

# OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH

**Saint Mary Immaculate Larkhall &  
Our Lady & Saint John's Blackwood**

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Raploch Road  
Larkhall, ML9 1AN

**SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**  
**4TH JANUARY 2026**

## THE THREE WISE MEN

The three kings are classic figures in every Nativity scene. But who were the Wise Men, and what do we know about them?

We're not exactly sure who they were. The evidence from the Gospels is found in the first 12 verses of St Matthew's account. All we can glean from that passage is that they are called Magi, or "magicians," that they came from the East to Jerusalem, and that they had seen a star announcing the birth of the King of the Jews. The Gospel doesn't say there were three Wise Men. That idea comes from the three gifts they brought.

To track down who the Wise Men were, we must first look East. The obvious choice is the Parthian Empire. During the time of Jesus, the Parthian Empire was the name of what was formerly the Persian Empire. It was centred on present day Iran and Iraq. In the Parthian Empire there was a caste of astrologer priests based in the ancient religion of Zoroastrianism. Most scholars think the Magi were Zoroastrian priest-astrologers from Persia. Matthew says the kings came from the East, and Persia seems the obvious choice, but the passage from Isaiah predicts that the kings come from Ephah, Midian and Sheba. Where are Ephah, Midian and Sheba?

Where did the gold come from? Yemen is the present-day location of the ancient civilisation of Sheba. The kingdom's fabulous wealth was based on gold mines in Ethiopia. Archaeologists have recently discovered what they believe to be the mines of the queen of Sheba. The kings of Yemen during the time of Jesus were Jewish. They would have had a keen interest in the goings-on in Herod's court and the arrival of a new king of the Jews. Finally, Jesus himself mentions this link in Matthew 12:42 when he refers to the queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon and, referring to himself, says, "there is something greater than Solomon here."

There are more intriguing clues based on three gifts. The Arabian peninsula — especially the area of Midian and Sheba — is the only place in the world where the specific plants grow from which are harvested the resin to make both incense and myrrh. These two rich gifts — used for their aroma and for medicinal purposes — were the cash crops of this part of the world.

The origin of the three gifts would indicate that the Wise Men came from the Arabian peninsula. And the gifts were not simply rich gifts offered to Christ, but were symbolic gifts from the kingdoms of their origin. The gifts had diplomatic significance and suggest that the Magi were indeed either kings or ambassadors from the court of Nabatea and Sheba. Even more intriguing, there was constant traffic along the "incense route," which came north from the southern tip of Arabia up to what is now Jordan and across Judea to Gaza. If the Magi were from southern Arabia and the Kingdom of Nabatea (present-day Jordan), their trade route ran right past Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

We do not know for certain who the Wise Men mentioned in the Nativity story were, and theories and explanations will continue. But if we put all the evidence together, it seems that the Wise Men were probably Zoroastrian influenced astrologers in the court of the Kingdoms of Nabatea and Sheba who brought rich gifts of diplomatic significance to the newborn King of the Jews.



# THIS WEEK IN OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH

**Sunday 4th January** (St Mary's 9.00am - 11.00am; OLSJ 11.00am - 1.00pm)  
**10.00am** Holy Mass for the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord (St Mary's)  
**12noon** Holy Mass for the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord (OLSJ)  
No 5.00pm Mass

**Monday 5th January** (St Mary's 9.00am - 4.00pm; OLSJ 8.00am - 4.00pm)  
11.30am Recitation of the Holy Rosary (St Mary's)  
12noon Holy Mass for the 5th January ( St Mary's)

**Tuesday 6th January** (St Mary's 9.00am - 4.00pm; OLSJ 8.00am - 4.00pm)  
9.00am Recitation of the Holy Rosary (Our Lady & St John's)  
9.30am Holy Mass for the 6th January (Our Lady & St John's)  
9.55am Novena to St Anthony (Our Lady & St John's)

**Wednesday 7th January** (St Mary's 9.00am - 4.00pm; OLSJ 8.00am - 7.45pm)  
9.30am Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 9.55am (St Mary's)  
9.30am Confessions until 9.50am (St Mary's)  
10.00am Holy Mass for the 7th January (St Mary's)  
6.30pm Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 6.55pm (Our Lady & St John's)  
6.30pm Confessions until 6.55pm (Our Lady & St John's)  
7.00pm Holy Mass for the 7th January (Our Lady & St John's)

**Thursday 8th January** (St Mary's 9.00am - 4.00pm; OLSJ 8.00am - 4.00pm)  
9.00am Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 9.25am (Our Lady & St John's)  
9.00am Confessions until 9.20am (Our Lady & St John's)  
9.30am Holy Mass for the 8th January (Our Lady & St John's)

**Friday 9th January** (St Mary's 9.00am - 4.00pm; OLSJ 8.00am - 4.00pm)  
9.30am Recitation of the Holy Rosary (St Mary's)  
10.00am Holy Mass for the 9th January (St Mary's)

**Saturday 10th January** (St Mary's 9.00am - 5.45pm; OLSJ closed)  
4.15pm Confessions until 4.45pm (St Mary's)  
**5.00pm** Vigil Mass for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (St Mary's)



## THE SEASON OF CHRISTMAS

The Christmas Season is preceded only in importance by the celebration of the Sacred Triduum, the Church has no more ancient a tradition than the celebration of the Christmas Season: from Jesus' humble birth in Bethlehem; the announcement of his birth to the shepherds by angels; the revelation to the Magi and their subsequent adoration of the child; his Baptism in the River Jordan and the Father's declaration of Jesus as the "Beloved Son" and the beginning of his public ministry. Until next Sunday we are still in the Season of Christmas.

## ST MARGARET'S ADOPTION SOCIETY

Today is the final opportunity for parishioners to donate to the box at the crib to support the marvellous work done by St Margaret's Adoption Society. This year there are over 1000 children who are in need of a stable and loving family home. Any donation you can make to the crib collection would be very gratefully received by St Margaret's. There is a QR code on the donations box for those with no cash.

## JUSTICE & PEACE

A box will be available at the back of the church at all Masses this weekend, the Solemnity of the Epiphany, for the work of the Justice & Peace Commission here in Scotland. A letter from Archbishop Nolan will be read at all Masses this weekend too.

## BURNS DAY LUNCH

St Mary's Conference of the St Vincent de Paul are having a Burns Day Lunch for senior parishioners (aged over 60 years) on Sunday 25th January at 1.00pm in Raploch Bowling Club, Larkhall. If you wish to attend please enter details (one name per line) on the list on the notice board by 12th January. The SSVP hope to see as many as possible there.

## PARISH FINANCES

Christmas Collection:	£2,315.00
Offertory Collection & Donations:	£1,752.00
Standing Orders & Bank Transfers	£255.00
Votive Candles:	£635.00
	<b>£4,957.00</b>

**Many thanks for your very generous support**

*To set up a standing order for the parish:*

Account Name - **Our Lady of Fatima Parish**

Account No - **00499758** Sort Code - **800877**

*Giftaid forms available at back of the church.*

## HIRE OF THE PARISH HALL

The Parish Hall is available for private functions, community events, regular lets and fundraising events. Please consider having your parties and functions in the Parish Hall to support the parish. If you would like to find out more information regarding the Hall and bookings, then please contact the Hall through email: **BlackwoodHallBookings@outlook.com**

**BOOK  
ONLINE**



## CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

The Christmas decorations in our churches will be taken down this week. St Mary's decorations will come down on Monday after the 12noon Mass and in Our Lady & St John's on Tuesday after the 9.30am Mass. If you could lend a hand please stay behind after Mass. Many hands make light work.

## PARISH HOGMANAY PARTY NIGHT

Many thanks to those who came along to the Parish Hogmanay Party and made it such a great success. Particular word of thanks to Suzanne, the volunteer bar staff and to those who helped in any way to make it such a special celebration. Happy New Year!

## SACRAMENTS FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE 2026

24th February	First Confessions (St John's)	6.30pm
25th February	First Confessions (St Mary's)	1.30pm
11th March	Confirmations (St John's & St Mary's)	7.00pm
9th May	First Holy Communions (St John's)	12noon
16th May	First Holy Communions (St Mary's)	12noon



## PARISH FRIDAY DRINKS

The Parish Hall

**EVERY FRIDAY AFTERNOON  
2.00PM - 9.00PM**



## PARISH LUNCH CLUB

The Parish Hall

**THURSDAY 29TH JANUARY**



## THEOLOGY ON TAP

The Parish Hall

**TUESDAY 17TH FEBRUARY**

6.30pm, Talk beginning at 7.00pm  
**Fr John McFadden on Life in the Missions**



## PARISH CHURCH WORKERS SOCIAL

The Parish Hall

**FRIDAY 13TH FEBRUARY**

**6.30pm - Late**

*List for those attending will be available soon*



## PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

**SICK** - Louise Gonnella, Jim Melville, Anne Connor, Jane Hamilton, Faith Lindsay, Pat Whalin, Declan McDonald, Paul McMurray, Margaret Craig, Aaron Mulligan, Stephen Fleming, Marion Bryson, William Young, James Thomson, Andy McGarvey, Julia Brassington, Maureen Crank, Robbie Frew, George Murphy, Phyllis Fleming, Joe Murphy (Dubai)

**RIP** -

**MONTHS MINDS & ANNIVERSARIES** - Patricia Weir, Kitty Reilly

Please remember to have your dead loved ones prayed for on their anniversary



## CHRISTMAS REMEMBRANCES



*This Christmas we remember those who have gone before us in faith.  
May they be at peace with the Lord who was born & died for them:*

John & Jane McMurray, Philip & Ida Holton, Ken & Millie Gough, Jim & Mary Dow, Jim Dow Jnr; John Creechan, Thomas & Catherine Kennedy, Annie & Michael Creechan, Margaret & Eddie Love, Cathie & George Gibney, Catherine Ann Bews, Kennedy Family, Creechan Family; Gerard Wyllie, John & Catherine Deerin, Hugh & Margaret Wyllie, Martin Wyllie, Kevin Wyllie, George Wyllie, David James, Ellen Mullen, Chrissie Ferris, Jim McShane, Frank Lyons, Anne Findon, Marion Hoey, Very Reverend Giles Canon Goward, Very Reverend Kieran Canon O'Farrell, Very Reverend William Canon Dunnachie, Eleanor Morrison; Elizabeth Gold, The Sweeney & McCabe Families, Margaret Curley Foix, Janet McIntosh, Pat Grace, Kathleen McGeoch, Buntly Kane, Margaret McGeechan, Frank Campbell, Milly Lynch; Alice & Con Weir & Family; Gordon Wilson Gardiner Hotchkiss, Graham Grant Hotchkiss, Christina Weller, Louis Baron Weller, Christina McCluskey, Teresa McCluskey, John McCluskey, David Yardley Kennedy, Robert Kennedy Snr, Robert Kennedy Jnr, Sharon Campbell, Barry Myles, Alexander Young, Christina Fuller, James Hotchkiss, Margaret Hotchkiss, John McStea; Jamie Dunn, Jerry Dunn, Marion Houston, Desmond Houston, Houston Family, Campbell Family; Members of the McAuley, McIvor, McIntosh & Gallacher Families; Rose & George Rodger, May & Tommy McMahan; Michael Simpson; Chris Crumley; John McMurray, John & Jane McMurray, Members of the McManus & Reilly Families; Betty Hamilton, Hugh Dawson, Mary Dawson; John Corr, Mary Corr, Jennifer Cochran, William Tait; Jim & Mary Somerville, Alan Rennie, Robert Brown, Jim & Margaret Matthews, Charlie & Margaret McNally, Charlie & Annie McNally, Johnny & Hannah McNally; McCorry Family, McLaren Family, Wedlock Family, Taggart Family; Hugh, Sam & May McCluskey; James (Jim) McLaughlin; Robert Maguire, Ian Quinn, Isa & Walter Freeland, Catherine Devine; Michael J Fleming, Paul Fleming, Marie Cullen; Martin Gibney, McLaughlin & Duncan Families; Raymond Holmes, Danny Cunningham, Margaret & James Girvan, Sadie Girvan, Ernie Girvan, Grace Girvan, Tom & Susan Girvan, Vida & Thomas Wilson, Rita & James Lyons, Margaret & Les Bennet, Fr Adrian Noonan; John & Emily Leonard, Cathie & Tommy Tierney, Alan Brotherton; Teresa & Bill Ellison, Freda & Geoff Davies, Michael Ellison; The Stewart, McGonagle & McGinn Families, Marion Wright; Jim & Elizabeth Sherry, Logan Ross, Frank & Elizabeth Carragher, James & Grace Sherry, Betty & John Anderson, Nancy & Ian McCall, Harry Carragher, Alyson Carragher, Frank & Betty Lynch, Jim Wotherspoon; Eddie Rae.

## RCIA PROGRAMME

The RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) Programme will resume on Monday 12th January in the Parish House for those who are preparing to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church this Easter. Please keep the four candidates in your prayers as they journey towards this important moment in their lives.

**RCIA**  
Christian Formation Process

## THE JUBILEE YEAR 2025

This weekend at St Peter's Basilica, our Holy Father Pope Leo XIV will conclude the Jubilee Year 2025 by closing the Holy Door, a door which is only open every 25 years for Holy Years. The theme of the past year has been "Pilgrims of Hope", but even though the Holy Year comes to a close this weekend we continue to journey in faith as pilgrims of hope as individuals, families, a parish community and as members of the Catholic Church. The next Holy Year will not be 2050 but rather 2033, when we will celebrate the 2000th anniversary of the death and resurrection of the Lord. This will be known as an Extraordinary Jubilee as it doesn't fall within the normal 25 year timeframe. This will give us all the opportunity to celebrate our redemption in a very special way.

