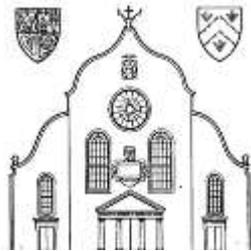


CANONGATE KIRK THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE & EDINBURGH CASTLE

www.canongatekirk.org.uk

Newsletter July 2021



MINISTER'S LETTER

My name is Douglas Reid, and I am going to be with you for the next 15 months or so as a probationary assistant minister. I am looking forward to my time at Canongate and hopefully getting to know you all. I recently completed a Masters in Divinity at the University of Edinburgh. I am married to Wendy, who is a doctor. We have two daughters, Rosemary, who is 10 years old, and a keen swimmer. She and I recently took part in an open water swim race at Lake Windermere. I must confess that she was the faster of the two of us. Our younger daughter is called Ruth. Ruth is 6 years old, sweet and has a brilliant imagination. She enjoys drawing and painting and has made me several ties which I will doubtless feature over the coming Sundays. Our home congregation in Edinburgh is Palmerston Place Church.

I grew up in Tain, Ross-shire, where my parents still live. My Mum's family have deep roots there and my Dad is Session Clerk in the local Parish Church. My Dad's family are from Alford and Glenkindie before that. Wendy grew up in London although her grandmother was from Morningside. Before studying Divinity, I practiced as a solicitor in Edinburgh principally dealing with Scotland's landed estates, tenant farmers, forestry and renewable energy projects. So why did I change career?

Quite simply I believe God had called me into ministry. It was a gradual process rather than a bolt of lightning moment. I also believe that unless our actions try to match what we profess then that is not a good advert for the Christian life. As Christ so frequently teaches, we are all connected, and are all each other's neighbours, to help and be helped when needed. I believe that in being a minister of the Kirk I can help people, regarding both their spiritual needs but also hopefully some of their practical needs as well. In that regard I have been led to become a non-executive director of Castle Community Bank. Castle Community Bank aims to help the financially disadvantaged in our midst through simple savings products, and affordable loans. All these things I do because of my Christian faith. I believe. I have faith in Christ, I believe that Jesus was raised from the dead for our benefit. That that is a hugely significant and valuable fact; it matters to me, and I want it to matter to everyone.

PARISH REGISTER

Wedding

18th June

Sharon Stacey & Patrick McLinden

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

FROM THE PRESBYTERY OF EDINBURGH PLANNING GROUP

Along with every other congregation in the Presbytery of Edinburgh, we have been asked to circulate the following report in the light of the far-reaching decisions taken at the recent General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Please read it carefully.

This year at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the sombre tone of some of the debates revealed the present state of the Church as an institution. The difficult but necessary decisions made will have very real consequences for the national Church, and also for the future of our own congregation. This was recognised by the Church’s magazine Life & Work, which took the step of producing immediately afterwards a special 4-page supplement sharing the outcomes. General Assembly 2021: Special Supplement - Life and Work. Pre-COVID, the Church was already aware that to safeguard its future in an increasingly secular society, something far-reaching needed to happen to the structures of the Church. Also, that there needed to be a renewed focus by the local and regional Church on its core values of mission and service, seeking to look outward and to proclaim with urgency and boldness its gospel message in word and deed. So, through the agreement of a Radical Action Plan, and by the appointment of Assembly Trustees and, through them, a Chief Executive, this major overhaul was initiated. But then the pandemic struck, and while the Church supported the national effort to suppress the virus by closing its buildings, its impact affected the Church mostly financially. Local congregations learned quickly how to produce worship online, followed by the courts of the Church discovering how to conduct their business via online Zoom meetings, but nothing could block the significant loss of income the Church has endured. And it was this factor that required both a speeding up of the process for change, and the need to propose the dramatic steps to achieve stability.

So, at the General Assembly, the Assembly Trustees set out the problem: presently the Church is using £11million of reserves annually to meet its commitments. This cannot continue indefinitely. To live within its means, the Church could now afford only 600 ministry posts (parish ministers plus Ministries Development Staff), plus maintain 60 vacancies (presently that number is over 200). To achieve this number, the presbyteries across Scotland were allocated a number of posts, and instructed to achieve that number by 2025. For Edinburgh Presbytery that presently works with the number 78.2, the allocated number is now 48.5. Two quotes from the conveners who presented these proposals are worth repeating here: The Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, Convener of the Assembly Trustees said, “We are well aware that this is not an easy ask. Every one of us is a member or minister serving in parishes that will be affected by this. We know reshaping the Church around this will involve painful decisions. But in the goodness and grace of God we trust.” The Rev Rosie Frew, Convener of the Faith Nurture Forum said, “We are draining the resources of the Church – people, morale, finance – just to keep this broken system going. Without a radical treatment plan the Church of Scotland will not survive.”

In a few months' time, the Presbytery of Edinburgh will have its first look at the draft Plan that seeks to achieve not only the reduction in numbers, but also the reduction in the buildings being considered necessary, plus enabling the local church to fully engage in the Five Marks of Mission which is at the centre of national planning: 1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom 2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers 3. To respond to human need by loving service 4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation 5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

The Plan will outline the future of our own congregation in all these respects, and this article is to prepare all of us that change is likely and to see how we may respond creatively to this changing time.

OPEN KIRK

The Kirk Session has agreed that we will resume Open Kirk on a trial, restricted basis, beginning with Sundays following on from the morning service. Visitors will be required to leave their name and telephone number for track and trace purposes, wear face coverings, maintain a 2m distance and follow a strict one-way system round the church. Like so much else these days, it won't be what it used to be, but it's better than nothing. If you'd like to help, please get in touch with the office.

SUNDAY SERVICES AND PARKING

Edinburgh City Council has now introduced on-street parking charges from 12.30pm to 6.30pm every Sunday. With this in mind the Kirk Session has agreed that we shall continue to hold one service at 10.30am with the addition of a monthly evening service when the Council reintroduces its Open Streets programme, when it can be particularly difficult for some of our members to access the Kirk in the morning. Looking ahead we shall keep open the option of an additional earlier service, as previously, though it would have to start considerably earlier than the previous 10am Family Service slot. Comments – especially from those who used to attend the 10am service – would be welcome!

OFFERINGS

We remain enormously grateful to everyone who continues to support Canongate Kirk in different financial ways in these challenging times. We are also now registered as a beneficiary of the Amazon Smile scheme, whereby 0.5% of the net cost of purchases you make on Amazon can be donated to us at no extra cost to yourself. To set the ball rolling you need to register at <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/> and nominate Canongate Parish Church of Scotland, Edinburgh as your chosen charity. Please note you need to use our formal Scottish charity name rather than Canongate Kirk.

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

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