

**Repository: New Items available:** Please take the time to visit the Repository after Saturday evening & Sunday morning Masses to 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! Father's Day cards available now. Cash only please.

**Second Collection** this weekend (17th / 18th May) for the Catholic Communications Network. This collection supports the work of the Catholic Communications Network (CCN) and the media office of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The CCN seeks to be of service both to the Church and the world in offering professional channels of communication, and provide support to the Bishops of England and Wales and the wider Church in promoting the Gospel through the media on current issues. Its office is the focus for media enquiries on national matters, and seeks to develop the public profile of the Church and its teaching. The theme for this year's World Day of Social Communications, chosen by Pope Leo is '*Preserving Human Voices and Faces*'. Please visit the Bishops' Conference website: [Catholic Church in England and Wales - Catholic Bishops' Conference](http://Catholic Church in England and Wales - Catholic Bishops' Conference) Here you will find the latest news, features, events, podcasts and more.

**Rosary For Life.** Archbishop John Wilson is calling on all of us to join him in praying the *Rosary for Life* this May (Month of Mary). Together, we will pray through the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous Mysteries, each one offered for the most vulnerable facing growing threats to life: unborn children at risk of abortion, victims of war and persecution, people with disabilities, and the elderly and vulnerable. For video, audio and written versions of the Rosary for Life, visit [rcaos.org.uk/rosaryforlife](http://rcaos.org.uk/rosaryforlife).  
**Pray the Rosary. Encounter Christ. Defend life.**

**Encounter Pentecost** on 23rd May. Join the Southwark Archdiocese Catholic Charismatic team for [a day of worship, prayer, and fellowship](#) at St George's Cathedral to celebrate Pentecost. The day, open to all, concludes with the Vigil Mass of Pentecost. Full programme at [encounterpentecost.com/programme](http://encounterpentecost.com/programme).

**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.

**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

**Grace Explorers – Preteens Fellowship (Ages 9 –12):** *Grace Explorers* is an initiative by Jesus Youth UK, started to support children aged 9–12 in their faith journey. We meet once every three to four months at Stephen's Parish church hall for a day of prayer, friendship, fun activities, and simple, engaging reflections on the Kerygma – the basic message of God's love. Children enjoy games, action songs, creative sessions, and time in prayer including Eucharistic Adoration. ***Our next programme is on 30th May 2026.*** The full-day event (10:30 am – 4:30 pm). A small registration fee of £10 includes pizza at lunch. ***We warmly invite this year's First Holy Communion group to join us on their path as Grace Explorers.***

**World Youth Day** will take place from Monday 2 August - Monday 9 August 2027 in Seoul, South Korea. Archbishop John will lead the Archdiocesan group (ages 18 to 35). Initial registration of interest is now open: [www.tinyurl.com/wyd2027](http://www.tinyurl.com/wyd2027) The final cost is expected to be approximately £3,000.

**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.

**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.

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



# ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

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Seventh Sunday of Easter (Year A)	
<b>Saturday 16th May</b>	
<b>5pm</b>	Peter Khang & Theresa Nguyet Ngo RIP
<b>Sunday 17th May</b>	
<b>9.30am</b>	People of the Parish
<b>11.30am</b>	Patrick Walsh RIP
<b>Mon 18th</b>	<b>Feria</b>
<b>10am</b>	James Kelly RIP—13th anniv
<b>Tues 19th</b>	<b>Feria</b>
<b>10am</b>	Lauren D'Costa—thanksgiving birthday
<b>11.15am</b>	<b>Funeral: Annie McAlea</b>
<b>7pm</b>	<b>Novena Mass</b>
<b>Weds 20th</b>	<b>Feria</b>
<b>10am</b>	Lee Abreo—birthday
<b>Thurs 21st</b>	<b>Feria</b>
<b>10am</b>	Cecilia Corbett
<b>Fri 22nd</b>	<b>Feria</b>
<b>10am</b>	Josephine & Godwin Akhilomen— wedding anniv
<b>Sat 23rd</b>	<b>Feria</b>
<b>10am</b>	Priest Ints
<b>Sacrament of Reconciliation</b> 10.30am—11am & 4pm—4.30pm	
Pentecost Sunday (Year A)	
<b>Saturday 23rd May</b>	
<b>5pm</b>	Mrs V Mendes RIP
<b>Sunday 24th May</b>	
<b>9.30am</b>	Rose Bradley RIP (Mc Morrow)
<b>11.30am</b>	People of the Parish

Mass Times and Intentions	
<b>Mon 25th</b>	<b>Mary, Mother of the Church</b>
<b>10am</b>	Siobhan Mythen RIP
<b>Tues 26th</b>	<b>St Philip Neri, Priest</b>
<b>10am</b>	Tom McCormack
<b>7pm</b>	<b>Novena Mass</b>
<b>Weds 27th</b>	<b>St Augustine of Canterbury, Bishop, Apostle of England</b>
<b>10am</b>	Marcelle Tambyapin—birthday thanksgiving
<b>Thurs 28th</b>	<b>Our Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest</b>
<b>10am</b>	Thanksgiving—Pam Desouza
<b>Fri 29th</b>	<b>Feria</b>
<b>10am</b>	Godwin Akhilomen—birthday
<b>Sat 30th</b>	<b>The Blessed Virgin Mary</b>
<b>No Morning Mass</b> <b>No Sacrament of Reconciliation</b>	
The Most Holy Trinity (Year A)	
<b>Saturday 30th May</b>	
<b>5pm</b>	Cypriano Joseph Castanha RIP
<b>Sunday 31st May</b>	
<b>9.30am</b>	Peter Newitt RIP & Tom McCormack RIP— anniv
<b>11.30am</b>	People of the Parish
<b>Please remember in your prayers the sick and housebound; at home, in hospital or in residential care.</b>	

My dear People,

Over the last few Sundays, we have been reading from the Last Supper discourse of Jesus in the Gospel of John. I also mentioned that almost five chapters of John's Gospel is devoted to what Jesus did and said at the Last Supper. Today's Gospel comes from chapter 17.

In the words of the great New Testament scholar, Raymond Brown, in chapter 17 of John, we now come to one of the most majestic moments in the fourth gospel, the climax of the Last Discourse where Jesus turns to his father in prayer. Other Scripture scholars like Brendan Byrne agree that John's Gospel reaches its most sublime point in the prayer of Jesus to the Father that concludes his conversation with the disciples at the Last Supper.

Praying to the Father, Jesus says that his hour has come. At the beginning of the Gospel, when Mary told Jesus at the wedding feast that they have no wine, Jesus' response, 'woman what is that to me and to you. My hour has not yet come.' But now, before his death his hour has indeed come.

Jesus concluded his Last Supper Discourse in John with the longest prayer in the gospels.

Each year on the 7th Sunday of Easter we read part of it. It provides a great supplement to the pre-Pentecost prayer of Mary and the disciples as we read in the first reading.

This prayer of Jesus is often called the 'high priestly prayer of Jesus', because Jesus prays that his disciples be consecrated in the truth. I think, as the hour of Jesus has now come, this prayer can be better called 'Jesus' prayer of the hour.'

Jesus prays for glory. The supreme manifestation of glory will come through his passion, death and resurrection. The theme of glory leads into that eternal life. This is the life of God himself which he desires to share with those who believe. Therefore, the glory belonging to Jesus and to the Father is offered to all.

God Bless and love you all.  
Canon Edward

### Seventh Sunday of Easter

#### Scripture Insights

The disciples obey Jesus' instructions to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit's power. The eleven are there (the inner circle of the twelve, minus Judas), along with Jesus' mother Mary, Jesus' brothers, and "some women," a group that likely includes Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women disciples who witnessed the empty tomb.

No doubt each one of these men and women had gone on their own journey of doubt and faith before they arrived in this room, ready to live and die for their Lord. Jesus' mother Mary believed (even though sometimes she also wondered) from the very beginning. Jesus' brothers did not; the first report of their faith is here, after the resurrection. But now they all ask "one thing" of the Lord (Ps27:4). Unlike the psalmist, their heart's desire is not to dwell every day in the temple. Instead, they take refuge in Jesus; they are ready to go wherever he sends them, whether it be Asia Minor or India (where Christians believe that Thomas brought the Gospel).

Perhaps, as Peter suggests in his first letter, the followers rejoice in the sufferings that they will endure for their Lord. Their lives are now patterned on Christ's, in both suffering (crucifixion) and rejoicing (resurrection). Like Christ, they suffer for the name they bear; like Christ, they will also be raised up. John's account tells, they already taste eternal life, since they have come to know "the only true God, and the one

whom you sent, Jesus Christ" (Jn 17:3). Jesus teaches his disciples that eternal life is not only something they will enter when they die; it is a fullness of life they will experience even now in this life, through their union with Father, Son, and Spirit.

#### Reflections

- Although Jesus is facing his death, he is already looking toward his resurrection and glory with confidence. Surrounded by his friends, looking back at his ministry and forward to his final destination, Jesus seems to be looking at a bigger picture in which the suffering that awaits him is less important than the magnitude of his mission.
- Jesus didn't need to pray this prayer out loud or in the presence of his apostles. So, we can assume his words are meant as much for our encouragement as for his own comfort. Here, as his death loomed, Jesus makes it clear that the eternal life he came to offer is the life that flows from drawing close to God. Heaven isn't a place we go to; it is a state of being that we share in more and more as we know and love the Father through Jesus.

#### Introduction to Mass

The Lord has ascended to heaven, and his followers return to Jerusalem to await the coming of the Holy Spirit. Gathered together as one, they are united by their common prayer and their love for Jesus. We too participate in this gathering of the early Church when we gather today, united in prayer and devotion to our Saviour.

LTP Sourcebook 2026

**New Sanctuary Furniture:** The Diocesan Arts & Architecture Committee have given the parish permission to purchase a new altar, lectern, baptismal font and a tabernacle stand. We hope to take delivery of new items in June. Our thanks to Canon Edward for sourcing the new items and the negotiations & meetings with the committee to secure our new sanctuary furniture. Once we have the items in place we can begin to plan the consecration of our church—which opened in December 1935. It is long overdue! If you and/or your family would like to make a donation to the cost of the new sanctuary items, which come to over £15,000, there are many ways in which you can contribute.

\* Cash or cheque (made payable to 'RCAS Welling') in a sealed envelope with *Sanctuary Furniture* written on the front or use one of the Gift Aid Envelopes on the table at the back of the church.

\* Card Readers at the back of the church or use the online link <https://portal.mydona.com/assets/webPay/index.php?cid=236>

\* Bank Transfer—please use the church bank details on the front page of the newsletter & please reference your donation with '*Sanctuary*'

Your donation can be anonymous if preferred but if you are eligible, please consider gift aiding your donation to the church, which will increase your donation value by 25% at no cost to you. Your kindness and generosity is much appreciated. If you have any questions regarding a donation to church for our new sanctuary items please speak to Canon Edward or contact the church office.

**Capital Ring Rosary:** Next Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May, pilgrims from across London are invited to take part in the *Capital Ring Rosary* — a beautiful prayer initiative to encircle the city in Mary's Mantle. St Stephen's is one of the starting points, meeting at 1pm for a short opening prayer. We will walk Section 2 of the Capital Ring: [Falconwood to Grove Park](#) 4.4miles praying the Rosary as we go. A Radio Maria volunteer will lead our group. All are welcome! For full details on starting points and to register, visit: [www.RadioMariaEngland.uk](http://www.RadioMariaEngland.uk) or pick up a leaflet from the table in the porch.

**First Holy Communion 2027:** There will be an initial meeting for parents of children who regularly worship at St Stephen's Church and will be in Year 3 and above (in September 2026) on **Wednesday 20th May at 7.30pm** in the parish hall. The registration process and an outline of the FHC programme will be shared at the meeting. No need to pre-register, just turn up.

**Preparing For Our Patronal Feast:** Meeting on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May at 11am in the small hall. The parish patronal feast, celebrating the Feast of St Stephen, will be held this year on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July. Following the pattern of last year's happy gathering, there will be just one Mass in the morning at 10.30am, followed by a shared meal and community activities. All parishioners will be warmly encouraged to participate. Last year about 180 joined the event and it would be good to have even more this year. There will be no charge for any of the food, drinks and entertainment: everything will be provided free.

We will be relying on the generosity of our parish community, to contribute their own time and talents, and items such as tableware and dishes of food, and containers of drinks. All this needs some planning and organisation. So, Canon Edward would like to meet at 11am next Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May, in the small hall, all those willing to contribute their ideas and some effort to help organise catering, music and other entertainment, and the logistics and decorations for the Feast. If you would like to help with organising but are unable to join this meeting, please speak to Canon Edward or email the Parish Secretary.

**SPARK in the Park 7<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> August 2026** in Danson Park. SPARK is *free* to the local community and costs in the region of £10,000 to run. SPARK is run on a non- profit basis and entry and all activities are completely free to the public. If you feel you can contribute financial help please follow the link <https://bexleylife.churchsuite.com/donate/fund/vdlbgo8n> to donate or scan the QR code on the poster on the noticeboard. Thank you for your generosity in supporting this community blessing.

**The FAITH Summer Break 2026**, which will take place from 10–13 August 2026 at St Mary's School, Ascot, SL5 9JF. This is a residential event for young Catholics aged 11–15, intended to offer a few days in which participants may grow in faith, make friends, and enjoy time together in a lively and supportive Catholic setting. The programme includes daily Mass and prayer, age-appropriate talks, small-group discussion, sports, arts and crafts, and a trip to Thorpe Park. The cost is £250, inclusive of accommodation, meals, and the Thorpe Park visit. Info & booking details, may be found at: <https://www.faith.org.uk/events/faith-summer-break-2026> See poster.

**We Believe Festival** - a festival of Catholic life in the UK - will take place from 24 to 27 July 2026, at Oscott, Birmingham. Tickets will be on sale now. More information can be found at: <https://www.webeliefefestival.com>