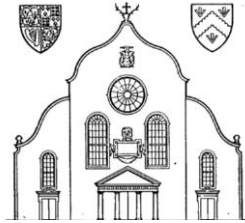


**CANONGATE KIRK  
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE  
& EDINBURGH CASTLE**

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

**Newsletter March 2023**



**MINISTER'S LETTER**

By chance I recently found myself on a train bound for London on the Saturday morning of a football Cup Final weekend. That wasn't immediately obvious until the first stop, Newcastle, where swarms of excited black-and-white clad supporters of all ages got on and I discovered that Newcastle United would confront Manchester United at Wembley the following afternoon. They were clearly allowing themselves time to get into the mood. Now I wasn't heading for Wembley but I couldn't help but get caught up in the sense of excitement and anticipation that filled the train and on our arrival at King's Cross immediately spilled out onto the platforms where the flag-waving fans' spontaneous singing and chanting echoed noisily around the whole station and alerted any rivals to the inescapable fact that they were on their way. Skirting round Trafalgar Square later on my way to St Paul's Cathedral (!) it was obvious that they and many more had arrived. By now they were well into their own version of Choral Evensong, with much singing and chanting and the occasional beer to lubricate their throats. I suspect there were many more of those to drown their sorrows after a 2-0 defeat the next day and I was quite relieved not to be on the train home on the Sunday evening!

Singing and chanting and travelling to the capital with a sense of excitement and anticipation were once all part of the Jewish approach to Passover, one of the most important festivals of their tradition for which many would make a long and arduous journey from home. *I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"* is from one of the psalms known as songs of ascents, which pilgrims would sing as they made their way to Jerusalem. United, as it were, in their purpose of remembering how God had rescued their ancestors from Egypt. That's why Jerusalem was especially busy when Jesus arrived for the last time, and why the crowds – already worked up to fever pitch – were so vocal and so volatile about his fate.

Now that Lent is underway we find ourselves on the way to Jerusalem with him once again. Sunday by Sunday we sing the familiar hymns and psalms of the season as our destination gets closer. And on our arrival we remember how God rescued us from sin and death and turned apparent defeat into eternal victory. Why not come and join us on the journey?!

*Neil Gardner*

## **SUNDAYS IN MARCH AND APRIL**

We will continue to observe Lent, without flowers in church, in our regular Sunday services at 10.30am on 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> March. Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>, the 4<sup>th</sup> in Lent, is also Mothering Sunday. The following Sunday, by which point the clocks will have sprung forward an hour to mark the start of British Summer Time, we will welcome friends from the Royal Regiment of Scotland as part of their “Muster, March & Remember” weekend. They will be marching down the Royal Mile from the Castle Esplanade in time for our 10.30am service, when music will also be supplied by musicians from the Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland. Later that same day, Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March, we will also host our monthly united evening service with friends from St Giles’ Cathedral at 7pm. Looking ahead to April, Palm Sunday falls on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, with Maundy Thursday and Good Friday 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> respectively. Easter Day is on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April and this year our Easter morning service will very appropriately include an adult baptism and confirmation. If anyone else would like to explore the possibility of also being baptised and confirmed that day, please have a word with the Minister. Holy Communion will be celebrated at our evening service on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April and at our morning service on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April.

## **NEWS FROM THE KIRK SESSION**

The Kirk Session met on the evening of Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February, the first for our new Elders who were admitted in January. There was a full Agenda with much to consider. Dinah Croy completed the handover of Safeguarding responsibilities to Claire Churchill and the Annual Accounts for 2022 were approved, as was a system of duty elders for Sunday services. Starting in March a team of Elders will be on duty at the Kirk when you arrive, welcoming you at the door, handing out and collecting in hymnbooks and service sheets to name but a few of their duties. Sincere thanks go to Lesley Wallace for carrying out these duties so diligently since services restarted post-Covid lockdown. We were also pleased to admit one new member to our congregation. A date will soon be set for the Annual Stated Meeting when the Finance Committee will formally present the Annual Accounts to the congregation for your approval.

## **LIVESTREAMING: CAN YOU HELP?**

We have been blessed by a willing band of volunteers who press the necessary buttons on a laptop in the gallery every Sunday morning to enable the broadcast of our service online via our website. We know for a fact that this facility is appreciated not just locally and across the country but around the world. Friends in Australia, Japan and the USA watch regularly and we were recently joined for a baptism by someone stationed in Antarctica! These days numbers watching by the end of the week are generally averaging around 50 or 60, but the Sunday after The Queen’s death they peaked at over 3600 and we can probably expect another spike around the time of The King’s Coronation. It would be great to add to the number of those who help spread the work and worship of Canongate in this simple but invaluable way, and the more who take a turn the less frequently they will be required. If you have basic computer skills and would like to find out more, please have a word with Imogen Gibson in the Kirk Office.

## **CRAFT CLUB**

The Canongate Craft Club had a successful inaugural meeting in February. Attendees worked on a variety of different crafts, including the knitting of baby blankets, cross-stitching and pom-pom making. There was even a short demonstration on how to make an origami paper crane - with successful attempts by all who were brave enough to try. The Club will meet monthly on the second Wednesday of each month, with the next meeting on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March from 6.30 – 8pm in the Harry Younger Hall. All crafters (and non-crafters) welcome!

## **BABY BLANKETS**

For all talented (or enthusiastic) knitters and crocheters. Simpsons Hospital (neo-natal care) is very short of baby blankets, and would be very grateful for any and all donations. Equally, if you have cotton, acrylic, or cotton/acrylic blend yarn you would wish to offer, we may be able to take donations. For more information about measurements, materials and pattern types please contact the church office.

## **TRUSSELL TRUST**

We continue to welcome donations for Edinburgh foodbanks supported by the Trussell Trust. Non-perishable foodstuffs and toiletries can be brought to church any Sunday and left in the basket in the foyer.

## **STAMPS**

Don't forget that we also have an ongoing collection for used stamps. This year's Stamp Project aims to raise funds for The National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL). NESSL employs more than a thousand people including their pastors. The economic crisis in the country and the consequences of the huge explosion in Beirut has struck hard and the Synod is struggling to pay salaries for pastors which range between £100 to £150 per month. The money raised from stamp collections will go towards supporting a pastor for a full year's salary.

## **TEA AND COFFEE AFTER CHURCH**

With thanks to those who have already volunteered to help with tea and coffee on a Sunday morning, anyone else wishing to help should give their name to David Croft who will coordinate the rota. It's shown on a sheet on the Kirk foyer notice board, so please check there to see if there are any gaps. The task, delivered in teams of two, should take up no more than 30 minutes of anyone's time and would hopefully be required no more than once every six weeks.

## **TELEPHONE SERVICE**

The weekly service continues to be livestreamed to our website at 10.30am every Sunday and then available online at any time, and may also be heard on a landline telephone – simply dial 0131 546 4001 and press 1 when prompted. Calls are charged at your phone provider's usual local rate – please let anyone know who is unable to access the internet but might appreciate this kind of connection.

## **CONCERTS AT CANONGATE KIRK IN MARCH**

<b>Garleton Singers</b>	Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> March	7.30pm
£14/£8/£3 from <a href="http://garletonsingers.co.uk">garletonsingers.co.uk</a>		
<b>Open Orchestra</b>	Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> March	7.30pm
FREE		
<b>Scottish Country Dancing Concert</b>	Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup> March	12 noon
£10 from <a href="mailto:info@rscdsedinburgh.org">info@rscdsedinburgh.org</a>		

## ASHES TO ASHES



For some time the former Minister of the Brick Church in New York – and friend of Canongate Kirk – the Revd Michael Lindvall has enjoyed an alternative career as a writer. Now he has teamed up with his daughter Madeline to create a writing duo under the name M.M.Lindvall and together they have recently published a mystery novel, Ashes to Ashes. *“In a Manhattan brownstone that has long served as a manse for him and his predecessors, the Revd Seth Ludington discovers the bones of an infant...49 years dead. With his side-kick, the acid tongued Harriet van der Berg, Ludington struggles to resolve the mystery of the bones long hidden in the ash pit of his home while trying to outrun a dark secret from his past. The answers he discovers set Ludington onto an ominous path from which he cannot return, forcing him to explore haunting questions of forgiveness and time.”* The story is very much set in the American Presbyterian world but there are passing references to Canongate. Seth Ludington’s wife is portrayed as a daughter of our Manse, and in an endnote Michael writes “Apologies to my friend Neil Gardner, the actual minister of the remarkable Canongate Kirk in Edinburgh, for replacing him with Fiona’s father.” It’s worth getting hold of a copy of Ashes to Ashes, perhaps as an alternative but quite appropriate form of Lenten reading?!

## OLD SAINT PAUL’S WEEKLY LUNCH

OSP’s is offering a free soup and rolls lunch every Monday from 12.30-2.30. The aim is to offer a warm, convivial space for anyone in the church and wider community who wants it, including people who might want a warm place to work or relax, so the hall will be open for a bit longer than the 12.30 - 2.30 lunch time.

## VETERANS’ LUNCH CLUB

603 Sqn provides a Monthly Veterans Lunch Club at 603 Sqn HQ, 25 Learmonth Terrace, Edinburgh, EH4 1NZ. Please contact Sergeant Paul Greenwood for details on 07583 092701 or email [paul.greenwood195@mod.gov.uk](mailto:paul.greenwood195@mod.gov.uk) The aim is to provide veterans both young and old, ex-regular and ex-reserve with a warm welcoming place to meet once a month where they can have a simple lunch or just a tea/coffee.

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