

**CANONGATE KIRK
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE
& EDINBURGH CASTLE**
www.canongatekirk.org.uk

Newsletter February 2026

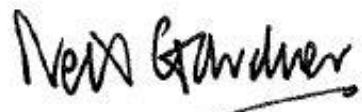


MINISTER'S LETTER

Just as every sermon usually begins with a text to support its theme, a short verse from the Bible to point what follows in a particular direction, so the story of my life these last months and indeed years could be appropriately introduced by a single text, in this case Genesis 32:31 “*...limping because of his hip.*” The text refers to Jacob but it’s the deterioration of my own right hip that has caused me to be on a waiting list of one sort or another since February 2024. At last I can report that I have been allotted a “pre-assessment” at the National Treatment Centre in Kirkcaldy in mid-February (2026!) with a view to a hip replacement operation some 6-8 weeks later. While I’d hoped to be refurbished at the same time as the Kirk, this takes me rather closer to Easter and our anticipated return to the sanctuary than I might have hoped. But let’s wait and see. And yes, I have seen and indeed received several copies of the card that shows a surgeon telling his patient “We’ve decided to keep the hip and replace the rest of you.” Very funny.

Meanwhile the refurbishment of Canongate Kirk is well underway. It has taken some time to fill the nave with scaffolding, a massive task in itself, but a temporary wooden floor has now been put in place directly beneath the ceiling with a staircase to get the painters there and back safely. While that’s all been getting assembled, they’ve been kept busy preparing the woodwork at ground level. Elsewhere the “flag ladies” from the Scottish National War Memorial have been cleaning and assessing for necessary repairs all the Regimental Colours and Standards and Governors’ Banners that have found temporary sanctuary in the meeting room at the Manse.

The congregation itself has found temporary sanctuary of course in the Harry Younger Hall, where services continue every Sunday at 10.30am. Our January united evening service took place in St Giles’ Cathedral, and will do so again in February. Apart from these necessary changes of location, it’s business as usual! Suddenly another relevant text springs to mind, St John 1:46: “Come and see!”



PARISH REGISTER

BAPTISM

14th December

Hamish John Frazer

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

WEDDINGS

6th December

Rachael Callaghan & Max Kuhnke

31st December

Jessica Deadman & Hayden Burford

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

FUNERALS

15th December

Simon Muirhead

Newhaven Road

29th December

Willie Munro

Succoth Place

5th January

Rachel Fraser

Kinnear Road

16th January

Ralph Ross-Russell

Regent Terrace

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

PARISH GROUPING

United Evening Services

Our next monthly united evening service in conjunction with St Giles' takes place in St Giles Cathedral on Sunday 22nd February at 7.30pm. All welcome.

February Night Kitchen

The St Giles' Neighbourhood Group, in common with volunteers from 40 churches in Lothian and Fife, has for many years past catered for homeless people in the Bethany Welcome Centre, providing a freshly cooked two-course dinner and a breakfast. Because St Giles' has no kitchen, Canongate Kirk has given the use of the kitchen in the Harry Younger Hall for three Wednesday evenings this winter, the first was in November, the next is this month on 4th February and the last on 4th March. Anyone interested in seeing the process would be welcome to observe work in the kitchen between 6pm and 7pm on the day - especially if they might like to volunteer to be part of the team. Please contact vashton20@gmail.com

CRAFT CLUB

This month's meeting of the Craft Club will be on Monday 9th February from 6.30pm – 8pm in the Harry Younger Hall. New members are most welcome - the group is open to crafters and non-crafters, skilled and non-skilled alike.

WASHBAGS FOR CRISIS AT CHRISTMAS

The local team from Crisis, the charity for the homeless, collected dozens of washbags from us in time to distribute them before Christmas. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this annual appeal.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL – SUNFLOWER SCOTLAND

This year we raised £1,722.60 for Sunflower Scotland, an Edinburgh based charity supporting children and families badly affected by the war in Ukraine. Here is an extract from a personal letter of thanks from Sunflower Scotland's Chairman Oleg Dmitriev.

Thank you so much for your wonderful donation, we really appreciate the kindness and support of everyone in your congregation!

The money will help some of the most desperate people in need. We will use your donation towards buying a wheelchair van (it will cover about 50% of the cost). I will personally deliver it to Dnipro, where the van will be used on a daily basis to transport amputees to a rehabilitation centre. There are 390 000 victims of war in Ukraine with various wounds, and tens of thousands have lost their arms and legs. We are doing all we can to help a rehabilitation centre in Dnipro. They treat even the most severe cases and have a very experienced medical team. Now, your donation will help them as well. I cannot thank you enough and I'm sure the team in Dnipro will be really grateful. It is such an excellent New Year's present. It will take some time to purchase a used wheelchair van and deliver it. I will keep you updated and send you photos from Ukraine.

COFFEE MORNING

Members of the congregation continue to be enthusiastic about raising funds, regardless how modest, towards our redecoration programme. Several now plan to organise a Spring Coffee Morning to take place in the Harry Younger Hall from 10am on Saturday 14th March. The theme of the event will be of a “bring and buy” nature where members of the Kirk may in advance, bring along unwanted and unused gifts. One of the stalls for example will be looking for and selling “pre-loved” jewellery. Please do not donate foodstuffs. The event will be a perfect opportunity for members to bring along their friends for some fun, refreshments and “rummaging “. Tickets priced £5 each can be purchased from Krista Ellis, Anne Croft or Dinah Croy. Contributions for selling on the day can be handed in either on a Sunday at church or to the manse office during midweek.

AN UPDATED HISTORY OF CANONGATE KIRK

It's exactly 70 years since Ronnie Selby Wright first published *The Kirk and the Canongate* in 1956. He described it as 'a short history from 1128 to the present day.' Obviously time has moved on in these three score years and ten and much could now be added to our story. Mark Peel, a member of our congregation and author, has kindly agreed to work on an updated history in anticipation of the 900th anniversary of the parish in 2028. As part of that process he is keen to meet with other members of the congregation to gather snippets of information and insight – if you can help with this please have a word with him or email him on mcgpeel@gmail.com

PALACE EXHIBITION

Drawing the Italian Renaissance is the current exhibition at the King's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse. Exploring the diversity and accomplishment of drawing across Italy between 1450 and 1600, the exhibition features around 80 works by over 50 artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian alongside lesser-known artists, all drawn from the Royal Collection, which holds one of the world's greatest collections of Italian Renaissance drawings. Open Every Sunday, Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday until 1st March 2026. For booking and more information go to <http://bit.ly/3Joxwjm>

STEWARDS NEEDED FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Are you interested in volunteering as a steward at the 2026 Church of Scotland General Assembly taking place at the Assembly Hall from Friday 15th May to Monday 18th May. If so please contact Chief Steward Neil Proven at assemblystewards@churchofscotland.org.uk for more information.

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.

SUNDAY OFFERINGS

As we are now having to pay bank charges on all cash paid into the bank, we would encourage you to consider switching to a monthly Standing Order if possible. Please contact the Treasurer, Jenifer Davidson jeniferdavidson@btinternet.com for more details. Thank you to those who have already made the switch.

STAMPS

Sadly, the Church of Scotland Stamp Project came to an end this month after 56 years. It has been a pivotal part of World Mission Council, collecting much needed money for projects from Partner Churches around the world simply by collecting used stamps. From 1995 to 2024 an amazing total of £96,459.67 has been raised for projects such as the HIV programme and Mount Olivet Boys' home in Jamaica & Cayman Islands. There continue to be other charities that collect used stamps, however, such as Age Scotland at <https://bit.ly/4qSf6rM> and RNIB <https://bit.ly/3Z57hm7>

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

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Scottish Charity SC 015251