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PARISH WEBSITE
www.englishmartyrsrccstrood.org

DONATIONS

Nat West Bank
Sort code: 60-21-02
Account number: 55082904
Account Name: RCAS Strood

*This parish is part of the RCAOS registered
Charity Number 1173050*

Thank you for your kindness and generosity.

ENGLISH MARTYRS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Headmistress Ms Catherine Thacker
Frindsbury Road, Strood
ME2 4JA
01634 718964

A member of Kent Catholic Schools Partnership

LAST WEEK

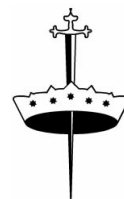
ATTENDANCE
315
WEEKLY COLLECTION

GIFT AID £266.10
NON-GIFT AID £438.26

TOTAL £704.36



ENGLISH MARTYRS' STROOD



DECEMBER
The Immaculate Conception

✠ HOLY MASS FOR THE WEEK 7TH DECEMBER 2025

Missal: Prayers and readings PG. 9

SUNDAY 7TH

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8.30am Said mass

10.30am Sung mass

*Voight Family
People of the Parish*

MONDAY 8TH

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

8.30am Exposition

9.30am Mass

Fr Bill and Peggy O'Brien RIP

TUESDAY 9TH

SAINT JUAN DIEGO CUAUHTLATZIN

11.30am Funeral Mass Josephine Maher

WEDNESDAY 10TH

OUR LADY OF LORETO

8.30am Exposition

9.30am Mass

Holy Souls

THURSDAY 11TH DECEMBER

SAINT DAMASUS I

8.30am Exposition

9.30am Mass

All the people of the Parish

FRIDAY 12TH DECEMBER

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

8.30am Exposition

9.30am Mass

(FRIDAY ABSTINENCE)

Rev Antonio Cannavina RIP

SATURDAY 13TH DECEMBER

SAINT LUCY

9.30am Mass

10.00am Exposition

6.00pm Vigil Mass

Killian and Chioma and their intentions

Arthur and Kathleen Pearl RIP

SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8.30am Said mass

10.30am Sung mass

*People of the Parish
Rose Barrington RIP*

Confessions

Saturdays at 10.15 am – 10.45 am and 5 pm 5.30pm.

Adoration

Saturday 10 am -12 noon and 1hour before every weekday mass.

Parish groups

(held in the John Fisher Room unless otherwise stated)

Monday

Mothers Prayers (monthly) at 7pm

Tuesday

Legion of Mary at 7 pm

Wednesday

Coffee Club after morning mass

Thursday

Padre Pio Prayer Group first Thursday at 7 pm

Friday

Mother and toddler's group at 9am (term time) Parish Hall

Saturday

Youth Club – first Friday of the month at 6.15 pm (term time)

Sunday

Knights of St Columba, first Saturday of the month at 7 pm

Tea and Coffee first Sunday at 11.30 am in the Parish Hall

Mary Immaculate and John the Baptist: A Call to Conversion

In this holy season of Advent, the Church gives us two powerful themes that come together beautifully: the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and the call of St John the Baptist. Both lead us to the same place—a humble, converted heart ready to welcome the Lord.

The Immaculate Conception is a truth long explored by theologians and scholars. They worked faithfully to understand how Mary could be conceived without original sin. God used their efforts, yet He also wanted us to know clearly that this mystery is not merely the product of human reflection, but a gift of divine revelation. That is why, in His own unexpected moment, He confirmed it through a simple, humble girl.

At Lourdes, the Blessed Virgin appeared to St Bernadette Soubirous—poor, unknown, and uneducated—and revealed herself in the local dialect: “*Que soy era Immaculada Councepciou*” — “*I am the Immaculate Conception.*”

Bernadette did not understand the phrase, yet she repeated it faithfully to her parish priest. God chose the little one to make known a great truth, reminding us that grace—not human brilliance—is the source of holiness, and that God speaks clearly to the humble and the open-hearted.

This message fits perfectly with the voice of St John the Baptist, who cries out in the Advent wilderness, “*Prepare the way of the Lord!*” His call to conversion is the practical response to the mystery we celebrate. His images of filling valleys, lowering mountains, straightening crooked paths, and smoothing rough roads show the inner work needed for Christ’s coming: allowing God to fill our emptiness, humble our pride, correct our sinful habits, and heal the roughness of our hearts—especially through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Mary’s Immaculate Heart is the model of what God desires for us: a heart pure, humble, and fully open to His will. Bernadette Soubirous shows us the humility required to receive God’s revelation. John the Baptist shows us the conversion needed to welcome Christ. Together they remind us that every achievement, talent, and skill we possess is God’s gift, entrusted to us so that we may serve others honestly and return all glory to Him.

As we journey through Advent, these two wondrous themes—Mary’s Immaculate grace and John’s call to repentance—stand together as one united invitation: Be humble, be converted, and open your heart to the coming of Christ.

Mary, conceived without original sin, pray for us sinners.

Funeral notice

Please note that **Josephine Maher** funeral will take place in English Martyr’s Church on **9th December at 11:30am**.

Big Floor Clean

A huge thanks to everyone who came and helped to clean and polish the wooden floor in the main area of the church last weekend. This was a significant task which involved removing and replacing all of the benches, something we have not done for several years. Thank you for giving up your Saturday mornings to help, the floor looks great.

Parish Christmas Party

All parishioners are most warmly invited to **our Parish Christmas Party**. It will be an evening of joy and thanksgiving. We will have Christmas carol presentation, Quizzes, Christmas games, Food (Buffet) Dance, and a wonderful opportunity to socialise with fellow parishioners.

We will celebrate in the **Parish Hall at 7pm till late on the Friday 19th December 2025**. Let’s dress up to make the night even more special.

Grand Christmas Raffle tickets

Our Grand Christmas Raffle tickets are available now and you can find them in the envelopes in the porches.

Please return them by Monday 15th December.

Tea and coffee

Tea and coffee is now held every Sunday 10.30 in the parish Hall. Please join us to get to know your brother and sister parishioners.

Wintertime 2026: Friday 2nd – Sunday 4th January.

Cost £139: For aged 11 – 15. This initiative is an offshoot of Summertime 2025. **For altars servers and those who attend Sunday mass regularly aged 11 -15.** See poster for details. Forms will be available, or you can contact Fr. Stephen Boyle, dartford@rcaos.org.uk. It takes place at Westminster Pastoral centre, Pinner. **Names need to be known by 15th December, and forms received by Fr. Stephen Boyle by the 20th December.** A coach will be put on from St. Anselm’s Dartford at a cost of £20 return.

A Defibrillator for our parish

Thanks very much to everyone who baked, helped and contributed to the defibrillator fund after 10.30 Mass last Sunday, cash contributions on the day totalled **£162.50 which is a great result.**

Further donations in cash, cheque or by bank transfer would be very welcome over the coming weeks and months please mark any contribution 'Defibrillator Fund'

Our defibrillator has been ordered and there will be further information on training etc. in future newsletters.

Charity Art Sale at Aylesford

On Sunday 21 December 2025 at Aylesford Priory, Kent there is an art exhibition by members and friends of the [Maltfriscan Community](#). The artworks mark the 800th anniversary of St Francis of Assisi’s ‘*Canticle of Creatures*’, celebrating God’s creation. The exhibition will include a children’s art activity, and is at The Yard workshop (near the pottery) during the Christmas Farmers’ market, 9.30am - 1.30pm. Original icons, artworks, cards and stocking fillers for sale. **All proceeds to the children’s charity, HCPT.**

Lift Needed to Sunday Mass

A parishioner, **Daphne George**, living on **St Mary’s Island, Chatham**, is looking for a lift to Sunday Mass (Saturday 6.00pm Vigil, Sunday 8.30am or 10.30am). She would also be especially grateful for help getting to **Christmas Mass**. If you may be able to assist, even occasionally, please speak to **Fr Mebrate** or contact the parish office.

Message from English Martyrs’ RC Primary School

1 – Children Starting School in September 2026: If your child was born between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022, it’s time to apply for a Reception place for September 2026. English Martyrs’ RC Primary School warmly invites you to consider our school.

2 – School Tours: We are offering school tours on Wednesday, 3 December and Thursday, 8 January. To book a visit or find out more, please contact the school office: office@englishmartyrs.medway.sch.uk.

3 – Faith School Applications: If applying to English Martyrs’ or any faith school, please remember to complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) alongside your main application. More details at medway.gov.uk. Applications close at 5pm on Thursday, 15 January 2026.

C Thacker (Headteacher)

Our sick parishioners and friends: Barbara Borthwick, John Paul Stoke, Betty Jones, Cathrin La Page, Lauren Allan, Tony Carroll, Sylvia Kemp, Billy Thomas, Marie Fassioms, Samantha Candeggi-D’Alonzo, Joe-Joe Dockrell, Carol Masey, Eileen Wells, Jenson Lambeth, Neo Taylor, Kathy Mogg, Anna Gawlik, Joanna Tidmarsh, Shane McNeelan, Helen and Arthur Annal, Claire Baron, Rod Black, Michael New, Michael (Mick) Griffin, Adam Luck. Elliott King.

Of your charity – please pray for those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Maria Humphrey, John Casey, James Doherty, Rosina Collier, Margaret Paynter, Janet Marks, Stephen Brzeski, Tom Mccann, John Burke, Jagdish Lal, Epigenia Trower, Ronald Valentine, Maria Higgins, Ralph Bole, Elizabeth Lelental, Mary Abela, Maryanne Jadzinski, Edward Cadic, Christopher Hibbs, Anthony Redmond, Margaret Durling, John Hart, Mary Mulrooney, Daniel McGuinness, Reginald Moore, Peter White, Florence Cunningham.