

First Saturday Devotions including praying the Rosary together start on 7th December at 9.20am in church. Please join us.

Catechetical Institute: From today, every parishioner, as well as teachers and parents in our schools, has free and unlimited access to the workshops created by the world-renowned Catechetical Institute. From Scripture to parenting workshops, to catechetical training and mentoring, there is something for everyone. For information on how to register your free account visit: <https://aec.rcaos.org.uk/franciscan> or see poster and scan the QR code.

Repository: Christmas cards, calendars and advent calendars on sale now in the Repository. Please take time to visit after weekend Masses.

St George's Cathedral Carol Service on Thursday 12th December at 7.30pm. Join Archbishop John and the St George's Cathedral Choir. All welcome.

2025 Confirmation candidates will be required to sign an attendance register after Mass. Please see the Catechists at the back of the church.

Caritas Southwark has created an **Advent Giving Calendar**, which provides suggestions of items to give to our local foodbank each day during Advent. See poster by Foodbank box in the porch.

Mass Intentions: If you would like to offer a Mass for an intention, please use the Mass Intention Envelopes available on the table at the back of the church and post it through the presbytery letterbox. Please ensure you include your contact number. The recommended stipend (donation) advised by the Archdiocese for a Mass Intention is £10.

Church Cleaners Needed to join the church cleaning rota. This will involve spending approximately one hour on a 4weekly rota. Please contact Kate Wilson on 07747 620087. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Support our parish and make your donations go further by signing a valid Gift Aid Declaration form. Go to <https://forms.rcaos.org.uk/giftaid>.

St Thomas More Church Christmas Fair on Saturday 30th November from 12noon in the parish hall. Contact bstallpark@rcaos.org.uk for more info. 420a Long Lane, Bexleyheath DA7 5JW.

Funeral Arrangements for Bishop Hine RIP: Requiem Mass on Tuesday 10 December at St George's Cathedral, Southwark at 2pm followed immediately by committal and internment in the Cathedral Crypt. Funeral will be livestreamed on the Diocesan YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/live/a-X9ogDkKiw>

Jesuit Refugee Service Advent Appeal: JRS UK is the biggest Catholic refugee charity in the UK. We work with people who are made destitute by the asylum system, providing a mixture of legal advice and casework, practical support, activities and classes for our refugee friends. This Advent, we are raising money for vital services including our hosting scheme and our two houses, which provide much needed shelter, safety and stability. To learn more about JRS UK's Advent Appeal & Accommodation Project and to donate go to <https://www.jrsuk.net/advent-appeal-2024/>

The Southwark Catholic Charismatic Team will be praying the rosary at St George's Cathedral following the 12.30pm Mass on Monday 9th December at St George's Cathedral. All are welcome to join. The rosary event is taking place on the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and is part of a project to encourage people across the Archdiocese of Southwark to pray the rosary. If you would like to know more about the rosary project, contact southwarkrenewal@gmail.com

Join our Mailing List: To receive our weekly newsletter by email please email wellingsecretary@rcaos.org.uk to subscribe, include your name and confirm your consent to receive our newsletter. You can unsubscribe at any time by notifying the parish office. Your email address will not be shared and used only to receive our newsletter. Any queries, please contact the parish office.

Your Legacy of Faith: Remember the Church with a gift in your Will. If you are thinking of putting your affairs in order, the Archdiocese of Southwark can help. 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. A leaflet is available on the table in the porch.

Save the date: Archdiocesan Jubilee Celebration - 7 June 2025. An Archdiocesan Jubilee celebration at Aylesford Priory. This event will also mark the 60th anniversary of the Archdiocese of Southwark. More details about this exciting event to follow.



ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

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Parish Priest: Canon Edward Perera
website: www.saintstephens.co.uk Email: welling@rcaos.org.uk
Secretary: Mrs. Lorraine Harris. email: wellingsecretary@rcaos.org.uk

School: St. Stephen's Primary School, Ruskin Avenue, Welling, Kent. DA16 3QG
Telephone: 020 8303 9738

First Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Saturday 30th November

5pm Margaret Leech RIP (Doherty Family)

Sunday 1st December

9.30am Annie & John Conlon—anniv RIP

11.30am People of the Parish

Mon 2nd Feria

10am William & Barbara Lennon

Tues 3rd St Francis Xavier, Priest

10am Betty Archard—anniv (T Vertnness)

7pm Honor Joyce

(Novena Prayers)

Wed 4th Feria

10am Mona Ahern RIP (B O'Reilly)

Thurs 5th Feria

9.30am Kathleen Denahy

7.30pm Advent Prayer Service

Fri 6th Feria

10am Francis Abreo RIP—anniv

Sat 7th St Ambrose, Bishop & Doctor of the Church

10am Priest Ints

Sacrament of Reconciliation

10.30am—11am & 4pm—4.30pm

Second Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Saturday 7th December

5pm John Toland RIP (Doherty Family)

Sunday 8th December

9.30am Brian Hellein RIP

11.30am People of the Parish

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

DONATIONS

All donations are greatly appreciated to help support our church & parish. Thank you.

The offertory collection during Mass on Saturday evening & Sunday morning is for parishioners who wish to donate with their gift aid envelopes or with loose cash. Other methods to donate are via the digital plate in church, online or by standing order. The collection bag will be circulated for second collections.

Donate online at <https://portal.mydona.com/assets/webPay/index.php?cid=236> or <https://justgiving.com/campaign/parishsupport>—please include parish name and location. To set up a standing order to make regular monthly donations see bank details below.

Support our parish and make your donations go further by signing a valid Gift Aid Declaration form. Go to www.rcaos.org.uk/media/xfqfyxyj/welling-planned-giving-and-gift-aid-form.pdf Paper copies of the form are available on the table at the back of the church. You can also join the gift aid scheme by completing an online form at <https://forms.rcaos.org.uk/giftaid>.

NatWest Bank
Sort Code: 51-70-14
Account No. 39013332
Account Name: RCAS Welling
Please use your name as a reference. Thank you.

Digital Collection Plates are at the back of the church. Making a donation is simple and quick. Press one of the donation values or Other Amount. Tap your card or phone on the card reader. Your donation can be gift aided by completing a digital Gift Aid Declaration on the Digital Collection Plate screen (name, address and email address required) and all future donations you make using this card will automatically be recorded as a gift aid donation. A Gift Aid Declaration is required when using the Digital Collection Plate for the first time even if you are already registered for Gift Aid at St Stephen's.

My dear People

Today is the first Sunday of Advent and the beginning of Church's liturgical year. As we begin this new liturgical year, I thought of sharing with you few thoughts of the overall picture of the liturgical season and a very brief comment on the Gospel of Luke which will be read this year.

From today we are using the new Lectionary and first set of the new parish Mass Books. My sincere thanks to you all for your generosity that helped to purchase this first set of Mass Books. Your generosity is acknowledged in the first page of the books.

English word 'Advent' comes from the Latin word *Adventus*, which means 'coming, approach or arrival.' the Greek word used in the New Testament is '*Parousia*' which means 'a being near, presence or arrival.' the word *Parousia* has become a technical word for the Second coming of Christ but in Greek it can also mean 'the presence' of 'the arrival' of people or things. St. Paul uses the word in this simple sense in his writings.

Evangelist Luke wrote the Gospels around 85AD and

used 50% of Mark's gospel, and also had his own sources. He begins with a brief prologue addressed to Theophilus so that he will know for certain the truth about the teaching he has received. Then we have the infancy narratives, followed by prelude to the public ministry, then the Galilean ministry of Jesus. Luke spends nearly 10 chapters for Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. This is followed by the last week in the life of Jesus—his teaching in Jerusalem, Passion narrative, Resurrection and Ascension.

Advent has a twofold character—a time of preparation for Christmas when the first coming of God's Son is recalled and also a time when our hearts and minds are directed to Christ's second coming at the end of time.' As Adolf Adam in his writings about liturgy said, 'Advent is not a season of penance in preparation for judgement of the returning Lord, but a festive commemoration and on the basis of the incarnation, a devout and joyous expectation of the Parousia. As an image for the season, Advent can be compared to a waiting room!

God bless and love you all. Canon Edward

First Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Scripture Insights

In a time of suffering for the people of Judah, Jeremiah looks forward with hope to God's fulfilling of the promise of the Davidic covenant. The time is coming, says he, for God to raise up his Anointed One from the line of David to redeem Israel and return justice to the land and its people. The psalmist follows, developing the essence of this covenantal relationship by petitioning God to continue teaching his ways and remember his fidelity, righteousness, and mercy. The hope is for an abiding, life-giving relationship, made manifest in the coming gift of the Christ.

The New Testament readings spring from the lived reality of this relationship in history. Paul pleads for help for God's people to abound in love, manifesting that of God the Father in the gift of Jesus the Son through loving care for creation and one another. How we choose to act and interact with one another should reflect this relationship. The hope now is for the time to come, as Jesus expounds in Luke's Gospel. Jesus calls disciples of all time to stand strong in the face of fear and distraction. Life in covenant relationship with the One who created us and the One who redeemed us is the longer, possibly harder road, but the journey is worth the effort in hope for a destination in union.

Reflections

• Today's readings invite us to explore the emotion of shame with the goal of releasing those feelings before the love of God (see verses 2-3 of today's Psalm 25). You can almost hear the yearning in St Paul's voice as he writes, "Why can't you love yourselves the way God loves you?" Our society relies heavily on shame in the ways we punish, defame, and even attempt to motivate people around us. God's way is not to shame ourselves and others, but to foster deep awareness of who we really are and live into that calling.

• The prophet Jeremiah connects safety with justice. Most regimes have created a system of "justice" that relies on the imprisonment of petty wrongdoers—creating an illusion of safety for some while driving others further into isolation and despair. The incarnation of the Word made flesh shows us that true safety and justice come not from separation, but from proximity and relationship.

• Apocalyptic signs abound in the world today, and can leave us fearful, anxious, and looking for escape. Let us lift our eyes toward God and trust that he will lead the way.

LTP Sourcebook 2024

Advent Prayer Service in church on Thursday 5th December at 7.30pm. A spiritual preparation for the Feast of Christmas. All welcome.

The Spirituality Commission will be sending daily reflections during Advent featuring scripture, thoughts and prayers. You can sign-up to receive them directly into your inbox each morning here: tinyurl.com/adventreflections2024

Readers: At all Masses on the Second Sunday of Advent (*Bible Sunday*), 8th December, all parish readers will be invited to come forward after the homily to receive a blessing and to renew their commitment this important ministry.

Volunteers Needed to help decorate the church for Christmas on Friday 20th December, after the 10am Mass. Please come along to lend a hand.

Parish Carol Service in church on Saturday 21st December 3pm—4pm. Refreshments available in the parish hall afterwards. All welcome.

Praying the Mass with Archbishop John:

Advent is a time people return to Mass, sometimes after many years - for others Mass is the cornerstone of their spiritual lives. To help people, wherever they are on their spiritual journey, connect more prayerfully with the Lord Jesus, Archbishop John has [recorded a message \(tinyurl.com/prayingthemass\)](https://tinyurl.com/prayingthemass) which guides us on how to pray through the Mass. Archbishop John said: '*the Eucharist is at the very heart of the Mass, but also the Church. It is an invitation from the Lord Jesus to participate in His sacrifice*'.

CAFOD Advent 2024: Help Ukrainian families rebuild walls & fix windows to keep out the cold – and providing fuel so families can cook food and stay warm. Please give today at <https://cafod.org.uk/give/appeals/advent-appeal> or scan the QR code on the poster on the noticeboard in church.

CAFOD Advent Service will be at the Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception Farm Street, Mayfair W1J 5RL on Wednesday 11th December at 7pm. All welcome.

A Day With Mary on Saturday 14th December St George's Cathedral, Lambeth Road SE1 starting at 10.15am, finish at 5.30pm. During the day: Confession and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Carols are sung during this DWM. Please bring a packed lunch. Tea / coffee provided. See poster for details or go to www adaywithmary.org

Coffee Morning on the first Sunday of each month, beginning this weekend (1st December), after the 9.30am & 11.30am Masses in the parish hall. Please pop in for a cuppa & chat. Donations welcomed.

Many thanks for your donations totalling £332.12 to the *Southwark Catholic Youth Service*, which provides a variety of activities for youth and young adults, For more info, visit www.tinyurl.com/scys1 or join the Southwark Catholic Youth network for regular updates at www.tinyurl.com/scysnetwork. Please take a leaflet from the table in the porch with activities for Youth & Young Adults.

Southwark Archdiocese Rosary Prayer

Project: Everyone is warmly invited to join this Archdiocese-wide prayer initiative, praying a decade of the Rosary each day for priests and parishes in their deanery. For details see the poster on the notice-board & pick up an invitation leaflet at the back of church or email southwarkrenewal@gmail.com.

Prayer Intentions Book: Parishioners are invited to write any prayer intentions in our Parish Prayer Intentions book which is placed on the table at the back of the church. Please take time to read the intentions and include them in your prayers.

CAFOD Nativity Fun Run on Clapham Common on Saturday 7 December at 11am (10am registration). [Sign-up here](#) See leaflets on table in the porch for more information.

SVP & Ink Cartridges: Recycle your old ink cartridges and raise funds for the St Vincent de Paul Society by placing them in the box on the table in the porch (no large cartridges). Many thanks.

Bexley Winter Shelter (BWS): Volunteers Needed: BWS provides overnight accommodation, hot meals, help and support for those affected by homelessness in the Borough of Bexley from Friday 3rd January to Sunday 30th March 2025. Each night's venue is located in Bexleyheath. If you could spare an evening (6.30pm ~9.00pm) weekly or fortnightly, please get in touch. · More details are available on the BWS website: <https://www.bexleywintershelter.org.uk/Articles/698880/Volunteer.aspx> · The application form to volunteer can be found at: https://www.bexleywintershelter.org.uk/Articles/698092/Bexley_Winter_Shelter.aspx · Any questions can be emailed to: volunteer@bexleywintershelter.org.uk Paul Harris is happy to have an informal chat to anyone who would like to find out more about volunteering at BWS – please call him on 07825 934694.