

Ambassadors for Christ: A Catholic apologetics free resource. The Archdiocese of Southwark has launched an exciting apologetics project to provide evidence-based answers to questions such as "Is Jesus God?" or "does prayer work?". Ambassadors for Christ is designed to equip you with a deeper understanding of your faith, so you can confidently answer questions and be a joyful witness for the Lord Jesus and his Church. Every Monday, a new video will be posted on YouTube, along with a worksheet to enable parishes, schools, youth groups and families to use them as part of their faith formation. To watch the videos and take part in this exciting project, please visit: [Ambassadors for Christ | Apologetics for Catholics | Archdiocese of Southwark](https://ambassadorsforchrist.org/).

Perfect for RCIA classes, parish study groups, confirmation classes, chaplaincies, families and many more. There will be 52 videos, posted every Monday on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/), with accompanying worksheets.

Eucharistic Adoration in church will be on Mondays to Fridays 9am to 9.30am.

First Saturday (of the month) Devotions including praying the Rosary together at 9.20am in church. Please join us on 7th February.

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV has appointed Canon Gerard Bradley as an Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Southwark. Bishop-elect Gerard's Episcopal Ordination will be on *Monday 2 February at 12.30pm* at St George's Cathedral, Southwark. Archbishop John asks all in our Archdiocese to pray for Bishop-elect Gerard as he prepares to serve as a Bishop.

Bexley Foodbank: Donations can be left in the box in the porch. Your support and generosity is much appreciated. A list of wanted items can be found at <https://bexley.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/> Donations of strong 'bags for life' are urgently needed—please put any spare bags you have in the donation box. 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.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

18th-25th January 2026

Churches Together in Welling are hosting the following services during the week. It is a great opportunity to visit the different local churches and meet fellow Christians, who are always very welcoming. Feel free to visit one or more churches as you are able. We hope to welcome other Christians to Mass on Friday 23rd and refreshments will be available afterwards in the small hall. Please join us.

Sunday 18th 6.30pm St John's (Danson Lane)

Monday 19th 5pm St Michael's
(Upper Wickham Lane)

Tuesday 20th 7.30pm Wellspring Pentecostal
(New Road)

Wednesday 21st 10am St Mary's
(Wickham Street)

Thursday 22nd 10am Methodists
(Bellegrove Road)

Friday 23rd 10am St Stephen's RC
(Deepdene Road)

Saturday 24th 10am Bishop Ridley
(The Green, Falconwood)
3.30pm Seventh Day Adventists
(Kelvin Road)

Archdiocese of Southwark 2026 Directory:

The fully functional, searchable Online Digital Directory for public use is available here www.rcaos.org.uk/directory

Parish Liturgy Meeting on Wednesday 14th January at 7.30pm in the small hall (attached to the church). Parishioners are invited to suggest additions or changes that could enhance any aspect of our parish liturgy by completing the leaflet available on the table at the back of the church and posting it through the presbytery letterbox or give to the priest after Mass. Ideas or suggestions from parishioners would be welcomed. At the meeting we will be reviewing the Advent, Christmas and the New Year events. The leaflets can also be used to volunteer for specific liturgical roles in our Sunday Masses.

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

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

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.

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

My Dear people,

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus, and with this celebration we bring our Christmas season to an end, and turn our attention towards the public ministry of Jesus.

The Baptism of Jesus is narrated by all the Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark and Luke. All three evangelists narrate the Baptism of Jesus in different ways. Mark only says that Jesus was baptised by John in the Jordan, Luke has John the Baptist in prison before the baptism of Jesus and does not state who actually baptised Jesus while Matthew is careful not to mention John the Baptist preached a baptism for the forgiveness of sins, but is the only one to add the dialogue between Jesus and John. The conversation between Jesus and John is unique to Matthew's Gospel. This conversation contains the very first words spoken by Jesus in Matthew. Jesus explains that he must be baptised not because he is a sinner but in order to do all that righteousness demands.

In the birth story of Jesus, many of the prophesies have

already been fulfilled. Jesus' teaching will fulfil the law and the prophets, his actions will be the words spoken through the prophets.'

We can understand the righteousness in two ways. Firstly, Jesus will reveal the righteousness that belongs to God by proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom, and he will train the disciples to live out the righteousness that is God's will for his people. This righteousness is to that of the scribes and pharisees as we will hear in the weeks to come and it is a righteousness for which the disciples are to hunger and thirst.

The feast of the Baptism of Jesus is an occasion for us to celebrate our vocation as baptised children of God. The heavens probably did not open above the font when we were baptised. It is from baptism we received our dignity as Christians and we are drawn into unity with Jesus, sharing his triple mission of being a priest, prophet and a king.

God Bless and love you all.

Canon Edward

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (Year A)

Today's Solemnity

The manifestation of Christ that we celebrate during Christmas Time culminate in the Baptism of the Lord. On the last day of the Christmas season, may we think of how we will be open to allow Christ to be manifested in our lives. Let us resolve to consciously choose to follow Christ more closely and take seriously our baptismal call to live as disciples.

Scripture Insights

Today marks the end of the Christmas season. Matthew describes the baptism and anointing by the Holy Spirit of the adult Jesus in a richly symbolic way that expresses Jesus' acceptance of the mission that the Father has given him as God's suffering servant. Jesus' baptism unfolds in the form of a drama in two parts. The first part focuses on Jesus' acceptance of his mission. Jesus comes to John to be baptised, but John objects and insists that he needs to be baptised by Jesus. Although Jesus is the Lamb of God who is without sin, by this action, Jesus, as the Lamb, identifies himself with humanity in order to take away the sins of the world. Jesus' baptism looks forward to his death. By accepting baptism Jesus submits himself to his Father's will, consenting to a path leading to suffering, death, and resurrection for the forgiveness of humanity's sin.

Reflections

In the accounts of Jesus' baptism, the Spirit of God descends like a dove and a voice comes from the heavens and says, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased". Here we have the entire essence of Christian community, rooted in the Trinity. We see the Father, Son and Spirit together-equal—grounded in a

genuine, relational love. This is what makes God God. The love would not be the same without any of the individual players.

- We cannot experience the fullness of the love of the Father without the Son and Spirit. The same is true for any other combination of the three. This Trinitarian love needs to be the model par excellence of all our relationships.

- Perhaps we do not always treat others as beloved and chosen by God because we cannot accept that reality ourselves. Henri Nouwen, a Catholic priest and theologian, wrote that if we dare to believe that we are beloved, we may suddenly realise that our lives are very, very special.

Introduction to Mass

At the Lord's baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon him and anointed him for his earthly ministry. At our own baptism, we too were anointed priest, prophet, and king that we might continue the work of Christ, shining into the lives of others the light with which he ignited us. As we prepare to nourish ourselves for this ministry, we pause in prayer to ask God's forgiveness for the times we have failed to shine with his light.

Liturgy and Life

John the Baptist testifies to his own experience of Jesus, explaining how he recognised Jesus as the long-awaited saviour. Think about what you would include if you were asked to share your own testimony of your relationship with Jesus.

Peace Sunday: The work of *Pax Christi* is based on the gospel and inspired by faith. Our vision is of a world where people can live in peace, without fear of violence in all its forms. Rooted in Catholic Christianity, we work with all who share our values to abolish war and create communities of peace and justice. To find out more about the work of *Pax Christi*, the Catholic movement for peace in England & Wales, please go to www.paxchristi.org.uk

There will be a second collection next weekend to support the work of *Pax Christi*. Please take an envelope from the table at the back of church for your donation. You can also donate online at Make a Donation – Pax Christi England and Wales

Our Christmas Crib donations will be donated to *Friends of the Holy Land*, whose mission is to secure a resilient and enduring community for Christians in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan. *Last chance to make your donation this weekend.*

St Stephen's Catholic Primary School: The closing date for school applications for children due to start school in September 2026 is **Thursday 15th January**. Please ensure that the supplementary form and additional paperwork (see below) is handed into the school office by *4pm on Thursday 15th January 2026* and that the application to Bexley Council is also submitted. More information can be found at <https://www.st-stephens.bexley.sch.uk/Our-School/Admissions/>

Paperwork required by school office:

Supplementary Form

Original birth certificate to be seen by office staff

Proof of child's address - this needs to have the child's name on it (e.g. NHS Letter, Child's Banks statement)

Proof of religion (if applicable).

School Address: Ruskin Avenue, Welling, DA16 3QG.

Tel: 0208 303 9738

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

Online Parish Gift Aid Declaration Sign-up:

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>.

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.

Confirmation 2026: Classes begin this *Sunday, 11th January at 9.20am* in the parish hall.

Confirmation Candidates & First Holy Communion Families are required to sign an attendance register after Mass. Please see the catechists and/or Canon Edward at the back of the church.

Parish Coffee Morning on Sunday in the meeting room attached to the church (while the Confirmation classes are taking place in the main parish hall). Please join us for a cuppa & chat. Donations welcomed

Archdiocesan Pilgrimage for Young Adults

(aged 18 to 35) are invited to join Archbishop John on pilgrimage to Lourdes, from 7 to 13 June 2026. The cost is £789, which includes flights and full-board accommodation on a shared basis. To book, please visit: www.tinyurl.com/lourdes26

Young adults (aged 18 to 35) are also invited to register interest for the *World Youth Day* pilgrimage to Korea in August 2027 at www.tinyurl.com/wyd2027

For information about youth activities for all ages across the Archdiocese please visit our website Southwark Catholic Youth Service: Archdiocese of Southwark

A Day With Mary on Saturday 24th January at St Anselm, West Hill, Dartford DA1 2HJ starting at 9.30am, finish at 4.30pm. During the day: Confession & Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Please bring a packed lunch. See poster for details of the day or go to <https://adaywithmary.org/>

See poster on the noticeboard in the church porch for a list of *A Day With Mary* venues for 2026.

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.