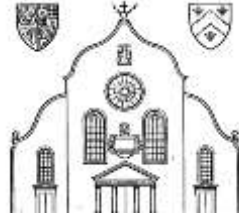


**CANONGATE KIRK
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE
& EDINBURGH CASTLE**

www.canongatekirk.org.uk

Newsletter December 2024 & January 2025



MINISTER'S LETTER

Every December we seem to add another charity carol service to the calendar and this year is no exception with St John Scotland lining up a particularly stylish event for Thursday 19th at 7pm. Music will be provided by the “St John Choir” led by the distinguished Aberdeen composer and conductor Paul Mealor LVO CStJ. Paul rose to prominence when his music was sung at the wedding of the (now) Prince and Princess of Wales in 2011 and his reputation as a royal favourite was confirmed when his music was also sung at national services of thanksgiving for the late Queen Elizabeth II, at The King’s Coronation in Westminster Abbey and at the Presentation of the Honours of Scotland in St Giles’ Cathedral a few weeks later. And now he’s coming to Canongate Kirk! The Lord Provost’s coming too and there will be a collection taken in aid of his One City Trust. The service will be a traditional blend of carols for choir and congregation, interspersed with readings of the Christmas story, and members of our congregation will be more than welcome to join local members of the Order of St John, whose premises in our parish are currently undergoing a major refurbishment. I’m particularly keen to encourage this new opportunity to develop links with the Order, which I hope will become an annual fixture in our seasonal schedule. That’s not to say members of the congregation wouldn’t also be welcome at some of our other charity carol services, held in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund, the Royal British Legion Scotland, and Crisis. Details of these can be found later in this newsletter. And of course there will be our own diet of Christmas services to look forward to, beginning with our Lessons and Carols at 10.30am on Sunday 22nd December, when in another new connection we shall be joined by friends from the Edinburgh Royal Warrant Holders’ Association. Then our usual Watchnight Service at 11.30pm on Christmas Eve, and the Family Service at 10.30am on Christmas Day. All welcome, always!

Some of the words of our most familiar carols might seem incongruous when we consider all the sorrow and suffering in and around the Holy Land these days. But the sentiment behind them surely stands as strong as ever:

*And man at war with man hears not the love song which they bring,
O hush the noise, ye men of strife, and hear the angels sing...*

Happy Christmas, and every blessing to you and yours

Neil Gardner

PARISH REGISTER

BAPTISM

17th November

Flora Thomson Weir

“Then he took them in his arms and blessed them.”

FUNERAL

25th November

Ronnie Maxwell

Cleish

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

PARISH GROUPING

United Evening Services

For a change our monthly evening service took place in St Giles' on Sunday 24th November, and took the form of a Festal Choral Evensong in which the combined choirs of St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Paisley Abbey and St Giles' took part. Together they made an impressive sound, and much of the music was recorded by BBC Radio 4 to be incorporated into their programme of “Sunday Worship” on Sunday, 1st December at 8.10am with words from the ministers of St Giles' and Canongate. It will be available on BBC Sounds for a month afterwards <https://bit.ly/3ZtrZNJ> There will be no United Evening Service in December – normal service, as it were, will resume at 7pm on Sunday 26th January 2025.

Young Adults Group

St Giles' have established a Young Adults Group for under 40s and would welcome any eligible contenders from Canongate. They plan to meet from time to time and if you are interested please email Rev Sam Nwokoro on sam.nwokoro@stgilescathedral.org.uk

St Giles' Neighbourhood Group

The St Giles' Neighbourhood Group is a small group of volunteers who come together to raise money for local charities. They organise fund-raising activities such as a can collection on Princes Street at Christmas and help staff night kitchens for the homeless through the Bethany Trust. They are always looking for new members and would particularly welcome anyone in the Canongate congregation who might like to find out more about their work (with no obligation). Anyone is welcome to simply observe an (online) meeting or contact us to find out more. Please get in touch with Alan Convery at alanconvery@hotmail.com at St Giles'.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

This year we will have our traditional service of Lessons and Carols for Christmas at 10.30am on Sunday 22nd December. Our Watchnight Service for Christmas Eve takes place on Tuesday 24th December at 11.30pm. Our Christmas Day Family Service is at 10.30am on Wednesday 25th December when children and families are encouraged to bring along and show a gift they have received. The following Sunday, 29th December, our service will incorporate the Sacrament of Holy Communion. There will be no monthly evening service, which will resume on Sunday 26th January 2025.

CHRISTMAS CHOIR

Our annual service of Lessons and Carols takes place on Sunday 22nd December. With this in mind our usual 'home-grown' choir is invited to gather round the piano for rehearsals at 9.30am every Sunday in Advent starting on Sunday 1st December. First timers welcome!

CHARITY CAROL SERVICES

Members of the congregation would be welcome to attend any of the following:

Thursday 5 th December	6pm	Armed Forces' Charities
Sunday 8 th December	4pm	Royal British Legion Scotland
Thursday 12 th December	6pm	Crisis Homelessness Charity
Thursday 19 th December	7pm	The Order of St John

CANONGATE KIRK CHRISTMAS SUPPER

There are still tickets available at £12 from David Croft or Dinah Croy for our congregational festive gathering for supper and carols on Thursday 12th December at 6.45pm in the Harry Younger Hall. All 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 22nd 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 APPEAL

The Kirk Session has agreed that this year we will support the Moderator's Challenge 'Let Your Little Light Shine', supporting the work of the Church of Central Africa to provide solar power, through light libraries in CCAP Primary Schools and solar panels for the new PhD centre at Zomba Theological University. A solar light costs just £10. The appeal will run via retiring offerings at all our services from Sunday 22nd December through to Sunday 29th 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://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/donate/?fund=128170>

TRUSSELL TRUST

Further to our support at Harvest, when we supplied a carload of stuff and a cheque for £500, 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.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

A reminder that we have a limited stock of Canongate Christmas cards available for purchase at church or through the office.

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. This year's appeal will continue on from last year and will go towards establishing the nurseries.

OPEN KIRK

We will be open from 27th December to 2nd January when the Royal Mile can be particularly busy with visitors for the festive season. Volunteers can sign up on the board in the church foyer.

KIRKYARD WINTER TOURS

We are delighted to announce that local historian and guide, Eric Drake, will resume his fascinating range of tours during five successive days from Sunday 29th December 2024 up to and including Thursday 2nd January. Each tour explores a different theme with the first focusing Canongate Kirk's royal connections from David I to Charles III including legends and facts, royal gifts, royal servants and more. Tours start at the front of the kirk at 12 noon and last about an hour. Tours are free but donations to kirk funds are welcome. Pick up a flier at the back of the church for more information.

CRAFT CLUB

The Craft Club will next meet slightly earlier in the month than usual on Wednesday, December 4th at 6.30pm in the Harry Younger Hall. It will be a festive craft session with mince pies and our Christmas craft this year will be magic snowy lanterns, so please bring glass jars of any size. All are welcome, even if you have never come to a craft club meeting before - kids especially welcome!

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

On Wednesday 18th December at 6.15pm, the Scottish Parliament will be holding its annual Christmas Carol Service providing an opportunity for Members of the Scottish Parliament and Parliament staff to come together with the wider Holyrood community to celebrate Christmas with a traditional Carol Service. Twenty places have been reserved for members of the congregation. Please contact the office if you would like to attend.

ST ANDREW'S DAY

The annual service organised by the Society of Friends of St Andrew's Jerusalem will take place in St Cuthbert's Church at 2pm on Saturday 30th November. The guest preacher will be The Very Reverend Sally Foster-Fulton, ex Moderator and chair of Christian Aid. All welcome.

ST MARGARET'S DAY

A special service was held in Canongate Kirk Saturday 16th November, St Margaret's Day. Usually on that day a series of short services is held in St Margaret's Chapel in Edinburgh Castle for members and guests of St Margaret's Chapel Guild, but this year as part of the 900th anniversary of the establishment of the Royal Burgh of Edinburgh by King David I (Queen Margaret's son) the service was held in our own Kirk of Edinburgh Castle. Supported by the St Margaret's Singers and shared with the Most Reverend Leo Cushley, the Right Reverend John Armes and the Very Reverend Colin Sinclair representing the Roman Catholic Church, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of Scotland respectively. The service reinforced our connections with St Margaret's Chapel Guild and the tiny chapel that bears her name in the upper reaches of our parish. Later in the day, a special interfaith service was hosted by Rev David Coleman of Eco-congregation Scotland in conjunction with Christian Aid, marking the COP29 Global Day of Action.

SCOTTISH POPPY APPEAL

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to our retiring offering on Remembrance Sunday, which raised £732.20 for the Scottish Poppy Appeal.

YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU!

As a result of last year's season of reflection and renewal there are 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!

EXHIBITION

A new 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. From Friday 29th November 2024 to Monday 21st April 2025. Free entry. <https://bit.ly/4fLCemc>

HOLYROODHOUSE BOOK

The Palace of Holyroodhouse – A House of Many Memories is a brand new publication by former Holyroodhouse senior curator Deborah Clarke. Drawing on new research and richly illustrated with historical drawings, photos and watercolours, this is the first official history of the palace ever published and has been many years in the making. More information and a link to order at <https://bit.ly/4fLpCev>

CONCERTS IN DECEMBER & JANUARY

Saturday 7th Dec	7.30pm	Open Orchestra	Free
Saturday 14th Dec	5pm	Calton Consort	£15/£12
Saturday 21st Dec	7.30pm	St Andrew Camerata	£12/£10
Sunday 26th Jan	3pm	Wind Serenaders Charity Concert (donations towards UKMED)	Free

Minister: The Revd Neil Gardner nng22@btinternet.com 0131 556 3515

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

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

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