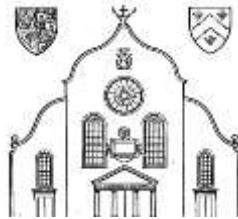


**CANONGATE KIRK  
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE  
& EDINBURGH CASTLE**

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

**Newsletter June 2025**



**MINISTER'S LETTER**  
**(from Andrew Henshaw – Candidate in Training)**

This year, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has chosen a powerful and resonant theme: *Extravagant Love... how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ*. Rooted in Ephesians 3:18, this theme invites us to pause, reflect, and respond to the overwhelming, boundary-breaking love of our Saviour.

In a world that often measures love by conditions, transactions, or convenience, the love of Christ remains radically different. It is not cautious or calculated. It is generous, inclusive, and endlessly patient. The word “extravagant” may feel unusual when describing divine love but it is exactly the right word. Christ’s love surpasses logic and breaks open the narrow containers we sometimes try to place it in.

The Apostle Paul’s words in Ephesians paint a picture of love that cannot be measured. It is wider than division, longer than time, higher than our dreams, and deeper than our pain. This love crosses borders, social barriers, and human limitations. It found Zacchaeus in a tree, restored Peter after betrayal, and embraced the outcast and the sinner. It even stretched to a cross for you, for me, for all.

In 2025, as the Church of Scotland seeks renewal, this theme challenges us not just to admire Christ’s love, but to live it. What might it look like if congregations across the country embodied that same extravagant love? How would our communities be transformed if we loved beyond what was comfortable, if we gave beyond what was expected, if we forgave when it was hard?

The General Assembly’s theme also calls us to unity. In a time when differences can feel like divisions, extravagant love reminds us of our shared identity in Christ. It urges us to listen more, judge less, and welcome the stranger as we would welcome Christ Himself.

In our daily lives, extravagant love might look like reaching out to someone who feels forgotten, standing alongside someone in crisis, or simply showing kindness when it’s not returned. It may not always be easy, but it will always reflect the heart of God.

As we journey together, may we ask God to enlarge our hearts. May we be rooted in His love and filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. And may we both as individuals and as a church be known not for how much we have, but for how deeply we love.

*“And I pray that you... may have power... to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ” (Ephesians 3:18).*

Yours in Christ



## PARISH REGISTER

### WEDDING

24<sup>th</sup> May                      Ayla de Heney and Alexander Low                      at Preston Hall

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

### FUNERAL

15<sup>th</sup> May                      Lord (Donald) Ross                      Cramond Residence

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

## PARISH GROUPING

### United Evening Service

We were delighted to welcome the Revd Scott Rennie, the new Minister of St Giles, as our preacher at our evening service on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May. Our next monthly united evening service in conjunction with St Giles’ takes place in Canongate Kirk at 7pm on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June. As usual a quartet of singers from the Cathedral choir will be in the gallery. All welcome.

### Edinburgh 900 Exhibition

Celebrating the 900th anniversaries of both St Giles’ Cathedral and Edinburgh ‘Edinburgh’s First Burghers’ at St Giles’ brings together new research of medieval burials first excavated in 1981 to reveal the lives and hidden faces of Edinburgh’s medieval citizens. The exhibition also features new lighting designs to project the facial reconstructions of five early Edinburghers, along with a short film featuring interviews with the project team and Cathedral staff, discussing the results and importance of the work to the heritage of the City and the Cathedral. From 6th June to 30th November. Opening hours: Mon - Fri : 10am - 6pm; Sat : 9am - 5pm; Sun : 1pm - 5pm. Admission is free.

## OPEN KIRK

There is a new rota in the foyer for volunteers to sign up for Open Kirk on Saturdays and Sundays until September between 11am and 1.30pm or 1.30pm and 4pm. There is also another rota for weekdays if anyone wants to sign up on an ad hoc basis but please check the on-line calendar [here](#) for occasional events already booked in.

## CRAFT CLUB NEWS

The next date will be Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June from 6.30pm – 8.00pm in the Harry Younger Hall. Everyone is welcome, experienced crafters and non-crafters alike. One of the Craft Club’s current projects is to baby blankets for babies baptised at Canongate Kirk. If anyone is

interested in knitting a baptism blanket at home, please get in touch with the Craft Club organisers via the church office - all supplies will be provided.

### **CANONGATE KIRKYARD MIDSUMMER TOUR**

On Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June, local historian Eric Drake will be our guide for a tour to discover some of the secrets of this historic space and the fascinating people for whom it is the last resting place. These include the “father” of the New Town, a well-travelled son of a farm labourer, an enterprising young man from Greenland and a Scot who saw the start of the American Revolution. Meet in front of the Canongate Kirk at 12.00 noon. The tour will last roughly one hour. Free but donations welcome.

### **VISITING GROUPS**

In early May we welcomed two separate groups of pilgrims to Canongate Kirk. The first came from the Presbyterian Church of the USA, a couple of dozen folk from Greensboro, North Carolina, who had been on a pilgrimage around Scotland for ten days and came here for their closing service, a simple celebration of Holy Communion. The following day our visitors travelled a shorter distance to get here, from the Jesuit Church of the Sacred Heart in Lauriston Street just beyond the Grassmarket - a group of around three dozen on a more local pilgrimage on their way to their closing service in St Mary's RC Cathedral but stopping here for a reading and a prayer en route. Then during General Assembly week, we were pleased to welcome a number of military chaplains to Canongate Kirk for tea and Holy Communion as they gathered in Edinburgh for ‘Chaplains’ Day’ in the Assembly Hall the following morning.

### **BBC RADIO 4**

The Minister's recent Prayer for the Day series is available on BBC Sounds <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/b006qmpj> until 9<sup>th</sup> June.

### **YEHUDI MENUHIN SCHOOL CONCERT**

The recent concert given by four extremely talented young musicians raised £500 towards church funds. Thanks to everyone for their support and not least to Henrietta Thewes for organising it. This is now an annual highlight in our calendar and well worth making a point of attending. Watch out for next year's date!

### **CONCERTS IN JUNE**

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June at 7.30pm      Rudsambee Company of Singers      £15/£10**

Music with a Scottish theme - settings of Rabbie Burns and traditional Gaelic songs by composers including Rudsambee's founder Sheena Phillips, Hugh Robertson, Cedric Thorpe Davie and Joanna Forbes L'Estrange. Also including some innovative contemporary music from James MacMillan, Peter Maxwell Davies and Tom Cunningham.

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm      Calton Consort Summer Concert      £15/£12**

Midsummer concert. Journey through the seasons, nature, and devotion in an hour of mesmerizing choral music featuring Dove, Macmillan, Whitacre and Marsh.

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June at 1pm      Masterworks American Choir      FREE**

From South Carolina, a selection of beautiful classical, spiritual, sacred and traditional folk tunes for mixed voice choir.

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June at 1pm      Mississauga Festival Choir, Canada      FREE**

Celebrating and representing the voices of Mississauga, Ontario – a selection of spiritual, sacred and classical pieces.

## **PALACE EXHIBITION**

*Royal Portraits – A Century of Photography* at the King's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse, 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 7<sup>th</sup> September <https://bit.ly/4gmsNZU>

## **CONTACTLESS MACHINE**

Please be aware the 'Payaz' contactless machine in the Kirk foyer has allowed us to set up different donation values, or lets the donor choose the amount. Where applicable we can also claim Gift Aid on donations. The first time you use the 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.

## **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 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.

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

Office Hours: Mon + Wed + Fri 9am – 1pm, Thurs 9am – 12 noon. Closed Tuesdays

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