

First Holy Communion 2027: For the parents who missed the registration meeting, there will be another opportunity to register your child(ren) on Wednesday 2nd September at 7.30pm in the parish hall. This will be the last opportunity to register before the preparations begin in September. The registration forms, preparation programme and details will be shared and explained on the day. Please also note that parish First Communion preparations are only for those who attend Sunday Mass at St. Stephen’s, Welling.

Many Thanks for your donations to the *Stella Maris* collection last weekend which came to £329.94. Stella Maris is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide who play a vital role in all of our lives. You can still donate by visiting www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate or by texting ‘SEA’ to 70460 to donate £5 or scan the QR code on the poster. Donation envelopes are available on the table at the back of church. Thank you.

SPARK in the Park runs from 17th to 21st August in Danson Park from 1pm to 4.30pm. A *free* community event for all the family. Each day will feature a range of free activities for children of all ages.

- Games & Stories
- Craft
- Under 5s Area
- SEN Quiet Area
- Bouncy Castles
- Sports

There will also be 3 family focused evening events on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, details to be confirmed.

<https://www.sparkinthepark.org.uk/>

Applications for SPARK Volunteers are now open and we encourage you to apply as soon as possible as this helps us with our organisation and planning. Whether you are able to help during the day, the evenings or with set-up and put down you are incredibly valuable to the team and we appreciate all the time you can offer. We also need volunteers to be at the site outside of the SPARK hours in the evenings, overnight and early morning. Perhaps you are not able to be there during the day due to other commitments but might be able to offer some time in these vital areas. Please go to:

<https://www.sparkinthepark.org.uk/volunteer/apply>

If you have any questions about SPARK or how you can support SPARK this year, please don’t hesitate to get in touch via email at sparkparkbexley@gmail.com

Bexley Winter Shelter which seeks to help and serve the rough sleepers of Bexley Borough, now operates a drop-in day centre based at the Sea Cadets Hall in Trinity Place, Bexleyheath on Mondays and Tuesdays. Please keep the staff, volunteers and “guests” in your prayers.

At this time, we would greatly value gifts of *new* men’s underwear, toiletries - shampoo, shower gel, dental floss, toothpaste, deodorant, shaving foam and soap—and sleeping bags. **Please bring your donation(s) to church next weekend—25th/26th July.** There is a box in the porch for donations. Alternatively, please email melvynfrench7@gmail.com to arrange collection or go to Trinity Place during opening days & times (Monday & Tuesday 10am – 2pm) to drop off your donation(s). Thank you so much for being part of this outreach to some of the less fortunate in our Borough.

Annual Mass for the Beatification of Father Agnello will be celebrated by Fathers Biju and Oliver at 10am on Thursday 30th July 2026 at Our Lady of the Rosary Church, Blackfen Sidcup, Kent DA15 8LW. All are welcome.

Pilgrimage to Assisi: A walking pilgrimage to Assisi from September 18th- 26th 2026: one night in Florence then six days along the beautiful ‘*Way of Francis*’. Contact Eddie Gilmore for more information: gileag@gmail.com www.eddiegilmore.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.

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.



ST. STEPHEN’S CHURCH

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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

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)	
Saturday 18th July	
5pm	Confirmation Mass
Sunday 19th July	
9.30am	People of the Parish
11.30am	Andrew Eisabor—memorial
Mon 20th	Feria
10am	Maureen Veronica Lee RIP—anniv
11am	Funeral: James Gorey
Tues 21st	Feria
10am	Mrs Brigid Finn RIP
7pm	Novena Mass
Weds 22nd	St Mary Magdalene, Feast
10am	Colm McDonagh & Dudley McDonagh
Thurs 23rd	St Bridget, Religious
10am	Mary Cassatelli—Get Well (McMorrow)
Fri 24th	Feria
10am	Brian Wilson
Sat 25th	St James, Apostle
10am	Priest Ints
Sacrament of Reconciliation	
10.30am – 11am & 4pm – 4.30pm	
Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)	
Saturday 25th July	
5pm	Shirley Ann Ferris & Mary Ferris
Sunday 26th July	
9.30am	Peter Ward RIP
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, Last Sunday we heard the parable of The Sower, one of the seven parables we find in chapter thirteen of Matthew’s Gospel. This weekend we hear three more parables— parables of the wheat and weeds, the mustard seed and the yeast or leaven. Of the seven parables in chapter thirteen, Jesus explains only two. The first was the parable of The Sower, which we heard last Sunday. Today, we hear the second, namely the parable of wheat and weeds, or the parable of the wheat and darnel or tares. The parable of the wheat and weeds is found only in the gospel of Matthew. Our gospel text today can be divided into four parts. Firstly, there is a long parable, this is followed by two short parables. Then we find a short comment from the evangelist as to the reason why Jesus uses parables, and, finally the explanation of the parable of the wheat and weeds. Parables are a very striking tool of Jesus’ teaching and preaching. For Matthew, Jesus’ use of parables fulfils one of the promises of the Old Testament. The quotation, the	third part of the text today, ‘I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world,’ is taken from Psalm 78. Psalm 78 is a long psalm that meditates the history of Israel. Jesus now fulfils what the prophet has spoken - as Jesus is the one who was sent by God -now reveals the meaning of the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven. The mystery of the Kingdom is so deep that people can only understand its meaning through simple parables, and as they continue to reflect on it they will eventually come to the deeper meaning and the wisdom it contains. We need to read and reflect on these parables on two levels, namely in the life time of Jesus and in the time of the reader. The weeds in the field symbolise a lack of response to Jesus’ teaching. But, despite the warning of John the Baptist, these will not be rooted out quickly by his Father. They will wait to the end. Matthew’s community is like a field too and so is our world today. Why does God tolerate? The answer of the parable is, ‘Have patience.’ God Bless and love you all. Canon Edward
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Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
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Scripture Insights The parables are pithy narratives with concrete images to help people understand abstract points. The three parables in Matthew 13:24-43 describe the kingdom of God as both spiritual and incarnate. Ancient prophecies foretold a time when God would govern the world in person. Some expected God to govern a literal kingdom, while others thought the kingdom would be some kind of intellectual or spiritual transformation. Jesus’ parables suggest that both understandings are true. The parable of yeast is the clearest example of a spiritual kingdom. In the minds of ancient peoples, yeast was a mysterious substance that transformed a paste of flour and water into bread. Just so, the kingdom of God was an unseen power that transforms people and communities. The parable of the mustard seed has similar themes. Mustard vines grow at such a rate that one ancient author warned against planting it. Ancient peoples wondered at the power of a tiny seed to produce something of such vigour. Similarly, Jesus teaches, the kingdom of God may seem small, but it draws on divine power and will flourish anywhere it takes root. The parable of the wheat and weeds speaks in concrete terms. Jesus offers the observation that not everyone is a child of the kingdom. Jesus warns, however, against using the exclusionary tactics of human communities to separate the two groups. It is almost impossible to tell the two plants apart. The weeds will do no damage, so there is no need to tear them out. It is better, he	cautions, that they should grow together. Only God can sort out the weeds from the wheat, since only God knows the human heart. Following centuries of Israelite traditions, Jesus recognises mercy to be the basis of God’s kingdom. Reflections • Looking around at the Church today may make us echo the question asked in the parable of the weeds and the wheat, asking Jesus, “Didn’t you sow seeds of mercy and justice in your Church? Where did all this scandal judgment, sin, and injustice come from?” • Many of those who walk away from the Church do so because they can’t see any good in a faith that can’t seem to transform the people who proclaim it. Others want to pull out whichever pieces of the teachings or structure of the Church they blame for the sins of her members. • When faced with frustration, fear, and doubt over the state of the Church, it can be comforting to know that Jesus knew it would be this way. The harvest is coming. The evil in the world will seek greed and power everywhere, including the structures and communities of the Church. Introduction to Mass The kingdom of heaven is not only the promise of eternal life after we die; it is a reality that is planted in our hearts now. As disciples of Christ, we help to reveal the kingdom on earth when we sow the seeds of kindness and mercy, suspending judgement of others and readily granting forgiveness. <i>LTP Sourcebook</i>
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New Sanctuary Furnishings: We are pleased to announce that our new sanctuary furnishings have now been installed. They provide a beautiful and dignified setting for the celebration of the Holy Mass and other sacred liturgies of our parish. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all parishioners whose generous donations have enabled the purchase of these new sanctuary furnishings. May God bless you for your continued support and commitment to our parish. Although the new sanctuary furnishings are now in place, donations towards their cost are still warmly welcomed. Anyone who wishes to contribute may do so by:

- * Cash or cheque (made payable to ‘RCAS Welling’) in a sealed envelope with *Sanctuary Furniture* written on the front or use one of the Gift Aid Envelopes on the table at the back of the church.
- * Card Readers at the back of the church or use the online link <https://portal.mydona.com/assets/webPay/index.php?cid=236>
- * Bank Transfer—please use the church bank details on the front page of the newsletter & please reference your donation with ‘*Sanctuary*’

Your donation can be anonymous if preferred but if you are eligible, please consider gift aiding your donation to the church, which will increase your donation value by 25% at no cost to you. Your kindness and generosity is much appreciated. If you have any questions please speak to Canon Edward or contact the church office.

CAFOD-DEC Venezuela Earthquake Appeal: You can help our neighbours affected by the 24 June earthquakes in Venezuela with emergency shelter, water and food. CAFOD is already working with local Church partners to support people who have lost their homes, but we need your support to help more survivors. Your donation will provide essential supplies and help families rebuild their lives. Donate to the CAFOD-DEC Venezuela Earthquake Appeal today: [cafod.org.uk/Venezuela](https://www.cafod.org.uk/Venezuela) or call 0300 999 0030 or scan the QR code below. Please keep our neighbours in Venezuela in your prayers.



Centenary Celebration: St John’s Church, Danson Lane, Welling 1926—2026. Saturday 18th July to Tuesday 21st July. All welcome. Please see poster for timetable of events or go to www.stjohnswelling.org.uk

Parish of St Stephen, Welling: Patronal Feast Celebration: Many thanks to everyone who contributed to making our Patronal Feast Day celebration a huge success! It was a great day when the parish came together to celebrate the parish of St Stephen’s. Thank you to our organisers & planners, decorators, musicians, children’s entertainment team & helpers, everyone who helped on the day & helped to clean up at the end of the day and all who donated food & drinks—we certainly had a feast day! We were blessed with good weather and everyone had a great time. Thank you to all for making it a wonderful day. Our thanks to Morrisons supermarket for donating delicious strawberries & to McDonald’s for a good supply of ice which helped keep our drinks cold & refreshing.

Save the Date: Patronal Feast Day
Sunday 11th July 2027

We would like to hear your views & thoughts on improvements or changes to our Feast Day in 2027. Please take a few minutes to write down your comments on the slip of paper from the back of the church and when completed please put it in the box on the table at the back of church. Positive reviews, new suggestions, improvements, changes &/or ideas for the 2027 celebration are welcomed. There will be a review session on Saturday 25th July at 11am in the parish hall for about an hour. All are very welcome to join this where we will discuss ideas & comments about our Feast Day.

Scam Alert: We would like to make you aware of a scam targeting individuals within our parish communities through WhatsApp. Cyber criminals are increasingly using AI to create convincing videos, voice messages and written communications while impersonating members of the clergy. Their aim is to deceive unsuspecting individuals into believing they are communicating with a priest, bishop, or other parish representative before requesting money or donations. We ask that you please remain vigilant.

- Never assume that a WhatsApp message or video is genuine simply because it appears to come from a member of the clergy.
- Never send money, gift cards or bank details in response to unsolicited requests received via WhatsApp or other messaging platforms.
- Always verify the identity of the sender by contacting the priest or parish directly using a known telephone number or official email address before responding to any request.

Report any suspicious messages and the phone numbers to Action Fraud <https://www.reportfraud.police.uk/>