

## Awakening – Eucharistic Adoration Initiative

Our parish will be hosting a time of Eucharistic Adoration on *Saturday 21st March*, from 10:30am to 4:30pm as part of *Awakening*, a nationwide initiative led by the Jesus Youth and taking place across many parishes in the UK during the Lenten–Easter season. All parishioners are warmly invited to join us for a moment or for as long as you wish for prayer, reflection, and quiet time before the Lord.

**Repository: New Items:** Please take the time to visit the Repository after Saturday evening & Sunday morning Masses for a varied assortment of Easter cards. Browse the wide range of cards for *every occasion*, plus a lovely section of religious gifts available. Baptism, First Holy Communion & Confirmation cards and gifts are on sale now! Cash only please.

**Gift Aid Envelope Boxes** are on the table at the back of the church. They are arranged in surname alphabetical order– NOT number order. Envelopes have only been ordered for parishioners who use them weekly. The new financial year begins on 6<sup>th</sup> April. New subscribers to our Gift Aid scheme are welcomed. Please take a *Gift Aid Declaration* form from the back table. Once completed, please post it through the presbytery letterbox. Alternatively, you can sign up online by clicking the link <https://forms.rcaos.org.uk/giftaid> If you have questions regarding the Gift Aid scheme please contact the church office via email [wellingsecrtery@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:wellingsecrtery@rcaos.org.uk)

### Stations of the Cross During Lent:

Wednesdays at 10.30am—after 10am Mass

(*NOT Wednesday 25th March*)

Fridays at 7pm (NOT Good Friday 3rd April)

Saturdays after 5pm Mass

Sundays after 11.30am Mass

**Bexley Foodbank:** Donations can be left in the box in the porch. Your support and generosity is much appreciated. Wanted items can be found at <https://bexley.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>

**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.

**Lent Activities 2026:** A leaflet has been prepared with a variety of interesting activities taking place at different churches in Welling. Please take one from the table in the porch.

**Pray the Romero Rosary at St George’s Cathedral** with Archbishop John Wilson who will personally lead the devotion at the National Shrine of St Oscar Romero at St George’s Cathedral (SE1 6HR) on Friday 27th March at 5pm. Stations of the Cross will follow at 6pm.

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

**Join our Mailing List:** To receive our weekly newsletter by email please email [wellingsecretary@rcaos.org.uk](mailto: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.

**Aspiring to Governance** - Wednesday 25 March, 5.30pm-6.30pm. Join the Education Service for an informative session designed for individuals interested in becoming a Foundation Governor within the Archdiocese. This session is ideal for prospective Foundation Governors, as well as anyone interested in the governance of Archdiocesan schools. To book and view further details please [follow this link](#).

### Date for the Diary: Guild of Altar Servers

**Rally:** The annual rally for Southwark Altar Servers is taking place at Aylesford on 4 May 2026. More details at [Guild of St Stephen Altar Servers Rally 2026: Archdiocese of Southwark](#)

**The Catholic National Shrine and Basilica of Our Lady of Walsingham** has published its 2026 pilgrimage guide, along with its theme - *Mary, Cause of Our Joy*, which "calls to mind the saving actions of God through Christ in the Holy Spirit that have brought joy to the Blessed Virgin, to the Church, and to humanity".

You can download the [pilgrm guide here](#), and find out more about the theme via their website: <https://www.walsingham.org.uk/pilgrimage-theme-2026-mary-cause-of-our-joy/>

The Archdiocese of Southwark pilgrimage to Walsingham is on 27 June 2026. More details to follow.

**Evergreen Care UK: Elderberries Vintage Tea Room** in a new Welling venue – 8<sup>th</sup> Bexleyheath Scout Group, 32 Westbrooke Road, Welling DA16 1PR. Starting on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April 10.30am – 1pm. For over 50’s – friendship, laughter and connection over a cuppa. See leaflets on the table in the porch for more details and for other venues & days in the local area.



# 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](http://www.saintstephens.co.uk) Email: [welling@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:welling@rcaos.org.uk)

Secretary: Mrs. Lorraine Harris. email: [wellingsecretary@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:wellingsecretary@rcaos.org.uk)

School: St. Stephen’s Primary School, Ruskin Avenue, Welling, Kent. DA16 3QG

Telephone: 020 8303 9738

## Fifth Sunday in Lent (Year A)

### Saturday 21st March

5pm Patricia Zimmerman RIP (M Rush)

### Sunday 22nd March

9.30am Peter Ward RIP (A O’Hare)

11.30am People of the Parish

### Mon 23rd

#### Feria

10am Zakharevych Josef

### Tues 24th

#### Feria

10am A Abreo & Family

7pm **Novena Mass**

### Weds 25th

#### The Annunciation of The Lord

10am Walter McKenna RIP—1st anniv

### Thurs 26th

#### Feria

10am Adelina Abreo—thanksgiving

### Fri 27th

#### Feria

10am Kevin Harney RIP (P Wall)

### Sat 28th

#### Feria

10am Priest Ints

### Sacrament of Reconciliation 4pm—4.30pm

### Palm Sunday of The Passion of the Lord (Year A)

### Saturday 28th March

5pm C Mendes RIP

### Sunday 29th March

9.30am Mary Theresa McNeil

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](http://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

As we enter the fifth week of our Lenten journey, raising of Lazarus is the third Lenten catechumenal Gospel to prepare the catechumens for Baptism at Easter. It is also the longest of the three Gospel stories used for scrutinies.

Just like the gospel readings of last two Sundays—the Samaritan woman and the Man born blind—the story is somewhat straightforward. Lazarus has fallen ill and the family calls upon Jesus to heal him. But by the time Jesus arrives, he is dead and is already buried for four days. Jesus asks the stone to be removed from the tomb and calls to Lazarus who comes out wrapped in his burial cloths.

Though the story is simple John seems to add suspense and drama onto it. Just like the Samaritan woman and the man born blind, there is tension at the beginning as to whether Jesus will go to his friend or not, and tension at the end as we wait for Lazarus to come out of the tomb. Within the story we are surprised at the confession and faith of Martha, as she admits Jesus as ‘Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into the world.’

As part of the preparations for Baptism, our Gospel story

today is reminder of what Baptism is all about. It is through baptism that we are plunged into the life of God—the eternal life, God’s own life—which becomes our birth right.

The raising of Lazarus looks forward to the resurrection of Jesus at Easter. Unlike in the gospel of today when a stone blocks the tomb of Lazarus and orders are given to remove it, when the disciples come to the tomb of Jesus the stone is already moved. In the empty tomb the disciples find the cloth that wrapped the body of Jesus neatly laid aside, while Lazarus comes out with his hands and feet bound with lines cloths. And Jesus orders to unbind him and let him go free.

Our catechumens, like Lazarus, are waiting to come forth to the life of resurrection. They too need the support of the community. We join in the prayer for the third scrutiny, ‘through your Spirit, who gives life, fill them with faith, hope and charity, that they may live always in the glory of your Resurrection for you are Lord for ever and ever. Amen.’

God Bless and love you all.  
Canon Edward

### Fifth Sunday in Lent (Year A)

#### Scripture Insights

The Father’s life-giving power is displayed by the Son when he raises his friend Lazarus from the dead—not to eternal resurrection life, but back to the normal mortal life of a human being. Lazarus’ sister Martha has faith that God will raise her brother to new life on the last day, but Jesus desires that she take her faith a step further and believe that Jesus, like God, has power over life and death even in these days. When Martha says, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died” (Jn 11:21), this must have pierced Jesus’ heart, because it was true. But Jesus uses the death of his beloved friend as an opportunity to reveal God’s glorious power over the grave.

Still, Lazarus would die again at the end of his life and be buried once again in a grave. Martha and Lazarus (and we too) join the psalmist, waiting in eager expectation for the Lord to arrive like the dawn, calling the dead from their graves into unending life.

#### Reflections

• Several remarkable things happen in today’s Gospel reading, the most remarkable being the raising of Lazarus. Jesus sees his death coming and knows it will test the faith of his followers, many of whom still do not understand that Jesus is something more than merely a prophet. Christ uses the death of Lazarus to demonstrate the divine power he has and to strengthen the faith and courage of his followers.

• There is a cost to this demonstration, however, and in the shortest and one of the most compelling verses of the entire New Testament, we read that upon seeing Mary’s grief for her dead brother, Jesus weeps. He grieves his friend’s death and the pain it has caused. Why didn’t Jesus use his power to relieve or avoid his grief? He could have stopped Lazarus from dying or raised him immediately. Instead, Jesus suffers and weeps, publicly, joining us in all of our griefs. If Jesus, who need never suffer, endures suffering voluntarily, then why do we run from it?

#### Liturgy and Life

There is a danger embedded in our conviction that God can transform any suffering: rendering suffering meaningless. Sometimes we hear: “It’s all for the best.” “God has a plan.” Jesus turns these platitudes on their heads when he raises Lazarus and states, “I am the resurrection and the life.” Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, say unambiguously that he is the God of life. He does not will our suffering. He weeps with us as we grieve. He feels the separation of death. Authentic hope is something different than platitudes. It is a belief that in those moments when we most struggle, Jesus is there with us. Is there someone who is in need of accompaniment during suffering? Give them the gift of your time.

LTP Sourcebook 2026

**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 if you can help during Holy Week.

**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 if you would like to read. New readers not on the regular rota would be most welcome.

**The Washing of Feet at The Mass of the Lord’s Supper** (8pm, Thurs. 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

**Eucharistic Ministers** are required for Good Friday and the Easter Saturday Vigil. Please sign the list at the back of the church. Thank you.

**Good Friday Walk of Witness:** Gather outside St Mary’s Church, Wickham Street on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April at 11.15am for a 11.30am departure. Join Christians from other churches in Welling as we walk, sing and pray along Bellegrove Road and Welling High Street, followed by a simple lunch at St John’s Church, Danson Lane. Donations to Christian Aid.

**Refreshments** will be available in the small hall after the Good Friday Reflection, and after the Easter Vigil in the main parish hall. *No Coffee Morning on Easter Sunday morning.*

**Collection for the Holy Places of Palestine** on Good Friday (3<sup>rd</sup> April)

**Easter Collection:** Your Easter offering is for our parish priest. Please use your gift aid envelope, card reader in church or online. Cheques /cash also accepted. Many thanks for your generosity.

**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>.

**Passion Readings on Palm Sunday and Good Friday:** The old lectionary had defined parts for “*The Crowd*” to be said aloud by the congregation. The current lectionary, introduced in November 2024, makes no provision for the congregation to speak any part. The Bishops’ Conference for England and Wales has confirmed that this is a deliberate change, made at the direction of the Dicastery for Divine Worship in Rome. It is now considered more appropriate for the congregation to focus on listening attentively to the Passion readings, just as they do for the Gospels throughout the year.

**Poor Parishes Collection This Weekend** (21<sup>st</sup> / 22<sup>nd</sup> March). This collection enables the Archbishop to make grants to some of the poorer parishes in the diocese.

**Easter Egg Hamper Raffle:** Tickets (£1 each) on sale this weekend! A chance to win a fantastic hamper full of delicious Easter treats! Tickets are available from the Repository and during Coffee Morning. Proceeds towards our Easter church flower displays.

**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

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

**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.

**Southwark Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes:** Bishop Paul Hendricks warmly invites everyone to join the pilgrimage on 21<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> August. A pilgrimage is a great opportunity to refresh and renew our relationship with the Lord Jesus, with the help of Our Lady’s prayers. Details for booking travel and accommodation can be found at <https://www.tangney-tours.com/diocese-pilgrimages/diocese-ca/>