



The Parish of St Francis Xavier's
St Francis Xavier's & St Anthony's Churches
Sunday 22nd December 2024, **4th Sunday of Advent**



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Clergy: Parish Priest of St Francis Xavier's, Monsignor Allan T Chambers
Fr Joshua Kauras, Fr Peter Shankland & Deacon Kenneth Mununga

Mass Times and Intentions

St Francis Xavier's Church

St Anthony's Church

Saturday Vigil, 5pm; *Chris & May Curran*
(Anniversary)

Sunday, 10am; *People of the Parish*
12 noon; *Mary McAuley (SI)*
3pm (Polish)
7pm; *Ellen Cheape & Family (SI)*

Monday, 10am; *David, Rosemary & Family (SI)*

Tuesday, 10am; *Michael McPeake (SI)*

Season of Christmas

Christmas Eve, 7:30pm readings
& carol; 8pm Vigil Mass; *Jacqueline & Grant*
Thomson (SI)

Christmas Eve, 11:30pm readings
& carols; midnight Mass; *Angela & Dougie Marr*
(SI)

Wednesday, Christmas Day, 10am; *Fred &*
Roslyn Duffy (SI)

Thursday, 10am; *Maureen Smith (SI)*

Friday, 10am; *Isabella Meighan (Anniversary)*

Saturday, 10am; *John Bain, RIP*

11am; **Tommy Donnelly, RIP**

9:30am; **Winifred Paton (Anniversary)**

Christmas Eve, 5:30pm readings & carols; 6pm
Vigil Mass; **Sr Bridget Carr, RIP**

Christmas Day, 10:30am; **Elizabeth Kelly**
(Anniversary)

9:30am; **Sr Margaret Caniy, RIP**

Confession is available in St Francis Xavier's church on Saturday morning from 10:30am until 11:15am and on Saturday evening from 4:15pm until 4:45pm. There will be additional opportunities to attend confession this Monday (23rd) and Tuesday (24th) after 10am Mass.

Morning Prayer takes place in St Francis Xavier's Church (Polish Chapel) at 9:30am Monday to Saturday. All are welcome.

Infant Baptism. The next preparation meeting is **Monday, 27th January, at 7pm** in St Francis Xavier's Church hall. To register your child, please email Deacon Kenneth for further information:

baptism.stfrancisfalkirk@staned.org.uk

Thank you for your generosity. Last week's offertory cash collection was **£2078.15** and the

special collection for SVDP was **£1518.27.**

My brothers and sisters in Christ, on this 4th Sunday of Advent, the first reading presents us with one of the Most explicit prophecies of Old Testament regarding - the birth of Jesus Christ. God promised through the prophet Micah that salvation would come out of an unimportant little village named Bethlehem. During the visit of the Magi, this prophecy is quoted by the chief priests and the scribes when Herod the Great asked them where the King of the Jews was to be born. The prophecy made it clear that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem of Judea (cf Matthew 2:6).

The place Bethlehem Ephratha is significant for three reasons: -1) Bethlehem was a royal city where King David and Solomon were born and thus is suitable for Christ

the King. 2) Bethlehem means "House of Bread" and Ephrathah means "fruitfulness". Our Lord Jesus describes himself as the Bread of Life (cf John 6:35). 3) Bethlehem was a very small and humble place. The prophet Micah speaks of it as "small among the clans of Judah" humble background of Jesus Christ.

According to the Theologian, Harold A. Buetow's comment regarding the encounter between Elizabeth and Mary, heard in our Gospel today, He said "when these two mothers- to - be met, two worlds met - not worlds of space, but of time. Elizabeth, advanced in years, symbolised the approaching end of the Age of the Law and Prophets. Her son John the Baptist would herald the new age of salvation that Israel had long awaited and Mary now represented. Their sons would become collaborators not competitors. In the visitation,

promise greeted fulfilment, and both Mary and Elizabeth responded positively to the Holy Spirit".

If you permit me, there is a play on words in today's Gospel: The name "Zacharia" means "God remembers" the name "Elizabeth" means "God's oath or promise" the name "Mary" simply means "beloved". Assembling the meaning of these names in a sentence gives "*God remembers his promise to his beloved*".

A lovely lesson from this meeting, like Mary who went to visit Elizabeth carrying the child Jesus in her womb, we are called to put aside fear to take Christ to the world. In whatever we do, either as single people, married couples, students, workers or professional people, Christ wants us to go to many places in the world and enter many hearts by what we say or do just as Mary visited Elizabeth. We are all called to visit the needy, the poor, the hungry, the homeless and those alone or ill. Remember that the greeting of Mary put a smile on John the Baptist for he leaped for joy. *Fr Joshua*

Invitation to Christmas Lunch

We are excited to welcome you all to our free Christmas Day Dinner this year, which will be held in St Francis Xavier's Church Hall.

If you are facing Christmas Day alone or it's your first Christmas without a loved one and you feel that some company would be beneficial for you and your family, please reach out by calling on 01324 636446 or emailing us at merrileesfamilyfuneraldirectors@outlook.com Wishing you all a lovely Christmas. *Andrew and Samantha Merrilees.*

Altar Servers, thank you for continuing to serve every Sunday. Can you please speak with Fr Peter (or one of the other clergy members) after Mass this weekend to let him know which Mass you will be serving at over the Christmas period. Please try to

arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass begins. Many thanks for all you do.

Hogmanay Ceilidh Thank you to everyone who has signed up for the Hogmanay Ceilidh. If you have still to give your food choice, make payment or collect your ticket, please speak to John McPherson in the hall after 10am Mass this Sunday or by calling 07526 392 876.

Merry Christmas! The clergy and house staff at St Francis Xavier's parish would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas.

SPRED friends will meet again on the 15th January from 7pm – 9pm in St Francis hall.

Praise Music for Friends – Christmas edition, will be Friday 27th December at 10:45am for half an hour with tea and coffee in St Anthony's hall afterwards. All are welcome.

Children's Christmas Party in St Anthony's church hall this Sunday 22nd December between 12-2pm. We hope the children (and helpers) have lots of fun. Thank you to our Children's Liturgy leaders in St Anthony's for organising this.

Christmas Film Afternoon. Thank you to the children's Liturgy team at St Francis Xavier's church for organising a great film afternoon for the children last weekend.

New Missal – copies are now available in the church stall at St Francis Xavier's for £17.

An Introduction to Prayer by Bishop Robert Barron is available to purchase in both church stalls, this Advent, for only £3.

The Stall at St Francis is selling copies of the new missal along with lovely Christmas cards and

boxes. Please drop in after Mass if you would like to buy any.

Christmas Edition of Bible Alive is available in both church porches.

Mass for the Opening of the Jubilee Year

Archbishop Cushley will solemnly open the Jubilee Year 2025 for the Archdiocese with Holy Mass and the blessing of the Jubilee Cross at St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, at midday on Sunday 29 December. Follow 'Holy Year Scotland 2025' on Facebook and visit www.iubilaeum2025.va for more details about this special year.

Anniversaries: Scott Peter Martin, Edward Dowd, Peter Woods, Patrick McLaughlin, Rea Boyle, Martha Woodhouse, Michael & Esther Connell, Alice McFarlane, Ramsay Young, James Meade, Jan Krupa, Samuel Fitzpatrick, Winfred Paton, James McGuckin, Hendyk Wallace, Frances McCabe, John Clifford Boyle, John Adams, William Imrie, Margaret Sneddon, Ulyses Estenzo Snr., Mary Fallon, Liviano Vannucci, James McCue, Maria Renella, Rev. Francis Doherty, Angus McRorie, Sarah Quinn, Fred Thomson, Mary O'Donnell, June O'Connor, Mary Quinn (Mooney), James Boyle, Alexander Hendrie, John Rennie, Joseph Hemill, Maisie Hosie, William Garvin, Mary Swierklanski, Daniel Sweeney, Katie Hanlon, Eileen Nortney, Hugh McCormack, Irene Leach, Joseph Sweeney, Robert Sibbald, Carol Noterangelo, William Bell, Isobel Grogan, Willie Bell, Kathleen Healy, Mary Little, James McLaughlin, Isabella Meighan, Elizabeth Collins, Thomas McAteer, Donal Coll, Pat Hughes, Livinio Vanucci, Peter Murphy, Mary Mohan, Matilda Yuill, and Luciana Wood.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

