Baptism Preparation Classes for parents living in the parish and who regularly worship at St Stephen's church wishing to baptise their child(ren) on Thursdays 16th October, 13th November and 11th December at *7.30pm in church*. Please note that parents must attend **all** classes.

Prisoners' Sunday is on 12th October. We remember Pope Francis and his call to support prisoners and their families. Prisons are in crisis, and life for prisoners and their families in our communities is challenging. *Pact*, the national Catholic prison charity, supports prisoners, their families and their children, offering them hope and the chance to turn their lives around. To find out more about the work of *Pact* and ways for you to get involved and to donate online please go to https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/faith/events/prisoners-sunday/ See poster to donate via the QR code. There will be a second collection in church next weekend to support Pact's important work in the year ahead.

Parish Coffee Morning on Sunday in the parish hall between the 2 morning Masses. Please join us for a cuppa & chat. Donations welcomed.

Christmas Carol Service: The two choirs are starting to plan the *Carol Service* which will take place on *Saturday 20th December at 3pm*. This is always a very joyful occasion and we invite others (singers and instrumentalists), who are not usually part of either of the choirs, to join us for the practices. Children and teenagers are particularly welcome. The first meeting will be next Saturday, 11th October, at 10.45am in the small hall, to plan what we might sing. Regular practices will commence from Saturday 8th November. There will also be some Wednesday evening rehearsals at 7pm for those unable to attend on Saturdays. Please feel free to speak to the choir leaders for more information.

Missio Red Boxes: If you are a red box holder, please bring your box to church during the month of October and leave it in the sacristy. If you find yourself collecting less change these days, please consider putting a note (or even 2!) in your box. There are some booklets about the work of *Missio* in the porch.

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.

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.

David Wells Seminar on Saturday 1st November in St Stephen's parish hall 10am—3pm. *"Your will be done! Learning to let God have the last word. A brief look at how our Faith can grow, transform and redeem us"*

Day of Retreat for Lectors & Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist
Saturday 18 October 2025 . Registration from 9.30am with teas / coffees in the parish hall.
Please sign up on the list at the back of the church to confirm your attendance.
PROGRAMME OF THE DAY
10:00 - 1040: Welcome & Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament by Canon Victor Darlington, Episcopal Vicar, Southeast
10.45am: *Discipleship of Hope* - Canon Edward Perera, Dean of Bexley
11.30am: Q& A
11.45am: Break
12 noon: *Virtual Missionary; How the Church can thrive in the digital space* - Father Antony Megalan Sellam, Dean of Lewisham
12.45pm: Q&A
1pm: Lunch - Bring your own packed lunch
1.30pm: *Liturgy of Witness* - Father Stephen Wymer, Dean of Bromley
2.15pm: Q&A
2.30pm: Mass
18th October Homily - Father Richard Plunkett, Dean of Greenwich
25th October Homily - Father Valentine Erhahon, Dean of Lambeth
Music: Father Bartłomiej Dudek, Dean of Camberwell

Exposition of The Blessed Sacrament weekdays from 9am. Please join us.

Bexley Foodbank: Donations can be left in the box in the porch. Your support and generosity is much appreciated. A list of urgently wanted items can be found at https://bexley.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/ as well as a list of not needed items—thank you. Donations of strong 'bags for life' are needed—please put any spare bags you have in the donation box. Thank you.

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: wellingsecretary@rcaos.org.uk

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

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

Saturday 4th October
5pm Mary Ellen RIP & Patrick Reilly RIP
Sunday 5th October
9.30am Living & Deceased Members of the Parish
11.30am People of the Parish

Mon 6th **Feria**
10am Gala Lobo RIP—birthday

Tues 7th **Our Lady of the Rosary, Memorial**
10am Spec Ints—MA Paguntalan & Family
7pm ***Novena Mass***

Wed 8th **Feria**
10am Paul Keady—anniv

Thurs 9th **St John Henry Newman, Priest**
10am Thanksgiving (J Onono)

Fri 10th **Feria**
10am Family Thanksgiving (L Newitt)

Sat 11th **Feria**
10am Priest Ints

Sacrament of Reconciliation
10.30am—11am & 4pm—4.30pm

Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

Saturday 11th October
5pm Mary Califano RIP
Sunday 12th October
9.30am Errol Vetanness RIP (A O'Hare)
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 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.

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.
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.

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. 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.

My dear people

The Gospel text of today has two different short sayings of Jesus. They seem like there is no obvious connection between them. The first is about the need for a bold faith and second is about the attitude of the servant.

When the New Testament writers speak about faith, it is not about just willingness to believe in a set of statements. For e.g., as we find in the Creed. In the Biblical sense faith is the kind of trust you have in someone that you are willing to sacrifice everything to follow him. In answer to the question of the disciples, Jesus' response is that if their faith were even the size of a mustard seed, it could do great many things. Faith is not measured quantitively. This is the answer of Jesus to the disciples. There is no question of having too much or too little faith. There is no question of faith having to be increased once you have it. What is important is that one has faith. Then, even if it is the size of a mustard seed, it is enough and more. This is the kind of faith that God calls Habakkuk to, in the first reading of today.

The attitude of realising that one has always been given one's due and that one has simply done what one has to do, is the attitude Jesus calls for in the second part of the gospel.

Today's gospel is about two of the basic attitudes that the disciples of Christ should have. The first is the need for a strong and deep trust in God, that will not and will not disappoint us or dampen our outlook even when we see things don't go our way. The saints are great examples of this. The second is the attitude of humility that does not expect to be thanked for doing what is required of us. It is the direct opposite of the attitude of the Pharisee who expect public recognition for every act of piety.

God Bless you and love you all.
Canon Edward

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Scripture Insights

The apostles' request for an increase in faith may be a response to what Jesus had said in the verses immediately prior to what we hear today. In those verses, Jesus instructs his followers about forgiveness. If someone sins against them seven times in one day, they are to forgive that person seven times. Perhaps the apostles requested an increase in faith so that they could forgive in the manner in which Jesus instructed them to forgive. In addition to recognising that Jesus uses hyperbole, it is helpful to know that the Greek construction of Jesus' words indicates that the faith of the apostles is already capable of doing great deeds.

The second portion of the Gospel text can be very difficult for faithful women and men of the twenty –first century to understand. At the time of Jesus, it was not unusual for someone to have a servant. Within the Scriptures, the conation of "servant" is not always understood negatively. While the role of the servant in today's Gospel may strike a negative chord in us, it is helpful to keep in mind that both Jesus and his mother Mary, along with many other persons in the Bible, are referred to as servants of God.

Reflections

• In today's world, it's not difficult to relate to Habakkuk's 600BC complaint: why does God not intervene to relieve suffering, to stop evil in its tracks? God's response reminds us that evil will not have the final word. We know that Jesus' resurrection already conquered death; this knowledge gives us resolve to continue being bearers of peace, consolation and hope.

• Baptised, confirmed and ordained Catholics will be familiar with the sign of the imposition of hands. While the effects of these signs are real, they are still points along a journey of our growth in faith. St Paul urges us to "stir into flame" the faith that sometimes diminishes to smoldering embers (2 Tm 1:6)

• While injustice and suffering exist, we are called as servants to remain faithful—not to turn away from the work of building God's kingdom, but to embrace it.

Introduction to Mass

When we ask God to increase our faith it is an expression of love because we are showing our desire to have a deeper relationship with God. Our Lord loves and cares for us, and he desires to be in relationship with us. In his love he hears us and responds to us when we call out to him. Prayer is one way that we strengthen that relationship.

LTP Sourcebook 2025

This weekend the Church celebrates both the **Jubilee for Migrants and Refugees** and **World Day of Migrants and Refugees**. These are specific occasions when we are asked to offer prayers and support for refugee and migrant peoples. We are mindful of the pressures of global conflict, poverty and climate change which lead to population displacement. As a Church we are called to offer sanctuary and welcome to those in need and celebrate the gifts of all people in our communities. To find out more about the Jubilee and what you can do, visit www.jrsuk.net/jubilee
The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation with a shared global mission to accompany, serve and advocate alongside and for the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced people. Copies of the JRS autumn magazine are available on the table in the porch.

Homelessness Sunday (5 October) is a national opportunity to pause and reflect on the reality of homelessness, and to stand together in solidarity with those without a safe home. Thank you for your ongoing support of *Bexley Winter Shelter* – a registered charity that operates January to March to provide overnight accommodation, hot meals, help and support to those affected by homelessness in the Borough of Bexley. Please keep BWS in your prayers as we approach the winter months again. To find out more and to make an online donation to help the work of BWS please go to https://www.bexleywintershelter.org.uk/

The Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis are hosting a *Sharing Your Faith Workshop* on Saturday 11th October 10am-3:30pm at Ss John Fisher and Thomas More, Eltham Well Hall. This one-day workshop aims to explore what it means to share our Catholic Faith. There will be practical tips and plenty of opportunities for discussion. For more details, including how to register, please see the poster in the church porch. Any questions, please email evangelisation@rcaos.org.uk

The Commission for Promoting Racial & Cultural Inclusion in the Archdiocese will be hosting a *free* Zoom webinar exploring how cultural and ethnic identities can be celebrated within our parishes on Thursday 16th October from 7pm to 8.45pm. Scan the QR code on poster to register. For more info email caritassouthwark@rcaos.org.uk or tel. 07521 425400.

Many thanks for your contributions to the collection for *Evangelii Gaudium* (*Home Mission)* which came to £223.13.

The Bexley Interfaith Forum stands in solidarity with everyone who has suffered and is suffering in Gaza, Israel and the West Bank. We call on all sides to recognise the dignity and sanctity of every human life. We call on all sides to make all efforts to achieve an enduring peace and an end to the killing. *The Bexley Interfaith forum* commits to praying for peace and living in peace and harmony with our sisters and brothers of all faiths (and none) within the London Borough of Bexley.

Cardinal Vincent has issued a statement following the tragic terror attack at Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in Manchester - https://www.cbcew.org.uk/cardinal-shocked-to-the-core-by-synagogue-attack-in-manchester/
Archbishop John has also written, both personally and on behalf of the Archdiocese of Southwark, to the Chief Rabbi, Sir Ephraim Mirvis and to Rabbi Daniel Walker of Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation, to convey his sorrow, condolences and the assurance of his prayers. The statement from Churches Together in England and Wales may be found here: https://cte.org.uk/cte-presidents-condemn-synagogue-attack/

CAFOD's Family Fast Day: Please donate to our Family Fast Day parish collection this weekend to share God's abundant gifts with our global neighbours as they find lasting solutions to poverty and climate challenges. Use a CAFOD envelope (available on the table at the back of church & in the porch) to Gift Aid your donation or give on the CADFOD website https://cafod.org.uk/?form=harvest25 or call 0303 303 3030. You can also text CAFOD to 70560 to donate £10. Scan the QR code to donate online.

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 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*. Please give plenty of notice to avoid disappointment if you would like specific date for your intention as we may not always be able to accommodate your request at short notice (at least 6 months notice is recommended). If you are a UK tax payer please complete the Gift Aid declaration on the reverse of the envelope. Cheques made payable to '*RCAS Welling'*. Thank you.