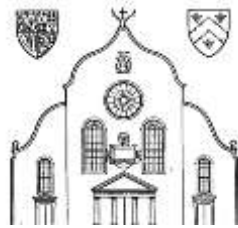


**CANONGATE KIRK  
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE  
& EDINBURGH CASTLE**

[www.canongatekirk.org.uk](http://www.canongatekirk.org.uk)

**Newsletter December 2023 & January 2024**



**MINISTER'S LETTER**

In late September, Historic Environment Scotland launched a 12 week consultation inviting the public to have their say on the future of Holyrood Park. As it's part of the parish I thought I should draw your attention to it! HES states that "While (Holyrood Park) is recognised as a place of outstanding value and importance, it has vast potential to offer even greater benefits for people, nature and heritage. It offers opportunities to measurably improve peoples' lives and wellbeing; to help us adapt to the ongoing and deepening climate crisis; to support the City's visitor economy, and to provide an exemplary model of integrated 21st century approaches to land management and change." Apart from the split infinitive, which is theirs not mine, it's good to be reminded of the distinctiveness of this large swathe of our parish that we probably take too readily for granted. The consultation ends on 19<sup>th</sup> December so there's still time to have your say – online at [www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot) or in person at Greyfriars Charteris Centre at 138/140 Pleasance from 10am to 4.30pm on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

Although it's not explicit in the consultation, it's been suggested that one of the possible outcomes will eventually be to close the park to traffic altogether, not just on Saturdays and Sundays as at present. Personally I hope that doesn't happen, as rather than persuade drivers to leave their cars at home, such a restriction would surely only make the Royal Mile even more congested and polluted than it already gets. But maybe that's just me getting old and grumpy?!

In his great prophecy that heralds in the season of Advent, Isaiah speaks of an ancient road running through a wild place. "A voice cries out: in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Sunday by Sunday that road brings us closer to our celebration of Christmas – details of this year's services are overleaf and I commend them to you and your families and friends. To paraphrase the Gaelic blessing, may the road rise to meet you, and bring you to our door. And when the time comes, may I wish you all a happy and blessed Christmas.

*Neil Gardner*

## PARISH REGISTER

### Baptisms

5<sup>th</sup> November Charles Alexander Weir

6<sup>th</sup> November Storm Lee Gardner (Adult Baptism)

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them....”*

### CHRISTMAS CARDS

Canongate Kirk has commissioned a new Christmas card featuring the palace pew’s replica of the Honours of Scotland that were presented to HM The King in St Giles’ Cathedral in July. These are now available for purchase in packs of 10 @ £5 at church or in the office. All proceeds to church funds. One or two previous cards featuring cartoons of Canongate choirboys have been reprinted and are also available for purchase.

### CHRISTMAS SERVICES

This year we will have our traditional service of Lessons and Carols for Christmas at 10.30am on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December. There will be a regular morning service on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December with the Watchnight Service for Christmas Eve following later at 11.30pm. Our Christmas Day Family Service is at 10.30am on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December when children and families are encouraged to bring along and show a gift they have received. The following Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> December, our service will incorporate the Sacrament of Holy Communion. There will be no monthly evening service, which will resume on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

### CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The Kirk Session has agreed that this year we will support the UNICEF Gaza appeal to help some of the hundreds of thousands of children affected by the violent conflict in Gaza and Israel. The appeal will run via retiring offerings at all our services from Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December through to Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> December. Alternatively, donations may be sent to the Kirk Office if you would like to contribute but can’t attend our Christmas services. This can also be done on-line at <https://www.unicef.org.uk/donate/children-in-gaza-crisis-appeal/>

### CHRISTMAS CHOIR

With our annual service of Lessons and Carols taking place at 10.30am on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December, our usual ‘home-grown’ choir has begun to gather round the piano for rehearsals at 9.30am every Sunday. First timers and late comers welcome!

### WASHBAGS FOR CRISIS AT CHRISTMAS

We have once again been asked to help supply washbags to Crisis, the local charity for the homeless. These can be brought to church or handed in at the church office up to and including Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December. Gender neutral washbags are preferred however this isn't always easy to achieve so male and female washbags would also be welcome. These can be filled with any selection of toiletries, but no razors, or hand sanitisers which contain alcohol. A suggested list of items includes shower-gel, soap, shampoo/ conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrush, flannel and anything else you would usually find in a washbag.

### CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICES

You might like to know that members of the congregation are welcome to attend the following charity carol services:

|  |            |                                    |
|--|------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December</b>  | <b>6pm</b> | Military Carol Service             |
| <b>Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December</b> | <b>6pm</b> | Crisis Carol Service               |
| <b>Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December</b>   | <b>4pm</b> | Royal British Legion Carol Service |

## **NATIVITY BLESSING**

There will be a traditional Nativity Carol Concert with music from the Salvation Army Brass Band and various church choirs at the Ross Bandstand, West Princes Street Gardens on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December from 2pm – 4pm. The event is organized by Edinburgh Churches Together and the City of Edinburgh Council. All welcome.

## **STAMPS**

As Christmas cards begin to drop through the letterbox, don't forget that we have had an ongoing collection for used stamps for many years. According to the Church of Scotland's World Mission Council, all stamps collected are first sorted into their respective denominations and then sold on to collectors and dealers from all over the world. The money raised is then used to support charities in developing countries. 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.

## **OPEN KIRK**

Following the success of Open Kirk earlier in the year, it is proposed to open our doors for the many visitors and tourists that come to Edinburgh for Hogmanay. If you can help at any point during the days after Christmas and around New Year, between 11am and 3pm, please sign up on the board in the church foyer.

## **SCOTTISH POPPY APPEAL**

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to our retiring offering on Remembrance Sunday, which raised nearly £600 for the Scottish Poppy Appeal.

## **SEASON OF REFLECTION AND RENEWAL**

As anticipated in this newsletter in September, our season of reflection and renewal ran from Harvest to Remembrance. We've had over 40 forms filled in and returned and thanks are due to everyone who has taken the time to identify areas of the Kirk's life in which they have experience or interest and might like to get further involved. We'll get back to you in due course! In the meantime, if anyone would like a form there are spare copies at the back of the King David Aisle, or get in touch with the office and we can e mail it out.

## **HIGH CONSTABLES**

Our morning service on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December will include the Kirking of the High Constables and Guard of Honour of Holyroodhouse.

## **CRAFT CLUB**

The Craft club continues to meet monthly in the hall on the second Wednesday of each month from 6.30pm – 8pm with the final meeting of 2023 on December 13<sup>th</sup> and the first meeting of the new year on January 10<sup>th</sup>. The group is open to crafters and non-crafters, skilled and non-skilled alike – you can be sure of a friendly welcome!

## **EVENING SERVICES RESUME IN JANUARY**

Our next united evening service with St Giles will take place on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7pm, supported as always by a quartet of singers from the Cathedral choir. All welcome.

## **TRUSSELL TRUST**

Following our support at Harvest Thanksgiving further donations for Edinburgh foodbanks supported by Trussell Trust of non-perishable foodstuffs and toiletries can be brought any Sunday and left in the basket in the foyer.

## **FWO ENVELOPES FOR 2024**

These are now ready for collection from the vestibule of the church. If you don't have weekly free will offering envelopes at the moment, but would like them, please get in touch with the Treasurer, Jenifer Davidson. Many of our members now give directly, for which we are very grateful, and if anyone would like to discuss this option please also have a word with Jenifer.

## **CONTACTLESS MACHINE**

Our previous machine has been replaced by a new 'Payaz' contactless machine which has allowed us to set up different donation values, or let the donor choose the amount they wish to give. Where applicable we will also be able to claim Gift Aid on donations. The first time you use the new 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.

## **COLLECTING CANS**

At the other end of the technological spectrum, we still have collecting cans available for members of the congregation to take home and fill with loose change. Every little helps!

## **THE BILL McDONALD LECTURE**

This year's lecture in memory of The Very Revd Bill McDonald will take place on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December at 7pm in Mayfield Salisbury Church. It will be entitled "The Colours of God: Celebrating Creation" and delivered by The Very Revd Professor David Fergusson, Regius Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge and Dean of the Chapel Royal in Scotland.

## **THE SANDPIPER TRUST**

Some of you may be familiar with the book *The Swallow, the Owl and the Sandpiper*, a collection of poetry and readings produced by The Sandpiper Trust as a resource for grieving families. A second volume, *The Swallow, the Owl, the Sandpiper and the Little Red Robin* has now been published with a foreword written by the Minister, reflecting on his duties following The late Queen's death last year. Further details can be found at [www.sandpipertrust.org](http://www.sandpipertrust.org)

## **UPCOMING CONCERTS IN CANONGATE**

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December 7.30pm: Calton Consort *A Boy was Born* £15/12**

A festive programme of music based around Benjamin Britten's composition.

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December 7.30pm: Edinburgh Gilbert and Sullivan Society £15**

A very merry evening of festive G & S favourites!

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December 7.30pm: St Andrew Camerata Christmas Concert £12/8**

*Tickets available via performers' websites or on the door.*

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Kirk Secretary Imogen Gibson (office) [canongatekirk@btinternet.com](mailto:canongatekirk@btinternet.com) 0131 556 3515

Office Opening Hours: Mon, Wed 9am – 1pm, Thursday 9am – 12 noon, Fri 8am – 12 noon.

Website: [www.canongatekirk.org.uk](http://www.canongatekirk.org.uk)  @CanongateKirk  @canongate.kirk

Scottish Charity SC 015251