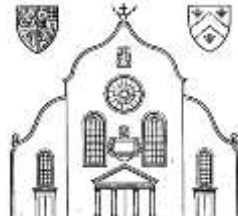


**CANONGATE KIRK
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE
& EDINBURGH CASTLE**

www.canongatekirk.org.uk

Newsletter October 2025



MINISTER'S LETTER

For many months now, if not years, members of the congregation and visitors alike have been wondering – and asking – when we're going to do something about the peeling paintwork on the ceiling of Canongate Kirk, and the general scruffiness of the upper reaches of the walls. Well, the answer is soon! It was always our general plan to turn our attention to the interior of the church once we had completed the extensive exterior work on the roof, windows and walls a few years ago. But then the pandemic struck and put paid to our best intentions. Since we reopened and time has gone on, the condition of the ceiling in particular has deteriorated and costs have spiralled, but the Kirk Session have agreed that we cannot delay any longer and must put our house, as it were, in order. We are also conscious that in 2028 we will be marking the 900th anniversary of the founding of the parish with the building of the Abbey at Holyrood in 1128. The last time the Kirk was redecorated was around 1991 to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the opening of Canongate Kirk to replace the Abbey in 1691. With all this in mind an application for permission to proceed was submitted to the Property Committee of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian and at the September meeting of Presbytery permission was duly granted.

So I can now confirm that we will be going ahead with this major project in the New Year of 2026. It will take at least three months and cost something in the region of £300,000. Thanks to the generosity of the congregation in the past and the careful stewardship of our finance team, we are fortunate to have the financial resources available to meet these enormous costs. But we will have something of a fundraising programme as the coming months go by, to help meet any unforeseen costs and to some extent to replenish our depleted reserves. Suggestions for events are welcome, but at this stage a Gift Day, concert and other gatherings are already tentatively envisaged. The church will be filled with scaffolding (accounting for at least a third of the cost) and we will have to meet in the Harry Younger Hall on Sunday mornings from January to March. It might be a bit tight but at least it will be cosy! We have avoided concert and wedding bookings for the first quarter of the year, and it is a relatively quiet time in the Church calendar, though the aim will be to be back in the Kirk in time for Easter. More details will emerge as the project gets underway, and I'll keep you posted as best I can as together we look forward to the day when we can say with the Psalmist once again, *How lovely is Thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts, to me.*

Neil Gardner

PARISH REGISTER

BAPTISMS

30th August Cordelia Gretta Rose Swinton Gow
30th August Montgomery Stephen Hunter Swinton Peck
31st August Genevieve Mary McCorquodale
7th September Charlie James Brydon Cunningham
"Then he took them in his arms and blessed them."

FUNERALS

5th September Sir George Reid KT Bridge of Allan
11th September Miss Margaret Butler St Margaret's Chapel Guild
"Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

PARISH GROUPING

United Evening Services

The next monthly united evening service in conjunction with St Giles' takes place on Sunday 28th September at 7pm. The following month the date is Sunday 26th October. 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. Until 30th November. Opening hours: Mon - Fri : 10am - 6pm; Sat : 9am - 5pm; Sun : 1pm - 5pm. Admission is free.

HARVEST

Our traditional service of Harvest Thanksgiving will take place on Sunday 12th October at 10.30am. The congregation is invited to bring along donations of non-perishable foodstuffs and toiletries, which will be transferred afterwards to the Trussell Trust Edinburgh Foodbank network. Cash donations may also be given for our own Homeless Fund.

CRAFT CLUB NEWS

Next month's meeting of the Craft Club will be on Monday 13th October 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.

CONCERT

On Monday 6th October at 7.30pm, the Georgian Concert Society will perform *For Love Every Creature is Formed* – a special event with 14 performers featuring the music of Purcell and Charpentier with Academy Baroque soloists directed by Elizabeth Kenny. For tickets and more information visit <https://gcs.org.uk/tickets/>

OPEN KIRK UPDATE

From our student intern, Roselle Brown:

This summer I had the privilege of serving as the intern/steward, welcoming over 20 thousand visitors and tourists to the church. It was a unique joy to meet a diverse range of people and share with them the history of this beautiful building. Some came not knowing it was a church, others with their google maps directions blaring "TURN LEFT INTO CANONGATE", or incidentally looking for Greyfriars Bobby. I was grateful to see visitors finding the burial places of their ancestors, pleasantly surprised by our provision of so many language guides or just simply enjoying a moment of peace. Working in this role taught me how even a simple welcome can open the door to meaningful conversations (and definitely some whacky ones too!). Thank you to everyone who supported me throughout my time here — it was lovely to get to meet a few members of the congregation and I hope to be back!

FOREIGN NOTES AND COINS

If you've been abroad on holiday this summer, you've probably come home with a few notes and coins that you can't use any more. We have recently discovered a company, Cash4coins, who will exchange these into Sterling for charities. This applies to old UK coins and notes too, so please consider bringing any you don't want to the Kirk, and we will add them to the 10kg of foreign coins that have come in through Open Kirk donations, which we haven't been able to do anything with until now. Don't forget we still have a supply of collecting cans to take home and fill with loose change as time goes by. Every little helps!

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 in Malawi.

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Scottish Charity SC 015251			

<https://linktr.ee/canongatekirk>