

St. Stephen's RC Church Blairgowrie

St. Luan's R C Church Alyth & St. Mary's Coupar Angus

Fouth Sunday of Advent Year C 22/12/24.

Parish website: <https://www.st-stephens-blairgowrie.org.uk/>

Parish Priest and Prison Chaplain: Father Gregory Umunna Ph.D. Phone: 01250872171

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Warm welcome to all our Parishioners and visitors. Whether you are visiting our parish or just moved into the area, please feel very welcome ... thanks.

Parish diary for the rest of the Week beginning from 22/12/24.

"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

Saturday 21st December - 5.30pm: Vigil mass St Stephen's.

Sunday 22nd Dec - 9.30 am: Holy mass at St. Luan's Alyth.

Sunday 22nd December - 11.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's.
Nativity of the Lord. Solemnity.

Monday 23rd December 10.30am/1.30pm Masses and Ministry of Care, all day in Glenochil Prison.

Tuesday 24th December. On this CHRISTMAS EVE: the Opening of the Jubilee Year will be celebrated in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome.

5.30pm: Carol Service followed by Holy Mass at St. Stephen's

Wednesday 25th December. The Nativity of the Lord

9.30am: Holy Mass at St. Luan's

11.00am: Carol Service followed by Holy Mass at St. Stephen's

Thursday 26th December

10.00am: Feast of St. Stephen. Holy Mass at St. Stephen's

Friday 27th December

10.00am: Feast of St John. Holy Mass at St. Luan's

Saturday 28th December

5.30pm. Vigil Mass of the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Holy Mass at St. Stephen's

Sunday 29th December

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

9.30am: Holy Mass at St. Luan's

11.00am: Holy Mass at St. Stephen's

This Sunday's message, ..., Holding our breath

The readings invite a final pause, one further holding of the breath, before the birth of Jesus. The Visitation, in particular, with its explicit and implied encounter(s), may help us reflect on all the encounters of this season, not forgetting "the" encounter to which we are all invited.

Opening Prayer: Who are we, Lord God, that you should come to us? Yet you have visited your people and redeemed us in your Son. As we prepare to celebrate his birth, make our hearts leap for joy at the sound of your Word, and move us by your Spirit to bless your wonderful works. We ask this through him whose coming is certain, whose day draws near: your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

Introduction to the Scripture Readings. *Micah 5:1-4* The promise is given that Bethlehem will be the birthplace of the shepherd of Israel. *Hebrews 10:5-10* Instead of offering sacrifices, Jesus offers himself, dedicating himself to do God's will — a model for all believers. *Luke 1:39-44* Blessed is Mary among women, and blessed is the fruit of her womb — Jesus, whose birth we will shortly celebrate.

In your prayers, kindly remember those on our prayer list: Michael Rolls, Neil Mcdowall. Pam McKenna, Val Naughton, Dr. Paul Kinnear, Mary and George Flockhart. Snooky Marshall, Maud McGinn, Alex Forrester, Cipriano and Carmelita, Tom O'Malley, Diana Richardson, Giles Umunna and Tony Donnan, Lisa Robertson.

You are never alone: Reach out! join any of the church groups e.g. readers, flowers ladies, Divine Mercy, adoration group etc. For a shared a prayer, or just have someone listen to you, a

candle lit for you or yours, have a mass offered for your intention or that of a loved one living or dead, please speak to the priest. Thanks.

Tea/Coffee, Everyone is welcome to tea and coffee served in the Lower Hall after 11.00am mass in St. Stephens every Sunday morning after 11.00am mass. Thanks.



MARY'S MEALS CEILIDH: FRIDAY 10 JANUARY 2025 BLAIRGOWRIE TOWN HALL

We have posters up about the Mary's Meals Ceilidh in both churches and we're being asked if we could please donate items suitable for inclusion in the raffle and also if we could take along some food. If you are willing to donate raffle prizes, please leave these in the box at the back of the Church. If you are able to provide any food items, please take these along on the night. If you are intending to donate any food, could you please jot down on the sheet at the back of the Church what item (crisps, sandwiches, sausage rolls etc etc.) you will be providing so that we can let Lynne (Fryer) who's organising the Ceilidh know. She's keen to know what might be offered in advance so that she can be sure to include different things so that there's a good variety of food available.

Parish Repository is packed with lovely items for your Christmas celebrations at very subsidized prices: Candles, cards, prayer books, bibles, pictures, statues and various gift items that you would love.

-Finale 170th and 125th Joint Anniversary of St Stephen's Blairgowrie (1856 – 2026) and St. Luan's Alyth (1900 – 2025).

-New to the Parish? Please pick a form at the entrance of the church, complete and hand in the form. Thanks. New members

are always welcome to come along and attend or visit the following parish groups: SVDP, Wednesdays 7.30pm; Divine Mercy, Tuesdays 10.30am; Adoration, Wed. 6.00pm.

-Today and Up Coming Events: -8th Dec. Poor Mission Fund. -29th Dec. Building maintenance Fund collection.-12th January. Justice and Peace. -26th January Building maintenance Fund collection. -9th February: The Ecclesiastical Students Fund, -23rd February: Building maintenance Fund; 16th March. The Ecclesiastical Students Fund -30th March: Papal and Episcopal Charities (SCIAF).

Confirmation and pastoral Visit by the Bishop: Sunday the 1st of June 2025, 11am mass. **First holy communion** will be on Sunday the 15th of June 2025, 2pm. **Reconciliation** would be on Wednesday the 26th of February 6.00pm.

Catechism Classes for First Holy Communion and Confirmation:

Are you an adult and not yet confirmed? Do you want to know more about the faith and get deeper into sacraments? Then do not hesitate to join us every Monday at 5:30pm from 14th October. We will have a great time together. Please, send a confirmation email to giovanigiovani2024@gmail.com with your full name, dates and places of your received sacraments.

-Parish Finances: All of us hope to leave the world a better place than when we came into it. When making your will please consider leaving something to St. Stephen's R C Church so that you will continue to assist our parish to flourish and leave behind a legacy of Faith. If you feel able to support the parish in whatever way you could via Standing Order, occasional or one-off payment, it would be very much appreciated. By signing the Gift Aid form, your offertory collection can earn the parish a bit more.

-Details of Parish account: Royal Bank of Scotland, 14 Allan Street, Blairgowrie, PH10 6AD. Sort code:- 83-16-33; Account No:- 00240708. Account name:- Trustees of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dunkeld No3 Char TST St Stephens RC Church. Many thanks.***Last Sunday's offertory coll. £505.29** Many thanks for your support to the parish. *Figures exclude takings from Standing orders, bank transfers and direct debits. Comprehensive Parish Financial Audits and Accounts are published on the Notice Board. Thanks.

Information on Annual Leave: Just to inform all our parishioners that I hope to be away from the parish for my annual leave from the 30th of December to the 5th of February 2022. During this period, I will be able to be with my family and manage some rest away from parish settings. Please give our usual warm welcome to the Superior of The Redemptorists, Fr. Elias (07378648040) (he may delegate another priest of the Redemptorists) in Kinnoull, Perth. He has gladly accepted to cover the Sunday masses which will be limited to 9.30am in St. Luan's Alyth and 11.00am in St. Stephen's Blairgowrie throughout the period of my absence. In the case of an emergency, he could be contacted on his number or the house line:01738624075.

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As we successfully arrive to the end of 2024, I give thanks to the almighty God in "in whom we live and move and have our being" and offer my deepest appreciations to all our parishioners for all your unflinching support to the parish throughout 2024.

Because of your faith, your support and participation, our parish family is alive, stable and focused. Beyond bricks and mortar, (which in our case all our buildings are well established and solid) the church is the people of God, and our parish is a vibrant family of God's people. Take time to notice the vibrant and enthusiastic young faces amongst the readers, at weekend masses, prayer of the faithful and offertory processions in both churches. Take time to notice the joy of meeting and sharing our ourselves, young, not so young and old at Sunday masses the tea and coffee after the 11.00am mass every Sunday. Take time to notice the now frequent musical evenings, concerts and other parish community events that are now celebrated in our parish. These qualities are testaments to our vibrancy, our lived faith and these are rare to find in many parishes!

A recap of the year 2024: During this year 2024, we continued with our celebration of the eucharist whether in St. Stephens, St. Luan's of at the primary school as the eucharist is the centre and summit of the Christian life. We increased visits to families, homes, Care homes and school, bringing communion and anointing of the sick where necessary. There is an increase in number of children who were baptised, made their first holy communion and or confirmed. Two adults became Catholics and we gave befitting funerals to our parishioners who passed away and condoled with their families.

Towards the last quarter of the year, an additional responsibility of pastoral care to prisoners in Glenochil was assigned to me. It has been a beneficial experience for me to have a first-hand experience of working and living in the prison and I am grateful each day for all these opportunities.

In the area of projects, besides the never-ending regular maintenance of our 170 and 125 years old church buildings and over a 100 years old presbytery, through your support,

1. We completed the replacement of the 13 rotten timber framed windows with 13 new PVC double glaze extra-large windows of the presbytery.

2. We completed the installation of new electrical wiring in Alyth,

3. the installation of new more modern and energy saving light and shade fittings, making the little lovely church well lit.

4. installation of new sets of heaters in St. Luan's church.

5. We also installed three new sets of stained-glass windows depicting the images our lady and St. Luan on the sanctuary end and on the top end of the entrance to the church.

The remaining six stained glass windows of the church to depict six Scottish saints: Columba, Andrew, John Ogilvie, Dun Scotus, Margaret of Scotland are ongoing at the moment. The hope is that this transformation of St. Luan's church will get her ready for the celebration of her 125th anniversary in the summer of 2026.

May 2025 usher in for us all, a blessed, healthier, happier and more prosperous individual and parish family lives.

I commend our whole parish and my journey to the powerful intercessions of the Blessed Virgin Mary the mediatrix of all graces and to your prayerful support.

With all my love,

- Wishing you a happy Christmas and a prosperous New year, Fr. Greg.

