

**Repository:** Please take the time to visit the Repository after Saturday evening & Sunday morning Masses to browse the wide range of cards for *every occasion*, plus a lovely section of religious gifts available. Baptism, First Holy Communion & Confirmation cards and gifts are on sale now! Cash only please.

**Parish Garden Morning** on *Friday 1st May* (& the first Friday of each month), at 10.30am. Everyone welcome to help if you have a spare hour or two. Please bring your own equipment. Refreshments provided.

**First Saturday (of the month) Devotions** including praying the Rosary together at 9.20am in church. Please join us on 2nd May.

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

**Missio and the Mill Hill Missionaries** invite all Red Box supporters and the wider Diocesan community to come together for two important events in 2026.

St Simon Stock Church, Bleakwood Rd, Walderslade, Kent ME5 0NF on Saturday 6th June at 11am.

*Join Fr Joseph Donkor (Missio Diocesan Director for Southwark) and the Mill Hill Missionaries for Mass, followed by lunch and sharing of mission work.*

St Elizabeth of Portugal Roman Catholic Church, The Vineyard, Richmond TW10 6AQ on Saturday 3rd October at 11am.

*Join us for this special World Mission month mass with Missio National Director, Fr Anthony Chantry MHM, and Fr Joseph Donkor.*

**Our Mission Masses** are an opportunity to hear about how missionaries share the Gospel throughout the world and how we can be missionary disciples in our own parishes. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please email [redbox@missio.org.uk](mailto:redbox@missio.org.uk) or visit <https://missio.org.uk/mission-masses-and-events/> for further 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](mailto: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.

**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

**‘Called’: An Evening on Vocation:** An inspiring evening for young adults aged 18-35 to explore and pray about your vocation. Enjoy live music, powerful testimonies from married, priesthood and religious vocations, and a keynote from Bishop Gerard Bradley. The evening also includes Adoration, Confession, veneration of the relic of St John Henry Newman, and a social afterwards with drinks and nibbles. Thursday 30 April, 6:30pm at St George’s Cathedral, Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HR. No need to book - just come along.

**Rosary For Life.** Archbishop John Wilson is calling on all of us to join him in praying the *Rosary for Life* this May (Month of Mary). Together, we will pray through the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous Mysteries, each one offered for the most vulnerable facing growing threats to life: unborn children at risk of abortion, victims of war and persecution, people with disabilities, and the elderly and vulnerable. For video, audio and written versions of the Rosary for Life, visit [rcaos.org.uk/rosaryforlife](http://rcaos.org.uk/rosaryforlife).

**Pray the Rosary. Encounter Christ. Defend life.**

**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.

**Summer Celebration of Saint Jude** on Saturday 30th May in the grounds of Carmelite Shrine of Saint Jude in Faversham. Starting at 11am—Devotions with Anointing, 1.30pm Open Air Mass & 2.30pm Procession to the Shrine. Refreshments & piety stall available. See poster. More information at [www.stjudeshrine.org.uk](http://www.stjudeshrine.org.uk)  
34 Tanners Street, Faversham ME13 7JW



# 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](http://www.saintstephens.co.uk) Email: [welling@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:welling@rcaos.org.uk)

Secretary: Mrs. Lorraine Harris. email: [wellingsecretary@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:wellingsecretary@rcaos.org.uk)

School: St. Stephen’s Primary School, Ruskin Avenue, Welling, Kent. DA16 3QG

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## Fourth Sunday of Easter (Year A)

**Saturday 25th April**

**5pm** Mary Theresa McNeil

**Sunday 26th April**

**9.30am** John Clancy RIP

**11.30am** People of the Parish

**Mon 27th Feria**

**10am** Raymond Treanor RIP

**Tues 28th St Peter Chanel, Priest & Martyr**

**10am** Rosario Da Silva RIP—birthday & anniv

**7pm Novena Mass**

**Weds 29th St Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church**

**10am** Peter Heathed RIP (E McKenna)

**Thurs 30th Feria**

**10am** Maria Bujor

**Fri 1st May St Joseph the Worker**

**10am** Philip Wall Intentions

**Sat 2nd St Athanasius, Bishop & Doctor of the Church**

**10am** Priest Ints

**Sacrament of Reconciliation**

10.30am—11am & 4pm—4.30pm

## Fifth Sunday of Easter (Year A)

**Saturday 2nd May**

**5pm** Maureen Penfold & Bob Burton

**Sunday 3rd May**

**9.30am** People of the Parish

**11.30am** Golden Book Subscribers

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](http://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,

Fourth Sunday of Easter is traditionally known as the Good Shepherd Sunday. It is because every year on this Sunday our Gospel reading is from the Gospel of John, chapter 10, which speaks of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Today is also a day for prayer for vocations for the priesthood and religious life.

In the Old Testament, many times we find the image of shepherd and sheep. Leaders of people are described as shepherds. Many of the psalms have the same imagery, just like today's responsorial psalm.

There are long speeches by Jesus in John's Gospel and they are known as discourses. For example, during this week we have been reading from chapter 6 of John, which is known as the Bread of Life discourse. These discourses tell us who Jesus is and the purpose of his mission.

The image Jesus applies to himself in today's gospel is the image of the door. The Greek word John uses means more than a door, the idea of access. This is because at that time

sheepfolds did not have gates or doors. They were simple stone enclosures. In the evening when the sheep were gathered in, a shepherd would lie down across the opening. Quite literally the shepherd became the door. The way in or out of the sheepfold was over his body.

The gate or the door of a sheepfold had two purposes. First to protect the sheep from robbers and wild animals, and secondly, a way of going in and out. In the evening the sheep were brought into safety of the fold and in the morning, they are guided by the shepherd to find food and water. Jesus identifies himself with the gate. The last words of Jesus in today's gospel, one of the great sayings of Jesus' mission, "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."

It is through Jesus that we enter into the life of God and we can find fresh pastures in which we are fed and nourished.

God Bless and love you all.  
Canon Edward

#### Fourth Sunday of Easter

#### Scripture Insights

Peter's sermon in Acts continues from last Sunday. His listeners have been moved by his testimony, and they ask what they can do. Peter instructs them to repent and be baptised, and he assures them that the promise of the Holy Spirit is both for them (the descendants of Abraham) and for "those far off" (the other nations).

The other three readings turn to the metaphor of the shepherd. The most well-known psalm in Scripture imagines God as a gentle, strong shepherd who refreshes and protects his people. Peter invokes this image in his letter when he writes, "you have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls" (1 Pt 2:25). It's unclear whether the shepherd is the Father or Christ. Both are possible, since Jesus takes on this divine metaphor and calls himself the good shepherd. But 1 Peter 2, Jesus is primarily described as the suffering servant from the prophet Isaiah. Like Isaiah's servant, Jesus does not return evil for evil, and bears our sins in his body despite having no sins of his own. He absorbs the world's violence and transforms it into our salvation. Peter's instruction was originally given to Christian slaves and turned the world's logic upside down: the slaves, not the masters, are like Christ.

The reading from John's Gospel takes the metaphor of the shepherd in a surprising direction. Not only is Jesus the shepherd who guards the sheep, he is the gate by which the sheep enter into the sheepfold. The sheep

follow him, recognising his voice, and then they enter into the fold through him: "No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn 14:6). As in the psalm, those who trust in their shepherd "find pasture" - places of safety and abundance.

#### Reflections

• If Jesus is the gate through which we all enter, then it follows that we must listen to his teachings and embody them in our lives. We desire to have eternal life with God, and in order to enter through that gate, we begin with our belief in God. This faith leads us to a deeper understanding of what it means to be a follower of Christ. It inspires us to find more ways to encounter him and to share his presence with others.

• We are to care for our brothers and sisters, feed the hungry, visit the sick, and perform works of mercy. We are to pray unceasingly for the needs of others, the needs of the world, and our own needs.

#### Liturgy and Life

The life of Christian discipleship is not always easy. We might sometimes secretly judge those people whom we think pick and choose only some parts of Church teaching to follow while we valorise or excuse our behaviour. But the Truth is a person, a person who "came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." Walk through your neighbourhood and notice the abundance of life that spring has brought to it.

LTP Sourcebook 2026

**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 Thursday 7th May, Monday 1st June and Wednesday 1st July at 7.30pm in church. Please note that parents must attend **all** classes.

**Safeguarding Sunday 2026.** Sunday 3 May is Safeguarding Sunday. In line with today's Gospel, we are called to protect, called to care, called to act. Safeguarding is not the work of a few; it is a shared responsibility. You can find out more about Safeguarding Sunday at [Safeguarding Sunday: Archdiocese of Southwark](#) or via the QR code.



**Grace Explorers – Preteens Fellowship (Ages 9–12):** *Grace Explorers* is an initiative by Jesus Youth UK, started to support children aged 9–12 in their faith journey. We meet once every three to four months at Stephen's Parish church hall for a day of prayer, friendship, fun activities, and simple, engaging reflections on the Kerygma — the basic message of God's love. Children enjoy games, action songs, creative sessions, and time in prayer including Eucharistic Adoration. Our next programme is on 30th May 2026. The full-day event (10:30 am – 4:30 pm). A small registration fee of £10 includes pizza at lunch. **We warmly invite this year's First Holy Communion group to join us on their path as Grace Explorers.**

**Missio Red Boxes:** Thank you to all those who give to *Missio* through the Red Boxes or directly to the charity. Last year St Stephen's raised £984. Sadly, as less people use cash these days, the number of boxes being handed in for emptying is decreasing. If you are still using yours, please bring it to the sacristy **by the end of April**. If you are not collecting many coins now, please consider putting a note or two in your box. The spring magazine is available on the table in the church porch.

**A Day with Mary** at St Anselm Church, Dartford DA1 2HJ on 30<sup>th</sup> May 9.20am – 4.30pm. Confession & Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament during the day. Please go to <https://adaywithmary.org/> for the full day programme or see poster. Please bring a packed lunch. Livestream link [www.churchservices.tv/dartford](http://www.churchservices.tv/dartford)

**Good Shepherd Sunday – Support Our Future Priests:** The priesthood has always been at the heart of the Church. There will be a collection on Good Shepherd Sunday this weekend, 25th/26th April, to support the Priest Training Fund, which forms men for service across our parishes, schools, hospitals, and communities. We currently have 9 seminarians, each costing around £30,000 per year over six years of formation. Your generosity helps make their calling possible.

- Donate online: [Priest Training Fund: Archdiocese of Southwark](#)
- Call: 020 7960 2504 (weekdays, 9am–5pm)
- Or use the envelopes at the back of church—please gift aid your donation if possible.
- Use the Gift Aid envelope in your box
- Digital Collection Plates at the back of church or online at <https://portal.mydona.com/assets/webPay/index.php?cid=236>

Leave a lasting legacy to the Church: Please consider remembering our church or the Priesthood in your Will. Find out more at [Leave a Legacy: Archdiocese of Southwark](#)  
Thank you for your prayers and support.

**Capital Ring Rosary** on Saturday 23rd May. Join Catholics across London for a powerful day of prayer as pilgrims walk the Capital Ring, praying the Rosary and placing our city under Our Lady's care. St Stephen's, Welling will be one of the starting locations and it would be wonderful to have some of our own parishioners praying with this event. Please meet at church at 1pm for a short opening prayer. We will walk Section 2 of the Capital Ring: [Falconwood to Grove Park](#) 4.4miles. A Radio Maria volunteer will lead our group.

Please go to [Capital Ring Rosary - Radio Maria England](#) or call 0300 3021251 for more details and to register your attendance.

The Capital Ring is divided into 15 sections. For more details about the Capital Ring walk – please visit: <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/walking/capital-ring>

**An Opportunity to Pray for World Peace:** St John's Church welcomes other Christians from Welling to join them in praying for peace each Saturday morning on Zoom from 9.30am to 10.10am. Come and join us regularly or occasionally - participants can pray out loud, or just listen and pray quietly. Zoom Code: 715 685 8747 Password: prayer "Pray continually." 1 Thessalonians 5:17