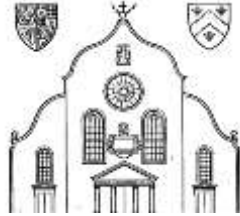


**CANONGATE KIRK
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE
& EDINBURGH CASTLE**

www.canongatekirk.org.uk

Newsletter February 2025



MINISTER'S LETTER

I don't usually resort to a visual aid during a sermon, but in the course of my reflection on Sunday 26th January I produced our oldest Bible from the Canongate archives, and it generated enough interest after the service for me to feel it was worth sharing something of it more widely. Prompted by the Gospel account of Jesus reading in the synagogue, I drew the congregation's attention to our edition of the Geneva Bible, printed in London in 1580 by Christopher Barker who refers to himself as "Printer to The Queen's Majesty". At that time of course The Queen was Elizabeth I, the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, and so I suggested that our ancient book takes us back towards the era of Wolf Hall. But it also takes us back to the early decades after the Reformation, when the focus shifted to Switzerland and the influence of John Calvin. Back in Scotland it was the further influence of John Knox that made the Geneva Bible especially appealing here, and in 1579 a law was passed requiring every household of sufficient means to buy a copy. Perhaps that explains the need for more copies – like ours - to be printed around that time, but quite how and when it came into the possession of Canongate Kirk is sadly lost in the mists of time.

It's known as a "Breeches Bible" because at Genesis 3:7 it refers to Adam and Eve as having made "breeches" to cover their nakedness. By the time the Authorised Version came along during the reign of King James VI & I, breeches had become aprons!

These days we use the New Revised Standard Version, and it's considerably easier to read than the ancient print of the Geneva Bible. Over the last year or two members of the congregation have kindly volunteered to read from it Sunday by Sunday, and if you'd like to take a turn please sign up on the rota. It's good to get a variety of voices.

Voices and indeed translations may vary but the good news of the Gospel stands firm, unchanged and unchanging through all the ages, but speaking afresh to each new generation.

*Thanks to God whose word was written
In the Bible's sacred page,
Record of the revelation
Showing God to every age.*

Neil Gardner

PARISH REGISTER

WEDDINGS

7th December Annabel Norris & Will Wheeler
14th December Rosanna Coleman & Callum Gillies
21st December Chloe Close & John McIntire

“Those whom God has joined together, let not man divide.”

FUNERALS

2nd December Victor McLaggan Kirkland Court, Liberton
10th January Vicky Wright formerly Sydney Terrace

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

We were sorry to hear of the death of former member of the congregation Alasdair Fairbairn, at home in Beaconsfield. Alasdair and Henriette were very much part of the family of our congregation before they moved south to be nearer the family, and we remember him with affection. We also remember with thanksgiving another former member, the late Lady Lucy Mackay, and the late Lt Gen Sir Peter Graham, Governor of Edinburgh Castle, 1991 - 1993.

PARISH GROUPING

New Minister for St Giles’

It’s been announced that The Revd Scott Rennie, currently minister of Crown Court – one of the two Church of Scotland congregations in London – will preach as Sole Nominee on 16th February in the Cathedral. 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.

United Evening Services

Having had no service on the last Sunday evening of December, normal service, as it were, resumed on Sunday 26th January, when there was something of a Robert Burns theme. As usual a quartet of singers from the Cathedral choir sang from the gallery, but this time for the first time under the direction of the new Master of Music at St Giles’, Jack Oades, following the retirement of Michael Harris MBE after 28 years in that post. We were glad to welcome Jack to Canongate Kirk. This month our united evening service will take place at 7pm on Sunday 23rd February, when our guest preacher will be The Revd Dr Stewart Gillan, Minister of St Andrew’s Jerusalem. That church was built as a memorial to Scottish soldiers who lost their lives in the region during the First World War, and has a link with both St Giles’ and Canongate Kirk. This is an ideal opportunity to hear at first-hand how the last year and more has affected life not just for the Scots Kirk but for all who have been caught up in all the terrors and tensions of Israel and Palestine. All welcome.

LVO THANKS

I’m grateful for the many kind messages that I’ve received both privately and publicly after the announcement at the New Year of the award making me a Lieutenant of the Royal Victorian Order. I’m not quite sure what happens next but I’ll keep you posted! NNG

CHRISTMAS SUPPER

Thanks are due to David Croft and the team for the highly successful evening of supper and carol singing in the hall last month. It was greatly enjoyed by everyone present and a substantial donation to our Christmas appeal was made possible from the proceeds.

CHRISTMAS APPEALS

Many thanks to everyone who helped us raise £1700 towards the Moderator's Challenge – Let Your Little Light Shine – supporting the Church's work in education in Malawi. Thanks too for over 100 washbags donated in support of Crisis at Christmas, the local charity supporting the homeless. The retiring offering for the carol service held by the Order of St John raised £1,100 for the Lord Provost's One City Trust, and various other carol services generated significant funds for their respective charities.

CHARITY CONCERT

A concert of chamber music held to raise money for the charities UKMED and Music Action International held here on Sunday 26th January raised over £450. UKMED aims to bring together the best of the NHS, humanitarian and local health expertise to help the poorest in areas all over the world impacted by medical emergencies. Music Action International supports survivors of war and torture through music and creativity. This was one of three 'peace and freedom' concerts around the UK organized by the conductor and musician Laurence Perkins, who has already arranged a return to Canongate Kirk next year.

OPEN KIRK

Thank you to our willing volunteers who kept the doors open in the bleak mid-winter and welcomed nearly 3,000 visitors around the New Year. Thanks too to Eric Drake for his daily tours which altogether attracted 40 people to learn about our kirkyard.

CRAFT CLUB

The Craft Club will hold a short general meeting following the service on Sunday 2nd February to discuss plans for the upcoming year. We have some exciting ideas already, including the possibility of a needle felting workshop - and would love to discuss other ideas from regular crafters and new joiners alike on how we might find fellowship and serve the Kirk's mission through our crafts. Please join us if you are able! The next regular monthly meeting will be on Wednesday 12th February in the Harry Younger Hall from 6.30pm – 8pm and thereafter every second Wednesday of each month. New members are most welcome - the group is open to crafters and non-crafters, skilled and non-skilled alike.

KIRK SESSION

The Kirk Session next meets on Monday 24th February at 6pm in the Harry Younger Hall.

NEW YORK ORGAN RECITAL

You might like to know that our organist Simon Leach will give a recital in St Patrick's Cathedral, 5th Avenue New York City at 3pm local time on Sunday 9th February. Follow this link to watch and listen <https://saintpatrickscathedral.org/organ-recitals> Safe journey, Simon, and good luck!

CONTACTLESS MACHINE

Our previous machine in the foyer 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!

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 opens 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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