

First Holy Communion 2027: For the parents who missed the first registration meeting, there will be another opportunity to register your child(ren) on Wednesday 2nd September at 7.30pm in the parish hall. This will be the last opportunity to register before the preparations begin in September. The registration forms, preparation programme and details will be shared and explained on the day. Please note that parish First Communion preparations are only for those who attend Sunday Mass at St. Stephen’s, Welling.

The Catholic Medical Association UK seeks to support Catholic healthcare professionals and students and to promote a faithful Catholic understanding of medical ethics and practice. Further information concerning the Association, its membership, and forthcoming events is available at [Home - Catholic Medical Association](#) See poster.

SPARK in the Park runs from 17th to 21st August in Danson Park from 1pm to 4.30pm. A *free* community event for all the family. Each day will feature a range of free activities for children of all ages.

- Games & Stories
- Craft
- Under 5s Area
- SEN Quiet Area
- Bouncy Castles
- Sports

There will also be 3 family focused evening events on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, details to be confirmed.

<https://www.sparkinthepark.org.uk/>

Applications for SPARK Volunteers are now open and we encourage you to apply as soon as possible as this helps us with our organisation and planning. Whether you are able to help during the day, the evenings or with set-up and put down you are incredibly valuable to the team and we appreciate all the time you can offer. We also need volunteers to be at the site outside of the SPARK hours in the evenings, overnight and early morning. Perhaps you are not able to be there during the day due to other commitments but might be able to offer some time in these vital areas. Please go to:

<https://www.sparkinthepark.org.uk/volunteer/apply>

If you have any questions about SPARK or how you can support SPARK this year, please don’t hesitate to get in touch via email at sparkparkbexley@gmail.com

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/>

Parish Coffee Morning on Sunday after the 9.30am Mass in the meeting room attached to the church. Due to popular demand ‘*Café Stephen*’ will be open during August! Please join us for a cuppa & chat. Donations welcomed.

Right to Life: *Support not Suicide* is the campaign to stop assisted suicide. On Friday 11 September 2026, Kim Leadbeater’s revived assisted suicide Bill, which has been brought back to Parliament by Lauren Edwards MP, will have its pivotal Second Reading vote in the House of Commons. Join people across the country in asking MPs to vote NO on 11 September. To find out who is your MP go to [Write to MP to vote NO on the new assisted suicide Bill on 11 Sept – Easy tool](#) Please write to your MP and ask them to vote NO to the revived Leadbeater assisted suicide Bill on 11 September 2026.

Statement on the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill. Ahead of the Bill’s Second Reading on 11 September, Archbishop John Sherrington has issued a statement opposing it, citing inadequate safeguards and risks to palliative care. Parishioners are urged to contact their MP via [Right to Life UK](#). More info on the [Catholic Bishops’ Conference website](#).

Many Thanks for your donations of toiletries to *Bexley Winter Shelter* last weekend. BWS seeks to help and serve the rough sleepers of Bexley Borough. Thank you so much for being part of this outreach to some of the less fortunate in our Borough. More info about BWS can be found at <https://www.bexleywintershelter.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 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 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.



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

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)	
Saturday 1st August	
5pm	John Lynch RIP
Sunday 2nd August	
9.30am	Patrick Hartley RIP
11.30am	People of the Parish
Mon 3rd	Feria
10am	Canon Jeremiah McCarthy
Tues 4th	St John Vianney, Priest
10am	Rowena Govia RIP—birthday
7pm	Novena Mass
Weds 5th	Dedication of the Basilica of St Mary Major
10am	John Kennedy—recovery from illness (Mc Morrow)
Thurs 6th	Transfiguration of The Lord
10am	Thanksgiving—Dr David Fernandes
Fri 7th	Feria
10am	Donald Govia RIP—birthday
Sat 8th	St Dominic, Priest
10am	Priest Ints
<u>Sacrament of Reconciliation</u> 10.30am –11am & 4pm—4.30pm	
Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)	
Saturday 8th August	
5pm	Lloyd Lobo—thanksgiving birthday
Sunday 9th August	
9.30am	People of the Parish
11.30am	John & Antonetta Fernandes - Thanksgiving
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 Please gift aid your donation, if possible, by completing a digital Gift Aid Declaration—name, address and email address required.
To set up a standing order to make regular monthly donations please contact the office for the church bank details via email wellingsecretary@rcaos.org.uk
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,	
This weekend we have the Matthew’s account of the feeding of the five thousand, to say nothing of the women and the children.	to a quiet place to absorb the shock. But the crowd follows them, and when Jesus sees them, he takes pity. Their getaway ends up being another day of teaching and healing.
The feeding of the five thousand has a special place in the Gospel. It is the only miracle of Jesus, apart from the Resurrection, that is mentioned in all four Gospels. It is also good to keep in mind that both Matthew and Mark have two feeding stories—the feeding of the five thousand and the feeding of the four thousand.	Matthew’s account of feeding looks back to Israel’s history and looks forward too. It looks back to Moses feeding the wandering Israelites in the desert with manna, and also how Elijah fed his followers with twenty loaves of barley bread. Jesus, the new Moses, now provides food for the lost sheep of the house of Israel in a desert place. Jesus is greater than Elijah, for with five loaves he feeds five thousand.
As I always mention, it is helpful to look at the context of the text. The background to our text today is that Jesus has received the news that John the Baptist has been executed by Herod. Herod not only feared the great popularity of John, but John had also told him that his marriage to Herodias was unlawful. Matthew’s gospel gives us two banquets — the banquet Herod gives where the rich and powerful attended, and the banquet of Jesus where all the hungry are fed. A banquet of death and a banquet that speaks about life	The text today looks forward to two other events. Firstly, the Last Supper, when Jesus took bread, blessed, broke it and gave it to the disciples saying, ‘Take and eat. This is my body.’ The same actions at the multiplication of loaves are repeated at every eucharist. Secondly, the image of a banquet is a symbol for the Kingdom. The parable of the Wedding Banquet comes to our mind, where all are included in the invitation to enter the kingdom.
The news of John the Baptist’s death must have upset Jesus and his disciples very much. So, they try to get away	God Bless and love you all. Canon Edward
Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	

Scripture Insights

We see the love of God in action in today’s Gospel. Matthew clearly tells us that Jesus has taken time to cure the sick out of compassion, despite his original plans for a retreat. When it becomes late and in response to the disciples’ suggestion to disperse the crowd, Jesus replies that there is no need for the crowd to go anywhere or to buy food. Instead, he performs a miracle and, with his disciples’ assistance, feeds five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. Just as our readings from the psalms and from Isaiah announce, God responds to our needs and provides free sustenance and nourishment.

Reflections

- Worried that people were getting hungry, the disciples thought the best course of action would be to tell every-one to go home and eat. This was not an unreasonable idea, as there were thousands of people and just a few loaves of bread and fish to go around. The disciples must have been shocked when they heard Jesus respond, “Give them some food yourselves” (Mt 14:16).
- Jesus’ instruction to the disciples that day is an important command for all of us. When we see a need, we must work to meet the need. While it might be easier to ignore, or even push the responsibility to someone else, Jesus’ response is clear.
- If you encounter someone who is hungry, give that person some food. If you encounter someone in need of

clothes, give that person clothes to wear. If you encounter someone who is sad, offer them love and encouragement. Jesus reminds us that we have the power and responsibility to serve others.

Introduction to Mass

The banquet of the Lord is one of abundance, a rich feast that satisfies every hunger. We are invited to come without cost, to listen heedfully, and to be filled with life. Let us joyfully approach the table of the Lord, thankful for the gifts that he gives to us and that we offer back to him.

Liturgy and Life

Through the Corporal and Spiritual Words of Mercy, we share God’s abundant grace with those in need. Let one or more of these Works of Mercy guide your response to the needs of those you encounter this week. During a homily on this Gospel, Pope Francis explained that those who receive the Eucharist need to be compassionate, just as Jesus is in sharing himself with us. “One who goes to the Eucharist without having compassion for the needy and without sharing is not at ease with Jesus,” Pope Francis said. Consider how Christ unites himself with us in the Eucharist and how the sacrament calls us to solidarity with the poor. In prayer, request an increase in compassion for the needs of others and the strength to respond in faith.

LTP Sourcebook 2026

This Weekend (1st / 2nd August)
Annual Mission Appeal for the Institute of Charity (Rosminians): We welcome Fr. Jose Kuttikkatt, IC, who will make the mission appeal at all our Masses this weekend.
<https://www.rosminians.com/>

New Sanctuary Furnishings have provided a beautiful and dignified setting for the celebration of the Holy Mass and other sacred liturgies of our parish. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all parishioners whose generous donations have enabled the purchase of these new sanctuary furnishings. The ‘old’ baptismal font has been placed at the back of the church and parishioners are invited to pause at the font to bless themselves with the holy water upon entering and leaving church.

CAFOD: Global Debt Crisis: *Next weekend* we will be collecting signatures for a CAFOD petition about the global debt crisis, which is causing terrible suffering for our brothers and sisters around the world. Cardinal Stephen Ameyu Martin Mulla from South Sudan has written to parishes in England and Wales to explain. A copy of his letter is available on our noticeboard. Please take the time to read his message and lend your support. Thank you for helping to build a better world. Every signature on the petition will help to make a difference, as CAFOD call for more ambitious action from the UK government. CAFOD director, Christine Allen, has recorded a message explaining why we are asking you to sign a debt petition in our parish next weekend: [watch the message now](#).

For more information on the campaign and to sign the petition online please go to <https://cafod.org.uk/campaign/the-global-debt-crisis>

Living Water: *New Articles posted!*
An Unexpected Pilgrimage by Giorgio Chiosso & *St Stephen’s Patronal Feast 2026*. Please go to <http://www.saintstephens.co.uk/blog/>

The CELEBRATE festival is coming to Worth School and Abbey, West Sussex from 15-19 August, and Fr Roberto Pasolini, Preacher to the Papal Household, will be coming to speak. Family Faith have created a Summer family activity pack which can be downloaded using this link: [Online Family Activity Packs — CELEBRATE Trust](#). Families can choose from faith filled activities, support for family prayer, books for different ages and film suggestions. There is also a Summer Psalm Walk designed to help families explore Psalm 139 whilst they walk in their local park or on holiday, [Get your FREE Celebrate@Home Summer Psalm walk!](#)

St George’s Cathedral: *The Living Heritage* is a magazine issued quarterly showcasing the history and living heritage of St George’s Cathedral, the Mother Church of the Archdiocese. Each edition brings St George’s Cathedral’s story to life through heritage features and in-depth articles, inviting our community to explore its traditions and stay connected to its living history and rich legacy. To subscribe, a full year of four issues costs £18, including postage & packing, contact the cathedral office via email cathedralenquiries@rcaos.org.uk The summer edition is available on the table in the porch to view.

The Year of St Francis: To mark the eighth centenary of the death of St Francis of Assisi, Our Lady of the Angels Church, Erith, has organized a programme of celebrations and devotional events. From Saturday 1 August to Saturday 26 September, the parish will hold nine novena themes based upon Franciscan spirituality. These will be accompanied by exhibitions of relics of Franciscan saints and of the Eucharistic Miracles exhibition devised by St Carlo Acutis. On Saturday 3 October, the 17:30 Mass will include the special liturgy of the Transitus, commemorating the passing of St Francis from this life to eternal life. On Sunday 4 October, Archbishop John will celebrate Mass for the Feast of St Francis at 10:30am. Further information is available from [Our Story — OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS RC CHURCH](#)

Job Opportunities:
Caritas Coordinator to support community engagement, communications and events across the Archdiocese of Southwark.
Parish Secretary, St Mary's Croydon to support day-to-day administration of a vibrant and diverse parish community.
Find out more about both roles and to apply go to rcaos.org.uk/vacancies.
ICT Team Administrator to provide vital administrative and operational support to our ICT function, serving both the Diocese of Westminster and the Archdiocese of Southwark. Find out more and apply at [External Jobs: Archdiocese of Southwark](#)

Summer Stillness Retreat at The Friars, Aylesford on 10–14 August 2026 with Fr Ged Walsh O.Carm and Angela Black. £582pp single/£542pp shared, all meals included. £30 deposit to book. Call 01622 717272 or email reception@thefriars.org.uk

Bereavement Ministry Training on Saturday 19 Sep. This training day at Aylesford Priory, Kent, (9am–5pm) equips parishioners to offer sensitive, empathetic support to the bereaved. Contact Barbara Salamonczyk to book: mflbereavement@rcaos.org.uk