Sacrament of Confirmation 2027 will take place on Saturday 27th February at 5pm Mass.
Introductory meeting for Parents and Candidates will take place either late September or early October, 2026. Please look out for the meeting date in our weekly newsletter. Classes for candidates, from Year 9 or age 13 and above, are usually on Sundays at 09:20. Start date will be announced at the introductory meeting.

Second Collection *this weekend (12th / 13th Sep)* for the **Catholic Education Services** who acts on behalf of the Catholic Bishops' Conference to support Catholic education. They have a strong and positive working relationship with the British and Welsh Governments sharing the aims of high academic standards for all and increased parental choice. The CES is the chief negotiating and advisory body on matters affecting all aspects of Catholic education. Donations can be made by cash, gift aid envelope (found in your box), card reader in church or donate online at https://portal.mydona.com/assets/webPay/index.php?cid=236

Parish Liturgy Meeting on Wednesday 16th September 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. The leaflets can also be used to volunteer for specific liturgical roles in our Sunday Masses.

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

Missio Magazine and Prayer Cards are available in the porch. Please feel free to take one of each, especially if you are a Red Box holder.

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 Michael's Festival Fayre on Sunday 27th September 12.30pm—5pm. Join us for an afternoon of community fun for all ages. Attractions include stalls, cakes & food stalls, family games, music, tombola, craft activities and more! All are welcome.
Upper Wickham Lane, Welling DA16 3AP

Parish Coffee Morning on Sunday after the 9.30am Mass in the meeting room attached to the church. Please join us for a cuppa & chat. Donations welcomed.

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.

Home Mission Sunday: On Sunday 20th September, we will celebrate Home Mission Sunday, a day for us as the Catholic community in England and Wales to celebrate our faith in these lands, and our shared commitment to communicate the beauty and the joy of knowing Jesus Christ. Celebrating the Holy Father's first encyclical, the theme for this year is "*Magnifica Humanitas*" as the heart of mission. We can celebrate together the call the Holy Father has placed before us to live out our authenticate humanity which finds it's fullness in Christ. More details about this can be found on the Bishops' Conference website - https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home-mission-sunday/
The Second Collection next weekend is to support the work carried out by the Bishops' Conference Mission Directorate. Through the Mission Directorate, we support our Church in a wide field of service and mission here in England and Wales.
Please hold this important work in your prayers and give as generously as you can. Thank you.

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.

Fire and Accidents: In the case of a fire in church or in the parish hall please evacuate the building immediately and report to the assembly point in the car park by the school fence (Assembly Point sign on fence facing the church & hall).
There is a First Aid box in church (sacristy) and in the parish hall (kitchen) including an accident report book. Please note that any slips, trips, falls or accidents must be logged in the report book and the parish office must be notified as soon as possible.

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-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
(Year A)

Saturday 12th September
5pm Michael Reilly—anniv

Sunday 13th September
9.30am Amanda Coutinho RIP—birthday

11.30am People of the Parish

Mon 14th **The Exaltation of The Holy Cross**
10am Norah Gorey RIP—anniv

Tues 15th **Our Lady of Sorrows**
10am Patrick Triplow RIP—anniv
7pm ***Novena Mass***

Weds 16th **Sts. Cornelius, Pope & Cyprian, Bishop, Martyrs**
10am Cypriano Joseph Castanha RIP—birthday

Thurs 17th **Feria**
10am Oseaghe Akhilomen—birthday

Fri 18th **Feria**
10am Reene Steel—91st birthday thanksgiving

Sat 19th **The Blessed Virgin Mary**
10am Priest Ints

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

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Saturday 19th September
5pm Josie Pace RIP (M Rush)

Sunday 20th September
9.30am Brian Illing RIP—8th anniv

11.30am People of the Parish

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

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 via email for the church bank details—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. If you have any questions please contact the church office.

My dear People,

This weekend we read the rest of the community discourse. Jesus now begins to prepare his disciples for life as the community that will continue his mission after his passion, death and resurrection. Last Sunday's and today's gospels explore the practical realities of living together as disciples of Jesus. Today's text focuses on one of the most difficult and demanding aspects of that common life, namely the call to forgive.

Our text also brings Jesus' Galilean ministry to a conclusion. Chapter nineteen begins with Jesus leaving Galilee and journeys into Judea. From this point onwards the shadow of the cross and the passion expands. Thus, before making head towards Jerusalem for his passion, death and resurrection, Jesus' final teaching and instruction in Galilee is about the kind of community the disciples need to become—a community characterised by humility, reconciliation and forgiveness, and not about power or success.

For Peter, if forgiveness lies at the centre of the of community, are there any limits? This is the question Peter puts to Jesus. Peter's presumed answer seems to be very generous. According rabbinic laws forgiving someone three times was regarded as very generous. Peter's suggestion of forgiving up to seven times is extremely generous. However, Jesus answering Peter avoids setting any limits. His response is, 'not seven, I tell you, but seventy times seven.'

Here Jesus is not talking about mathematics or numbers, but rather the real nature of forgiveness. The kind of forgiveness Jesus invites Peter and the disciples, and from each one of us, is beyond all calculation. It is the most perfect and limitless. If one has to count the number of times one is forgiving, it means that one is not really forgiving at all.

And in order to instill this in the heart of Peter he tells the parable. It is clear from the parable that God's forgiveness can be lost through human unkindness. We forgive because God has first forgiven us. This is the point Ben Sirach makes in the first reading nearly two centuries before Christ. He had recognised the inseparable connection between receiving God's mercy and extending mercy to others. Jesus takes this ancient wisdom a step further.

God Bless and love you all. Canon Edward

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Scripture Insights

God forgives, and so must we. This is message of this Sunday's readings. Sometimes forgiveness is easy. Friends and family know how to brush off each other's small transgressions. As the Book of Proverbs states, "Love covers all offenses" (10-12), an insight that was repeated in the New Testament.

Sometimes forgiveness is difficult. Some people enjoy hurting others. Many more sin against each other out of ego or fear, inflicting thoughtless damage out of insecurity. Still others live with destructive tendencies such as addictions, mental illness, or trauma. Although these are out of their control, such inclinations make relationships difficult. Finding ways to forgive in circumstances like these can feel like a hopeless task.

Jesus did not agree. "Not seven times, but seventy-seven times," said Jesus, responding to Peter's question with an absurdly large number. The Old Testament already had a long tradition of teaching forgiveness. God forgave Israel again and again for its transgressions against the covenant, and prophets and teachers reminded individual Israelites to do the same. As this Sundays' first reading proclaims, God's tireless compassion should be the pattern for ours.

"Moved with compassion, the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan." In this parable, forgiveness means starting over from zero. Whatever happened in the past is gone, and a new relationship takes its place. God finds new reasons for compassion every time we request forgiveness. This is an example of the freedom Christ calls us to follow. Forgiveness costs God nothing but instead deepens opportunities for divine love. Just so, Christ calls his followers to the same freedom. No one can take anything from us that God cannot replace tenfold. This realisation can inspire our sense of compassion and free us to forgive, no matter the amount of mercy required.

Introduction to Mass

The readings today, as they did last week, focus on reconciliation and granting forgiveness to those who wrong us. No matter how many times we sin against God, our merciful Father always forgives us if we ask for his pardon, but he also wants us to extend that same limitless mercy to those who offend us. If we are to be forgiven, we must forgive others.

As we prepare our hearts for the liturgy, let us think about the people in our lives who need our forgiveness, and ask the Father to give us the grace to be merciful as he is merciful.

LTP Sourcebook 2026

RCIA: Anyone seeking to learn more about the Catholic Faith is invited to join the RCIA group which meet on Monday evenings in the small hall (attached to the church) from 7pm to 8.30pm.
Our first session is on *Monday 28th September*. Former members are most welcome to join us and share their thoughts and experiences.
Please make contact with one of the catechists if you intend coming so we have your name:
Eileen at 5pm (Saturday) and 11.30am Sunday Masses.
Peter & Maureen at 9.30am Sunday Mass
and Canon Edward.

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 Wednesdays 14th October, 25th November and 9th December at *7.30pm in church*. Please note that parents must attend **all** classes.

Lectors' & Eucharistic Ministers' Formation Day
Canon Victor Darlington, Episcopal Vicar for the South East Area, warmly invites all Lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to a Formation Day on the theme "*Nourished by the Word, Sent with the Eucharist*." The day will include Holy Mass, formation, discussion and Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.
***Bexley*, Bromley, Greenwich & Woolwich Deaneries:** Saturday 31st October, 10am–2pm at the Capuchin Franciscan Friary, Erith DA8 1DN.
Camberwell, Lambeth & Lewisham Deaneries: Saturday 24th October, 10am–2pm at Bishop Thomas Grant School, SW16 2HY.
Participants are asked to arrive by 9:45 a.m. and to bring a packed lunch. All Lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are warmly encouraged to attend.

It is with great sadness to announce the recent death of Philip Harrison, a well loved member of our parish for many years. Please keep his wife, Maureen, in your prayers & thoughts at this sad time.
Phil's funeral will be at St Stephen's Church on Monday 21st September at 11am.

The Archdiocese of Southwark will be holding their annual service for those that have been harmed by abuse on the 30th September at 6.30pm at St George's Cathedral. The service will be led by Archbishop John Wilson and is an opportunity for the archdiocese community to express their solidarity and compassion to those that have been hurt by abuse and our commitment to building safe environments for all. Please attend if you are able. See poster.

The Synod Implementation for the Parish of St Stephen, Welling: In October 2021 Pope Francis asked the whole Catholic Church worldwide to engage in a process of discernment under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This process is called a synod. It involved everyone in the Church - clergy, religious and lay Catholics. After three years of assemblies and consultations, the Synod published a Final Document entitled 'For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission. Pope Francis then launched a four-year Implementation Phase, for all parts of the Church to adopt the orientation and guidelines of the Final Document.
To support our parish conversations on the Final Document, there are some questions to encourage your thoughts, conversations and suggestions about ways in which our parish could improve in the light of the Final Document. Please take a paper from the table at the back of the church which includes extracts from the Document, focusing on the most relevant paragraphs for parishes. They are arranged in three sections: Sunday Eucharist, Initiation and Formation, and Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Council. Once we have collected the responses there will be some small group meetings to discuss our parish response.
Please send your response and thoughts to the parish secretary via email wellingsecretary@rcaos.org.uk or hand written responses can be posted through the presbytery letterbox. If you would like to join the group meetings, please contact the parish secretary.

Day for Catechists is on Saturday 3 October at the Amigo Hall and St George's Cathedral, SE1 6HU. This event is for all the catechists of the diocese. Booking and further details here - https://aec.rcaos.org.uk/day-for-catechists-2026. or scan the QR code below. The theme this year is: *Truth and Beauty in Catechesis in the Age of AI*. We expect this event to be fully booked once again so please book early to avoid disappointment. If you require any help with booking your place please contact the church office.

Teach me to Pray is a five-part experiential programme on how to open ourselves to God through prayer starting on Tuesday 6th October. All are welcome to sign up and new Catholics are especially encouraged to join. To book your place and for more information on the programme, including dates and cost please see poster on the noticeboard & scan QR code or go to https://aecsouthwark.churchsuite.com/events/tnpn4hqd