

Many Thanks for your donations to the *Catholic Youth Services* collection last weekend which came to £311.82. Visit www.tinyurl.com/scys1 or join the Southwark Catholic Youth Network for regular updates at www.tinyurl.com/scysnetwork or scan the QR code below. Please take a leaflet from the table in the porch with activities for Youth & Young Adults.



We remember in our prayers Peter Ward and Joao Colaco who died recently. We pray also for their families that they may find God’s comfort and strength at this sad time.

Singing Carols at Tesco Welling on Saturday 6th December 10.15am—12noon. Raising money for the Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice. All welcome to join in!

Come and sing Carols with the other churches in Welling next to the cannon / Christmas tree at Welling Corner – a chance to *Shine our Light* together! On Saturday 13th December 2pm – 3pm. Carol sheets provided – just come along and join in. All welcome.

Volunteers Needed to help decorate the church for Christmas on Friday 19th December from 4pm. Please come along to lend a hand.

Christmas Carol Service on *Saturday 20th 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. Please feel free to speak to the Sunday Mass choir leaders for more information. Choir practice on Saturdays at 10.45am in the small hall.

St George’s Cathedral Carol Service on 9th December at 7.30pm. Join Archbishop John and the beautiful St George’s Cathedral Choir. All are welcome so please invite family and friends to join us.

CAFOD Advent Carol Service: Dr Christine Allen, CAFOD Director, invites you to CAFOD's annual Advent Carol Service at St George’s Cathedral on Wednesday 10th December followed by drinks and mince pies. All welcome.

Mass to Celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the Knights of St Columba Welling Council 294 on *Sunday 30th November* at 11:30am. We will remember all passed and present Knight's of Welling Council 294. Followed by refreshments in the parish hall. All are welcome.

Bexley Foodbank: Christmas sweet treats—e.g. chocolates, biscuits, mince pies etc. will be gratefully appreciated by their needy customers. Please put your donations in the box in the porch by **Thursday 18th December** so your food gifts can reach the customers in time for Christmas. Your support and generosity is much appreciated. Also, 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. Donations of strong ‘bags for life’ are wanted—please put any spare bags you have in the donation box. Thank you.

Exposition of The Blessed Sacrament weekdays from 9am. Please join us.

Rooted in Love is a programme for married and engaged couples to meet online monthly, where we share friendship, reflect on real-life topics, and pray together as we grow in love rooted in Christ on 11th December at 8.30pm. Further dates will be available in January 2026. Email mflkent@rcaos.org.uk to sign up or receive more information.

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.

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.

Ecumenical pilgrimage to Rome & Assisi 2026. Join Bishop Paul Hendricks, Canon Michael Branch and Anglican Bishop Christopher Chessun on a joyful 8 day pilgrimage from 2 March - 9 March 2026 to Rome and Assisi. [Click here](#) for more details, including costs and how to book your place.



ST. STEPHEN’S CHURCH

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First Sunday of Advent (Year A)	
Saturday 29th November	
5pm	Robert & Julie Fernandes
Sunday 30th November	
9.30am	People of the Parish
11.30am	90th Anniversary Knights of St Columba Welling Council 294
Mon 1st December	Feria
10am	William & Barbara Lennon
7.30pm	Advent Prayer Service
Tues 2nd	Feria
10am	Holy Souls (G Robinson)
7pm	Novena Mass
Wed 3rd	St Francis Xavier, Priest
10am	Repose of the Soul of Peter Ward (Ward Family)
Thurs 4th	Feria
10am	Joe Mulvihill RIP
Fri 5th	Feria
10am	Eves Paguntalan—birthday
Sat 6th	Feria
10am	Priest Ints
Sacrament of Reconciliation 10.30am—11am & 4pm—4.30pm	
Second Sunday of Advent (Year A)	
Saturday 6th December	
5pm	Francis Abreo RIP
Sunday 7th December	
9.30am	Patrick Hartley RIP (M Rush)
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 or https://justgiving.com/campaign/parishsupport —please include parish name and location. To set up a standing order to make regular monthly donations see bank details below.
NatWest Bank Sort Code: 51-70-14 Account No. 39013332 Account Name: RCAS Welling Please use your name as a reference Thank you.
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	
A very happy New Year to you all. Yes, I did not get it wrong. A very happy new year to you all. Today, with the first Sunday of Advent, we begin the new liturgical year.	the Son of God to humanity is remembered, and likewise a time when, by remembrance of this, minds and hearts are led to look forward to Christ’s second coming at the end of time.
I often say Advent is one of the liturgical seasons we generally forget to celebrate. This is because the world outside is focusing their attention towards Christmas. Shopping centres, open markets with Christmas music blaring out, and our streets with all the Christmas decorations all spread the season of Christmas and we too can get dragged into it if we are not careful.	Beginning of any new year is marked by many unknowns. In Advent, however, we wait knowing well that the waiting period ends in Christ’s birth. While we may not know when Christ’s second coming would be, the church invites us to wait in joyful hope. By the third week when the midpoint of Advent is reached and we celebrate Gaudete Sunday, the season invites us to rejoice as the season quickly approaches Christmas time.
Liturgically Advent is a lovely season. Advent means ‘the arrival of the Lord.’ By definition Advent invites us to observe the four weeks before Christmas as a time to pray, wait and remain in joyful anticipation of the notable arrival of Jesus.	As we begin the new liturgical year, our gospel readings are from Matthew, you will notice the new parish Mass books. I take this opportunity to thank all who so generously contributed towards the purchase of these books. May God bless and reward you for your generosity.
The Universal norms of the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar describe Advent as having a “twofold character” which remembers the ‘first coming of	God Bless you and love you all. Canon Edward

First Sunday in Advent (Year A)

Scripture Insights

These Advent readings revolve around two themes. The first reading and the psalm offer a vision of peace centred around Jerusalem and its temple. Three times the psalm repeats a prayer for peace within the holy city. While the psalmist describes the tribes of Israel joyfully entering the temple, the prophet Isaiah sees a vision of all the nations streaming into Zion to receive instruction, a vision of international peace, of the weapons of war melted down and reforged into tools for farming.

Jesus offers the dramatic images of one man in the field and one woman grinding flour being taken while the other woman are left. Both images evoke sudden judgement. Some Christians assume that the one taken is being rescued, while the one who is left will endure the tribulation of the end times, but the Gospel suggests instead that those taken away are like those swept away by the great flood of Noah’s day. Stay awake, Jesus urges, so that you might not be carried away on the day of judgement.

In Scripture, falling asleep is a metaphor both for death and for careless and self-indulgent living, living for pleasures rather than being attentive to God’s purposes. Jesus reminds his followers that they won’t know the hour or day of his return, which means they should live as if it might happen at any time. Likewise, Paul urges the Christians in Rome to live as if the day were about to break: the day of Christ’s return is at hand.

Reflections

• In Disney’s classic film *The Lion King*, the evil uncle Scar sings “Be Prepared” to convey the importance of what is to come. Perhaps not surprisingly, fear is the underlying emotion throughout the song. Scar assures certain starvation, death, and destruction to all who hear his words but choose not to act accordingly. Preparation in this sense is nothing more than a way to avoid misery.

• Not unlike *The Lion King*, Jesus tells his disciples of the importance of preparing for the coming of God. Quite differently, however, Jesus does not capitalise on fear to promote his message, for the coming of God is not based on terror. Rather, as Christians, we wait in joyful hope for the coming of Christ. We do not prepare for the coming of God because we are afraid. Instead, we look forward to God’s presence in our lives with eager anticipation for what is to come.

• Christian waiting is rooted in hope, and hope is the opposite of fear. Hope gives life; fear causes desolation. We do wait for the coming of Christ in a spirit of emptiness or loneliness. As Christians, we wait for the coming of Christ with eager anticipation and deep peace, knowing the immense happiness that comes from a relationship with God.

LTP Sourcebook 2025



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).

First Saturday Devotions including praying the Rosary together at 9.20am in church. Please join us on 6th December.

Archbishop John’s Advent 2025 reflection. This Advent, Archbishop John is calling us on to reflect on the “astonishing truth” that the “Lord Jesus is, and always will be, Emmanuel: God with us, God beside us, God within us”. In a [video reflection](#), Archbishop John said that: “to say God is with us is not poetry but power. It means that the Lord Jesus stepped into our humanity so that we might step into his divinity. It means that God is no distant deity, but one who draws near; who shares our joys and carries our sorrows; who opens heaven to earth, and earth to heaven”. You can watch his full reflection at [rcaos.org.uk/advent2025](#).

Southwark Spirituality Commission Advent reflections. The [Southwark Spirituality Commission](#) will be sending daily reflections during Advent featuring Scripture, thoughts and prayers. Sign-up to receive them directly into your inbox each morning via [tinyurl.com/SSCAdvent2025](#). These reflections are a great way to keep your mind focused on the Lord Jesus during the busy Advent season.

A Day With Mary on Saturday 20th December starting at 9.20am and finish at 5.30pm at Our Lady Help of Christians, Blackheath SE3 9RD. During the day: Confession & Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Please bring a packed lunch. For more info see poster or go to [www adaywithmary.org](#)

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.

Advent Prayer Service in church on Monday 1st December at 7.30pm. A spiritual preparation for the Feast of Christmas. All welcome.

Parish Coffee Morning on Sunday in the parish hall between the 2 morning Masses. Please join us for a cuppa & chat. Donations welcomed.

Called to Bear Fruit consultation response published. Please take a booklet from the table at the back of the church home to read. Thank you to the thousands of people who took part in the Called to Bear Fruit consultation. We are grateful to you all for sharing so openly your hopes for the life of the Church in our Archdiocese. The consultation response, which includes 15 actions points for renewal, is also available at [rcaos.org.uk/calledtobearfruit](#). The consultation revealed a burning desire within our parishes to be missionary and evangelising disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, who work together to help people encounter His love. So, as we move forward on the next steps together, let’s build up the Body of Christ in Southwark with faith and confidence, becoming ever more a community of missionary disciples filled with joy and hope for the future. As an Archdiocese, we will continue to discern the process of renewal, and further updates will be provided in due course.

The Jubilee Year concludes in just five weeks. There is still time to visit the designated shrines and churches across the archdiocese and to receive the plenary indulgence. For a full list of places: [https://rcaos.org.uk/faith/jubilee-2025/designated-jubilee-churches-and-shrines/](#)

Church Decoration: If you would like to make a financial contribution towards the cost of the recent decoration work in church, the meeting room and new hall doors please contact the parish office. Cash / cheque donations can be posted through the presbytery letterbox in a sealed envelope with ‘*Church Decoration*’ written on the front (cheques made payable to ‘RCAS Welling’). Donations can also be made on the Digital Collection Plates at the back of the church and online at [https://portal.mydona.com/assets/webPay/index.php?cid=236](#) or use the church bank account details on the front page of the newsletter (use reference: Church Decs). Your support is important and deeply appreciated. If you are able, please gift aid your donation. Thank you. 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](#).