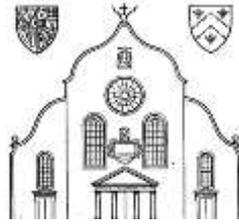


**CANONGATE KIRK  
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE  
& EDINBURGH CASTLE**  
[www.canongatekirk.org.uk](http://www.canongatekirk.org.uk)

**Newsletter December 2021 & January 2022**



**MINISTER'S LETTER**

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas. Not just because of the wintry drop in temperatures, or the long dark nights, or even the lighting of the Advent Crown in church and the opening of the Advent calendar at home. It's the diary that's beginning to look a lot like Christmas as it fills up with concerts, events and services, a little more tentatively than previously but a lot more like it used to be in the old days pre-pandemic. You can find the details elsewhere in this newsletter. Face coverings must still be worn, and names and numbers noted for track and trace purposes, but it's better than nothing. Last year very little was possible at all, but at the time of writing we can look forward to welcoming back a variety of audiences and congregations to Canongate Kirk, hopefully adorned for the season once again by a tree from the Balmoral Estate. If there are any left after Storm Arwen.

After such a long lull, there has already been something special about seeing people getting together again, in person, face to face, rather than relying on phone calls and Zoom calls and livestreaming and YouTube from afar. In a less technological but more theological sense, something similar lies at the heart of the Christmas story. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." Isaiah's familiar proclamation suggests they had been suffering a sense of isolation from God, struggling with a feeling of remoteness from him, wondering when things would change, waiting for light and hope to break through their darkness and despair. The writer of an Advent hymn sums it up better than I can:

*Long your exiles have been pining,  
Far from you, and rest, and home;  
But, in heavenly glory shining,  
Soon their loving Lord shall come.*

And when he came they would see him face to face, in person. Not remote any longer, but up close and personal. That's what Emmanuel means, God with us, around us and before us, "to human view displayed", as a popular carol puts it. And that's what we celebrate at Christmas, the Word becoming flesh, one of us. Soon our loving Lord shall come. May you know his presence and his peace in your hearts and homes. Happy Christmas!

## PARISH REGISTER

### Baptisms

21<sup>st</sup> November Douglas James Weston Menzies *at Gask House, Perthshire*  
28<sup>th</sup> November Luka Hugo Samuel Bakovljev  
*“Then he took them in his arms and blessed them.”*

### Wedding

27<sup>th</sup> November Tony Jones & Ashley Mawby  
*“Those whom God has joined together, let not man divide.”*

### Funerals

25<sup>th</sup> November Keith McKenzie Whitefoord House  
29<sup>th</sup> November Lt Gen Sir Sandy Boswell Gifford

### Memorial Services

12<sup>th</sup> November Col Andrew Campbell Stobo  
20<sup>th</sup> November Marilyn Imrie Leopold Place  
*“Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”*

## CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> December	10.30am	Lessons & Carols for Christmas, with Baptism
Friday 24 <sup>th</sup>	11.30pm	Christmas Eve Watchnight Service
Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Christmas Day Family Service
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service

## CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The Kirk Session has agreed that our Christmas Retiring Offerings this year should be shared between Crossreach, the Church of Scotland social care wing, and Population Matters, a UK-based charity working globally to achieve a better future for people and planet.

## WASHBAGS FOR CRISIS AT CHRISTMAS

Further to last week's Kirk Session meeting, Crisis have indicated that they would welcome donations of washbags once again this year. A mix of male and female washbags would be ideal with any selection of toiletries, **but no razors, aerosols or hand sanitisers which contain alcohol.** A suggested list of items includes: shower-gel, soap, shampoo/conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrush, shaving foam, flannel and anything else you would usually find in a washbag. These can be brought to church or handed in at the office up to and including Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December. A reminder that we continue to collect non-perishable foodstuffs and toiletries in the basket in the foyer – these are regularly delivered to Streetwork, the local resource centre for the homeless.

## CHRISTMAS CARDS

A limited number of cards, mainly showing views of the church from Regent Road, are still in stock and available for purchase at £3.50 per pack of ten. All proceeds to church funds.

## ROYAL MILE PRIMARY SCHOOL CARD COMPETITION

Entries for the local school Christmas card competition will soon be on display on pin-boards in church. We look forward to hosting their end of term service later this month.

## **STAMPS**

Talking of Christmas cards, don't forget that we have had an ongoing collection for used stamps for many years. According to the Church of Scotland's World Mission Council, all stamps collected are first sorted into their respective denominations and then sold on to collectors and dealers from all over the world. The money raised is then used to support charities in developing countries. The current beneficiary is The Women's Development Centre (WDC) in Kandy, Sri Lanka, which runs a project to support women and girls who have been victims of rape and sexual violence.

## **TEA AND COFFEE AFTER CHURCH**

The last 20 months or so has affected much of what we do at the Kirk and how we do it. One of the most significant of these is the opportunity for fellowship and refreshments at the close of the service. Government guidelines now allow such arrangements so long as participants wear masks when walking around and that food handling is kept to a minimum. The Kirk Session has therefore agreed, subject to there being a volunteer available to prepare and serve the refreshments, that we should after future services provide tea, coffee and wrapped biscuits and that all participants should consume these provisions sitting down in groups rather than standing (which would require masks to be worn). It will also be necessary to serve the drinks in eco-friendly paper cups. It is hoped that we will be able to offer this service from 12<sup>th</sup> December. Volunteers should speak with the Session Clerk or the Deputy Session Clerk.

## **SEASONAL UPDATE FROM THE ECO TEAM**

Tips for a sustainable Christmas celebration:

- try a nut roast or vegetarian wellington instead of the traditional Christmas turkey as the centrepiece of your dinner.
- if still opting for meat, try organic and free-range, and support small-scale farming where possible.
- plan your meals around the holidays carefully to use all leftovers and avoid food waste.
- buy glitter-free Christmas cards and wrapping paper as these can be recycled and don't contain harmful micro-plastics.
- turn any cards received this year into gift tags for next year.
- give homemade gifts such as cookies and knitted items, or second-hands items just waiting for a new lease of life.
- opt for a potted, live Christmas tree instead of a cut one. You can plant it in your garden and use it again next year.

## **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, especially around Christmas time.

## **REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY THANKS**

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the retiring offering, which raised over £640 for Poppy Scotland.

## ST MARGARET'S DAY

This year we welcomed members of St Margaret's Chapel Guild to Canongate Kirk for their annual gathering on 16<sup>th</sup> November. Usually the Minister, as President of the Guild, holds a series of short services in St Margaret's Chapel itself, high up in Edinburgh Castle, but this year it was felt that the tiny Chapel, which seats 24 max, was too confined a space for members to feel comfortable. So a short service in the chapel was pre-recorded and uploaded to our website, and the Guild came to Canongate instead, where the service was shared by Lord Wallace, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and The Most Revd Leo Cushley, Roman Catholic Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh.

## FETTES COLLEGE CONFIRMATIONS

Another relocated ecumenical service took place in Canongate Kirk on the evening of Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November, when 14 young people were confirmed jointly by the Minister and the (Scottish Episcopalian) Bishop of Edinburgh. The annual service is normally held in Fettes Chapel but current restrictions meant that families and friends of the candidates for confirmation would not be able to attend there. It was good to be able to reinforce our connection with the College, whose founder Sir William Fettes lies buried in our Kirkyard.

### Concerts in December

Sat 4 <sup>th</sup> Dec	@ 7.30pm	Abbotsford Orchestra	£14/£9
Sat 11 <sup>th</sup> Dec	@ 7.30pm	Calton Consort     Carols at Canongate	£12/£10
Fri 17 <sup>th</sup> Dec	@ 7.30pm	Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland	Free

### Charity Carol Services

Sun 12<sup>th</sup> Dec     @ 4pm     Legion Scotland Carol Service

Tues 14<sup>th</sup> Dec     @ 6pm     Crisis at Christmas Carol Service

*(Please RSVP [olivia.scott@crisis.org.uk](mailto:olivia.scott@crisis.org.uk))*

Minister	The Revd Neil Gardner	<a href="mailto:nng22@btinternet.com">nng22@btinternet.com</a>	0131 556 3515
Assistant Minister	Douglas Reid	<a href="mailto:Douglas.Reid@churchofscotland.org.uk">Douglas.Reid@churchofscotland.org.uk</a>	07960251971
Kirk Secretary	Imogen Gibson (office)	<a href="mailto:canongatekirk@btinternet.com">canongatekirk@btinternet.com</a>	0131 556 3515

*Usual Office Opening Hours: Mon, Wed 9am – 1pm, Fri 8am – 12 noon.*

Website: [www.canongatekirk.org.uk](http://www.canongatekirk.org.uk)      @CanongateKirk      @canongate.kirk

Scottish Charity SC 015251