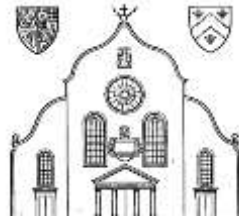


**CANONGATE KIRK
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE
& EDINBURGH CASTLE**

www.canongatekirk.org.uk

Newsletter March 2025



MINISTER'S LETTER

The last few days of February saw an unusual flurry of activity at Canongate Kirk. We welcomed a bigger congregation than usual to our monthly evening service, with friends from churches beyond Canongate and St Giles' joining us to hear Rev Stewart Gillan, the minister of St Andrew's Jerusalem, reflect on life in and around that military memorial church at this turbulent time. Monday saw an invasion of young soldiers, who filled our pews for a national competition organised by the Royal Corps of Army Music. A sequence of nine instrumental soloists competed for the top prize, accompanied by a huge band which combined the forces of the Royal Regiment of Scotland and the Light Division among others. By Wednesday we were reduced to two trumpeters, a piper, choir and organ to support another large gathering for a special service to install the new Prior of the Order of St John's Priory of Scotland in the presence of its Grand Prior, HRH The Duke of Gloucester, after an impressive procession down the Canongate from St John House. On each occasion our church provided an appropriately bright and welcoming space that was much appreciated and admired.

Looking ahead, the Kirk Session has agreed that we will hold a Lent Study Group in the church beginning on Sunday 9th March and concluding on Sunday 13th April. The group will meet in the King David Aisle at 11.30am and finish before 12.30pm, when parking restrictions on the Royal Mile kick in. We will follow a book produced by the Church of Scotland entitled "Living Generously", copies of which are available at £10 each, or can be ordered online. Offering what is described as a "whole-life response to God's love", the book incorporates a series of articles, case studies and discussion prompts as we travel towards Easter and its reminder of God's own generous and unconditional love for the world in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. All are welcome, both to the Study Group and to our morning services as Lent unfolds.

Stewart Gillan reflected on how Palestinian Christians have found life-saving shelter literally within their church buildings, when they have either found their homes in Gaza to be destroyed or to have been occupied by other displaced neighbours. We live in less extreme times, but are glad to find life-enhancing opportunities within the walls of Canongate Kirk and the bright and welcoming space it provides.

Stewart Gillan

PARISH REGISTER

FUNERAL

22nd February

Lord Cameron of Lochbroom

Musselburgh

“Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

PARISH GROUPING

New Minister for St Giles’

The Revd Scott Rennie, currently minister of Crown Court – one of the two Church of Scotland congregations in London – preached as Sole Nominee on 16th February in the Cathedral and was duly elected to be the next minister of St Giles’. We keep him and the congregation of St Giles’ in our prayers at this time and look forward to welcoming Scott to our Parish Grouping on the Royal Mile in due course.

New Master of the Music for St Giles’

After nearly 30 years as Master of the Music at St Giles’, Michael Harris MBE retired at the end of last year. His replacement is Jack Oades who has previously held posts in Cambridge, the Isle of Man, London and Dublin and as well as playing the organ is also a composer, conductor and tenor.

United Evening Service

Our next monthly united evening service in conjunction with St Giles’ takes place at 7pm on Sunday 30th March. As usual a quartet of singers from the Cathedral choir will be in the gallery. All welcome.

CRAFT CLUB

The baby blanket initiative has been a great success these last two years and has been warmly received by the neonatal unit at the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed yarn and blankets. With assent from the Kirk Session, the crafters are now turning their crochet hooks and knitting needles to making a pram blanket for each baptism family as a memento of their christening at Canongate Kirk. More on this exciting initiative soon! The next regular monthly meeting of the Craft Club will be on Wednesday 12th March in the Harry Younger Hall from 6.30pm – 8pm. New members are most welcome - the group is open to crafters and non-crafters, skilled and non-skilled alike.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

A short meeting to note our accounts for the year ending 31st December 2024 will be held immediately after the morning service on Sunday 16th March. Copies of the accounts will shortly be sent to all those on our email distribution list, and paper copies will also be available at the back of the church.

MUSTER MARCH AND REMEMBER

On Sunday 23rd March we will be joined at our morning service by friends from the Royal Regiment of Scotland Association as part of their reunion weekend.

LAST SUNDAY IN MARCH

Mothering Sunday falls on Sunday 30th March and please note that the clocks go FORWARD one hour at 1am that morning!

CONCERTS IN MARCH

Calton Consort's *Lamentations* on Saturday 22nd March at 7.30pm, is a choral programme of ancient and contemporary perspectives on love, loss, and faith, directed by Rory Wilson. Tickets £15/£12 on the door. On Saturday 29th March at 7.30pm Open Orchestra will perform their Spring Concert. Admission free.

CONTACTLESS MACHINE

Please be aware the 'Payaz' contactless machine in the Kirk foyer has allowed us to set up different donation values, or lets the donor choose the amount. Where applicable we can also claim Gift Aid on donations. The first time you use the machine you will be asked if you wish Gift Aid to be applied. If yes, just follow the steps on the screen. Once you have registered for Gift Aid, so long as you use the same card, you will not be asked again.

SUNDAY OFFERINGS

We are grateful to everyone who supports the church financially in the variety of ways, including contactless, that are now available. Many members of the congregation still prefer to put something in the offering bags when they are passed around during the service. If you give by other means, please feel free to pass the bag on to those sitting alongside you so that everyone has an opportunity to give their offering.

YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU!

There are now rotas in place for volunteers to sign up to help with Sunday duties – if you'd like to be part of the welcoming face of Canongate Kirk, giving out hymn books and orders of service and taking up the collection etc., please sign up against any particular Sunday. There's a rota for those who would like to read lessons too. Not to mention the rotas to help with tea and coffee after the service, to arrange flowers in advance, and to support Open Kirk's remit of welcoming visitors and tourists at weekends. There are lots of opportunities to work with and get to know other members of the family of our congregation – don't be shy!

TRUSSELL TRUST

We continue to collect donations for Edinburgh foodbanks supported by Trussell Trust. Non-perishable foodstuffs and toiletries can be brought any Sunday and left in the basket in the foyer.

STAMPS

Don't forget that we have had an ongoing collection for used stamps for many years. This year's Stamp Appeal proceeds will go towards the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian project Firmly Planted, which aims to establish self-sustaining tree nurseries to nurture and protect the environment and protect livelihoods for households and communities in Malawi.

LOCAL EXHIBITION

An exhibition directly across the road from Canongate Kirk at the Museum of Edinburgh, *Four Seasons of Faith*, celebrates the rich diversity of faiths across our city through traditions, celebrations, and stories that shape Edinburgh's spiritual landscape throughout the changing seasons. The exhibition, delivered in partnership with Edinburgh Interfaith Association, was created in collaboration with members of Edinburgh's faith communities and showcases items donated and loaned by practitioners of major world religions. Until Monday 21st April 2025. Free entry. <https://bit.ly/4fLCemc>

KING'S GALLERY EXHIBITION

Royal Portraits – A Century of Photography has just opened at the Kings Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse, on 28th February. This exhibition charts the evolution of royal portrait photography from the 1920s to the present day, bringing together photographic prints, proofs and documents from the Royal Collection and the Royal Archives, including works from Cecil Beaton and Dorothy Wilding to Annie Leibovitz and Rankin. Open daily until 7th September

<https://bit.ly/4gmsNZU>

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Office Opening Hours: Mon + Wed + Fri 9am – 1pm, Thurs 9am – 12 noon

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