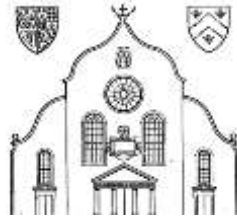


**CANONGATE KIRK
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE
& EDINBURGH CASTLE
www.canongatekirk.org.uk**

Newsletter November 2025



MINISTER'S LETTER

The Remembrance season has taken on an extra poignancy for our family this year, with the sudden death of my mother, Isobel, on 23rd October. She was 96 years old, so it wasn't entirely unexpected, but of course it just means she's been part of our lives for that much longer and the gap she leaves is that much bigger. It fell to me to register her death and that meant checking her birth certificate. I knew she'd been born in a nursing home in Royal Terrace – her family home in 1929 was in London Street - but I hadn't realised that it all came into the "Registration District of Canongate." No wonder she felt so at home in the Kirk when she was able to attend! Latterly she watched the livestream of our services most Sundays via my sister's phone, and still felt part of the family of our congregation. I'm grateful for the many messages of sympathy and support I've already received and continue to receive from that wider family, it means a great deal. As Mum's immediate family, we're focussing on how much we have to be thankful for.

That is partly what this rather sombre season from All Saints and All Souls to Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day is about, remembering those who have gone before, and acknowledging how much we have to be thankful for. This year marked the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War both in Europe and in the Far East. I happened to be in Singapore last month and took the opportunity to visit Kranji War Cemetery. I've been before and am always struck by the young ages on the stones particularly of soldiers from Scottish Regiments, who fought and died so far from home. This time I was particularly touched to see a squad of young men around the same age tending their graves, weeding and replanting between the stones and somehow honouring the memory of those who once gave their tomorrow for our today. The cemetery is not neglected, and neither is the sacrifice. Not least as the wartime generation slips away, soul by soul and silently. One of Mum's favourite prayers was written by John Henry Newman:

O Lord support us all the day long of this troublous life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over and our work done. Then Lord in your mercy grant us safe lodging, holy rest and peace at the last, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

How much we all have to be thankful for.

Neil Gardner

PARISH REGISTER

WEDDINGS

18 th October	Fiona Frame & Henry Webster	<i>in St Margaret's Chapel</i>
25 th October	Rebecca Wallace & Will Jones	<i>in Canongate Kirk</i>

VOW RENEWAL

22 nd October	Mark & Katrena Caulder	<i>from Georgia, USA</i>
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"Those whom God has joined together, let not man divide."

FUNERAL

2 nd October	Lt Col Christopher Smyth	<i>Adjutant General's Corps</i>
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MEMORIAL SERVICE

3 rd October	Sir George Reid KT	<i>Former Presiding Officer</i>
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"Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

SUNDAY MORNINGS IN NOVEMBER

2 nd November	All Saints	Sacrament of Baptism
9 th November	Remembrance Sunday	Service starts 10.45am
16 th November	Kirking of High Constables and Guard of Honour of Holyroodhouse	
23 rd November	Sunday before Advent	Fundraising Recital
30 th November	Advent 1/St Andrew	Holy Communion

PARISH GROUPING

United Evening Services

The next monthly united evening service in conjunction with St Giles' takes place on Sunday 30th November at 7pm. As usual a quartet of singers from the Cathedral choir will be in the gallery. There will be no evening service in December, so the first one of 2026 will be on 25th January, probably in St Giles. All welcome.

November 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 of them being on 12th November. Anyone interested in seeing the process would be welcome to observe work in the kitchen between 6pm and 7pm - especially if they might like to volunteer to be part of the team for subsequent dates in the Harry Younger Hall on 4th February or 4th March. Please contact vashton20@gmail.com

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. Until 30th November. Opening hours: Mon - Fri: 10am - 6pm; Sat: 9am - 5pm; Sun: 1pm - 5pm. Admission is free.

KIRK REDECORATION PROJECT UPDATE FROM DAVID CROFT

As part of our strategy to keep members informed of progress on all aspects of the Redecoration Project, we intend to include periodic briefings to members through the monthly newsletter. The congregation is represented on the Project Team by Carol Nimmo and Louise Brodie. The Project, is estimated to cost around £240,000 and includes the painting of all internal walls, ceilings, metals and woodwork (pews and walls below dado level). The scaffolding alone will cost over £90,000, taking three weeks to erect and two weeks to take down. Removal, cleaning and reinstalling Regimental Colours will cost around £20,000 and we await quotes for the gold coloured re-lettering on specific parts of the furniture. At this time the project does not include the foyer, kitchen or toilet areas.

The plan is to remove the 'Colours' between 15-19th December with an 'in house' team removing the Kirk furniture into the vestibule between 29-31st December. The last service in the Kirk will be on Sunday 28th December and the scaffolders and painters will move in on 5th January 2026. The plan is that all scaffolding will be dismantled and removed from the building by Good Friday (3rd April) allowing services in the Kirk to recommence in time for Easter Sunday. Between these dates all Sunday Services will take place in the Harry Younger Hall at the usual time. The completion of the woodwork low level painting will continue for several weeks after Easter on days when the Kirk is not in use.

The costs associated with the project are substantial and will severely impact on our existing financial reserves. However, it is recognised that we are very fortunate to have the required funds available and that the congregation and its visitors are entitled to see the benefits of their giving over recent years. As a cushion to help soften the impact of reduced financial reserves the Minister has already advised our members of a forthcoming programme of events to raise as much as we can to replenish some of what we will spend and to put us back on our feet to some extent.

The first event, "Daydreams and Nocturnes" will take place in the Kirk on Friday 7th November at 7pm, admission £10. Further to this, our Organist Simon Leach's musical student 14 year old Becca Ye, will perform a piano recital following the Service on 23rd November. The recital will begin immediately following the Service and run for just under 30 minutes. As the Minister often tells people attending non ticketed concerts in the Kirk, "entry is free but you have to pay to leave!" Finally, we are already now selling tickets for our annual Christmas Supper to be held on 16th December commencing at 6.45pm. Tickets this year at £20 each are slightly inflated to allow for a contribution to the replenishment fund. They can be purchased any Sunday at Church or ordered via the office.

Thank you for your already expressed enthusiasm towards the future of our precious Kirk.

HARVEST THANKS

Our traditional service of Harvest Thanksgiving took place on Sunday 12th October and 101 kg of non-perishable foodstuffs and toiletries were duly delivered to the foodbank depot. A significant amount of money was also donated. Many thanks to everyone who contributed in any way. 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.

REMEMBRANCE 2025

Our traditional service of Remembrance takes place on Sunday 9th November this year, beginning at 10.45am and followed as always by a short wreath-laying ceremony at the War Memorial next door. This year we'll be marking not only the 80th anniversary of the end of WW2, but the centenary of the founding of 603 Sqn in October 1925. We look after their Roll of Honour in the Memorial Chapel at the Kirk, and look forward to welcoming them back among us along with a contingent from 142 Sqn of the RAF Air Cadets.

CRAFT CLUB

Next month's meeting of the Craft Club will be on Monday 10th November 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.

HIGH CONSTABLES

Our morning service on Sunday 16th November will include the Kirking of the High Constables and Guard of Honour of Holyroodhouse, and we look forward to welcoming the Constables and their families back to the Kirk of Holyroodhouse.

BBC RADIO SCOTLAND

You might like to know that the Minister has been asked to lead the weekly 'New Every Sunday' broadcasts on Sundays 2nd and 9th November at 7am. Visit <https://bit.ly/491gz97>

ST ANDREWS DAY SERVICE

The Friends of St Andrew's Jerusalem will be holding their annual service on Friday 28th November between 2pm and 4pm at St Cuthbert's Parish Church, 5 Lothian Road. The guest preacher will be former Moderator The Very Revd Shaw Paterson. All welcome.

KINGS GALLERY EXHIBITION

Drawing the Italian Renaissance is the latest 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>

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!

CONCERTS IN DECEMBER

Saturday 6th December	5.30pm	Calton Consort
Friday 12th December	5pm	Army Piping and Drumming Event
Saturday 20th December	7.30pm	St Andrew Camerata

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICES

You might like advance notice of the fact that members of the congregation would be welcome to attend any of the following charity carol services:

Thursday 4th December	6pm	Armed Forces Carol Service
Wednesday 10th December	6pm	Crisis Homeless Charity Carol Service
Thursday 11th December	5pm	Order of St John Carol Service
Sunday 14th December	4pm	Royal British Legion Carol Service

WASHBAGS FOR CRISIS AT CHRISTMAS

We have once again been asked to help supply washbags to Crisis, the local charity for the homeless. These can be brought to church or handed in at the church office up to and including Sunday 21st December. Gender neutral washbags are preferred however this isn't always easy to achieve so male and female washbags would also be welcome. These can be filled with any selection of toiletries, but no razors, or hand sanitisers which contain alcohol. A suggested list of items includes shower-gel, soap, shampoo/ conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrush, flannel and anything else you would usually find in a washbag.

FESTIVE STAYS 2025

Could you lay an extra place at your table this Christmas for an international student? Each year the charity EIL UK receives hundreds of applications from international students studying at British universities hoping to experience Christmas or New Year in a British home. If you could offer friendship and host an overseas university student for a 3-night stay between 24th and 27th December 2025, drop us a line at host@eiluk.org to find out more about this rich and rewarding experience and how you can be part of the HOST UK programme.

Minister: The Revd Neil Gardner nng22@btinternet.com T: 0131 556 3515

Kirk Secretary: Imogen Gibson canongatekirk@btinternet.com T:0131 556 3515

Office Hours: Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays 9am – 1pm. Wednesdays 9am – 12 noon.

Scottish Charity SC 015251

<https://linktr.ee/canongatekirk>