Remembrance Sunday is a national opportunity to remember the service and sacrifice of all those that have defended our freedoms and protected our way of life. We remember the Armed Forces, and their families, from Britain and the Commonwealth, the vital role played by the emergency services and those who have lost their lives as a result of conflict or terrorism. The National Service of Remembrance, held at The Cenotaph in Whitehall on Remembrance Sunday, provides the nation with a physical reminder of all those who have served and sacrificed.

REMEMBERING

An older person says
They shall grow not old,
as we that are left grow old;
age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn.
A younger person may reply
At the going down of the sun
and in the morning,
we will remember them.
All affirm
We will remember them.

Sacrament of Confirmation 2027: Registration has started for Candidates (Year 9 and above or age 13—17), wishing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation which will take place on Saturday 27th February 2027 at 5pm Mass. Please see the Catechists to register at the end of every Saturday/Sunday Mass. **Classes will begin on Sunday 8th November at 9:20am in the parish hall.**

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.

Bexley Foodbank: Donations can be left in the box in the porch. Your support and generosity is much appreciated. A list of urgently wanted items can be found at https://bexley.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/ as well as a list of not needed items—thank you.

A Day with Mary on *Saturday 7 November* at Westminster Cathedral with Archbishop Richard Moth. Starting at 9.45am, finishing at 5pm, followed by tea & coffee. During the day: Confession & Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. See poster for the full programme of the day or go to https://adaywithmary.org/

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.

Archbishop's Appeal is a Diocesan second collection that funds three key areas of ministry: Youth & Evangelisation, Our Faith in Action (Caritas) and Clergy Care & Formation. Your support will enable the Archdiocese of Southwark to support innovative projects taking place within Catholic parishes and schools throughout South London and Kent that seek to invest Faith, Hope and Love into the communities they serve. Please be generous to the Archbishop's Appeal 2026 this weekend (7th / 8th November). Every gift is welcome. Thank you for your generosity of heart.
Find out more, or donate online at https://rcaos.org.uk/archbishops-appeal
• Scan QR Code on poster using telephone camera
• Telephone weekdays 9am – 5pm: 020 7960 250
• Cash / Cheque – please use the *Archbishop's Appeal* envelopes at the back of church. Please gift aid your donation if possible. Thank you.
• Digital Collection Card readers at the back of the church.

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.

World Apostolate of Fatima (WAF) Symposium: Fatima & First Saturdays Devotion. Join Sr Angela de Fátima Coelho and Fr Lawrence Lew OP at Belmont Abbey (21 Nov) or London (22 Nov) for Mass, Rosary, and talks on the Fatima message. Free; register via worldfatima-englandwales.org.uk.

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.

Knights of St. Columba Mass: There will be a Mass for the Deceased Brothers of Southwark Province, at Our Lady of The Angels church, Erith on Saturday 14th November at 2pm.



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

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
Remembrance Sunday

Saturday 7th November
5pm Terry Rush RIP—14th anniv

Sunday 8th November
9.30am Roy Hebben RIP—1st anniv
11.30am People of the Parish

Mon 9th **The Dedication of The Lateran Basilica**
10am Baptista Rodrigues RIP—anniv

Tues 10th **St Leo the Great, Pope & Doctor of the Church**
10am In Thanksgiving
7pm Novena Mass

Weds 11th **St Martin of Tours, Bishop**
10am Deceased Members of Doogan Family

Thurs 12th **St Josaphat, Bishop & Martyr**
Mass for the Deceased Clergy at St George's Cathedral at 12.30pm

Fri 13th **St Francis Xavier Cabrini, Religious**
10am John & Rosa Colaco RIP

Sat 14th **The Blessed Virgin Mary**
10am Priest Ints
Sacrament of Reconciliation
10.30am—11am & 4pm—4.30pm

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Saturday 14th November
5pm Mr Matthew Thuy Vu RIP

Sunday 15th November
9.30am Olive & Michael Reilly
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 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,

We are gradually coming to the end of our liturgical year. Over the next three Sundays we will read from chapter twenty-five of Matthew which is known as the Eschatological discourse of Matthew. Our readings will focus on the end of the age, the period between the departure of Jesus through his Passion, Death and Resurrection, and his return in glory at the end of time.

The final discourse of Jesus that took place on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem was centred on this theme. Such farewell speeches are common in scripture. They were spoken by leaders of God's people to prepare their followers for the time when they would no longer enjoy their company. Jacob spoke to his sons, Moses to the people of Israel, David to Solomon and Paul addressed the elders of Ephesus. But the main difference between these and Jesus was that none of them expected to return.

Matthew gives three parables to the description of the coming of the Son of Man. They all deal with the topic of delay. Unlike the normal introduction to the parables, we are familiar with, namely, 'the kingdom of God is like,' today's parable begins with the words, 'will be like.'

In today's parable the bridegroom represents the returning Christ. Jesus has already spoken of the bridegroom who would be taken away from his disciples, the bridegroom's attendants. The maidens who cope with the delay by buying enough oil represent the Christians who live a life of responsible discipleship as they wait. The ones who allowed the lamps to run out of oil represent those who do not value the time allowed them.

Some of Matthew's parables put before us tragic figures such as the man without the wedding garment who was excluded from the wedding feast. Today we have the five foolish bridesmaids.

Our Christian discipleship demands activity alertness and preparedness. That time is always now and not when the bridegroom is at the door.

God Bless and love you all.
Canon Edward

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Introduction to Mass
The kingdom of heaven is not fully realised in this life; we look with hope to what is yet to come. We wait with eagerness and spiritual alertness, watchful for the ways God enters our lives now and calls us to make our souls ready for the glory that awaits us. With hearts open to the wisdom and grace of the Spirit, let us prepare to encounter God in our liturgy through his Word and his sacrament.

Scripture Insights
Most of the writers of the New Testament believed that Jesus would return in their lifetimes. This is especially clear from the urgency of Paul's words in this Sunday's second reading. The Lord would appear with cosmic power, summon the living and the dead of each nation before him, and call each person to account for the actions of their life. Those who tried to justify their actions would be judged strictly according to their deeds. Those who knew Jesus' name, however, would know to cry out for mercy, and they would receive it. Once the judgement was complete, the fullness of God's kingdom would appear. Paul believed that he and his readers might still be alive when revelation occurred, and he wrote this letter to console and prepare them.

When Christ did not come right away, Christians began to consider how they ought to live while they waited. Matthew's Gospel is a product of this reflection. It contains large sections dedicated to the ways Christians should behave while they awaited Christ. A number of parables in Matthew encourage Christians to stay alert.

Judaism already had a spirituality of waiting. This Sunday's first reading, for example, promises that those who patiently seek divine wisdom will not be disappointed. Likewise, the psalm recounts the experience of a fervent believer waiting for God's response to prayer. In both cases, waiting symbolised the deep and true faith that drew the believer to God.

Matthew knew these traditions well and also knew that such faith-filled waiting required the self-control and prudence that the wise bridesmaids display. The lesson for Christians, then, is to treat every moment as if it might be the moment of Christ's return.

Reflections
At first you might feel like today's Gospel reading is strange. What do ten virgins (or bridesmaids) waiting for a bridegroom have to do with the kingdom of God? At that time, the groom's friends would wait in the street for him to come back to his home to meet his bride for a large celebration. If they were ready and waiting, they would be invited into the celebration. If they were unprepared, the guards at the doors would turn them away, assuming the bridegroom didn't know them. In the story, the wedding attendants who were lazy and foolish were unprepared and therefore turned away.

LTP Sourcebook 2026

Parish Liturgy Meeting on Tuesday 17th November at 7.30pm in the small hall (attached to the church) where we will discuss the implementation of the Final Document of the Synod in our parish. Please join us.

Parish Christmas Carol Service on *Saturday 19th December at 3pm* in church followed by refreshments in the parish hall. This is always a very joyful occasion. Please mark the date in your calendar & come along. There will be a collection for *Friends of the Holy Land*. https://www.friendsoftheholyland.org.uk/
If you would like to join the choirs for this merry event, Please attend the practice sessions on Wednesdays at 7pm. There will also be practices on most Saturday mornings. Please speak to one of the choir leaders for more information.

Reception 2027: Open Meetings and Tours at St Stephen's Catholic Primary School for parents/carers of children due to start school in September 2027 (*children born between 1st September 2022 and 31st August 2023*) on:
Monday 16th November 9.30am & 1:15pm
Monday 30th November 9:30am & 1.15pm
There will be a talk from the Headteacher and the opportunity to tour the school.
Booking is not required, please attend your chosen session.
School Address: Ruskin Avenue, Welling DA16 3QG.
https://www.st-stephens.bexley.sch.uk/

Missio Red Boxes: If you are a red box holder, please bring your box to church during the month of November and leave it in the sacristy. If you find yourself collecting less change these days, please consider putting a note (or even 2!) in your box. There are some booklets about the work of *Missio* in the porch. Many thanks.

National Conference on Migration, Integration and Human Dignity. Saturday 21 November 9.30am –4pm, Our Lady of the Rosary, Blackfen. Inspired by Pope Leo XIV's teaching, this conference explores migration as a profoundly human and theological reality. Register at local.magnicharity.org.

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.

November Remembrance – A bowl is in front of the altar for the month of November in which you can put names of the departed to be prayed for.

Mass for Deceased Clergy will be at St George's Cathedral on Friday 12th November at 12.30pm. Please join the other parishes in our diocese to remember and pray for our past clergy. All welcome.
Cathedral address: Lambeth Road, SE1 6HR.
Please note there will not be a morning Mass at St Stephen's on 12th November.

Repository: Advent candles and calendars, Christmas cards, calendars, candles, children's Christmas books and Christmas Mass Bouquet cards on sale now in the Repository. Please take time to visit after weekend Masses. (cash only please).

Blessing of Graves
• *Plumstead Cemetery* - Saturday 7th November, 12noon.
• *St Paulinus Cemetery, Crayford* - Sunday 8th November, 12:30pm.
• *Bexleyheath Cemetery* - Sunday 8th November, 2pm.
• *Kemnal Park Cemetery, Sidcup* - Sunday 8th November, 2pm.
• *Brook Street Cemetery, Erith* - Sunday 8th November, 3pm.
• *Sidcup Cemetery* - Sunday 15th November, 2pm.
• *Hillview Cemetery, Welling* - Saturday 21st November, 11am.

CAFOD's World Gifts catalogues are available on the table in the porch & at the back of the church. This Christmas, share the joy of Christmas with a CAFOD World Gift—from safe water to school meals! A meaningful way to bless loved ones while putting faith into action in solidarity with families around the world. To order and discover the full range of gifts visit https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/ or call 0300 777 0030. Please take a catalogue home.

Your Legacy of Faith: Remember the Church with a gift in your Will. When you move onto the next life, you can make your lifetime of faith live on through a gift in your Will. If you are thinking of putting your affairs in order, the Archdiocese of Southwark can help. If you would like to find out more and receive information on Will writing and estate planning contact the team on legacy@rcaos.org.uk or tel.no. 020 7960 2504. An information leaflet is available on the table in the porch. A copy is also on the new Diocesan Church Legacy page: https://rcaos.org.uk/donate/leave-a-legacy/