

Marriage Help - Retrouvaille helps couples find hope and healing for their marriage. Next date: 20-22 June www.retrouvaille.org.uk Tel: 0788 7296983
Out of 21 couples who joined the Retrouvaille programme in February, two couples have turned away from divorce, and others have now found *hope* to restore their marriages.

Oppose Assisted Suicide: Archbishop John, alongside an updated pastoral letter urging us all to oppose the Bill to legalise assisted suicide, has published a video message which highlights the Bill's flawed parliamentary process. You can watch his message via the diocesan YouTube channel: [youtube.com/RCSouthwark1](https://www.youtube.com/RCSouthwark1)
Postcards to post to your MP are available on the table in the porch. These postcards present evidence-based reasons to oppose assisted suicide, urging MPs to vote against the Bill at Third Reading on Friday 25th April.

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.

Bexley Foodbank: Donations can be left in the box in the porch. Your support and generosity is much appreciated. Thank you.

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.

Southwark Catholic Youth Service. The Southwark Catholic Youth Service has [a number of upcoming activities](#) for youth and young adults. For regular updates on forthcoming events, sign up to its network at www.tinyurl.com/scysnetwork. For queries on youth activities email youth@rcaos.org.uk. You can download their latest newsletter [here](#).

Cheques: If you write a cheque for your church collection, hall hire, mass stipends etc. please could you write the payee as **RCAS WELLING** and not 'St Stephen's Church'. This is due to a change of our bank account name. NatWest bank will no longer accept cheques that do not match our account name. Thank you for your cooperation.

Archdiocesan Jubilee Celebration Day at The Friars, Aylesford 7 June 2025. Led by Archbishop John Wilson for a day of prayer, reflection, celebration and fun. There will also be a walking pilgrimage from St George's Cathedral to The Friars (2-6 June 2025). You can find out more including how to join the walking pilgrimage and the Archdiocese Jubilee Year plans at www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/faith/jubilee-2025/

Summer Celebration of Saint Jude on Saturday 31st May in the grounds of Carmelite Shrine of Saint Jude in Faversham. Starting at 11am—Devotions with Anointing, 1.30pm Open Air Mass & 2.30pm Procession to the Shrine. Refreshments & piety stall available. Sere poster. www.stjudeshrine.org.uk
34 Tanners Street, Faversham ME13 7JW

A Day With Mary on Saturday 26th April at St Saviour Church, Lewisham High Street, SE13 6AA starting at 9.30am. Please see poster for details of the day or go to www adaywithmary.org. Please bring a packed lunch.

Save the Date: Bexley Deanery Pilgrimage on Saturday 5th July from St Stephen's to St John Vianney, Bexleyheath. More details to follow.

Lourdes Pilgrimage 2026 - Save the date: Archbishop John will lead a pilgrimage to Lourdes for young adults (18-35) from 6-12 June 2026. The pilgrimage will be a time of prayer, reflection and fellowship. Those interested are encouraged to register their interest here—<https://form.jotform.com/250133233796051> with further details to follow.

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 telephone 020 7960 2504. An information leaflet is available on the table in the porch. A copy is also on the Diocesan Church Legacy page: [Leave a Legacy: Archdiocese of Southwark](#)

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.



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

Palm Sunday of The Passion of The Lord (C)	
Saturday 12th April	
5pm	Olive & Michael Reilly RIP
Sunday 13th April	
9.30am	People of the Parish
11.30am	Tony Califano RIP
Mon 14th	Holy Week
10am	Amelia Gomes RIP—anniv
Tues 15th	Holy Week
10am	Thanksgiving (Carvalho)
	7pm Novena Mass
Wed 16th	Holy Week
	11.30am <i>Chrism Mass at St George's Cath</i>
Thurs 17th	Mass of The Lord's Supper
8pm	Fred Baker RIP (M Rush)
	11.45pm Night Prayer
Fri 18th	Good Friday
9.30am	Stations of the Cross (children)
3pm	The Passion of The Lord
7pm	Reflections on the Cross
Easter (Year C)	
Saturday 19th April	Easter Vigil
9pm	Walter (Wally) McKenna RIP (M Rush)
Sunday 20th April	Easter Sunday
9.30am	Maya Lobo—thanksgiving 1st birthday
11.30am	People of the Parish

DONATIONS

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

The offertory collection after the Liturgy of the Word during Mass on Saturday evening & Sunday morning is for parishioners who wish to donate with their gift aid envelopes or with loose cash. If you choose to donate via the digital plate in church, online or by standing order, please continue to do so—there is no need to change your chosen method of giving. The collection bag will also 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. Please consider signing up to our Gift Aid scheme. Contact the church office for more details.

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 situated 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. For donations greater than £45, the card must be inserted. 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 registered for Gift Aid at St Stephen's.

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

My dear People

Our Lenten journey is almost over. Today marks the beginning of Holy Week, the final week in the life of Jesus. It begins with Jesus approaching Jerusalem on the day that we traditionally call Palm Sunday, and it concludes with his resurrection from the dead on Easter Sunday.

Passover was one of three pilgrimage festivals; the other two are Pentecost or Shavuot in Hebrew, and Tabernacles or Sukkot in Hebrew.

Mark and Matthew tell us that people spread their garments and leafy branches on the road. Luke tells us that the people spread their garments on the road. So, if we had only the gospel of St Luke, we wouldn't be calling today Palm Sunday - it would be 'Garment Sunday'. It's only John's gospel that tells us that people took branches of palm and went out to meet Jesus. John's gospel doesn't mention garments, only palm branches. I

don't think that this is an incidental detail. John is making an important point about palm branches.

What do they signify? To answer that question, we need to look at some of the old coins of that time. There are palm branches on both sides of old coins. In fact, palm branches or leaves appear on coins minted in Israel from 140 BC until 70AD, and they also bear the inscription "for the liberation of Israel."

For most of the many years between the time of King David and the time of Jesus the Jewish people had been dominated by one superpower after another. In the 1st Book of Maccabees, we read what happens as the victorious Jews enter their holy city: "The Jews entered the citadel at Jerusalem with praise and palm branches, and with harps and cymbals and stringed instruments, and with hymns and songs, because a great enemy had been crushed and removed from Israel." 1 Mc.13:49-53. Note the use of palm branches, symbols of a great victory. So, palm branches had become a symbol for the liberation of Israel.

Today we welcome our liberator with palms. What has Jesus liberated you and me from?

God Bless and love you all
Canon Edward



Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord (Year C)

About Today's Liturgy

No other Sunday in the Liturgical year reflects such dramatic contrast as today. What begins with songs of triumph quickly shifts into remembrance of the Lord's passion. His royal entrance into the holy city of Jerusalem was also an entrance into the mystery of his suffering, death, and resurrection. As we enter this holiest of weeks with Christ, may our participation in each solemn liturgy draw us into deeper union with him and with one another. Today's liturgy "unties the royal splendour of Christ with the proclamation of his Passion"

Scripture Insights

Paul's Letter to the Philippians gave homage in the early Church to the Christ event. Paul describes Jesus as one in the form of God who humbled himself by taking on our form and going to a sacrificial death to exemplify the love God has for us. This early hymn shows how we recognise Jesus as Christ and Lord who brings God's glory into our world.

Luke's passion is shaped by tradition. The Passover preparations and meal are unique as Jesus instructs the disciples on the importance of service for the future mission. At the Mount of Olives, Jesus' prayer is framed by warnings against temptation, and his arrest in betrayal and violence, even as Jesus heals the high priest's injured slave. Peter's later denials, where he fails to identify with Jesus when challenged, are told before the account of Jesus' suffering. The assault during the arrest is met with healing,

and Peter's betrayal is met with forgiveness and repentance.

At the trial before the Sanhedrin, Jesus accepts that he is the Christ, the Son of Man who will come as the final judge, and the Son of God. The Roman trial follows, set around a visit to Herod. Jesus emerges as king and is eventually handed over to death by Pilate who nonetheless, declares him innocent. Finally, with words of compassion and warning, Luke describes Jesus' road to the cross.

Jesus is crucified between criminals; he forgives his crucifiers, and he welcomes repentant sinners. While he commends his spirit into the Father's hands, the Roman centurion announces what many have known all along: "This man was innocent beyond doubt." All return home, beating their breasts in grief and ripe for repentance.

Reflections

• With whom can we walk in solidarity this Holy Week, crying out "Hosanna, save us," on their behalf.

• Unlike any other events in the history of the world, the various moments of Holy Week demonstrate just what God's love is all about. In our lives we often try to box God in, making the love of God fit within our plans. This week shows us that God is so much bigger, wider, deeper than the limits we've created. How are we being invited this year to expand our faith?

LTP Sourcebook 2025

Reconciliation Service at St Stephen's on Saturday 12th April at 11am. Please note—no morning Mass.

Many thanks for your donations to the *Poor Parishes* collection which came to £556.28. This collection enables the Archbishop to make grants to some of the poorer parishes in the diocese.

NEW: Children's Liturgy: If you are interested in joining a team to provide *Children's Liturgy*, for children aged 4 – 7yrs old during the 9.30am Sunday morning Mass, please add your name to the list on the table at the back of church or email Alexia Powell alexpowell679@gmail.com or Christabel Acquah christabelacquah@me.com to express your interest - no firm commitment required at this initial stage. All volunteers will require a DBS check. This will be arranged & paid for by the diocese / parish prior to Children's Liturgy beginning.

We aim to run a pilot session, depending on volunteers, on Easter Sunday, 20th April. If you would like your child(ren) to attend please notify Alexia or Christabel via email who will send you a registration form to complete and return and also answer any questions you may have. Please note each child attending Children's Liturgy will have to be pre-registered—please do not just 'turn up' on the day. Please contact Alexia or Christabel for further information on volunteering or to register your child(ren).

Missio Red Box Holders: Please bring your box to the sacristy before the end of April. If you are not using cash much now, please consider adding a note to your box. With grateful thanks to those who are keeping up this generosity for the missions.

Shroud of Turin Exhibition at St George's Cathedral in Southwark until the 21 April. At the exhibition you can see a life-sized replica of the Shroud of Turin and learn more about the artefact, which many believe to have been used to wrap the body of the Lord Jesus after his crucifixion. The exhibition is free and you can find the Cathedral's opening hours at stgeorgescathedral.org.uk.

Mass Intentions: If you would like to offer a Mass for an intention, please use the Mass Intention Envelopes available at the back of the church. Please ensure you include your contact number. The recommended stipend (donation) advised by the Archdiocese for a Mass Intention is £10. Your Mass stipend can be gift aided—please complete the gift aid declaration on the reverse of envelope if you are not already signed up to the parish gift aid scheme.

Collection for the Holy Places of Palestine on Good Friday (18th April).

Easter Collection Next Weekend: Your Easter offering is for our parish priest. Please use your gift aid envelope, card reader in church or online. Cash / cheques also accepted. Many thanks for your generosity. Every Blessing of the Easter Season to you all.

The Washing of Feet at The Mass of the Lord's Supper (8pm, Thurs. 17th April) re-enacts Jesus gesture of service at the Last Supper. 12 volunteers needed please to have their feet washed at that Mass. Please sign up on the list at the back of church.

Readers for the Passion and Holy Week: Two readers are required at each Mass on Palm Sunday to read the Passion. These are in addition to the readers on the rota; the readers on the rota should do the normal readings & bidding prayers as usual. Readers are also needed for the Holy Week services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Saturday Vigil Mass. Please sign the lists on the table at the back of the church. New readers not on the regular rota would be most welcome.

Welcomers for Holy Week: We would like to encourage a number of new Welcomers to help with distribution of Mass books, palms, and candles during Holy Week. Please sign the list at the back of the church.

Good Friday Walk of Witness: New route this year! Gather outside St John's Church, Danson Lane on Friday 18th April at 11.15am for a 11.30am departure. Join Christians from other churches in Welling as we walk, sing and pray along Welling High Street and Bellegrove Road, followed by a simple lunch at Seventh Day Adventist Church, Kelvin Road. Donations to Christian Aid.

St George's Cathedral, Southwark: A full schedule of services for *Holy Week and Easter* can be found at [Holy Week & Easter 2025: St George's Cathedral, Southwark](http://HolyWeek&Easter2025:StGeorge'sCathedral,Southwark) | [Roman Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral](http://RomanCatholicMetropolitanCathedral)

The London Catholic Worker magazine (Lent / Easter edition) is available on the table in the porch. Please take a *free* copy home to read.