

First Holy Communion 2027: For the parents who missed the first 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.

SPARK in the Park runs from 17th to 21st August in Danson Park from 1pm to 4.30pm next to the Boathouse. 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 & Infatables
- Sports

There will also be 3 family focused evening events on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 7pm –9pm.

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

SPARK in the Park - Please pray for the success of SPARK in the Park this year. Join us on Sunday 9th August at 6.30pm in St John’s Church, Danson Lane, Welling for *SPARK Prayer & Praise*. A great opportunity to catch up with the team and hear about some of the new things we are doing this year as well as lift SPARK up to the Lord. On Sunday 16th August at 6.30pm we will be meeting in Danson Park for our SPARK Commissioning Service in the SPARK tent (next to the Boathouse). It would be great to see you all there.

Applications for SPARK Volunteers—It is not too late to offer your help for SPARK— 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. Due to popular demand ‘*Café Stephen*’ will be open during August! Please join us for a cuppa & chat. Donations welcomed.

Right to Life: *Support not Suicide* is the campaign to stop assisted suicide. On Friday 11 September 2026, Kim Leadbeater’s revived assisted suicide Bill, which has been brought back to Parliament by Lauren Edwards MP, will have its pivotal Second Reading vote in the House of Commons. Join people across the country in asking MPs to vote NO on 11 September. To find out who is your MP go to [Write to MP to vote NO on the new assisted suicide Bill on 11 Sept – Easy tool](#) Please write to your MP and ask them to vote NO to the revived Leadbeater assisted suicide Bill on 11 September 2026.

Statement on the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill. Ahead of the Bill’s Second Reading on 11 September, Archbishop John Sherrington has issued a statement opposing it, citing inadequate safeguards and risks to palliative care. Parishioners are urged to contact their MP via [Right to Life UK](#). More info on the [Catholic Bishops’ Conference website](#).

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.

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



ST. STEPHEN’S CHURCH

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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
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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> Please gift aid your donation, if possible, by completing a digital Gift Aid Declaration—name, address and email address required.

To set up a standing order to make regular monthly donations please contact the office for the church bank details via email wellingsecretary@rcaos.org.uk

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,	
Our gospel today can be looked at as a drama of four scenes. In the first, Jesus having fed thousands of people with five loaves and two fish, sends them back home, and asks the disciples to go ahead of him in a boat while he withdrew to spend some time in prayer by himself.	
The second is the struggle of the disciples against the wind and the waves as they are making very little headway. Into this struggle of the disciples Jesus comes walking towards them. The disciples are frightened thinking it is a ghost, but Jesus calls out saying “Take heart (courage)! It is I. Do not be afraid.’	
Third scene is the futile attempt of Peter to walk on water towards Jesus and almost drowning. In the last scene Jesus and Peter get into the boat, the wind drops and the sea is calm again. The drama ends with the disciples’ confession of faith.	
Biblical scholars call this an ‘epiphany story.’ Though this story takes place during the life of Jesus, it has many similarities of the appearance of Jesus to the disciples after the resurrection.	
God Bless and love you all.	Canon Edward
Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	

Scripture Insights

God does not always appear how and where we expect, and Christ often calls us to follow him in ways that we cannot fathom.

In the first reading, Elijah encounters God in an unusual site and manner. Although he is at the place where Moses met God centuries before, this was unfamiliar territory for Elijah, whose home was distant from Horeb. Elijah had previously encountered God in places of worship and sacrifice, like his own offering on Mount Carmel. God had now called him to a distant land to show him something new.

Elijah realises God is present when he hears the “tiny whispering sound.” No one knows what phenomenon these words describe. Some suggest it was intuition. Others propose that it was an unnatural stillness in the environment. The other phenomena mentioned—wind, earthquake, and flame—all manifested God’s presence in older Israelite traditions. Indeed, at Mount Carmel, God had appeared in fire that fell from the sky. But in this “tiny whispering sound,” Elijah encountered God in an unfamiliar way and place.

In the Gospel reading, the wonder is not just that Jesus is somewhere he cannot possibly be and doing something he cannot possibly do. It is also that he calls Peter to join him. Matthew emphasises this call in his version of this event. Peter can walk on water because he saw Jesus doing it first. Unlike Elijah, however,

Matthew presents the story in ways that echo Israel’s scriptures. He wants the reader to recognise that when Jesus walks on the sea and calms the raging waters, he is performing actions that scriptures attribute to God alone. For example, speaking of God, Job declares that he ‘alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea.’ (Job.9:8) no one else does this. Matthew depicts Jesus doing precisely what Job says belongs to God.

Scripture scholar John Meier speaking of Jesus walking on water, sees it as an image of how the church struggles to survive in the midst of uncertainty and hostility. Its Lord is no longer vividly present as he was to his disciples. He comforted them and fed them with his words and food. Now, it seems as though they have to go it alone. Facing criticism and mockery of a hostile world where can they find comfort? They find it in the Gospel and in this story. As Meier says, ‘for the early Church, the Eucharist was the ritualised experience of an epiphany of the risen Jesus, coming to a small group of believers labouring in the night of this present age; once again, he gave courage and calmed fears simply by announcing his presence.’ (A Marginal Jew, Vol2. p.923)

whose constant faith let God show him something new, Peter’s fear subverted the evidence of his eyes. To follow Christ without fear, we must seek him out in unfamiliar places, listening for his quiet but unmistakable Word. Once we find him, we need to follow him past any fears. Then we too will have the faith to walk on water, side by side with the Son of God.

Reflections

- In today’s Gospel, Jesus is off by himself praying while the disciples are at sea, facing rough waters. Notice that Jesus begins to walk towards them even before they seek his help. Because they are not expecting Jesus to be walking toward them on the water, they are more afraid of him than the waves! Jesus reveals himself to them, Peter wants proof. So, Jesus invites Peter to walk towards him. Peter begins to walk but becomes afraid of the wind and waves and begins to sink. There is so much fear here: fear of the stranger, of the unknown and of that which we cannot control.
- In the midst of all this, Jesus reaches out and catches him. Jesus came to the disciples in the midst of the storm and in the midst of their fear. Having faith in God’s love and support can help us stay afloat, especially when we are most afraid or anxious.

CAFOD: Global Debt Crisis: *This weekend* we will be collecting signatures for a CAFOD petition about the global debt crisis, which is causing terrible suffering for our brothers and sisters around the world. Cardinal Stephen Ameyu Martin Mulla from South Sudan has written to parishes in England and Wales to explain. A copy of his letter is available on our noticeboard and on the table at the back of the church. Please take the time to read his message and lend your support. Thank you for helping to build a better world. Every signature on the petition will help to make a difference, as CAFOD call for more ambitious action from the UK government. CAFOD director, Christine Allen, has recorded a message explaining why we are asking you to sign a debt petition in our parish this weekend: [watch the message now](#). For more information on the campaign, to sign the petition online & to write to your MP online please go to <https://cafod.org.uk/campaign/the-global-debt-crisis> Cards are available on the table at the back of the church for you to write to your MP at the House of Commons (no stamp required) asking their support to pass a UK Debt Justice Law without delay & to lead urgent reform on the global debt system. Please take a card home with you to write and then post.

Many Thanks for your generous contributions to the Mission Appeal last weekend for *the Institute of Charity (Rosminians)* which came to £776.99. <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.

The ‘old’ baptismal font has been placed at the back of the church and parishioners are invited to pause at the font to bless themselves with the holy water upon entering and leaving church.

Family Faith have created a Summer Family Activity pack which can be downloaded using this link: [Online Family Activity Packs — CELEBRATE Trust](#). Families can choose from faith filled activities, support for family prayer, books for different ages and film suggestions. There is also a *Summer Psalm Walk* designed to help families explore Psalm 139 whilst they walk in their local park or on holiday, [Get your FREE Celebrate@Home Summer Psalm walk!](#)

Catholic Worker magazine (summer edition) is available (*free*) on the table in the porch. Please take a copy home to read.

RCIA: Anyone seeking to learn more about the Catholic Faith is invited to join the RCIA group which meet on Monday evenings in the small hall (attached to the church) from 7pm to 8.30pm. Our first session is on Monday 28th September. Former members are most welcome to join us and share their thoughts and experiences. Please make contact with one of the catechists if you intend coming so we have your name: Eileen at 5pm (Saturday) and 11.30am Sunday Masses. Peter & Maureen at 9.30am Sunday Masses and Canon Edward.

The Archdiocese of Southwark Education Service warmly invites you to an inspiring evening exploring the rewarding and varied opportunities available within Catholic education. This event is open to graduates, career changers, teachers, support staff, retired professionals, parishioners and anyone interested in supporting the mission of Catholic education on Tuesday 15 September, 6:30–8:30pm at St John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School, Rochester ME1 2FA. Tea, coffee and light refreshments will be available. Details and booking at rcaoseducation.org.uk/actr

Bereavement Ministry Training on Saturday 19 Sep. This training day at Aylesford Priory, Kent, (9am –5pm) equips parishioners to offer sensitive, empathetic support to the bereaved. Contact Barbara Salamonczyk to book: mflbereavement@rcaos.org.uk

March for Life UK: Join Archbishop John Wilson at the March for Life UK on Saturday 5 September, 10am –5pm in London, including the Pro-Life Family Summit and Youth Summit. Find out more at marchforlife.co.uk.

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. 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](#)