

PARISH BULLETIN

**St Kieran's, the Catholic
Church** in Campbeltown and
Islay

Ceann Loch Chille Chiarain

4th January 2026



The Epiphany of the Lord

Hymns/Music for Sunday

Processional (Sunday only)

601 We three kings

Offertory

605 What child is this

Post Communion

300 Let all mortal flesh keep silence

Recessional

523 The first Nowell

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

The Baptism of the Lord: Holy Mass, 10.00am

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

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Islay

Sunday, 18th January 2026: Holy Mass, 4pm

Psalm response

All the nations on earth shall fall prostrate before you, O Lord.

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

*We saw his star when it rose
and have come to worship the Lord.*

Alleluia.

Communion Antiphon

*We have seen his star in the East,
and have come with gifts to adore the Lord.*

Take Five

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

MONDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

5 JANUARY 2025

"In the world but not of it"

The believer's ideal relationship to the world is often described as "in the world but not of it." The Christian spiritual tradition, however, has at times gone a bit overboard, seeing the world as so evil and full of temptation it is best to stay as separate as possible until you can leave it all behind, and wait for heaven. At the other extreme, of course, people can embrace earthly life so much they forget about God—what Saint Paul called living "in the flesh." In the end it's best to recall that while we may choose to separate ourselves from God through sin, God did look at the world and see that it was good—good enough to dwell among us.

Today's readings: 1 John 3:22-4:6; Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25. *"You belong to God . . . for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."*

TUESDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

6 JANUARY 2026

Open to interpretation

The miracle of the loaves and fishes is the only miracle story found in all four gospels, highlighting its profound impact. Some interpret it as the "miracle of sharing," emphasizing that the world's resources are abundant when we are willing to share. Others see it as a direct act of divine intervention: "Ask and you shall receive." Both interpretations are worth remembering as they remind us of the saving power of our faith.

Today's readings: 1 John 4:7-10; Mark 6:34-44. *"They all ate and were satisfied."*

WEDNESDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

7 JANUARY 2026

Believing is seeing

"No one has ever seen God," the First Letter of John says. If that's so, then how can people know what God is like and what God wants us of us? The answer is fairly simple. While we may have to wait until after our earthly pilgrimage to know God fully, we can see God now. God is love, scripture says. In the love we show others, and others show us, God is present right in front of us. The Christmas and

Epiphany celebrations have amply demonstrated God's original love for us. How about returning the favour?

Today's readings: 1 John 4:11-18; Mark 6:45-52. *"If we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us."*

THURSDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

8 JANUARY 2026

Listen up!

Within a couple of decades, the Arctic ice cap may disappear entirely in summer months because of global warming, experts warn. The theme of today's World Day of Prayer for Peace is therefore quite timely: "If you want to cultivate peace, protect the creation." Citing the many environmental challenges, a Vatican statement cautions that "if the human family is unable to face these new challenges with a renewed sense of social justice and equity, and of international solidarity, we run the risk of sowing seeds of violence among peoples, and between current generations and those to come." Pray for the gift of peace through the work you do to protect God's creation the whole year long.

Today's readings: 1 John 4:19-5:4; Luke 4:14-22. *"Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."*

FRIDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

9 JANUARY 2026

Keep your Christmas present

It is two weeks since Christmas. You remember Christmas—"May your days be merry and bright" and all that. Too often we think of "getting through the holidays" rather than savouring, like fine wine, the implications of "God with us." Our attitude often resembles the routine of the classroom: data traveling from the notes of the professor to the notes of the student without having spent time in the mind of either one. What Christmas celebrates is nothing less than the most radical moment in human history: the leap from the divine to the human, piercing the veil, God taking root in skin and bone and changing our destiny forever. The lights may be packed away, the gifts exchanged, but that's trivia. How have I been changed by these days? In his first letter John evokes "water, blood, and

Spirit," a triple, shattering testimony to Jesus as Son of God and to our own eternal life because of him. We need time to take that in.

Today's readings: 1 John 5:5-13; Luke 5:12-16. *"There are three who testify, the Spirit, the water, and the Blood."*

SATURDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

10 JANUARY 2026

Look for signs of life

It seems odd to continue celebrating the Christmas season and newborn Jesus when at Mass we hear proclaimed Jesus' deeds and mission and we celebrate his death and

resurrection. What was the church thinking when it extended the Christmas season so long? Two words: new life. Christmas is not only a time to remember the occasion of Jesus' birth; it is also a time to immerse ourselves in God's call to each of us to new life. Over and over again in this season we have opportunities in scripture, in liturgies, and in the ordinary goings-on of our life to experience and witness to this new life. Be on the lookout!

Today's readings: 1 John 5:14-21; John 3:22-30. *"We also know that the Son of God has come."*

Readings for the Solemnity of Epiphany

Isaiah 60:1-6

The Lord's city of Jerusalem will become the light of the world.

Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

The king will illumine the world with right judgment and justice.

Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

The mystery now revealed is the unity of the body of Christ.

Matthew 2:1-12

Magi from the East follow a star into an unknown future.

Words on Word

*

There's a well-known tale about a "fourth king" who, just like the three Magi, studied the stars and discovered that the Son of God had been born. He decided to set out and honour this Child. According to one version, this king's name was Artaban. He was a magus from Ecbatana who sold his home and possessions to buy three precious gems—a sapphire, a ruby, and a pearl—ready to offer them to the newborn King in Jerusalem. But he never made it there, nor did he get the chance to present his gifts to the Christ Child. Instead, he spent his days rescuing people in need: he saved a region from famine, looked after the dead, helped those suffering from leprosy, and even ransomed a girl from slave traders. Thirty-three years passed like that. Finally, he met Christ just at the moment of the Saviour's death. Artaban said, "When did I ever feed or clothe you? When did I open my home to you, or care for you when you were sick? I've been searching for you for thirty-three years, but I've never even glimpsed your face, nor served you in any way." Then he grew quiet, but heard a voice reply, "Truly, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers, you did for me." At those words, Artaban's face shone with an unearthly light, and his final breath slipped out in a sigh of joy and relief. His journey was done. His gifts were accepted. The fourth Wise Man had found his King (according to Henry van Dyke).

* *

Today's feast is actually the most ancient celebration of Christmas in the Eastern Church. In the Catholic Church, we sort of celebrate Christmas twice: first on 25 December and then again on 6 January. But the liturgy on 6 January doesn't focus so much on the Bethlehem stable, the shepherds, or the angels announcing the Good News. Instead, we turn our attention to three scholars who embarked on a remarkable voyage, guided by a special star, to pay homage to the newborn King. Tradition says their names were Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. That's why we call this day the Feast of the Three Kings. We don't know their religion, only that they shared a passionate longing for what is true—something that, up until then, had been hidden in signs and stars. They weren't dreamers, but realists. They probably had their families and friends baffled by this sudden need to follow a star. But don't they remind you a bit of Abraham, who heard a voice no one else did, calling, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1)?

"I have a dream," said Martin Luther King, and he described a world without racial segregation. David Ben-Gurion, the founder of the State of Israel, once said, "A realist is someone who believes in miracles." Indeed, the Wise Men had to face a big disappointment when they got to Jerusalem: no one there knew about any new King of Israel. In fact, King Herod and his court were terrified to hear about it.

Still, obedient to the star, these three from the East found the Child lying in a manger, knelt down, offered their gifts, and worshipped Him. In that moment, they weren't seekers anymore—they had finally found their Saviour. More than that: in finding Him, they discovered themselves. This is the kind of wondrous relief we might feel when we find the deeper meaning of life or understand the purpose behind our struggles or crosses.

Warned in a dream not to return to Herod, the Magi headed back to their lands by another route. They were the same people yet utterly changed—no longer searching but transformed and redeemed.

* * *

"And suddenly all three looked, where the Child shone like a drop of light, and they could see as though in cracked mirrors, in themselves—a hollow, roaring chasm. And they felt their three hearts clench with grief. So, they travelled back in great peace, rocked like a dream upon their animals. The camel swayed slowly like a mast, the tiger purred softly like the sea, and the fish glided through the air in a silver trail. A gentle rush and ripple filled them, like a flowing stream. They were returning, hurrying down from on high—three kings, newly taught in the ways of love."

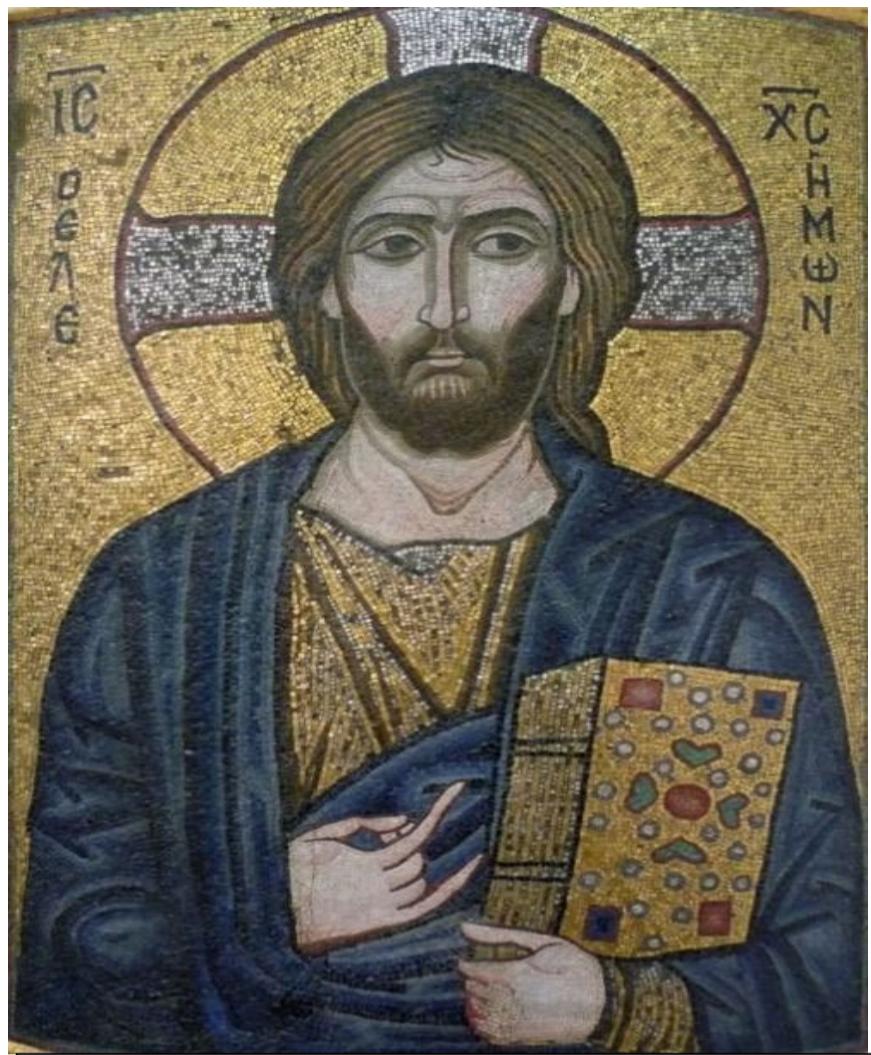
(K.K. Baczyński)

In Christ's love,

Fr Anthony

CHRIST IN ICONS: 12. VARIANTS OF THE CHRIST PANTOCRATOR

These images have always stirred something deep within believers' hearts. Even in a half-length depiction, you can't help but feel His presence – one hand holding the Holy Scriptures or a scroll, the other hand raised in blessing, those fingers forming a distinct gesture. These different portrayals might look quite similar at first glance, but the real difference lies in the expression on Christ's face, the intensity of His gaze, and subtle changes in how His fingers are arranged.



Byzantine: The Merciful Christ
c. 11th/12th century, mosaic, Staatiche Museum in Berlin

For instance, when Christ is shown as the Saviour and Giver of Life, He's depicted gently blessing us while holding a closed book. He looks far more tender than the solemn Pantocrator, and the message is all about His role in saving humanity. In pictures of the Merciful Christ, His hand hovers closer to His heart, and His face exudes limitless kindness, highlighted by those large, almond-shaped eyes full of compassion.

Some say this version of the icon emerged so the faithful could have a more intimate representation of Christ in their personal devotions. The focus shifts to a softer emotional connection – His gaze, His gentle features – inviting us to draw near to His tender mercy. It's a powerful reminder of how, in all His roles, Christ meets us with love and grace at every turn.

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(c)

Finding oneself in exile

John 1:39

Lately, I've been diving into the Book of Ezra, and it's really moved me. It opens with these striking words: "That the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled..." From there, we see how God uses King Cyrus's decree to free the Jews from Babylon – a place that must have felt like a grim prison camp, leaving people teetering between despair and insanity.

Seventy years of exile later, they finally return home. But here's the astounding bit: Jeremiah had foretold this whole drama decades beforehand. He didn't just warn about Jerusalem's downfall and the people being carted off to Babylon; he also prophesied a joyful homecoming. Those very words helped so many endure what felt impossible to bear. God's promises gave them a reason to hang on when all hope seemed lost.

You can imagine how bleak life was at the time. King Nebuchadnezzar forced thousands into slavery, destroyed the Temple, and set Jerusalem ablaze. Poor King Zedekiah witnessed his own children killed, and then had his eyes put out – a tragic fate that must have convinced many that God had abandoned them. Some even doubted His existence altogether. But the people persevered. In Babylon, quite a few found wealth, gained an education, and turned back to

their faith with renewed fervour. New sacred writings appeared, and God raised up more prophets. Oddly enough, in Jerusalem their love for the Lord had cooled, but in exile – cut off from everything they knew – they rediscovered a deep love for Him. Even captivity had a purpose. For a believer, nothing just “happens”; there’s always meaning in it.

Ultimately, you’ll find the key to everything in Jesus, because He is the LOGOS – the Word – the reason, explanation, and justification behind all things. Lots of people never discover meaning simply because they don’t embrace His Word. Yet Christ doesn’t bring doom or hopelessness; He brings the best news imaginable, every single time.

Fr Anthony

We Read Pope Leo



If peace is not a reality that we experience and that must be protected and nurtured, aggression spreads in domestic and public life.

Peace exists; it desires to dwell within us; it has a gentle power to enlighten and broaden the mind; it resists violence and overcomes it. Peace has the breath of eternity (...). When we treat peace as a distant ideal, we eventually cease to find it scandalous that it can be denied, and even to wage war in order to attain it. There seems to be

a lack of sound ideas, measured words, the ability to say that peace is near. If peace is not a reality that we experience and that must be protected and nurtured, aggression spreads in domestic and public life. In relations between citizens and those who govern, we reach a situation in which blame is assigned to the fact that one does not prepare sufficiently for war, for responding to attacks, for responding to violence. Going far beyond the principle of legitimate defense, at the political level such a confrontational logic is a leading factor in global destabilization, which with every day grows more dramatic and unpredictable. It is no accident that repeated appeals to increase military spending, and the ensuing decisions, are justified by many leaders by an alleged threat from others. In fact, the deterrent force of military might, and in particular nuclear deterrence, expresses the irrationality of relations between nations based not on law, justice, and trust, but on fear and the domination of force. (...)"A true lover of peace loves the enemies of peace." In this way St. Augustine advised not to burn bridges and not to press the case by presenting a list of accusations, but to prefer the path of listening and—so far as possible—the encounter with the reasons of others. (...)

Kindness is disarming. Perhaps that is why God became a Child. (...)

Unfortunately, more and more often in the contemporary world the words of faith are drawn into political struggle, to bless nationalism and to provide religious justification for violence and armed conflict. Believers must actively—above all through their lives—contradict those forms of blasphemy that obscure the Holy Name of God. Therefore—alongside action—more than ever it is necessary to cultivate prayer, spirituality, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue as paths of peace and languages of encounter among traditions and cultures. It is desirable throughout the world that "every community become a 'house of peace,' in which we learn to disarm hostility through dialogue, where justice is practiced and forgiveness is nurtured."

Today, more than ever, through vigilant and creative pastoral creativity, we must show that peace is not a utopia.

Message for the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2026.

In my opinion

New Year's resolutions

Failures and mistakes are a natural part of the process of achieving goals. It is important to treat them as an opportunity to learn and improve, not as a reason to give up. New Year's resolutions are a common way to start the new year with new goals and aspirations. Most of these resolutions, however, are not carried out. To increase the chances of success, it is worth looking at a few key aspects that can help in effectively achieving New Year's goals. The first step to effectively fulfilling New Year's resolutions is to formulate goals that are realistic and specific. Overly ambitious or general resolutions can lead to frustration and quick discouragement. For example, instead of resolving, "I'll lose weight," it is better to set a concrete, achievable goal, e.g., "I will lose 5 kg in 3 months." Defining specific, measurable goals allows for better monitoring of progress and, if necessary, adjusting the strategy. It is worth writing these resolutions down.

Having a clear action plan is crucial for carrying out resolutions. This plan should include specific steps to take to achieve the set goal. If the goal is, for example, to improve physical fitness, the action plan may include regular workouts, a healthy diet, and monitoring progress. It is important that the plan be flexible and adapted to individual needs and possibilities. A ten-minute daily walk will be better and easier to implement at the beginning than a one-hour cardio workout.

Motivation plays a key role in fulfilling resolutions. It is worth identifying the internal reasons why we want to achieve a given goal, because intrinsic motivation is more durable than extrinsic.

Regularly reminding yourself of these reasons can help maintain engagement, and sharing your resolutions with others can increase motivation—thanks to the effect of social accountability. That is why so many people announce them publicly on social media. Support from family, friends, or the community can significantly increase the chances of fulfilling resolutions. People who have a supportive environment around them are more likely to achieve their goals. Such support can take various forms—from words of encouragement, through joint activities, to providing information and resources. It is worth surrounding yourself with people who will motivate and support us in difficult moments.

Regular monitoring of progress is crucial for maintaining motivation and adjusting strategy. This can be keeping a progress journal, using apps to track goals, or regular evaluations of progress. It is important to celebrate small successes, because that motivates and gives a sense of satisfaction.

Fulfilling New Year's resolutions is often associated with challenges and unforeseen difficulties. It is essential to be flexible and ready to adjust your plans when necessary. If something does not work, it is worth considering what can be changed, instead of completely giving up on the goal. Flexibility and adaptability can significantly increase the chances of success.

Failures and mistakes are a natural part of the process of achieving goals. It is important to

treat them as an opportunity to learn and improve, and not as a reason to give up. Analysing mistakes and drawing conclusions from them can help better adjust the strategy and increase the chances of achieving the goal. It is better to start again with a 10-minute walk every day than to hope that an unused gym pass will "work out for us." A paid pass may motivate us because of the discomfort felt from spending hard-earned money, but it will not "go exercise for us."

The change we implement to form a habit requires a minimum of 4–6 weeks, and sometimes 4–6 months if we are replacing an unfavourable habit with a healthy one. We need support from loved ones, the communities we live in, and also someone who will hold us financially accountable for giving up exercise, abandoning an addiction, or a bad habit. For this purpose, it is worth establishing a fee schedule right away. When these principles are implemented, one can significantly increase the chances of achieving New Year's goals and start the new year with a sense of success and satisfaction.

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** Mary Carroll (Molly)(1978), George Williams (2013), Fr. John Bentley (2011) **and 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 is a new rota in the porch. Please add your name when it is convenient for you to clean the church.



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www.stkieranscampbeltown.org



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Before the Infant, bending low, they lay their precious gifts;
O thrice-blest Kings, your star-led road our longing spirit lifts.
What shall we give? O tell us true – what offering may we bring?
Give contrite hearts and faithful love – let Jesus be our King.