. This will remain the case until the Sunday obligation is reintroduced by the Bishops.

If there are more applications than places available, we will apply the order of priority to each of the over-subscription criteria in turn. ***Although we would wish to admit children with siblings in the school, that alone does not guarantee an automatic right of admission.***

The Admissions Policy with a full list of the over-subscription criteria is available on the school website, the Bexley Borough website and at local libraries. The application window for Primary School and Reception places closes at 11:59pm on 15 January 2022.

The link to Bexley Primary school information is: <https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/primary-schools/starting-primary-school>

Also on the school website;

<https://www.st-stephens.bexley.sch.uk/>

- 1) An introduction letter from the Headteacher.
- 2) Welcome films from pupils.
- 3) Welcome to Reception

If you need any further information regarding school admission please contact St Stephen’s Catholic Primary School.

T: 020 8303 9738

E: admin@st-stephens.bexley.sch.uk



Christmas Masses 2021:

Our grateful thanks to the volunteers who attended the meeting last week. Without our stewards we would not be able to open the church for the celebration of Mass. Your help and assistance is appreciated by all.

We have a schedule of Masses for the Christmas Octave. Liturgically, each of the days from 25th December until the 1st January is 'Christmas Day'. We would like to invite parishioners to make full use of the Christmas Octave and whilst there are additional Masses on Christmas Eve (Vigil Masses) and Christmas Day parishioners can come and celebrate the mystery of Christmas at any of the Octave Masses with the same sense of joy and solemnity. The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation has not yet been reinstated by the Bishop's Conference in England and Wales.

We will continue to encourage hand sanitisers to be used entering and leaving the church and the 'one-way' in and out system will be in use. Please complete a Track & Trace card OR use the NHS app and scan the QR code. There will be a registration ticket system to ensure we do not breach the safe capacity of the church at each Mass. You will be able to book a seat at any of the Christmas Octave Masses via *Eventbrite* from next week.

One family / household member will need to book tickets for **all** the family members in the household who wish to attend Mass so we know how many in each family / household unit for the socially distancing seating arrangement in church. Each household will require a separate booking (no joint household bookings). Please note only people from the same household or support bubble can sit together in St Stephen's Church (we are **not** permitting 'Christmas bubble' seating in church).

Parishioners who do not have online access can telephone the church office to check availability and book (subject to availability) a seat at any of the Christmas Octave Masses from next week when the booking system will open.

Christmas Eve 24th Dec—4pm, 5.30pm, 7pm, 8.30pm
Christmas Day 25th Dec—8.30am, 10am, 11.30am

26th Dec—9.30am, 11.30am
27th Dec—10am
28th Dec - 10am
29th Dec - 7pm
30th Dec—10am
31st Dec—6pm Holy Hour, 7pm Mass
1st Jan—10am
2nd Jan - 9.30am, 11.30am

Advent Prayer Evenings

This year we have arranged two *Advent Prayer Evenings* as a spiritual preparation for the Feast of Christmas, on Tuesdays 7th and 21st December at 7.00pm in the church. There will be exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Reflection, Silent Prayer and Benediction. Please keep the two evenings free and come along for a time of spiritual nourishment.

Senior Citizens' Advent Tea Party on Friday 10th December 1.30pm – 3pm at St Catherine's Catholic School, Watling Street, Bexleyheath DA6 7QJ. RSVP 01322 556333.

Bexley Women's Aid: Toy Service on Sunday 5th December at All Saints Church, Rectory Lane, Foots Cray 10am. Unwrapped gifts are collected for the children at *Bexley Women's Aid*. If you feel able to donate an unwrapped gift for a child, please come along, it is a joyous occasion & you will be made very welcome. Father Christmas may well pop by to say hello! All welcome.

Missio: Available on the table in the small hall today free of charge – *Mission Today* magazine, *2022 Calendar* and bookmarks with a *Prayer for Peace Between People of all Faiths* written by the Women's Interfaith Council in Nigeria. For more information about Missio please go to <https://missio.org.uk/>

November Remembrance – A bowl is in front of the altar for the month of November in which you can put names of the departed to be prayed for.

Zumba Fitness is back in the church hall every Tuesday at 6pm. You don't have to be a dancer to join. Beginners welcome. Contact Emma on 07979 330145 or check www.emmalock.zumba.com

Celebration of Mass:

At St Stephen's, we will continue to celebrate Mass socially distanced and face coverings are to be worn. Hand sanitisers should be used entering and leaving church and the 'one-way' in and out system will be in use. As long as the *NHS Test, Track and Trace* system is in operation, we will continue to make available the means for people to sign in when attending Mass using the NHS app and scanning the QR code or completing a *Track & Trace* card. 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.* There will be no toilet facilities open in church or the hall.

We ask everyone to respect and follow the guidance for the celebration of Mass in our church and for your cooperation and understanding so we can keep the church a safe environment for all. Many thanks to all our stewards.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Kick Start:

Welling Churches are offering free 40-minute online sessions in November 2021 designed to open up conversations and provide practical tips on job searching, money management, habits that harm and the emotional challenges of worry and loss. Click for dates and registration. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSctKxwqBbGU4J7_pjybSjPihOHrxcqA5YC6cekXiWDBVj4TA/viewform

Church Flowers: If you would like to join a rota to look after the flowers in church, please sign the list on the noticeboard in the church porch or contact Velia Dobinson. Everyone welcome—no floral experience needed. Velia 07789 673747. If you would like to make a donation towards the cost of flowers for church, please put your donation in the box on the wall at the back of the church labelled **Flowers**. Thank you.

Holy Mass, celebrated by Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R. into your home every Sunday. Please click on the link [Holy Mass Online | Every Sunday | RP Books](#)

Repository: Some items from the repository will be available to purchase in the small hall after Masses, including a selection of Advent and Christmas items. Please place your money in the box provided.

Synod and Synodal process in the

Archdiocese of Southwark: An invitation is extended to all to contribute on three principal themes: *Communion, Participation and Mission*. For information visit <https://www.synod.va/en.html> & <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/synodalechurch/>. If you wish to submit your contributions online, please visit <https://aec.rcaos.org.uk/synod> and complete the form at the end of the web page. Please take one of the prayer cards you will find in the porch of the church and let's pray for the success of the synodal process.

A Day With Mary at St George's Cathedral, Lambeth Road SE1 6HR on Saturday 18th December 10.15am – 5.15pm. Please bring a packed lunch. Confession and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament & carols sung during the day. See poster for details or go to www adaywithmary.org

CAFOD World Gifts: CAFOD's range of virtual gifts, make a real difference to families living in poverty across the world. We can be good neighbours to our sisters and brothers overseas by giving *World Gifts* as Christmas presents to family and friends. *The Keep Clean Kit gift for £6* and the *Wonderful Worms gift for £10* are just two gifts that will help vulnerable families affected by the pandemic to protect and feed themselves. There are six new gifts this year inspired by the work in response to the climate crisis – including *Energy Saving Stove £9* and *Fight Fires in the Amazon £18*. Let's spread joy and hope around the world this Christmas. Visit cafod.org.uk/worldgifts or pick up a catalogue from the table in the porch.

Advent Extra *Your Journey to Christmas:* We've all known dark and light moments during 2021. *Advent Extra*, with its theme "From darkness to light", celebrates the Light of the World, who transforms even the darkest moments. Available from Redemptorist Publications £2.25 Tel: 01420592974 or email customer-care@rpbooks.co.uk or order online at <https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/>

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

In an increasingly cashless society, we are able to respond to new ways in which people can donate to St Stephen's.

We are pleased to announce that we have installed 2 **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.

You will also be able to contribute to 2nd Collections. Just choose the fund you wish to donate to and the amount you wish to donate.

To give online go to <https://portal.mydona.com/assets/webPay/index.php?cid=236> or go the parish website 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).

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. All major payment methods accepted:

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.

NEW: One-Off Gift Aid Envelope: Please find at the back of church one-off Gift Aid envelopes. These envelopes can be used for different funds / options and can be used for both Gift Aid and Non-Gift Aid donations. You can choose to make the gift a one-off Gift Aid donation or sign up to on-going Gift Aid. Mass intention details can be included on the envelope. Visitors / guests to St Stephen's are encouraged to use an envelope if they wish to make a donation.

Please take an envelope to make a donation to;

Parish Offertory

Poor Box

General Church Income

Church Building Fund

Clergy Support Fund

Priest Training Fund

Christmas / Easter Offering

Mass Offering - If you wish to use the envelope for a Mass Offering, please do not tick a box but write the intention or name of the person on the lines provided so we can clearly identify the intent of your gift.

Bexley Winter Shelter: We will provide Covid-19 'safe' B&B accommodation and services for up to ten guests from January to March 2022. Three locations in Bexleyheath—Trinity Baptist Church, The Salvation Army and the Boys Brigade Hall—have graciously offered their premises to BWS for communal eating purposes. BWS is once again in need of many volunteers to help those experiencing homelessness. We are in need of people who can set-up the premises for the evening meals, those with people skills to engage with guests - making them feel welcomed and at home, those who can cook and others to serve the meals. Finally, we are looking for team leaders who can oversee the operation each evening. If you are interested in being part of BWS please email volunteer@bexleywintershelter.org.uk or fill in the contact form online at <https://www.bexleywintershelter.org.uk/> and we will get back to you as soon as possible. God bless you and thank you for your offer to help and we look forward to a brighter future for those experiencing homelessness in Bexley.

Bexley Foodbank: Items currently needed are:

Strong carrier bags / bags for life

Shower gel, shampoo & conditioner, razors

Shaving foam/gel, deodorant,

Toothbrushes and tooth paste

Household cleaning items, washing pods

Tinned fruit, tinned spaghetti, tinned potatoes

Noodles, jam, sweets, coffee, sugar

Long-life milk, long-life fruit juice

DROP-OFF POINTS:

Tesco: Welling, Sidcup & Footscray

Asda: Bexleyheath

<https://bexley.foodbank.org.uk/>

Helping local people in crisis

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). Narrow down your search results by selecting the Mass Type (Daily, Vigil or Sunday). You can also select from the available languages (including signed).

Your Legacy of Faith: Remember the Church with a gift in your Will. When you move onto the next life, you can make your lifetime of faith live on through a gift in your Will. If you are thinking of putting your affairs in order, the Archdiocese of Southwark can help. If you would like to find out more and receive information on Will writing and estate planning contact the team on legacy@rcaos.org.uk or tel.no. 020 7960 2504. An information leaflet is available on the table in the porch. A copy is also on the parish website / Twitter feed) and on the new Diocesan Church Legacy page: <https://rcaos.org.uk/donate/leave-a-legacy/>

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 \(rpbbooks.co.uk\)](https://www.rpbbooks.co.uk/celebrate-following-your-faith-childrens-liturgy/)

The Catholic Spirituality Network Advent Day of Reflection online. Reflecting on the passage through the weeks of Advent as we negotiate global events and personal experiences. CSN will draw upon the scripture of the liturgical cycle – Year C to support our reflection and prayer. Saturday 11th December at 10.30am—3.30pm. Donations for CSN invited £10-£15. To book contact: catholicspiritualitynetwork@gmail.com

Advent Service in the Relic Chapel of Aylesford Priory at 8pm on Friday 3rd December, as part of the preparation for the coming Christmas Season. The Friars will be joined by the Choir of St Peter and Paul. All most welcome. Aylesford Priory, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7BS

Carols by Candlelight at Aylesford Priory: Friday 10th December at 7.15pm. Traditional carol singing, accompanied by the Medway Towns Brass Band, and treat yourself to a hot drink and one of our famous mince pies on sale afterwards in the Pilgrims' Hall. Please book in advance by calling 01622 717 272 - Adult tickets £4.50 Children U16 Free. All welcome. <https://www.thefriars.org.uk/>