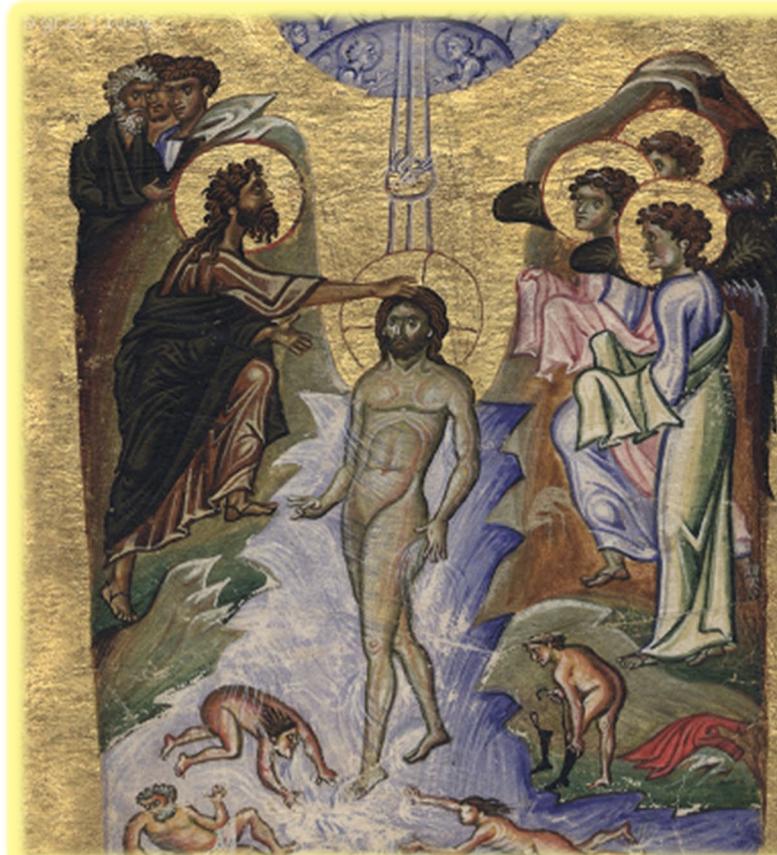


# PARISH BULLETIN

**St Kieran's, the  
Catholic  
Church in Campbeltown  
and Islay  
Ceann Loch Chille  
Chiarain**

11<sup>th</sup> January 2026



**BAPTISM  
OF THE  
LORD**

## *Feast of the Baptism of the Lord*

### **Hymns/Music for Sunday**

Processional (Sunday only)  
183 God's spirit is in my heart  
Offertory  
28 All that I am  
Post Communion  
381 O bread of heaven  
Recessional  
501 Spirit of the living God

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Tuesday: **Holy Mass, 6.00pm**

Wednesday: Adoration and mid-morning prayer,  
9.30am; **Holy Mass, 10.00am**

Friday: Mid-morning Prayer, 9.50am; **Mass, 10.00am.**

### **Next weekend:**

Saturday: **Vigil Mass, 6.00pm**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time: Holy Mass, 10.00am**

**Sacrament of Reconciliation** Saturday 5.00pm-5.30pm or  
anytime on request.

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Islay

Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2026: Holy Mass, 4pm

### **Psalm response**

*The Lord will bless his people with peace.*

### **Gospel acclamation**

*Alleluia, alleluia.*

*The heavens were opened and the voice of the Father thundered:  
'This is my beloved Son; listen to him'.  
Alleluia.*

### **Communion Antiphon**

*Behold the One of whom John said:  
I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.*

# Take Five

*Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow – a day at a time.*

## MONDAY OF WEEK 1

12 JANUARY 2025

### Can you hear me now?

The telecommunications industry would have us believe that the most important connections we make are via computer and mobile phone. While it's true that these devices are useful in today's world, there remains the crucial connection with that still, small voice within our own hearts that no computer can reach. That voice, which is God's, can only be heard in stillness: in the bare branches of trees against a clear blue winter sky, the quiet of new-fallen snow, the starry brilliance in a winter night sky, our breathing in and breathing out. What is God calling you to do now? Spend some time today just listening.

**Today's readings:** 1 Samuel 1:1-8; Mark 1:14-20. "And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me.' "

## TUESDAY: FEAST OF SAINT KENTIGERN (MUNGO), BISHOP

13 JANUARY 2026

### Incomprehensible love

Jesus loves us so deeply that He wants us to join Him in saving souls. He doesn't want to do anything without us. In fact, the Creator of the universe is waiting for even the simplest prayer from the humblest soul to help bring salvation to others – souls redeemed by the precious price of His Blood. Whenever God's word is spoken, His kingdom is unveiled and His power is set free. When we answer God's word with faith and obedience, we're reshaped, becoming a "new creation" in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Amazingly, God calls ordinary people – like you and me – to be His ambassadors, using our everyday routines and workplaces to draw others into His kingdom. The same love that redeems us longs to work through us, showing the world just how transformative His mercy really is.

**Today's readings:** Isaiah 52:7-10; Luke 5:1-11. "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."

## WEDNESDAY OF WEEK 1

14 JANUARY 2026

### Did you hear a voice?

It's pretty common for those professing vows in

a religious community to pick the story of Samuel in the temple as their first reading. In classic storytelling fashion, young Samuel hears God calling three times but keeps thinking it's his mentor, Eli. At last, Eli realises it's the Lord speaking and tells Samuel that the next time he hears that voice, he should say, "Here I am, Lord. Speak, your servant is listening." That response rings true for anyone open to God's gentle, almost whisper-like call, which can be so easily drowned out or misunderstood. We're reminded that "vocation" means a call – and God's not just calling newcomers. We're all on a long journey of faith, and if we've chosen to walk with Christ along that narrow path, we'll need regular tune-ups of heart and mind. Day by day, we have to stay alert to God's direction, remembering that it's the Lord who should guide our every step.

**Today's readings:** 1 Samuel 3:1-10, 19-20; Mark 1:29-39. "Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy."

## THURSDAY OF WEEK 1

15 JANUARY 2026

### Bad examples

The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were the trusted priests of the ancient temple in Shiloh. But they were dipping into the collection, tapping the till, so to speak. That's why the army of Israel got hammered by the Philistines, and Hophni and Phinehas got theirs. Not only that, but the Philistines took the ark of God captive. Now what will Israel do? Don't worry, they get it back. And it's a great story. It should inspire us to pray for vocations, men and women to serve the Lord in truth and integrity.

**Today's readings:** 1 Samuel 4:1-11; Mark 1:40-45. "The ark of God was captured; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died."

## FRIDAY OF WEEK 1

16 JANUARY 2026

### Get going

There's a lot in life that can get us down. Sometimes things of our own making, and sometimes, well, it's life. It's not always easy to know what to do. We can stand still and try to figure it out, or we can try to backtrack to see what happened. At some point, however, it is

time to move-to step out of what happened and to imagine something new. There's no magic trick to moving on, and there's no one-size-fits-all solution. But there is one thing we can do: Begin.

**Today's readings:** 1 Samuel 8:4-7, 10-22a; Mark 2:1-12. *"Stand up and take your mat and walk."*

## **SATURDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT ANTONY, ABBOT** **17 JANUARY 2026**

### **Turn down the distractions**

On the feast of Saint Anthony of the Desert, we recall that there has been, almost from the beginning, a way of following Christ that draws

the believer away from busyness, away from noise, away from the sense stimulation that many experts say we are becoming addicted to. We respond reflexively not to what is most important in life but to the latest signal, beep, buzz, or ringtone to impinge upon our consciousness. Few of us have a desert at hand where we can retreat and listen to the still, small voice of God, but perhaps there is a park, a rooftop, a chapel, a parked car with the radio off that can offer a chance for contemplation, for quietly considering the things that really matter.

**Today's readings:** 1 Samuel 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1a; Mark 2:13-17. *"Many tax collectors and sinners sat with Jesus and his disciples."*

## ***Readings for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord***

### **Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7**

The oracle defines the character of God's trustworthy servant.

### **Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10**

The voice of the Lord speaks clearly, mightily, and majestically.

### **Acts of the Apostles 10:34-38**

Peter names Jesus as God's anointed: one who served, healed, and cast out demons.

### **Matthew 3:13-17**

Jesus is revealed as the beloved of God, the Son, the one who pleases.

## **Words on Word**

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*In a certain monastery, two monks were talking with each other about when they are most pleasing to God. When God likes them the most.*

*They said to each other: perhaps when we pray or when we work? Perhaps when we keep the Rule as faithfully as possible or sing beautifully? Their abbot gave an original answer: when you do all of that, but above all when you love one another with all your heart, without reserve (RB).*

\* \*

Being yourself or slipping into some easy disguise – wearing a heap of different masks – can feel so much simpler, can't it? And the same goes for being a Christian. How do we tell who's genuinely living the faith, and who's just putting on an act?

If we look at religious customs – holy days, rites of initiation, ceremonial meals, prayers, priests, altars, all that – these aren't exclusive to Christianity. Most religions, even those that existed before Christ, share these sorts of practices. Fasting, pilgrimages, and even religious taxes or penalties aren't new ideas either. And what about prophets or messengers from the divine? Different faiths have had those, too. Healings and miracles (or sometimes illusions) were around long before Christ.

But there is something fresh that Jesus brought: love – an immense, boundless kind of love that makes no exceptions. God's love doesn't draw lines between who's in and who's out. Meanwhile, we humans are experts at making distinctions: we like some people, dislike others, and only have so much love to give. Yet God, through Jesus, shows us something breathtaking: He pours out His warmth on everyone – good or bad – just the same. He redeemed us when we were still sinners. Our Lord said, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," which is the guiding star for any true Christian.

This is Jesus' revolution. Too often, some religious founders and even certain Church leaders talk first about commandments or law, forgetting the primacy of love. But when Christ was baptised in the Jordan, a voice from heaven called out, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11). And that same beloved Son says to us: "Love is all that's needed. That's the measure of your life." It's not meant to condemn you, but to guide, to free you from hatred, anger, pride, greed, and betrayal. It's also a reminder to snap out of that habit where we only love those nearest or dearest to us.

Who does God love? Everyone equally: man or woman, friend or enemy. He loves animals, and indeed all creation. That's a staggering truth, a divine calling for anyone wanting to be a genuine Christian, not just a facsimile that goes through the motions. We're asked to adopt this stance of love every day – and not just when people return the favour.

Whatever we've given even one person with genuine love, we've placed in God's own hands. That's the heart of the Christian life: a love so wide it embraces everyone – and asks us to do the same.

\* \* \*

*Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace,  
that I may sow love where hatred reigns;  
forgiveness where injury reigns;  
unity where doubt reigns;  
hope where despair reigns;  
light where darkness reigns;  
joy where sadness reigns.  
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
not so much seek to be understood as to understand;  
not so much seek to be loved as to love;  
for in giving we receive;  
in pardoning we are pardoned,  
and in dying we are born to eternal life.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen. (attr. St. Francis)*

In Christ's love,

*Fr Anthony*

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## CHRIST IN ICONS: 13. SYMBOLIC DEPICTIONS OF CHRIST

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Symbolic representations of Christ are images that bear a spiritual message inseparably linked to the person of Christ, to His mission of redeeming humanity and His sacrifice for the remission of sins. Distinguished among them are such representations as: Emmanuel, the Sleepless Eye,



Novgorod School: Otechestvo. 15<sup>th</sup> century:  
Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow

Michael. The scene, set against a paradisal landscape, personifies the work of salvation and the sacrifice of Christ.

## Wounded Light

Commentaries on the Gospel of St John

Saint John's Gospel is used in the lectionary for Sundays on particular occasions, feasts and solemnities, and also in certain seasons, e.g. Easter, Christmas.

### Chapter 7(d)

#### The lesson of Nehemiah

John 1:39

**In Nehemiah's account (Neh 8:1–10), the people come together in Tishri – the seventh month, traditionally marked by repentance – to celebrate Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles. They assemble at the Water Gate, carrying the memory of their years in Babylonian exile. Aware that their own power could never have brought them back, they recognise that it is through the Lord's merciful love alone that they have returned home.**

#### Grace, Not Our Own Strength

During their time in exile, Israel recognised its own powerlessness: they were held captive because of idolatry and wrongdoing. In much the same way, we lack the strength to break free from the chains of sin, undo its lasting effects, or behold the joy of God's presence through our own efforts.

Scripture reminds us that we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory, yet we are freely justified by His grace through the redeeming work of Christ Jesus (Romans 3:23–24). Our

Holy Silence, the Crucified Seraph, and depictions of Christ within the Holy Trinity. Images of Christ Emmanuel – that is, Christ shown in the form of a Child – are often presented in a medallion in the company of God the Father or the Mother of God. In such an image, Christ symbolizes the Incarnation of the Divine Word. A distinctive feature of these representations is that Jesus, though depicted as a youth, has the serious countenance of a mature man.

In representations known as Otechestvo, Christ appears as the embodiment of one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. In the icon shown nearby, upon the lap of God the Father enthroned, stilled in a gesture of blessing, sits God the Son in the type of Emmanuel, and upon His knees rests the Holy Spirit, symbolized by a dove. This type of representation is also called Paternitas. They are accompanied by holy seraphim. The Sleepless Eye is a representation depicting Christ in the type of Emmanuel, surrounded by the Mother of God and the Archangel

predicament finds a parallel in the Babylonian exile, while Cyrus's generous decree granting the captives their return foreshadows the Gospel's saving message.

Cyrus restored the gold and silver once taken from the temple, bringing Judah its most uplifting news in fifty years. In a similar way, through Christ, God offers us pardon and restoration – the essence of the Gospel message.

Despite their devotion, no Israelite could leave Babylon without the royal decree. And so, it is for us: our acts of penance and righteous living alone cannot break our bonds unless supported by grace. Indeed, these good works spring from grace rather than purchase it.

Many people believe that this passing world is enough, or that being upright is sufficient to earn God's favour. Yet, when sorrow, loss, illness, or death confronts us, these illusions crumble. Simply being "a good person" neither overcomes sin, death, nor evil, nor does it secure our place in the heavenly homeland.

No Jew was freed from Babylon by personal merit, and we likewise cannot escape the enemy's grip except by the Father's generous will in Jesus Christ. Our salvation is a pure gift – embraced through faith and carried out in charity – never an outcome of our own efforts alone. "For it is by grace that you have been saved through faith. This does not come from you; it is the gift of God – no one can boast that it comes from their own works. We are, after all, his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works God set out for us long ago, so that we might live out those works" (Eph 2:8–9).

We know sin leads to death, yet God desired to deliver us from its grip. To do this, he immersed himself fully in our human condition. The immortal and eternal One became mortal – truly taking on a humanity he did not have before.

In this lesson, there is a seemingly minor detail: the feast of Sukkot took place by the Water Gate. Yes, there was an actual gate by that name, but on a deeper level it signifies another gateway – the gate of the abyss. The Book of Job speaks of it in these words: "Who shut the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb? ... I set limits for it, placing bars and a gate, and said, 'You may come this far, but no farther. Here is where your proud waves halt'" (Job 38:8–11).

We might also recall Jesus' words to Peter: "You are the Rock, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!" In this way, God has shut the entrance to death and damnation, just as a builder constructs a dam to hold back the floodwaters of darkness. He accomplished this through his Son, who stands as the sure gate holding back the tides of sin and death.

*Fr Anthony*

## We Read Pope Leo

**The world is not saved by sharpening swords, judging, oppressing, or eliminating our brothers, but rather by tirelessly seeking to understand, to forgive, to set free, and to welcome everyone, without calculation and without fear.**

The Saviour comes into the world, being born of a woman: let us pause to adore this event, which shines in the Most Holy Virgin Mary and is reflected in every unborn child, revealing the image of God engraved in our flesh. On this day let us all pray together for peace: above all among nations afflicted by conflicts and misery, but also in our homes, in families wounded by



violence and pain. Certain that Christ – our hope – is the Sun of Justice that never sets, let us confidently ask for the intercession of Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church.

***Angelus, January 1, 2026.***

Each day can be for each of us the beginning of a new life thanks to God's generous love, His mercy, and our free response. It is beautiful to think of the year beginning in this way: as an open road to be discovered, upon which we dare to set out thanks to grace – as free people and bearers of

freedom, as those who have been forgiven and who grant forgiveness, trusting in the nearness and goodness of the Lord who always accompanies us.

We recall all this as we celebrate the mystery of Mary's Divine Motherhood, whose "yes" contributed to the fact that the Source of all mercy and goodness received a human face: the face of Jesus, through whose eyes – first as a child, then as a youth, and finally as a man – the Father's love reaches us and transforms us.

Therefore, with the beginning of the year, as we set out toward the new and unrepeatable days that await us, let us ask the Lord that at every moment we may feel around us and above us the warmth of His fatherly embrace and the light of His blessing gaze, so that we may understand ever better and keep constantly in mind who we are and toward what wonderful destiny we are heading. At the same time, let us also give Him glory through prayer, holiness of life, and by becoming for one another a reflection of His goodness.

Saint Augustine taught that in Mary "the Creator of man became man: so that, being the Lord of the stars, he could suckle at a woman's breast; so that, being the bread (cf. Jn 6:35), he could feel hunger (cf. Mt 4:2); (...) in order to set us free, even though we were unworthy." In this way he recalled one of the fundamental features of God's countenance: the total gratuitousness of His love, by which He reveals Himself to us – as I wished to emphasize in the Message for the World Day of Peace – "unarmed and disarming," naked, defenseless like an infant in a cradle. And all this in order to teach us that the world is not saved by sharpening swords, judging, oppressing, or eliminating our brothers, but rather by tirelessly seeking to understand, to forgive, to set free, and to welcome everyone, without calculation and without fear. (...)

Let us draw near in faith to the Manger, as the place of "unarmed and disarming" peace par excellence, a place of blessing, where we recall the wonders the Lord has worked in the history of salvation and in our lives (...). Let this be our commitment, our resolution for the months ahead and forever for our Christian life.

***Homily on the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, January 1, 2026.***

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***In my opinion***

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***"Okay, Houston, we've had a problem here!"***

*Lessons in Hope and Determination*

In many areas of life, we never really cross that final red line – the point where we throw up our hands and admit there is nothing more to be done. If I set out to achieve something, I must refuse to believe I might fail, in order to invest myself completely, driven by fervour, determination, and above all, an unwavering faith in success. It's an attitude that stands in stark contrast to those who dismiss victory as mere luck or coincidence. Take the cook, for instance, who thanked God that their beef bourguignon "just worked out" for their guests. In reality, very little "just happens" by chance; achievement usually follows hard work and conviction. The phrase "it just worked out" often robs us of acknowledging our own efforts. After all, no one swims the Atlantic on a whim – confidence and persistence are

indispensable. I've never resorted to the words "it just worked out" because I know successes come from deliberate choices and tireless dedication.

This brings to mind the famous line uttered 56 years ago: "Okay, Houston, we've had a problem here." On 13 April 1970, the Apollo 13 crew had just finished a nearly hour-long television broadcast when, nine minutes later, a damaged wire caused a short circuit and an oxygen tank exploded. Their command module lost its main supply of power and water, leaving astronauts Jim Lovell, Fred Haise, and Jack Swigert in a dire predicament 320,000 kilometres from Earth. "Okay, Houston, we've had a problem here," Swigert calmly informed Mission Control, signalling the start of a terrifying battle for survival.

What followed was a remarkable display of human resilience. With technology faltering and communication disrupted, the three men relied on their unwavering resolve and problem-solving skills. Deep in the cold and dark recesses of space, they had to abandon plans to land on the Moon and instead focus on simply staying alive. The entire world watched in hushed anticipation, praying for good news. Against all odds, the astronauts persevered, returning safely home in a triumphant feat of ingenuity.

Even years later, astronaut Fred Haise reflected on how they pushed forward: "We never reached the red line beyond which nothing more could be done." Their story is a powerful reminder that genuine hope endures, even when everything seems lost. In moments when life imitates the Apollo 13 crisis – when multiple obstacles appear at once and the way forward seems obstructed – we would do well to recall this example of tenacity. It shows us that, with steadfast courage and creativity, even the most formidable problems can be surmounted. In short, "Okay, Houston, we've had a problem here" is more than just a famous line: it is a testament to the extraordinary potential of hope, faith, and human determination.

*Tony Wood*

## Prayer



**Please remember to pray for those who are unwell, in need, or have requested our prayers:** Andrew McLaughlin, Claire Wiggins, Russell Carroll, Lucy Cunningham, Tommy McGrory Senior, Sarah Carmichael, and Doleen Durnin.

**Please keep in your prayers all those whose anniversaries fall around this time.**

## News and Events

**Tea and coffee** this Sunday in the parish hall, all welcome.

**Cleaning rota:** there are still spaces on the church cleaning rota.

**Artem and Oleksii** will be travelling south to be with family and to find work. We really appreciate their presence with us and all that have willingly contributed to our parish community and to me personally. We pray for happiness and success in whatever their endeavours are and hope they will keep in touch with us with what they are doing and how they are. We are indebted to the work they have done and offer our prayers and good wishes for them.



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