Ambassadors for Christ: A Catholic apologetics *free* resource. The Archdiocese of Southwark has launched an exciting apologetics project to provide evidence-based answers to questions such as "*Is Jesus God?*" or "*Does prayer work?*". Ambassadors for Christ is designed to equip you with a deeper understanding of your faith, so you can confidently answer questions and be a joyful witness for the Lord Jesus and his Church. Every Monday, a new video will be posted on YouTube, along with a worksheet to enable parishes, schools, youth groups and families to use them as part of their faith formation. To watch the videos and take part in this exciting project, please visit: Ambassadors for Christ | Apologetics for Catholics | Archdiocese of Southwark .
Perfect for RCIA classes, parish study groups, confirmation classes, chaplaincies, families and many more. There will be 52 videos, posted every Monday on YouTube, with accompanying worksheets.

St George's Cathedral Second Collection This Weekend: For over half a century, St George's Cathedral has been the Mother Church of the Archdiocese of Southwark, home to 175 parishes and over 50,000 Roman Catholics. For many Catholics living and working across London and the South East of England, St George's has been a beacon of light. Today, St George's Cathedral continues to attract thousands of worshippers and visitors each year, as well as serving a lively local parish community which proudly reflects the rich cultural and ethnic diversity of South London. The Cathedral frequently hosts important Diocesan and national celebrations, as well as concerts and events for various Catholic charities. There is a rich musical tradition, maintaining a choir of boys and men, as well as a girls' choir, both of which sing at Sunday Masses and on major feasts. In many respects, St George's Cathedral serves as a spiritual home and 'beehive' for Catholic evangelisation and mission across the Archdiocese of Southwark.
St George's Cathedral is entirely reliant upon the generosity of its parishioners, volunteers and the Archdiocese of Southwark to keep its doors open. It does not receive Vatican or government funding, nor has an endowment to rely on. Your support can enable the Cathedral to remain open daily to those seeking a place of peace, prayer and worship. Thank you!
· Donate Online: www.rcaos.org.uk/Cathedral
· Or Scan QR Code using telephone camera (below)
· Telephone weekdays 9 am – 5 pm: 020 7960 2504
· Digital Collection Plates at the back of the church.

Readers: The Third Sunday in Ordinary Time was designated "*Sunday of the Word of God*" by Pope Francis in 2019, and so will be the time for the annual renewal of our readers' commitment to their ministry. This will take place immediately after the homily at each Mass this weekend - Saturday 5pm, Sunday 9.30am and 11.30am Masses. We thank our readers for their continued commitment to their ministry at our Masses.

Parish Liturgy Meeting on Thursday 5th February 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.
At the meeting we will be planning our Lent and Easter events.

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.

Catechetical Institute: The Agency has agreed an extension to the diocesan-wide subscription to the Catechetical Institute workshops. Each person in our parishes and schools can create a personal account and access over 140 workshops for free. Visit https://aec.rcaos.org.uk/franciscan for more details. See poster on notice board to scan QR code.

Grief in Loss Retreat: 20 - 22 March 2026. For anyone who has experienced bereavement, either recently or some time ago. Grieve, remember, hope and give thanks for your loved ones in the light of the Resurrection of Jesus. Call 01622 717272 or email reception@thefriars.org.uk to book and find out more.

Archdiocese of Southwark 2026 Directory:
The fully functional, searchable Online Digital Directory for public use is available here www.rcaos.org.uk/directory

SVP & Ink Cartridges: Recycle your old ink cartridges and raise funds for the St Vincent de Paul Society by placing them in the box on the table in the porch (no large cartridges). Many thanks.

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

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Saturday 24th January
5pm Olive Reilly RIP—20th anniv

Sunday 25th January
9.30am People of the Parish
11.30am Roland Payne—wellbeing (R Steel)

Mon 26th **Sts. Timothy & Titus, Bishops**
10am Jaltuchowsti Igoz

Tues 27th **Feria**
10am John Piper (A & J Carolan)
7pm ***Novena Mass***

Weds 28th **St Thomas Aquinas, Priest & Doctor of the Church**
10am Rosin McCoy

Thurs 29th **Feria**
10am Maura O'Brien RIP (Mythen Family)

Fri 30th **Feria**
10am Peter Ward (Teresa Adams)

Sat 31st **St John Bosco, Priest**
10am Priest Ints

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

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Saturday 31st January
5pm Peter Ward RIP (M Rush)

Sunday 1st February
9.30am Roy Hebben RIP (M Harrison)
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,

Today we start reading from Gospel of Matthew till we begin the season of Lent. During Lent and Easter John's Gospel will be read on most Sundays until the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. We will return to read from Matthew without interruption after that.

Just a few thoughts about the structure of Matthew's Gospel as we hear today's Gospel. After the infancy narrative we have a kind of an introduction to the public ministry of Jesus and this is followed by the Galilean ministry of Jesus which is almost 16 chapters. Then we read about the journey of Jesus and the disciples to Jerusalem for the celebration of the Passover. Strangely enough the journey to Jerusalem in Matthew is very short—just three chapters— unlike in Luke's Gospel which spans over almost ten chapters. Then we have Matthew's account of the Final Week ending with the crucifixion and the burial of Jesus. In the final chapter we meet Mary of Magdala and the other Mary who visits the tomb, the message of the angel to the disciples, and the Risen Lord coming to meet them and the gospel ends on a mountain when the Lord sends the disciples on their mission, assuring them that he will be with them always, till the end of time.

As we read todays gospel, we notice that Jesus' baptism and temptations are over and it is time for his mission to begin. John the Baptist is now arrested and is in prison. Jesus begins his mission not in the holy city of Jerusalem but in Galilee, the land of Herod Antipas the ruler. It's a strange place to start the mission and the messiah to reveal himself, taking into consideration that it is this same Herod who had just arrested John the Baptist and put him in prison.

But for Matthew, this is fulfilment of Isaiah as we heard in the 1st reading today, for 'the Light has come into a land of darkness' and, soon the disciples will be asked to be 'light of the world and to whose light must shine out before others.'

God Bless and love you all.
Canon Edward

Sunday 25th January - Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Scripture Insights
"The Lord is my light," sing the psalmist (Ps 27:1). As a metaphor, light represents many things: spiritual enlightenment, understanding, salvation. It reveals secrets kept hidden and signals the life and joy of spring after the silence and death of winter. The prophet Isaiah used light as a metaphor to signify God's redemption of Israel after their defeat by Assyria (Zebulun and Naphtali were regions defeated by Assyria). Isaiah's words likely celebrated the coronation of Hezekiah, the king who protected Jerusalem from Assyrian invasion; in their deeper meaning, they point forward to a king and a salvation of another kind.

In Jesus' teaching, preaching, and healing (Mt 4:23), Jesus ushers in God's kingdom in all its radiance: its hope and joy after a long winter of foreign occupation and a high priesthood that bowed to Rome. Matthew points out that Jesus starts his ministry in the very territory once captured by Assyria. The heavy yoke of foreign rule that once burdened the people (see Is 8:4) will now be the light, easy yoke offered by Jesus' way (Mt 11:29-30).

Reflections
• Notice the urgency in the disciples' response to Jesus' invitation. Peter, Andrew, James and John were fishermen tending to their daily labour when a stranger appears on the shore and says, "Come, after me" (Mt 4:19). The men immediately leave their nets and boats to follow Jesus. They do not stop to ask questions, nor do they offer any sort of explanation or excuse for why they are unable to follow in their relationship with the Lord

• Notice, also, where Jesus speaks to the first disciples. He does not invite them to a fancy dinner and offer an outlined business proposition. Instead, Jesus invites the first disciples in their ordinary places of work. The call itself was not extraordinary, nor was it elaborate or confusing. Jesus met the disciples where they were and simply said, "Come, after me."
• The same is true for us. Jesus does not necessarily call us in bombastic, grandiose ways. Jesus instead calls us amid our everyday routine. Jesus speaks to us in our studies and work, through our friends and families, and especially in the things that make us happy. We must recognise Jesus' call amid the ordinary events of our lives and respond without hesitation or excuses.

Liturgy and Life
"At once" Peter and Andrew left their nets. James and John "immediately" left their boat and their father. Imagine yourself in the story of the call of the first disciples. There were many travelling preachers at the time of Jesus. What made this one stand out? Was it something in Jesus' tone or about the way he looked? Had they heard of this Jesus? When we pray with this particular Scripture, we see how we might see more clearly our own call. God is always calling to us, always waiting for us to respond in love. Discuss with a close friend how you see God calling you.

LTP Sourcebook 2026

Many Thanks for your donations to *Pax Christi* on Peace Sunday last weekend which came £229.42.
To find out more about the work of *Pax Christi,* the Catholic movement for peace in England & Wales, please go to www.paxchristi.org.uk
Online donations: Make a Donation – Pax Christi England and Wales

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**.**

Catholic Association for Racial Justice second collection next weekend to support the work of the Catholic Church to promote racial justice in our schools, parishes and in wider society.

Archbishop John Wilson will celebrate Mass for *Racial Justice Sunday* at St George's Cathedral on Sunday 1 February 2026, at the 10am Mass. Racial Justice Sunday is a time for the Church to pray, reflect and take action against racism, while celebrating the diversity of our Archdiocese. Everyone is invited to take part, and those who wish may wear national or cultural dress as a sign of unity and pride.
After Mass, all are welcome to gather in Amigo Hall for refreshments — a chance to meet one another, share experiences and continue the conversation about faith and inclusion.
You are warmly encouraged to attend in person, but if you cannot make it you can watch the livestream through the following link: **https://www.youtube.com/live/fdmGwmESSgI**

CAFOD's Big Lent Walk 2026: Take on this challenge! Walk 200km throughout the 40 days of Lent anytime and anywhere to raise funds for life-saving water. Go to CAFOD's Big Lent Walk for 2026 for more details & to sign up.

Bexley Foodbank: Donations can be left in the box in the porch. Your support and generosity is much appreciated. Wanted items can be found at https://bexley.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/

Confirmation Candidates & First Holy Communion Families are required to sign an attendance register after Mass. Please see the catechists and/or Canon Edward at the back of the church.

Parish Coffee Morning on Sunday in the meeting room attached to the church (while the Confirmation classes are taking place in the main parish hall). Please join us for a cuppa & chat. Donations welcomed

Aspiring to Governance - Wednesday 25 March, 5.30pm-6.30pm. Join the Education Service for an informative session designed for individuals interested in becoming a Foundation Governor within the Archdiocese. This session is ideal for prospective Foundation Governors, as well as anyone interested in the governance of Archdiocesan schools. To book and view further details please follow this link.

Archdiocesan Pilgrimage for Young Adults (aged 18 to 35) are invited to join Archbishop John on pilgrimage to Lourdes, from 7 to 13 June 2026. The cost is £789, which includes flights and full-board accommodation on a shared basis. To book, please visit: www.tinyurl.com/lourdes26
Young adults (aged 18 to 35) are also invited to register interest for the *World Youth Day* pilgrimage to Korea in August 2027 at www.tinyurl.com/wyd2027
For information about youth activities for all ages across the Archdiocese please visit our website Southwark Catholic Youth Service: Archdiocese of Southwark

First Saturday (of the month) Devotions including praying the Rosary together at 9.20am in church. Please join us on 7th February.

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.

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.