

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 note that parish First Communion preparations are only for those who attend Sunday Mass at St. Stephen’s, Welling.

First Saturday (of the month) Devotions including praying the Rosary together at 9.20am in church. Please join us on 1st August.

The Catholic Medical Association UK seeks to support Catholic healthcare professionals and students and to promote a faithful Catholic understanding of medical ethics and practice. Further information concerning the Association, its membership, and forthcoming events is available at [Home - Catholic Medical Association](#) See poster.

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

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 This will be the last Coffee Morning before a break during the month of August. ‘*Café Stephen*’ will return in September!

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 this 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.

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

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
Mon 27th **Feria**
10am Bob Burton RIP & Julia Lynch RIP (K O’Halloran)
Tues 28th **Feria**
10am Wendy Ross RIP (T Vertanness)
7pm **Novena Mass**

Weds 29th **Sts. Mary, Martha & Lazarus, Memorial**
10am Felix D’Costa (P Fernandes)

Thurs 30th **Feria**
10am Paddy Cadden RIP (M&S Baker)

Fri 31st **St Ignatius of Loyola, Priest**
10am Lily O’Reilly RIP (Mulvihill)

Sat 1st August **St Alphonsus Liguori, Bishop & Doctor of the Church**
10am Priest Ints

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

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Saturday 1st August
5pm John Lynch RIP

Sunday 2nd August
9.30am Patrick Hartley 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,	
We continue reading from chapter thirteen of Matthew’s gospel, which is called the parable discourse.	
Last Sunday we noticed that after giving the three parables, Jesus leaves the crowd and goes into a house. There the disciples joined him, and he explained to them the meaning of the parable of the wheat and the weeds (darnel). Immediate after the explanation of the parable, Matthew gives us the last three parables in the chapter. We can quite confidently accept the fact that Jesus is still in the house and speaking mainly to his disciples. This is because Matthew has not said anything about a change of scene or setting.	than Kingdom of God out of respect for the Jewish community.
The three parables of today are only found in the gospel of Matthew. In these parables, like last Sunday’s, the Kingdom of Heaven—reign of God—is likened to a man finding treasure hidden in the field, to a merchant who finds a pearl of great value and to a dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds. Unlike Mark and Luke, Matthew speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven rather	The parable of the dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds, is making the same point as last Sunday’s parable of the wheat and weeds (darnel). The separation of the good fish from those that are of no use takes place later on when the fisherman returns to the shore.
	Just like the wheat and the weeds will be separated later on at the harvest time, the parable of the dragnet cautions us about judging others, judgement will be made, but not by us and not here and now. Perhaps Matthew is reminding us about the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on Mount, that we are very much prone to seeing the splinter in our brother or sister’s eye, while being totally oblivious to the log in our own eye.
	The conclusion to this parable chapter has a question by Jesus. It is addressed to the crowd, the disciples and to us.
	God Bless and love you all. Canon Edward

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Scripture Insights

For several weeks, the Sunday Gospel readings have come from the parables of Jesus. In each one, Jesus has tried to find some concrete illustration for the reign of God. God’s direct rule over all things might be the ultimate reality, but it is a subtle process. Recognising it requires discernment and the ability to identify God’s presence and action. The parables Jesus shares this week each emphasise that process of search and discovery.

Spiritual discernment is a type of wisdom. Solomon recognises the difficulty of making good decisions on behalf of God and Israel and begs God for the grace to do so. The wisdom he receives is a special treasure, because not only does it help him judge things rightly, it also offers him insight into God’s mind, which made all things. The psalm reinforces this belief, adding a need for commitment. Those careful to follow the will of God will discover things that only God can reveal.

Those exercising discernment in today’s Gospel had already trained themselves to find what they sought. The fortune hunter knew how to discover treasure; the pearl merchant recognised an especially valuable pearl; the fisherman knew what to keep and what to discard. Likewise, those who seek God’s kingdom must first train themselves to recognise it. Prayer, works of mercy, and study of God’s Word are the training that opens the heart to recognise God’ constant presence and action.

This Sunday’s second reading reveals the result of an open heart. “All things work for good for those who love God.” The person whose mind is trained to seek the kingdom encounters divine gifts at every turn. Loving God and living out Christ’s commands will attune the mind to the treasures hidden in open view all around us.

Reflections

- How far would you go to claim a fortune? This is the question implicit in the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price. In each of these parables the treasure being sought is so precious that the seekers do not hesitate to give up everything they already own to possess it.
- Jesus tells us that the kingdom of God is like the pearl of great price because it promises to return far more than whatever we might spend to gain it.

Introduction to Mass

The Lord offers us an exquisite treasure, a pearl of great price, in the kingdom of heaven. Nothing of earthly value can match the worth of eternal life; we should give all we have to obtain this heavenly treasure. Let us invest time and devotion to our relationship with God, listening to his Word and sharing in his Eucharist, that we might know the joy and blessing of life in his presence.

Next Weekend (1st / 2nd August)
Annual Mission Appeal for the Institute of Charity (Rosminians): We will welcome Fr. Anthony Meredith, IC, who will make the mission appeal at all our Masses next weekend.
<https://www.rosminians.com/>

New Sanctuary Furnishings have provided 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.

Living Water: *New Articles posted!*
An Unexpected Pilgrimage by Giorgio Chiosso & *St Stephen’s Patronal Feast 2026*. Please go to <http://www.saintstephens.co.uk/blog/>

CAFOD-DEC Venezuela Earthquake Appeal: You can help those affected by the earthquakes in Venezuela with emergency shelter, water and food. 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 or call 0300 999 0030 or scan the QR code below. Please keep the people of Venezuela in your prayers.



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.

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. 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.

Fundraising For Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage.
A message from Bishop Paul: One of the trustees of our Lourdes pilgrimage has been doing a sponsored walk to raise money to help disabled pilgrims to go to Lourdes. He will be in parts of Kent and SE London this week. If you would be willing to contribute, he has a fundraising page at www.justgiving.com/page/calourdes125sw

The Year of St Francis: To mark the eighth centenary of the death of St Francis of Assisi, Our Lady of the Angels Church, Erith, has organized a programme of celebrations and devotional events. From Saturday 1 August to Saturday 26 September, the parish will hold nine novena themes based upon Franciscan spirituality. These will be accompanied by exhibitions of relics of Franciscan saints and of the Eucharistic Miracles exhibition devised by St Carlo Acutis. Guest speakers will be present at each Mass. On Saturday 3 October, the 17:30 Mass will include the special liturgy of the Transitus, commemorating the passing of St Francis from this life to eternal life. On Sunday 4 October, Archbishop John will celebrate Mass for the Feast of St Francis at 10:30am. Further information is available from [Our Story — OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS RC CHURCH](http://www.saintstephens.co.uk/blog/)

St Francis Summer Retreat: Join Sr Janet of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood for a peaceful 7 week *online* video retreat starting on 5th August from the beautiful grounds of The Franciscan Centre, Ladywell. Walking in the footsteps of St Francis of Assisi and Pope Francis, discover fresh inspiration in their witness of humility, simplicity, care for creation and love for those on the margins. Through prayer, reflection and the beauty of the natural world, this joyful retreat offers an opportunity to deepen your faith and encounter God in all things. Sign up by 29th July to guarantee your place. To find out more go to <https://mailchi.mp/eea0ce15b714/1rgsid5mow>