

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary: Most Highly-Favoured One

The feast of the Immaculate Conception centres on God's loving power to make us holy. Our Blessed Lady's integrity or holiness right from the moment of her conception is not something she achieved by her own power. It is a pure gift of God, given to her for a saving purpose. It was in her genes, as we might say today, on behalf of us all. For it was supremely fitting that the woman who brought our Saviour into the world should be herself totally free from sin and available to do God's work.



Belief in the Immaculate Conception of Mary is belief in a provident God, who provides for the future, who prepares His children for their assigned task in life even before they are born, a God who foresees and equips us with all the natural and supernatural qualities we need to play our assigned role in the drama of human salvation. God anoints them already in the womb those men and women whom He appointed as prophets. Jeremiah was told, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." God does not just launch us into this world as beasts, meant to fight it out among ourselves. The evolutionary view of the survival of the fittest, of "Nature red in tooth and claw," may well describe the animal kingdom, but it is not the destiny of the people of God redeemed by grace from the harmful effects of the Fall.

As we admire our Blessed Lady, God's most favoured one ("Full of grace") on the feast of her conception, let us thank God for His love and mercy which embraces us right from the moment of our own conception. As Scripture says, "or who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?" (1 Cor 4:7). Everything is gift, everything good in us is by God's grace. For we all, children of God, are also favoured and heirs of God's grace. Yet Mary remains the most favoured one, the mother of all graced ones, the one that enjoys the fullness of grace.

ST. STEPHEN'S PARISH PASTORAL TEAM

Parish Priest/Prison Chaplain: Fr. Gregory E. Umunna Ph.D.

Phone: 01250872171. **Email:** ststephen@dunkelddiocese.org.uk

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Hall Reservations: Contact no: 01250872171.

Hospital Chaplains: Please call: N/wells Direct line: 07821624124, Hospital Pager 01382660111; **P.R.I:** 01738259371. *Pls let the priest know if you are on a long stay at the hospital and would like a visit.

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals: Please make appointment with Priest before any arrangements are made.

Diocese of Dunkeld Scottish Charity No: SC00810

Parish Ministries, Volunteers and Contact Persons:

H/T: St. Stephen's P. S: Lindsey Smith. Ph: 871950.

Catechist: Mrs. Gail McIntyre.

Parish Safeguarding Coordinator: Mrs Maureen Jackson 07952376985; Email: ststephen-psc@dunkelddiocese.org.uk

Parish Webmaster: Mr. Irek Kawalinski. irekkowalinski@gmail.com

Music Directors: Mr. Tom Buckham and Mrs. Gail McIntyre. (Blair) The Donnelly Family (Alyth)

Responsible Person for Eucharistic Ministers: Mrs Maureen Jackson.

Responsible Person for Children's Liturgy: Mrs Mary Wojtowicz

Responsible Person for Lectors: Mr. Anthony Jervis (Alyth) Mrs Maureen Jackson.

Responsible Group for Parish Social Justice Issues: SVP

Responsible Person for Church Flowers: Jean Scott (Blair), Mrs Elma Sharp (Alyth)

Resp. Person: Altar Servers: Mr Rolly Colanese

Grounds Flowers: Mrs Jennifer FitzPatrick (Blair)

Responsible Person for St. Luan's RC Church, Alyth: Daria McDowall: dariam@gmx.com

Adviser on Finance: Mr. Mike Coyle

Adviser on Fabric: Mr. Jim Graham

A team of vibrant Welcomers in St. Luan's and St. Stephen's

Wishing you and your loved ones a lovely Sunday -Fr. Gregory

Tear this off please:... Are you going into the hospital? Do you have someone going into the hospital? Would you like him/her/you to be visited with communion, please fill the form below and return to Fr. Gregory.
Name:.....Hospital:..... Date:
Date:.....

Please submit all items for the parish bulletin by 6.00 p.m. on Thursday each week.

Email: peacegreg2002@yahoo.com

Phone: 01250 872171



St. Stephen's R C Church

8 Bank Street, Blairgowrie PH10 6DE, 872171

& St. Luan's Alyth.

Second Sunday of Advent Year C. 7/12/25

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

E-mail: ststephen@dunkelddiocese.org.uk

Scottish Charity No: SC001810



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.

***Our Vision:** To be a welcoming and participating Catholic community on a journey, striving to be led by the Spirit, strengthened by a bond of love and unity, guided by the gospel message of Christ, refreshed and nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ at the Eucharistic table. Enriched by a vibrant people of God from diverse backgrounds and supported by many gifts employed in various ministries and stewardships, we journey together hand-in-hand through life as a community.*

Parish diary: Week beginning from 7/12/25

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

Sunday - 9.30 am: Holy mass at St. Luan's.

Sunday -11.00am: Holy mass at St. Steph's.

Monday - 10.30am/1.30pm Masses and Ministry of Care all day in Prisons.

---7.00pm - Holy mass of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary at St. Stephens.

Tues - 10.00am Holy mass at St. Stephens.

Wed - 10.00am Holy mass at St. Luan's.

---6.00pm: Christmas Carol by Pupils of St. Step's Pri. Sch. Everyone's invited

--- 7.00pm Holy mass for the Sick at St. Stephen's.

Thurs - 10.30am/1.30pm Masses and Ministry of Care all day in Prisons.

Friday -10.00am **Funeral mass for Patricia Rich** at St. Stephens.

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

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

Sunday -11.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's.

-Other Participatory Programmes of the Parish.

-Family Rosary and adoration. Every Wednesday 6.00pm-7.00pm. Mass for the sick every Wednesday 7.00pm-7.30pm.

-Sac. of Reconciliation: 5.00pm every Sat and 9am every Sun. **-Divine Mercy Devotion.** Tuesdays after morning mass.

-Please join us. Mass with St. Stephen's Pri. Sch: 1st Fri. of the month; end of terms and core events masses.

Journeying together in Faith Group - Come and learn the faith we celebrate! Session, Every fortnight. Next Session starts in Feb.2026

Don Bosco Group: with activities tailored to children and young people and open to everyone in the community. 6-7:15pm. Hall. Next session, 19th December.

This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad

"The central mystery of Christian faith and life is the mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity. Christians are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (CCC: No. 44).

This Week's Message in a Glance... "you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honourably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy"

Kindly remember also those on our prayer list: Michael Rolls, Neil McDowall, Pam McKenna, Mary and George Flockhart, Snooky Marshall, Maud McGinn, Cipriano and Carmelita, Tom O'Malley, Giles Umunna and Tony Donnan, Lisa Robertson, Philip Lafferty, Philip Jackson, Morag McInness, James Jeffrey.

Opening Prayer:

Your kingdom is at hand, O God of justice and peace; you made John the Baptist its herald to announce the coming of your Christ, who baptises with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Give us a spirit of repentance to make us worthy of the kingdom. Let complacency yield to conviction, that in our day justice will flourish and conflict give way to the peace you bestow in Christ. Grant 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. Amen.

Introduction to the Scripture Readings

Isaiah 11:1-10 Isaiah looks forward to the coming of a messiah, who will restore harmony and justice.

Romans 15:4-9 Paul reminds us that the scriptures were written to teach about God's promises.

Matthew 3:1-12 John the Baptist's call to repentance is described by Matthew.

Blessing of the Advent Wreath

Priest: On this Second Sunday of Advent, we embrace the themes of hope and peace

All: May we reflect on the hope that comes with Your promise of salvation through Jesus Christ

Priests: May the light of this candle shine brightly in our hearts.

All: showing us our destiny and guid-

ing us to share peace and compassion with those around us. So that our hearts be filled with hope, knowing that Your presence brings peace.

Together: Lord our God, grant us the grace to prepare for the coming of Christ your Son, the Light of the World, with an expectant, hopeful and joyful heart and prayer

Amen. **(The first advent candle is lit)**

Priest. Let us Pray: Lov-

ing Lord God, as we pray, "Thy kingdom come," grant us the courage to share Your peace with the world. Enlighten us to see areas in our lives that need transformation. May we accept the message of repentance and prepare our hearts for Your coming. .

Amen.

Foods 4 Thought: These challenging and most difficult Times Require us to LEND A HELPING HAND. Please let us know if you would like somebody to talk to at this difficult time.

"Service is our work too; it makes our talents bear fruit and it gives meaning to our lives. Those who do not live to serve, serve for little in this life. We must repeat this, and repeat it often: those who do not live to serve, serve for little in this life. We should reflect on this: those who do not live to serve, serve for little in this life." —Pope Francis

Vatican News: Pope Leo: 'In the poor, the Lord continues to speak to us'

Pope Leo XIV meets artists and organizers on the eve of the annual Christmas Vatican "Concert with the Poor" at its sixth edition.

Pope Leo XIV met on Friday with the artists and organisers of the sixth Vatican Concert with the Poor, calling the initiative begun under Pope Francis a "beautiful tradition" as the Church prepares for Christmas.

He recalled Saint Paul's words about Christ "who for your sake became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich," noting that the Incarnation is "the revelation of the love that God the Father has for each of us." The Pope also cited Benedict XVI's Deus Caritas Est: "This divine activity now takes on dramatic form when, in Jesus Christ,

⇒ Today's and Up Coming Events:

14th Dec: Poor Mission Fund.

- ⇒ 28th Dec: Building maintenance Fund; 11th January: Justice & Peace Collection; 25th January: Building maintenance Fund; Feb. 15th: Ecclesiastical Students Fund; 1st March: Building maintenance Fund. 15th March: SCIAF Sunday; 29th March: Building maintenance Fund. Feb. 18th 2026, Ash Wednesday; 5th April 2026 Easter; 31st May 2026: Confirmation; 7th June 2026 First Holy Communion; 25th/26th June Joint Anniversary Celebrations for St. Luan's and St. Steph's "300 years of Catholicism."
- ⇒ **Christmas Carol in St. Stephen's Church by the pupils of St. Stephen's Pri. School** 6pm. Everyone is invited.
- ⇒ **Funeral Mass for Late Patricia Rich.** Friday 12th December, 10am followed by internment at Perth Crematorium.
- ⇒ Visit of a guest at mass, Rev Graham Bell, advisor of HM Prisons Glenochil in furtherance of the Jubilee Year cel. of Jubilee of Prisons
- ⇒ **Join Justice & Peace Scotland** to call for "Dignity Not Detention" and advocate for an end to the inhumane practice of unlimited immigration detention. The UK is the only country in Europe that does not have a statutory time limit on detention, meaning people can be held in prison-like conditions indefinitely with no idea when they will be released. We do so mindful of Pope Leo XIV's recent reaffirmation that we will be judged by how we treat the stranger.
- ⇒ **Don Bosco Group:** The Parish is beginning a programme, Don Bosco Group with activities tailored to children and young people and open to everyone in the community. The aim is to meet every other Friday from 6-7:15pm. St. Stephen's Hall. Next session, 19th December. Basic idea: This project seeks to engage young people with meaningful activities. We Learn skills, Perform tasks, Gain confidence, Grow together and Pray together. In November we can start preparing a quiz/play for a parish Christmas social night. Contact person: Esther Brown sdjbya@gmail.com.
- ⇒ Children's Liturgy: I want to thank Mary Wojtowicz and her team of Liturgists for the wonderful work they do for us and I encourage the parents to please
- ⇒ **Altar Servers/Children/Young parishioners Christmas Party:** 22nd December 2025, 6.00pm, Parish Hall. Lots of gifts, music, dance, games, snacks and fun.
- ⇒ **Social/Family Night 12th December** 6.00pm, BYOB, Some poetry, songs, drama and more ('And more' refers to others wishing to contribute as usually happens on these evenings). All welcome.
- ⇒ **Religious articles Stalls:** The repository is packed for your early shopping for Christmas cards, gift items and other religious items. Please visit stall and enjoy chopping at subsidised prices.
- ⇒ Mill Hill Missionaries will be preaching mission here in St. Stephen's parish in the weekend of 19th of April 2026. Please welcome them.

2025 Christmas Mass times for St. Stephen's Church, Blairgowrie and St Luan's Church, Alyth

Wednesday 10th 6.00pm St. Stephen's Primary School Christmas Carol in St. Stephen's Church. Everyone is invited.

Wednesday 17th 10.00am Holy Mass and Reconciliation at St. Luan's Alyth
--6.00pm: Exposition/Adoration, Reconciliation.
--Holy Mass at 7.00pm at St Stephen's

Tuesday 23rd 10.00am: Holy mass at St Stephen's

Wednesday 24th Christmas Vigil:
--5.30 pm: Carol Service followed by Holy mass at St. Stephen's

Thursday 25th - The Nativity of the Lord - Solemnity:
--: St. Luan's 9.30 am: Holy mass at St. Luan's Alyth
--St. Stephen's 11.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's

Friday 26th - 10.00am. Feast of St. Stephen. Holy mass at St. Stephen's

Saturday 27th 5.30pm - Vigil Mass of Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph - Feast

Sunday 28th - Mass of Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph - Feast

Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Wishing you every grace and peace from heaven above and Healthy and happy New Year.
'Emmanuel - God is with us'

We begin this season of Advent in a spirit of expectation. During this time we look forward not just to the birthday of Jesus at Bethlehem but also for his second coming at the end of time! Advent reawakens hope and longing for a better future. Not just a secure financial future for me or you, but a future of Redemption for the entire people. The scriptural recommendations of Advent try to wake us up and shake us out of our complacency, but they generally end by affirming that all will be resolved by the power and faithfulness of God.



The Eucharist:

As food, do I feel nourished after holy communion? Do I feel a sense of being blessed and graced at the end of each Mass?

As Sacrifice, what have I offered as part of the sacrifice?

As communion, Has the Mass strengthened my identity as a member of this worshipping community?

As thanksgiving, do I give thanks always.

You are never alone: 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.

-Details of Parish account: Name: **St. Stephens RC Blairgowrie.** Account Number: 28075068; Sort Code: 80-22-60.
Last Sunday offertory collection: £595.56; BMF £379.85. 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. Many thanks .



Project Matthew 25: Make the joy of the Christmas season go round. Support the PRISON APOSTOLATE with Food and vouchers, canned food, biscuits, chocolates, pastries etc. Collection bag at the back of the church.

Adoration in St. Stephen's, every Wed. 6.00pm-7.00pm. The Eucharist is that love which surpasses all loves in Heaven and on earth." - St. Bernard.

Please feel free to join us for adoration.



Christmas Hampers 2025: Please could you bring any items for the hampers to this Sunday's (30th November) masses—we're hoping to have the hampers ready to raffle for tickets going on sale the first Sunday of December. Thank you very much.

Relection:

During Advent the Church brings us back in time to the centuries before the coming of Christ – the readings allow us to identify with the sentiments, longings and hopes of the people of the Old Testament who awaited the Messiah. We see how God was at work in their lives, leading them to the truth about their relationship with Him and each other. Last Sunday the Prophet Isaiah presented us with the image of God as Father and the Potter who formed His people. In today's first reading God is the Shepherd who gently leads His flock, feeding them and gathering the lambs in His arms, holding them against His breast. This morning's Gospel invites us to prepare a way for the Lord in the wilderness of our lives – or perhaps better to allow God to prepare a way in our hearts for His coming. We may ask ourselves for whom or what are we preparing; who or what are we expecting? – as always the readings and prayers of the liturgy are our best teachers – during Advent these focus on what God would like to find when He comes – two phrases from the prayer for Monday week I stood out for me – it prayed that when the Lord knocks He "may find us watchful in prayer and exultant in his praise" – I take it to mean not so much that we must multiply our prayers but that we be alert to His Presence with us moment by moment and respond with alacrity and joy to whatever He may ask – as Mary responded with her fiat and Magnificat. Advent reminds us that we are on a journey and that the Lord will come to each of us personally at our journey's end. We have come from the hand of God – he loved us and called us into being – each one is personally known and loved and we journey through life until the moment when He calls us back to Himself. Advent strengthens our hope that He will come – and invites us to be ready and on the watch. If we learn to recognise His coming at each moment then when He finally comes for us we will recognise Him and surrender to His embrace. The Entrance antiphon of this morning's Mass expresses it very beautifully: "People of Sion the Lord will come to save all nations and your heart will exult to hear his majestic voice, the people of God will sing songs of joy like songs in the night. They will have gladness of heart..... On every high mountain streams will flow and there will be joy for you are loved by the Lord." -Dominican Nuns Ireland

