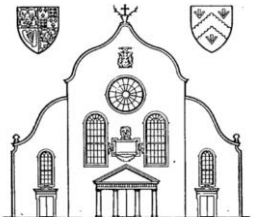
CANONGATE KIRK
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE
& EDINBURGH CASTLE
www.canongatekirk.org.uk

Newsletter

November 2026



MINISTER'S LETTER

Cinemas have such comfortable seats these days that on the rare occasions I go to see a film, I rarely stay awake to the end! But recently "Pressure" turned out to be the exception that proves the rule. Based on the play of the same name by playwright David Haig, it's the story of Scottish meteorologist James Stagg's ultimately successful efforts bravely to stand up to Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D Eisenhower and delay the launching of the D Day invasion of Normandy by 24 hours to 6th June 1944. Stagg was a local boy - born in Musselburgh and raised in Dalkeith, he became a science teacher at Heriot's before joining the British Meteorological Office from which he was duly seconded to offer advice in the planning and preparation of Operation Overlord. The film highlights the tensions which arose from his precise weather forecasts anticipating bad weather, stormy seas and poor visibility on the day originally set (5th June) for the momentous invasion across the Channel. Calmer weather the following day enabled the complex operation to go ahead successfully and though many men were killed in the course of that day, it was generally reckoned that many more would have died had the commanders stuck to their original plan. For the crucial part he played, Stagg was awarded the US Legion of Merit at the end of the war.

Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather.

As we approach the Season of Remembrance once again, John Bunyan's familiar hymn reminds us of all those who showed real courage in the face of considerable pressure, both meteorological and military, not just to land on the beaches of Normandy but to fight for peace and freedom in both world wars and in countless conflicts since. Those whose courage and sacrifice we must never forget.



PARISH REGISTER

BAPTISMS

24th October	Finlay Andrew Robert Scott	*St Margaret's Chapel*
25th October	Liliana Maya Harrison Sarafilovic	
	Oscar Enzo Harrison Sarafilovic	
1st November	Annabel Grace Thorneycroft	

"Then he took them in his arms and blessed them."

WEDDINGS

3rd October	Eliza Mackenzie & Robert Russell	*St Mary's, Haddington*
17th October	Charlotte Stevens & Joseph Risselmann	*Signet Library*

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

FUNERALS

5th October	Professor John MacKenzie	*Alyth*
19th October	Evelyn Loudon	*Elsie Inglis Nursing Home*
29th October	Ann McCarter	*Lammermuir House, Dunbar*

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

PARISH GROUPING

St Giles' Catering Group in HYH

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 4th 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 3rd February or 3rd March. Please contact vashton20@gmail.com

United Evening Service

At our recent service on 25th October the address was given by Rev Sigrid Marten, who is about to move from being Associate Minister of St Giles' to become Parish Minister for Uist and Barra in the Western Isles. We wish her well across the sea! Our next service in Canongate Kirk, shared with our friends from St Giles' and supported by singers from the Cathedral choir, will be at 7pm on Sunday 29th November. All welcome.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2026

Our traditional service falls this year on 8th November, beginning at 10.45am, slightly later than our usual morning service. Afterwards a retiring offering will be shared with Poppy Scotland and there will be a short wreath-laying ceremony by the War Memorial outside.

SUNDAY 11TH OCTOBER

Many thanks to everyone who brought non-perishable foodstuffs and toiletries to our service of Harvest Thanksgiving on 11th October – over 100kg were swiftly transferred to the Foodbank in Leith we continue to support throughout the year, via the basket in the foyer. Over £300 in cash was also generously donated. That same Sunday a separate service was held at 1pm to lay up Colours of the First Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland. The Colours were marched down the Royal Mile from the Castle Esplanade in a colourful parade led by the Regimental Band and Pipes & Drums, before being handed over – in the course of the service - by HRH The Princess Royal, Deputy Colonel-in-Chief, for safe keeping in Canongate Kirk, the Regimental church.

FINAL TOUCHES

A smart new deep-red carpet has recently been laid on the floor of the Kirk, along with matching carpet tiles in the foyer and organ gallery. It's the last stage in this year's major redecoration project and grateful thanks are due to those whose generous financial support has made it possible. Lifting the old carpet in the War Memorial Chapel unexpectedly revealed a painted black and white checkerboard pattern on the floor – can anyone ever remember it looking like that?! It wasn't exposed for long but there's a photo on our website which might jog memories. We also took the chance to install a new loop system under the carpet for the benefit of those who use hearing aids and are reliably informed it already makes a huge difference.

EVENING TALK AND RECEPTION

In a return to our previous pattern of occasional talks, Mark Peel presented "Donald Dewar: A Man out of Time" on Thursday 29th October in the Harry Younger Hall. The first First Minister at Holyrood is the enigmatic subject of Mark's latest biography, and several signed copies were snapped up by members of the appreciative audience.

BBC RADIO 3

Canongate Kirk was mentioned in the popular "In Tune" programme on Thursday 29th October, when composer Helen Leach was interviewed by Katie Derham about her new album and asked in particular about her piece "Prelude for a Royal Swan". The piece was inspired by the swans in St Margaret's Loch close to Holyroodhouse, and written to mark the Platinum Jubilee of The late Queen. It was first played in Canongate on Sunday 6th February 2022, Accession Day, by Helen's husband (and our organist!) Simon Leach. Simon can also be heard playing the piano in the course of the radio interview, which is still available on BBC Sounds.

WINTER EVENTS

Christmas Craft Fair

Mark your calendar for Saturday, November 14th , from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and enjoy an afternoon of holiday shopping in the Kirk! Explore handcrafted gifts, festive Christmas décor, and delicious baked treats made with care. All proceeds will go to the Kirk. We look forward to seeing you!

November Concert On Saturday 7th November at 5pm, Calton Consort begin a series of concerts to celebrate their 25th anniversary with 'Twenty five' – Martin Mass for double choir and choral highlights from the past 25 years. Tickets £15/12 available from https://www.ticketsource.com/calton-consort or on the door.

Community Ceilidh All are invited to a St Andrewstide Community Ceilidh jointly hosted by St Giles' Cathedral and Canongate Kirk on Friday 27th November from 6.30pm – 10.30pm at the Scottish Storytelling Centre, Royal Mile. Tickets at £20 (free for accompanied under-18s) include a welcome drink and haggis supper. The event is not BYOB as the bar will be open all evening. Booking early is recommended as this is sure to be a very popular event! Tickets available on Eventbrite https://bit.ly/47K9pnN

Christmas Supper and Burns Celebration Our Christmas Supper will take place in the Harry Younger Hall on Thursday 10th December and then on Tuesday 26th January the award-winning Scottish singer Robyn Stapleton will lead a celebration of Robert Burns in Canongate Kirk. Not to be missed!

NEW COLLEGE FESTIVAL

The University of Edinburgh's School of Divinity is hosting a Festival of Books and Belief on 6th and 7th November 2026. An array of writers from the UK and beyond will explore the fascinating relationship between literature and all aspects of belief. More information about the programme as well as tickets available on Eventbrite https://bit.ly/4zmKPFw

PALACE EXHIBITION

The current exhibition at the King's Gallery, Holyroodhouse is The Edwardians – Age of Elegance, exploring the opulence and glamour of the Edwardian age through the lives and tastes of two of Britain's most fashionable royal couples – King Edward VII & Queen Alexandra, and King George V & Queen Mary. Until 6th December 2026. For more information visit https://bit.ly/4bJ9pHp

TRUSSELL TRUST

We continue to collect donations for Edinburgh foodbanks supported by Trussell Trust, not just at harvest time but all year round. Non-perishable foodstuffs and toiletries can be brought any Sunday and left in the basket in the foyer.

STAMPS & COINS

Please continue to bring any used stamps or foreign coins and notes along to church and put them in the box at the back of the King David Aisle.

CONTACT DETAILS

Minister: The Revd Neil Gardner **nng22@btinternet.com**
Kirk Secretary: Imogen Gibson **canongatekirk@btinternet.com**
Office/Manse Phone: 0131 556 3515
Office Hours: Mon, Wed, Fri: 9am – 1pm, Thurs 9am – 12 noon, CLOSED Tuesdays
Scottish Charity SC 015251

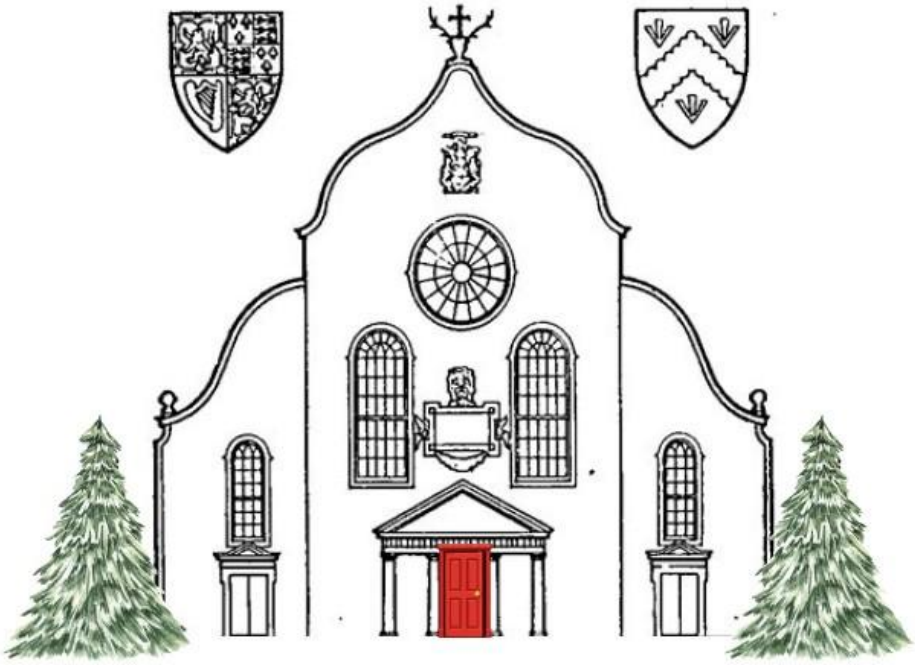
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Christmas Craft Fair

Canongate Kirk

Saturday Nov. 14 2026

11-2pm





Handmade crafts

Festive baked goods

Christmas decor

