



THE SUNDAY NEWSLETTER

First Sunday of Lent
Sunday 22nd February 2026

St Joseph's – Our Lady of Mount Carmel – St Matthew's
Catholic Parishes, Kilmarnock

Parish Priest: Father Stephen G. McGrattan (stephen.mcgrattan@rcdg.org.uk)

Assistant Priest: Father Kevin J. A. Rennie (kevin.rennie@rcdg.org.uk)

Pastoral Assistants: Sisters Mary Rose Confidence, Mary Mabel and Marilyn Juliet (ihmsisters@rcdg.org.uk)

Parish Secretary: Mariella Hoekstra Berry (rckilmarnock@rcdg.org.uk)

Items for the newsletter to the Parish Secretary (by 10 am Thursday please): rckilmarnock@rcdg.org.uk

Web: www.rckilmarnock.org.uk

Parishes of the R C Diocese of Galloway (www.rcdg.org.uk). Charity number SC010576. ONELICENCE #A-632895.

LITURGY AND GATHERINGS FROM SUNDAY 22nd FEBRUARY – 1st MARCH 2026

Time	Venue	Gathering	Mass intention
Saturday 21st			
5.30 – 5.45 pm	St Joseph's	Confession	
6.00 pm	St Joseph's	Vigil Mass	People of the Parishes
Sunday 22nd			
9.30 am	St Matthew's	Mass	People of the Parishes
After Mass	St Matthew's	Tea and Coffee	
10.30 – 11.30 am	St Matthew's	I Belong (Committee Room)	
10.15 – 11.15 am	OLMC	I Belong (Norbert Room)	
11.30 am	OLMC	Mass	Patrick McGowan (Ann)
After Mass	OLMC	Tea and Coffee	
11.00 am	St Joseph's	Mass	Kevin Dorrian (RIP)
After Mass	St Joseph's	Tea and Coffee	
12.30 – 1.30 pm	St Joseph's	I Belong (Meeting Room)	
3.00 pm	Cathedral	Rite of Election (St Margaret's Cathedral, Ayr)	
3.00 pm	Kay Park Church	Fellowship of Kilmarnock Churches Service ("From Lent through to Easter")	
4.00 – 5.00 pm	St Matthew's	Lenten Hour of Prayer	
6.15 pm	St Joseph's	Choir Practice for Holy Week & Easter	
Monday 23rd			
9.30 am	St Matthew's	Recitation of the Holy Rosary	
10.00 am	St Matthew's	Mass	Jordan Robertson (Ann)
10.00 am	St Joseph's	Mass followed by Confession (until 10.45 am)	Robert Dourish (Ann)
1.45 pm	St Matthew's	Funeral Service for Kathleen Queen, RIP	
7.00 pm	OLMC	RCIA in the Norbert Room	
Tuesday 24th			
10.00 am	St Joseph's	Mass	Catherine Heron (Ann)
10.30 – 11.00 am	St Joseph's	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	
10.00 am	OLMC	Mass	Special Intention
10.30 – 11.00 am	OLMC	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with Confession (until 10.50 am)	
11.00 – 1.00 pm	St Joseph's	Community Café	
Wednesday 25th			
10.00 am	St Joseph's	Mass	Vincent Cygan (Ann)
After Mass	St Joseph's	Recitation of the Holy Rosary	
After Rosary	St Joseph's	Church Cleaning (New volunteers welcome)	
10.00 am	St Matthew's	Mass	Bobby Gallagher (RIP)
10.30 – 11.00 am	St Matthew's	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with Confessions (until 10.50 am)	
1.30 – 3.30 pm	OLMC	U R Welcome Club	
2.00 pm	St Matthew's	Ladies' Spirituality Group in the Hall	
Thursday 26th			
6.00 pm	St Joseph's	Mass	Special Intention
6.30 pm	St Joseph's	RCIA in St Joseph's Presbytery	
Friday 27th			
9.30 am	OLMC	Recitation of the Holy Rosary	
10.00 am	OLMC	Mass followed by Stations of the Cross	Catherine (Hanlon) Dodds (RIP)
10.00 am	St Joseph's	Mass followed by Stations of the Cross	Bobby Gallagher (RIP)
11.00 – 4.00 pm	St Joseph's	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	
Saturday 28th			
10.00 – 3.00 pm	St Joseph's	Deanery Day of Reflection	
5.30 – 5.45 pm	St Joseph's	Confession	
6.00 pm	St Joseph's	Vigil Mass	Maureen Baird (Ann)
7.00 pm	St Joseph's	Ladies' Night	
Sunday 1st			
9.30 am	St Matthew's	Mass	William & Mary Gallacher (Ann)
After Mass	St Matthew's	Tea and Coffee	
11.00 am	St Joseph's	Mass	Peter Maxwell (Ann)
After Mass	St Joseph's	Tea and Coffee	
11.30 am	OLMC	Mass	For the Parish
After Mass	OLMC	Tea and Coffee	
4.00 – 5.00 pm	St Matthew's	Lenten Hour of Prayer	
5.45 pm	St Joseph's	Mass followed by Young Adults' Evening	
6.15 pm	St Joseph's	Choir Practice for Holy Week & Easter	

St Joseph's is open for prayer Monday to Friday from 9.30 am until 4 pm. Enter through the small side door.

LENT

PRAYING WITH THE PSALMS: "Praying with the Psalms" is a prayer resource for Lent which is a collection of three-minute daily devotions for Lent and Holy Week. A few copies are still available free of charge from the porch.

SCIAF BOXES: Available from the porches of our churches.

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT DURING LENT: The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed after morning Mass in St Joseph's on Fridays during Lent until 4 pm. A list will be on the notice board inviting people to watch for half-hour long periods during the day. People are also welcome to drop in for quiet prayer during the day.

HOUR OF PRAYER: There will be a quiet hour of prayer in St Matthew's church on Sundays during Lent from 4 – 5 pm.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Stations of the Cross will be prayed after Mass on Fridays after 10 am Mass in St Joseph's and Our Lady of Mount Carmel churches.

DAY OF REFLECTION FOR ALL, ESPECIALLY RCIA CANDIDATES / CATECHUMENS PAST AND PRESENT: Saturday February 28th at St Joseph's Church, Kilmarnock, 10am – 3pm. Take time with God for silence, prayer and sharing with others on the journey. A chance to deepen our experience of Lent in preparation for the Easter Vigil for those going to be received into the Church this year, and for those who have been in recent years. Sponsors are also welcome. Explore different ways of praying and deepening our faith. To register, please email rckilmarnock@rcdg.org.uk.

LENT, WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The season of Lent began on Ash Wednesday and continues through to Holy Week, ending with the beginning of the Easter Triduum on Holy Thursday. During this season we're invited to unite ourselves with Christ spiritually who spent forty days in the desert prior to the beginning of his public ministry.

The season is a time when we're invited to reflect on our lives and to identify and seek to work with a renewed vigour on those aspects of our lives which take us away from Christ or which prevent us from giving of ourselves as fully as we ought.

Typically, our Lenten observance is highlighted by our choosing to abstain from something during Lent – this may be food, unhealthy practices or similar, uniting ourselves with Christ who fasted for forty days in the desert. Through our personal observance, we are enabled to give of ourselves more fully.

In addition to fasting, we're also called to renew our commitment to prayer and almsgiving. In all of our parishes, there are additional opportunities for prayer – walking the journey to Calvary with Christ through the Stations of the Cross on Friday mornings, and also all day Adoration on Fridays from 10.50 am – 4.00 pm in St Joseph's, and the Lenten Hour of Prayer from 4.00 – 5.00 pm in St Matthew's. These opportunities invite us to renew our relationship with Christ – to talk to him in prayer, as a friend, seeking to re-enliven our relationship with him.

There will also be added opportunities to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation through which we admit of our own faults, failings, and sinfulness, and seek God's forgiveness – which is boundless, if only we are prepared to ask him for it. Through the Sacrament, we apologise to God as we would to a friend if we hurt them and have our relationship with God, a relationship rooted in love, refreshed and restored. Whilst we may not be guilty of serious, mortal sin, we are all guilty in our daily lives of venial sin, which, whilst it doesn't destroy our relationship with God, nonetheless harms it and, over time, if we don't seek to address and restore it, draws us further away from God, weakening that relationship further.

In almsgiving we're invited to reflect on our own situation and to ask ourselves whether we can do more to support those in

poverty and those in need. If we are unable to do so, we're not required to do anything, but we are encouraged to give of what we can to support those in need.

Let us therefore seek to truly enter into this Lenten Season with open hearts, to invite Christ into our hearts to transform them in his love, so that when we reach the end of this journey, the beginning of the Easter Triduum on Holy Thursday, we may truly enter into the celebrations with our hearts open to Christ and to his transforming presence in our lives.

GENERAL NOTICES

PASTORAL LETTER FROM BISHOP FRANK DOUGAN: Bishop Frank has written to the faithful about beginning a process that will include a review of the whole Diocese. This will include some decisions on parish structures to help maintain our missionary identity rather than just manage decline. As we progress towards that, and as we pray to the Spirit for inspiration, and we are invited to take an active part in the process which await us in the months and years to come. The pastoral letter is included within this newsletter.

ACTION ON THE ASSISTED DYING LEGISLATION: Last weekend, in St Matthew's, a presentation was given at the end of Masses about the dangers of the proposed assisted dying legislation presently being debated in Holyrood. The same presentation will be given in Our Lady of Mount Carmel this weekend. The speaker appealed for your help in acting against this legislation by signing a letter to the local MSP and two list MSPs in South Scotland, including your name and address. To make this as easy as possible, a team of people will be in the porch before and after Mass (at both St Matthew's and Our Lady of Mount Carmel) this weekend to give you access to the letters to sign before and after Mass. Your support will be appreciated to fight against this assault to the dignity of human life. The letters will be hand delivered to the MSP's offices.

I BELONG: The monthly "I Belong" Sunday Sessions continue **today** in all parishes for children preparing for the Sacrament of First Eucharist. Children, please remember to bring your candle and to gather in the sacristy 5 minutes before Mass to be part of the procession.

RITE OF ELECTION: The Rite of Election takes place this Sunday in the Cathedral at 3.00 pm. During the Mass, the Catechumens and Candidates (those already baptised but not confirmed) who will be received into the church at Easter will be presented to Bishop Frank. The Mass is the first official step on their journey towards receiving the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil. This year St Joseph's is presenting several catechumens and candidates.

We would ask that you please pray for all of those who will be received into the church at Easter. If you would like to attend the Rite of Election, you are welcome to do so, the Mass takes place today at 3.00 pm in the Cathedral.

YOUNG ADULTS' (S5-30) EVENING: The next evening takes place on Sunday 1st March when Fr Ben Mkeri, CSSp, will be speaking on the Holy Spirit: who the Holy Spirit is, why we pray to him, and how he supports us. Join Young Adults from across the Diocese at St Joseph's Church, Kilmarnock, beginning with Mass at 5.45 pm, or join from 6.30 pm online for the talk. To follow online, register through their website: youth.rcdg.org.uk and click on 'Young Adults'.

HCPT GROUP 138 LOURDES APPEAL: HCPT Group 138, formerly of Fr Martin Chambers, are fundraising to raise funds to send disabled and disadvantaged children from Ayrshire on pilgrimage to Lourdes this Easter. We have various parishioners involved in the group from across our three Kilmarnock parishes. Graham Rannochan of our Lady of Mount Carmel is running a free to attend race night on Saturday 7th March at Kay Park Bowling Club, doors open 7pm, includes a licences bar. We have horses for sponsor, sponsorship being £2 per horse, allowing you to name your horse and receive a prize

should it win on the night. No need to attend the event in order to sponsor a horse and we can get the prize to you at a later date.

Elizabeth McConnell of St Matthew's is running a raffle for a food hamper. Which includes wine and various other non-perishable items. £1 per strip. Prize draw on 1st March. Kieran and Mark O'Neill of St Joseph's and Caroline McCloskey of St Matthew's will be selling the horses and hamper raffle tickets after Masses throughout February. Please keep an eye out for them. Thank you for your continued support.

DO YOU FEEL CALLED TO DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD? Do you sense a call to serve God and his people in the Priesthood? The Catholic Church in Scotland is inviting you to explore the possibility of a vocation to the priesthood. If you are considering a life dedicated to serving in the ministry, we encourage you to apply for seminary starting in 2027. To learn more about the application process and what a Priestly vocation entails, please contact the diocesan vocations director, Fr Stephen McGrattan at stephen.mcgrattan@rcdg.org.uk. The Vocations Director will support you in your journey of discernment and guide you through the steps along the way. Don't hesitate; the Lord may be calling you to something extraordinary. Take the first step and contact the Diocesan Vocations director today!

HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY: Fr Stephen, Fr Kevin, and the Sisters visit Catholic patients in Crosshouse Hospital typically twice weekly. If you know of anyone in the hospital, please let us know by email (stephen.mcgrattan@rcdg.org.uk) or phone 01563 521832 and they will be visited during our routine visiting. We are not automatically notified when a Catholic patient is admitted to hospital and so we rely on receiving the information from family and friends. For general visiting in Ayr Hospital please contact Fr Benjamin Mkeri at benjamin.mkeri@rcdg.org.uk or on 01655 882145. For urgent or emergency assistance from a chaplain please ask the hospital staff to page the priest on call.

RETREAT WEEKEND FOR PEOPLE THINKING ABOUT WHAT IS NEXT IN LIFE: 'Navigating the way forward' - 13th-15th March (Conforti, Coatbridge). Take time out with God for reflection, input and community as we consider how to discern where we are and where we might be invited to next steps. For those facing choices in life, or wondering if there are changes which would lead to greater growth.



'GOING DEEPER' FOR PEOPLE NEW TO THE CATHOLIC FAITH (RCIA): 1-3 May Pluscarden Benedictine Monastery, Elgin. Take time to pause and reflect on your faith journey in the beautiful surroundings of Pluscarden Benedictine Monastery. Arrivals from 5pm on Friday 1st May and leaving after 12:00 noon lunch on Sunday 3rd May. This residential retreat is designed for those who have been through RCIA (a programme which prepares people to become Roman Catholic). The weekend will include opportunities to try different ways of praying, exploring some of the Ignatian (Jesuit) and Benedictine traditions, and sharing with others on living a reflective life. We will have time together as a group, as well as periods of silence and personal reflection.



MARY'S MEALS WALK FOR HOPE: This year, the charity Mary's Meals is organising a selection of pilgrimage walks around the UK, bringing people together to pray for our mission to feed hungry children. Routes include Dalmally (9 May), Glasgow (28-30 May) and the Peak District (3-5 July). Visit our website to find out about our selection of walks and register your interest: <https://bit.ly/MarysMealsPilgrimage>.

DON'T MISS OUT: FINANCIAL HELP FOR SCOTS IN 2026: As households across Scotland continue to feel the pressure of the cost-of-living crisis, many people may be missing out on vital financial support they are entitled to. To find out

more about benefits that may be available, visit mygov.scot/benefits.

THE IRISH VOICE: Copies of "The Irish Voice" bringing you all the news from the Irish in Scotland are available free of charge from the porches of the churches.

ST JOSEPH'S PARISH

REQUIESCANT IN PACE: Please remember in your prayers the souls of our parishioner William (Willie) Wallace and Anne Vernon who have died. Willie's Requiem Mass will be offered on Tuesday 3rd March at 10.00 am. Anne's Requiem Mass will be offered on Wednesday 11th March at 10.00 am. May they rest in peace.

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT DURING LENT: The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed after morning Mass in St Joseph's on Fridays during Lent until 4 pm. A list will be on the notice board inviting people to watch for half-hour long periods during the day. People are also welcome to drop in for quiet prayer during the day.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Stations of the Cross will be prayed after Mass on Fridays.

LADIES' NIGHT: A ladies' night will take place in St Joseph's Hall on Saturday, 28th February at 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm. The bar will be open with waiter table service available. **All tickets are now sold out.** All proceeds go towards St Joseph's building fund. Donations of raffle prizes would be greatly appreciated.

CHURCH CLEANING: The next Church Cleaning morning will be on **Wednesday** 25th February immediately after the recitation of the Rosary. New volunteers welcome.



ST JOSEPH'S, KILMARNOCK

THE RESTORED HARRISON & HARRISON ORGAN (1903, 2023)

EXTRAORDINARY ORGAN & STRINGS RECITAL

Recitalists:
JOHN KITCHEN (Organ)
with **STRING QUARTET**

Saturday 7 March
2.30 pm

St Joseph's Church,
15a Hill Street,
Kilmarnock, KA3 1HB

The Edinburgh and Glasgow Societies of Organists host a special organ recital with strings featuring music by Handel and Stanley on the church's restored Harrison & Harrison pipe organ.

Admission free - Retiral collection

No booking required - just come along

www.rcokilmarnock.org.uk/outreach/organ-recitals

EXTRAORDINARY CONCERT WITH ORGAN AND STRINGS: The Edinburgh Society of Organists is joining with the Glasgow Society of Organists to visit St Joseph's restored Harrison & Harrison organ and to perform a concert with organ and strings on Saturday 7th March at 2.30 pm.

John Kitchen (City of Edinburgh Organist) who will play the organ that day said of the St Joseph's pipe organ: "This organ is a triumphant demonstration of what can be achieved when a congregation comes together with a common purpose and faith in the outcome. In 2023, after a dedicated fund raising campaign by members of the church, led by their priest and organists, the 1903 Harrison and Harrison organ was restored by its original maker. The project was enthusiastically supported by the congregation both financially and in terms of ongoing commitment; they now regularly attend the recitals that are held, and greatly appreciate the contribution it makes to their worship."

John Kitchen will present Handel and Stanley organ concertos, featuring a group of string players from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. It will be an honour for St Joseph's to host this prestigious event. Everyone is very welcome.

ORGAN RECITAL SERIES 2026: The sixth annual organ recital series programme has been finalised and an eminent cast of musicians from cathedrals, towns and cities at home and abroad will come to St Joseph's to perform on the restored Harrison & Harrison (1903, 2023) pipe organ. The programme is printed in full in this newsletter. Please spread the word! All are very welcome to join us to celebrate the joy of music.

HALL HIRE: Did you know that our Church Hall is available for hire for community events, fundraisers and family gatherings? We offer competitive rates for the hire of the hall which are affordable and, by hiring the hall, you're helping to support the parish. For more information or to book the hall, please contact Margaret McGrath.

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL PARISH

U.R. WELCOME CLUB DATES: The next dates are 25th February (Talks on Kilmarnock) and 11th March (Chair Exercises) from 1.30pm till 3.30pm in the Norbert Meeting Room, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. Come and join the fun and catch up over a cuppa. All welcome: seniors, friends and neighbours.

SSVP AFTERNOON TEAS: Our Lady of Mount Carmel Saint Vincent de Paul Conference will be hosting two afternoon teas between 1pm and 3pm on 28th March and 18th April 2026 and parishioners from all three parishes are welcome to attend. There is no charge and sign up forms will be left in the Norbert Room at Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Stations of the Cross will be prayed after Mass on Fridays.

ALTAR SERVER TRAINING: The altar servers are asked to come to church at 11 am on Sunday 15th March for some ongoing training to help them serve at the altar. If there are any children who would like to become altar servers, you will be welcome to join the servers for training. Please speak to Fr Stephen or Fr Kevin for more details.

ST MATTHEW'S PARISH

REQUIESCAT IN PACE: Please remember in your prayers the soul of our parishioner Kathleen Queen who has died. Kathleen's funeral service will be celebrated in St Matthew's at 1.45 pm on Monday 23rd February. May she rest in peace.

HOUR OF PRAYER: The church will be open every Sunday between 4-5pm during Lent for people to come and go from the church for quiet prayer as they wish. If anyone can help, please contact Colette Murray on 07905620033. This will start on Sunday 22nd February, finishing Sunday March 29th.

HALL HIRE: Did you know that our Church Hall is available for hire for community events, fundraisers and family gatherings? We offer competitive rates for the hire of the hall which are affordable and, by hiring the hall, you're helping to support the parish. For more information or to book the hall, please contact Margaret Merrick.

LADIES SPIRITUALITY GROUP: The ladies Spirituality group will meet on Wednesday 25th February in St. Matthew's at 2pm. Tea and coffee available. All ladies welcome. Contact: Cherry Stacey 07759943762.

ST MATTHEW'S AND MOUNT CARMEL

THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS AND THE PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEES OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL AND ST MATTHEW'S PARISHES:

When a new parish priest is appointed, the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) and the Parish Finance Committee (PFC) are dissolved and a new PPC and PFC are to be constituted.

Fr Stephen invited those who had previously served on these groups to meet with him at an early stage to learn more about the life of the parishes, and this collaboration was valuable. Once again, those who served on the PPC and PFC are invited to a joint meeting of both groups from both parishes on Thursday 19th March at 7.15 pm in St Matthew's church hall.

At the meeting Fr Stephen will share and discuss information about the stewardship of the parishes in advance of reporting to the wider congregations.

Also, an initial discussion will take place at this meeting about the shape of the PPCs and PFCs to be newly constituted.

GIFT AID FORMS: If you pay tax and wish the church to reclaim the tax on your donation through the gift aid scheme, please complete and return a gift aid form to the sacristy. Forms are available in the porch.

SECOND COLLECTION: The regular second collection, which was to contribute to increasing fuel costs, will no longer be taken. You are asked, however, to put what you would have donated to the second collection into the main collection because fuel costs remain high. From April, there will be a collection roughly once a month for maintenance including fuel costs.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

SSVP & FOODBANK PROVISION: We are extremely grateful to the Society of St Vincent de Paul who run foodbanks in St Joseph's and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, as well as the volunteers who help to run the foodbank in St Matthew's in partnership with the Trussell Trust and Ayrshire (East) Foodbank.

Foodbanks are available through our parishes on the following days and times:

Day	Start	Finish	Location
Monday	7.30 pm	8.15 pm	Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Tuesday	4.00 pm	6.00 pm	St Matthew's
Wednesday	10.30 am	11.30 pm	St Joseph's Hall
Thursday	4.00 pm	6.00 pm	St Matthew's

All of our foodbanks are provided free of charge.

Supporting our Foodbanks: Donations of food and essentials are always greatly appreciated and help support local individuals and families in need, these can be handed in to any of our churches, the parish house, or directly at any of the Foodbanks. All donations should be non-perishable items. Please see below for current guidance from each foodbank.

St Joseph's: At present we **only** need tins of meat, fish and fruit.
Our Lady of Mount Carmel: We have lots of soup, pasta and rice but all other non perishable items are accepted.
St Matthew's: All donations gratefully received.

We are extremely grateful to all of those who support the work of our Foodbanks and to all of those who are able to offer donations to support those in need.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

P4 – FIRST EUCHARIST

MEETING DATES: The Sacramental Preparation dates for our young people preparing to receive the Sacrament of First Eucharist are shown below. On each listed Sunday, 'I Belong' will take place in their respective parish following Mass. Each session lasts approximately 1 hour and attendance is required as part of their preparation to receive the sacraments.

- Session 7 – Sunday 22nd February (**Today**)
- Session 8 – Sunday 22nd March

- Session 9 – Sunday 26th April
- Session 10 – Sunday 10th May
- Retreat Day – Saturday 16th May (For all young people in the deanery) in St Joseph's from 10.00 – 2.00 pm.

First Holy Communion will be celebrated:

- St Matthew's – Sunday 31st May, 9.30 am
- Our Lady of Mount Carmel – Sunday 31st May, 11.30 am
- St Joseph's – Sunday 7th June, 11.00 am

The monthly 'I Belong' sessions will now take place in:

- St Matthew's: After Sunday Mass, 10.30 – 11.30 am in the Committee Room
- Our Lady of Mount Carmel: 10.15 – 11.15 am in the Norbert Room
- St Joseph's: 12.30 – 1.45 pm in the Green room (with Parents' Session in the main hall)

P3 – FIRST RECONCILIATION/CONFESSION

FIRST RECONCILIATION: The children of primary 3 age will make their First Reconciliation on Monday 23 March at 6.30 pm in Our Lady of Mount Carmel church. This celebration is for the children of all the Kilmarnock parishes.

accommodation, breakfast, dinner, and admission costs. If you're interested, scan the QR code on the poster, or go to youth.rcdg.org.uk, for more details and to register.

ADVENT YOUTH RETREAT: Takes place from 27th – 29th November at Gowanbank SU Centre, near Darvel. The retreat is open to all young people currently in P6-S3. Register before Easter for a discounted rate of only £140 pp, and only pay a £50 deposit. The weekend includes a range of times of prayer, Mass, spiritual reflection, different outdoor activities and lots of time to relax and spend time with friends. Subsidies are available for those in need, or for families with more than one child wishing to attend – please contact the Youth Office by emailing: youth@rcdg.org.uk. Go to youth.rcdg.org.uk for more details and to register.

YOUTH EVENING: (Until the summer, these evenings are open to young people in P5 and up.) Join Youth from across the cluster on Sunday 22nd March as they gather for their monthly evening in St Joseph's, Kilmarnock. They'll be reflecting on St Joseph: who he is and what we can learn from him. The evening begins with Mass at 5.00 pm after which they'll continue in the hall with games, activities, a short talk, and pizza. All young people in P5-S4 are welcome, if it's your first time, please complete an Annual Consent Form online: youth.rcdg.org.uk.

YOUTH OFFICE 200 CLUB: This provides support for young people who otherwise would struggle to participate in events. Membership is £5 per month, with a monthly draw giving you the chance to win cash prizes. **Pick up a form in the stall to register, or go to their website: youth.rcdg.org.uk.**

EASTER YOUTH GATHERING: Celebrate Easter with Galloway Youth! Are you in P5-S4? Sign up to join Galloway Youth in St Teresa's, Dumfries on Sunday 18th April as they gather to celebrate Easter! They'll have a fantastic selection of games, activities, talks, prayer and Mass – as well as pizza and a BBQ! All completely free of charge. Free transport is available from Kilmarnock, just sign up on their website: youth.rcdg.org.uk.

MINISTRY TO YOUNG PEOPLE



GALLOWAY YOUNG ADULTS 12TH-16TH OCTOBER
ROME 2026 £1000

JOIN US FOR A FANTASTIC 5-DAY
SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL PILGRIMAGE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER SCAN THE QR CODE.

COST INCLUDES:

- ✓ Flights and airport transfers
- ✓ City Centre Accommodation (Twin/ Triple Rooms)
- ✓ Breakfast and Dinner
- ✓ Visits to all four Papal Basilicas
- ✓ Wednesday Papal Audience



MORE INFORMATION @ youth@rcdg.org.uk
Diocese of Galloway Youth - @rcdgyouth

REGISTER BY FRIDAY TO GUARANTEE YOUR PLACE AT THE CURRENT PRICE.

YOUNG ADULTS PILGRIMAGE TO ROME: Join Young Adults from across the Diocese for a 5 day/ 4 night pilgrimage to Rome from 12th – 16th October 2025. The itinerary will feature a wide range of different spiritual and cultural activities, including the Wednesday Audience, Vatican Museums, and a walking tour of Rome, as well as a free day to explore the city. The pilgrimage is open to young adults in S6 (at time of departure – current S5) to age 30 and costs £1000 (the group is planning to fundraise to reduce this) which includes all flights,

FELLOWSHIP OF KILMARNOCK CHURCHES

ECUMENICAL SERVICE: The next ecumenical service will be in Kay Park Parish Church on Sunday 22nd February at 3 pm. The theme will be *Journey through Lent to Easter*. All are welcome.

EAST AYRSHIRE CHURCHES HOMELESSNESS ACTION: The Community Friends breakfast drop-in will soon be moving into new premises in John Dickie Street, and we are looking for a few volunteers who would like to join our team to serve breakfasts four mornings each week. Further information from Janice Grant, janice.grant@hotmail.co.uk or Michael Smith, michael@eacha.org.uk.

FAITH STORIES AT KAY PARK: Faith Stories meetings take place at Kay Park Church at 7 pm on Wednesdays 25th February, 4th and 11th March, during which people from different backgrounds will talk about their journeys to faith. All welcome.

ST KENTIGERN'S CHURCH: will host Lent study discussions on Wednesdays 25th February - 25th March at 7.15-8.45 p.m. Discussion will be based on videos by Canon J. John, entitled "Facing The Canon". These show interviews with people who have felt God's presence in their lives. "Facing the Canon is a weekly dose of encouragement and inspiration to give you confidence to share your faith."

JAZZ BY CANDLELIGHT: On 14th March at 7 pm you are invited to an evening of jazz by candle-light with the acclaimed Edinburgh vocalist, Lorna Reid and her quartet who brings her signature blend of classical jazz and original song-writing to Kilmarnock's New Laigh Kirk halls, 35 John Finnie street for the latest in their *Music For All* series of events.

Expect an evening of beautiful songs, impeccable musicianship and refined heartfelt jazz. Tickets at £10 plus small booking fee are available by searching online via Ticket Source.

ORGAN RECITALS 2026

THE RESTORED 1903 HARRISON & HARRISON PIPE ORGAN

SATURDAY 7 MARCH - 2.30 p.m.

JOHN KITCHEN

Edinburgh City Organist

with STRING QUARTET in a concert of organ concertos in association with
GLASGOW SOCIETY OF ORGANISTS and EDINBURGH SOCIETY OF ORGANISTS

TUESDAY 24 MARCH - 12 NOON

RAYMOND McCLUSKEY

St Joseph's Church, Kilmarnock

TUESDAY 19 MAY - 12 NOON

HANS UWE HIELSCHER

Wiesbaden Marktkirche Lutheran Cathedral, Germany

TUESDAY 23 JUNE - 12 NOON

AARON HAWTHORNE

Freelance Organist

TUESDAY 7 JULY - 12 NOON

ALESSANDRO BIANCHI

St Edward's Anglican Church, Lugano, Switzerland

TUESDAY 28 JULY - 12 NOON

JAMES GOUGH

Southwark Cathedral

FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER - 7 p.m.

STEVEN McINTYRE

Dunblane Cathedral

TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER - 12 NOON

BENJAMIN SAUNDERS

Leeds Cathedral

TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER - 12 NOON

MATTHEW HYNES

Royal Burgh of Ayr Organist

ST JOSEPH'S RC CHURCH

HILL STREET, KILMARNOCK, KA3 1HB

FREE ADMISSION

RETIRAL COLLECTION

TEL: 01563 521832

WEB: www.rckilmarnock.org.uk

EMAIL: rckilmarnock@rcdg.org.uk

FACEBOOK: RC Kilmarnock

ST JOSEPH'S IS A PARISH OF THE RC DIOCESE OF GALLOWAY. CHARITY NO. SC010576



DIOCESE OF GALLOWAY

Pastoral Letter February 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am writing to you in response to a promise I made to the clergy. In November of last year, I spent time with them discussing their well-being. On the subject of their ministry and the many responsibilities they have, one word came up: *unsustainable*.

Before I expand on that, let me give an important context. The priests love their ministry, love the People of God and show a tremendous commitment to Christ and their calling. I am inspired by the example they give, their witness and their pastoral care.

However, the simple fact is that they are being asked to do increasingly more while being fewer in number. Few priests have responsibility for only one parish and, along with other pastoral responsibilities, they are being stretched more and more. And yet, they still answer the call. For that, I am sure you are as grateful as I am. But we cannot simply continue as before, and hope things get better.

As we continue to ask the question of how best to proclaim the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ in the Diocese of Galloway, we must also be asking if the present structuring and number of parishes is suitable.

And it is not simply a question of the number of priests. That was the factor that brought things into focus, but it is not the only one. There are many others: reduced numbers of people attending church; the physical condition of some of our churches; shifting populations from one place to another; financial issues. This is far from an exhaustive list, but my point is that this would not simply be solved by bringing in more priests.

We are very fortunate in the priests who are already with us from outside the Diocese, including the Spiritans, a Schoenstatt Father, a Passionist. But please do not imagine that there is a massive pool of priests out there waiting to be invited in. Yes, we do look for priests from elsewhere, but this has to be done carefully. Not all priests are suitable for ministry here.

In my previous letter to you, I directed you to the next Holy Year in 2033, the 2000th anniversary of the great events of our faith. As we progress towards that, and as we pray to the Spirit for inspiration, we must also be prepared to make difficult decisions around our present parish structures. I do promise you transparency and the chance to engage with the process. I ask that you be open to this and to resist the temptation to simply fight your corner. While we naturally want to preserve what we have, at times the vine has to be pruned so as to grow (John 15:1-2).

I am signalling my intention to begin a process that will include a review of the whole Diocese. This will include some decisions on parish structures that will have to be made sooner rather than later and will also include medium- and long-term planning. You all have your part to play, and I promise you the opportunity to do so.

While this is a letter that is difficult for me to write, it is not a message without hope. As a Diocese we might have to breathe in to breathe out, to contract in order to expand. If we retain our missionary identity, we will be doing more than managing decline. We will be answering the call to proclaim the Good News to our brothers and sisters around us and finding the best way to do this. Let us not lose sight of that demand that Christ makes of us individually and collectively:

“Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time” (Mt 28:19-20).

St Ninian pray for us.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop of Galloway

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- U. R. Welcome – Wednesday 25th February (*Our Lady of Mount Carmel*)
- RCIA Day of Reflection – Saturday 28th February, 10.00 am (*St Joseph's*)
 - Ladies' Night – Saturday 28th February, 7.00 pm (*St Joseph's*)
 - Young Adults' Evening – Sunday 1st March, 5.45 pm (*St Joseph's*)
- Extraordinary Organ and Strings Recital – Saturday 7th March, 2.30 pm (*St Joseph's*)
 - Youth Evening – Sunday 22nd March, 5.00 pm (*St Joseph's*)
- SSVF Afternoon Tea – Saturday 28th March, 1.00 pm (*Our Lady of Mount Carmel*)

MINISTRY ROTAS FOR THIS WEEK AND NEXT WEEK

	Readers (1st, 2nd, Intercessions)	Ministers of Communion	Altar Servers	Sunday Teas	Children's Liturgy	Welcomers	Bidding Prayers
Saturday 21 Feb St Joseph's 6 pm	F Donachie, K McGhee, M Kirk	Sr Juliet, G Rankin, L Rankin, M Steele, J Lennon	Joseph, Ethan, Antoni, Ravindu, Lexi, Maia			Clare, Margaret	Philip Brown
Sunday 22 Feb St Matthew's 9.30 am	F Boyle, G Coyle, C Bias	R: A M Gilmour, A Gillion L: M Dempster, M Gordon, M Thomson	Luca, David, Rebecca				
Sunday 22 Feb St Joseph's 11 am	An Davidson, M Walker, P Nicholson	I Love, H Matthews, R Murphy, A Neil, J Shields	Ryan, Luca, Mark, Rachel, Gabo, Jason, Marilyn, Kamili, Bianca, Jude	E Cunningham, L Heron	IHM Sisters	Alan, Theresa	
Sunday 22 Feb OLMC 11.30 am	Owen Jones, Colin Cox	L Shearer, C Harper, C Lamberth	Jessica, Farrah, Katie	Suzy	Alice, Graham	Brian McDade, Marie Wilkie	
Saturday 28 Feb St Joseph's 6 pm	E Heron, H Rameckers, A Davidson	C McGowan, F Donachie, K McGhee, C Power, Sr Juliet	Joseph, Ethan, Antoni, Ravindu, Lexi, Maia			Kathleen, Frances	H Matthews
Sunday 1 Mar St Matthew's 9.30 am	M Merrick, B Gilhooley, A Gillion	R: L Vernon, Sister L: M Bradley, N McKenna, C Stacey	Luca, David, Rebecca				
Sunday 1 Mar St Joseph's 11 am	M Cunningham, T Murphy, L Hand	F McCann, M Andrew, P Dorrian, D Custodio, M Walker	Ryan, Luca, Mark, Rachel, Gabo, Jason, Marilyn, Kamili, Bianca, Jude	Alice Murphy	L Feeney, E O'Connell	Paul, Libby	
Sunday 1 Mar OLMC 11.30 am	Charlie Harper, Kathleen Jones	Sister, J Hefron, L Hefron	Jessica, Farrah, Katie	Suzy	Julie, John	G Rannochan, C Harper	

Useful Contacts

	Hall bookings	Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinators
St Joseph's	Margaret McGrath (01563 542130)	Margaret McGrath (psc.kilmarnock.stjoseph@rcdg.org.uk)
Our Lady of Mount Carmel		Alice Brown (alice.brown@rcdg.org.uk) Charles Harper (charles.harper@rcdg.org.uk)
St Matthew's	Margaret Merrick (07765 715798)	Marjorie McInnes (marjorie.mcinnis@rcdg.org.uk)
Crosshouse and Ayr Hospitals: In emergencies ask hospital staff to page the on-call priest. For regular visiting: <i>Crosshouse Hospital:</i> Fr Stephen McGrattan (stephen.mcgrattan@rcdg.org.uk or 01563 521832) <i>Ayr Hospital:</i> Fr Benjamin Mkeri (benjamin.mkeri@rcdg.org.uk or 01655 882145)		
St Andrew's Primary: 01563 549549 Mount Carmel Primary: 01563 525897 St Joseph's Academy: 01563 526144		

Parish Office & Presbytery Contact Details:

St Joseph's Presbytery, 15a Hill Street, Kilmarnock, KA3 1HB – Telephone: 01563 521832

Convent Contact Details

Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mount Carmel Convent, 14 Kirkton Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 2DF
 Telephone: 01563 523822 • Email: ihmsisters@rcdg.org.uk

Collections for Sunday 11th January

St Joseph's	Standing orders: £834.08. Weekly collection: £1,507.87. Building Fund: £961.47.
Our Lady of Mount Carmel	Standing orders: £261.57. Weekly collections: £444.84. SSVP: £103.65.
St Matthew's	Standing orders: £515.54. Weekly collections: £399.55. Ecuador Trust: £6.50. Community Box: £118.60.

Thank you for generously supporting our parishes.

SUPPORT OUR PARISHES

You can now support our parishes by giving online, just scan the QR code to donate or go to our website and click the link.

St Joseph's



Our Lady of Mount Carmel



St Matthew's



FOLLOW US ONLINE

Facebook – X – Instagram – @rckilmarnock

Web: www.rckilmarnock.org.uk

YouTube: RC Kilmarnock

Please ask your child(ren) to return to you immediately after the Children's Liturgy if you do not wish them to be captured on the live-stream recording.