Sacrament of Confirmation 2027: Introductory meeting for Parents and Candidates (Year 9 or age 13—17) is on Saturday 17th October at 10.30am in the parish hall. Details of the registration process and course dates will be shared at the meeting.
All candidates wishing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation should please see the Catechists to register their Mass attendance at the end of every Saturday/Sunday Mass from now until the Confirmation Mass which will take place on Saturday 27th February 2027 at 5pm Mass.

Feast of Saint Jude on 24th, 25th & 28th October. The programme of activities during the feast includes regular celebrations of the Eucharist, blessings with the oil of Saint Jude, and other devotions. Please see poster for the full programme of events and times. All are welcome. More info call 01795 539214 or visit https://stjudeshrine.org.uk/events/feast-of-saint-jude-2026/ The Shrine of Saint Jude is at 34 Tanners Street, Faversham ME13 7JW. See poster.

Prisoners' Sunday is on **11th October** when we pray for prisoners & families, and for all those affected by crime and imprisonment. Pact, the national Catholic prison charity, offers practical & emotional support to prisoners and their loved ones, helping families stay connected and people rebuild their lives. Our second collection next weekend (10th / 11th October) will support this work. Thank you for whatever you can give, and please keep those whom Pact serves in your prayers. Envelopes are available on the table at the back of church. If you are able to gift aid your donation please complete the details at the back of the envelope. To donate directly to Pact scan the QR code on the poster in the church porch. To find out more about the work of *Pact* and to donate online please go to https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/faith/events/prisoners-sunday/

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.

World Mission Sunday is on 18th October. The Holy Father invites all Catholics to support Missio—his charity for world mission—through a special collection. This day of prayer, solidarity and giving unites Catholics worldwide to share the Good News of God's love which has the power to transform lives and heal our world. To donate, use the Missio envelopes, call 020 7821 9755 (office hours) or visit https://missio.org.uk/ to give a gift, set up a Direct Debit and Gift Aid your donation if possible.

CAFOD *Family Fast Day Harvest* Appeal
Please donate to our *Family Fast Day* parish collection this weekend (3rd /4th October). Put your faith into action and share the Lord's love by supporting our global neighbours experiencing shortages of food and safe water. Your gift can support children like Tayla in Zimbabwe to stay in school by helping communities and schools provide nourishing meals, improve access to water and grow food in school gardens.
Use the CAFOD envelope available on the table at the back of the church—please gift aid your donation by completing the GA declaration on the back of the envelope, donate online at https://cafod.org.uk/fundraise/parishes/virtual-envelope or call 0303 303 3030, scan the QR code below or donate via the DCP's in church—please note you cannot gift aid your donation via this method so gift aiders please use the CAFOD envelopes or donate directly to CAFOD.

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.

Southwark Catholic Youth Services (SCYS): Faith, friendship, formation and unforgettable experiences. There's plenty happening across SCYS, with opportunities for young people, young adults and parish youth leaders. Take a look at what's coming up and start planning for the year ahead. Go to home - Southwark Catholic Youth Service

Living Water: You can read the tribute to Philip Harrison, a much loved and respected member of our parish for many years who sadly died in August. Please go to http://www.saintstephens.co.uk/blog/

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.

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-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Saturday 3rd October
5pm Lorna D'Costa—thanksgiving birthday

Sunday 4th October
9.30am People of the Parish
11.30am Mary Califano RIP—10th anniv

Mon 5th **Feria**
10am Gala Lobo—birthday thanksgiving

Tues 6th **St Bruno, Priest**
No Morning Mass
11.30am **Funeral: Aidan Molloy**
7pm ***Novena Mass***

Weds 7th **Our Lady of the Rosary, Memorial**
10am Moira Canning (E McGirr)

Thurs 8th **Feria**
No Mass

Fri 9th **St John Henry Newman, Priest**
No Mass

Sat 10th **The Blessed Virgin Mary**
No Morning Mass
No Sacrament of Reconciliation

Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Saturday 10th October
5pm Canon Alan McLean RIP (Vu)

Sunday 11th October
9.30am Special Intention Mary Anne
11.30am People of the Parish

Mass Times and Intentions

Mon 12th **Feria**
10am Phil Harrison RIP (B Hebben)

Tues 13th **St Edward the Confessor, King**
10am Phil Harrison RIP (Mulvihill)
7pm ***Novena Mass***

Weds 14th **Feria**
10am Cypriano Joseph Castanha RIP

Thurs 15th **St Teresa of Jesus (of Avila)**
10am Philip Harrison RIP (MCMorrow)

Fri 16th **Feria**
10am Etta & Otis Rodrigues—birthdays

Sat 17th **St Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop & Martyr**
10am Priest Ints

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

Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary (Year A)

Saturday 17th October
5pm Mrs Anna Hang Ngo RIP

Sunday 18th October
9.30am Pat Murphy RIP (T Vertanness)
11.30am People of the Parish

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

My dear People,

This weekend we hear the third vineyard parable. The parable is once again addressed to the religious leaders as we saw last Sunday.

Jesus' teaching in the temple gathers series of confrontations between Jesus and the chief priests and the elders. They wanted to know by what authority he is acting.

He answered them giving them the parable of the two sons, as we saw last Sunday, and now that conversation continues as Jesus widens his focus. Now the issue is not just the failure of the leaders to obey the will of God. Relating the third vineyard parable (second in the temple) Jesus opens the whole history of God's dealings with his people—the prophets whom Israel rejected and now coming to get God's own Son. The confrontation we hear in the parable today is within that larger story.

Matthew is writing his Gospel to a community well versed in Jewish scriptures. Jesus takes up the familiar biblical image where in Israel the people of God were likened to a vineyard. Just as Isaiah's readers—our first reading—were to recognise themselves in the vineyard song, so the audience of Matthew is to recognise the history of salvation in the parable. The two sets of servants sent to get the fruit are the 'former' and 'latter' prophets of Israel, and the son of Jesus himself.

As I mentioned last Sunday, we need to keep in mind where we are in the Gospel of Matthew. These events take place during Holy Week and today's events on Tuesday of Holy Week. In three days time this will be Jesus's own fate. Like the son in the parable who meets his death outside the vineyard, Jesus too will be taken outside the city and put to death. The parable is already foreshadowing the events that will unfold before the week is over.

Unlike the vineyard in the first reading which produced only wild grapes and the vineyard has failed. But the vineyard in the parable today is very productive. Here the problem is not the vineyard but the tenants. Those entrusted with the care of the vineyard want the fruits for themselves. They are not the faithful stewards.

Unlike the vineyard in the first reading which was destroyed, in today's parable the vineyard will be given to other tenants who will give the produce at the harvest time. Jesus calls for a radical change of mind, to think everything in the light of the coming of God's Kingdom and the Kingdom values.

God Bless and love you all.
Canon Edward

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Scripture Insights

We become what we ponder. Consider the thoughts of the tenants in this Sunday's Gospel reading. They knew the responsibilities of a tenant farmer, but their obsession led them to kill their landlord's son to seize his inheritance.

Jesus drew on the ancient prophecy from Isaiah that we hear in the first reading. In Isaiah's image, God planted a vineyard, but it produced a poor crop. Isaiah knew that many Israelites had drifted into foreign worship or the violent pursuit of power and wealth. These same activities had already caused the collapse and exile of the northern half of Israel. Isaiah hoped to avoid the same result among the remnant who were still free. This prophecy was part of an attempt, ultimately successful, to call the nation and temple to reform.

Centuries later, Jesus used the same imagery to tell a different story. In his parable, the crop is quite good. These are the average Israelites, whose deep faith is the harvest for which God had hoped. By contrast, Israel's leaders– the chief priests and elders—are the problem. They are wicked tenants, who knew their responsibilities but resisted them. Jesus even accuses them of trying to "seize the inheritance." The obedience they demand as rulers of Israel, he contends, is a poor substitute for true faith in God. Such wicked thoughts—fear, resentment, pride, obsession—result in disaster for those in any age who indulge them.

Reflections

• In today's Gospel, we can understand the landowner to represent God and the tenants as representing the sinful nature of humanity. The tenants steal the landowner's produce for themselves and beat or kill those who come to gather the landowner's produce. They represent the selfish, greedy, cruel, and sometimes even violent nature that can be seen in our world. The landowner tries sending his own son (think about God sending Jesus into the world) to reason with the tenants, thinking that the tenants will respect the landowner's own flesh and blood. But even the landowner's son is not safe.

• This story is a dark reminder of the human tendency to turn away from God and focus on our own desires. Sadly, there are a lot of examples we can look at in today's world where these sinful tendencies are present. It might feel overwhelming to think about what we would have to do to stop or at least slow down the evil in the world, but as Jesus teaches us, we must try.

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.
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. No pre-registration required—just come to the first class.

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. 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.

Eucharistic Miracles Exhibition and Franciscan Relics Exhibition, taking place from now until 10 October at Our Lady of Angels Church, Erith. For the latest information and exhibition timings, please go to https://www.olaerith.org.uk/

Help Needed: One of our parishioners desperately needs a stroller/pushchair for her 9-month-old son who has outgrown his original baby carrier. If you know of one that could be given or sold cheaply to this lady, please inform Canon Edward or the parish secretary. Any offer would be very gratefully received.

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.

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. 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.

Adoremus 2026: Encounter Christ in the Eucharist: Young people and young adults from across London are invited to come together for Adoremus 2026, part of the Eucharistic Congress taking place in Westminster. At the heart of the events is a simple invitation: *to encounter Jesus Christ, truly present in the Blessed Sacrament*, and to spend time with Him in prayer, Adoration and worship.
Friday 9 October, 7–9pm: Young Adults (18–35) Vigil at Most Holy Trinity, Dockhead, with Adoration, Confessions, Fr Emmanuel Mansford, Bishop Gerard Bradley and One Hope Project.
Saturday 10 October: The main Adoremus celebration begins at St George's Cathedral with Mass at 12 noon, followed by a Eucharistic Procession to Westminster Cathedral. A Youth Vigil takes place at Westminster Cathedral from 8–11pm, followed by Eucharistic Adoration throughout the night.
Full details: https://scys.org.uk/adoremus-2026/

Using Scripture to Paint a Picture: The women of Wellspring Church (New Road, Welling) invite you to discover powerful artwork inspired by Scripture and the stories it tells on Saturday 17th October 10.30am – 4.30pm. We encourage you to drop in to this free open event to reflect, chat & enjoy a cuppa. Contact Yvonne Randall (yvonne1.randall@yahoo.co.uk) for more info. See poster.