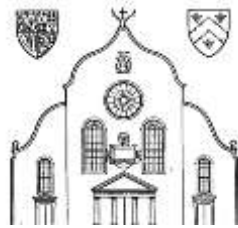


**CANONGATE KIRK
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE
& EDINBURGH CASTLE**

www.canongatekirk.org.uk

Newsletter June 2023



MINISTER'S LETTER

Canongate Kirk was drawn in to this year's General Assembly of the Church of Scotland a little more than usual. On General Assembly Sunday, for instance, we were joined by a contingent of a hundred or so Boys Brigade who had been on parade to welcome The Lord High Commissioner as His Grace arrived at St Giles' Cathedral for the Assembly Service there, and then marched down the Royal Mile in time to join us for our 10.30am service before gathering in the Harry Younger Hall for brunch. It's been a while since we heard "Will your anchor hold" sung quite so enthusiastically! There was more enthusiastic singing a couple of days later when a number of military chaplains gathered for a Communion service in our King David Aisle as part of their programme around what is traditionally known as "Chaplains' Day" at the Assembly. And on the last day three dozen commissioners from the Presbytery of Perth met for lunch in the Harry Younger Hall before going their separate ways.

Furth of the parish, there was very little coverage of the actual General Assembly in the news, and what little there was largely depressing, focusing inevitably on the worrying decline in numbers. Out of 283,600 members – compared to 1.3 million in the peak of the 1950's – just 60,000 attend in person on a Sunday these days. On average there is one baptism a year per congregation and one wedding. The vast majority of ministers are over the age of 50 and it is estimated that 40-50% of them could retire in the next ten years. The current rate of securing new ministers is 20-30 a year, not nearly enough to support the well over 1000 buildings that are still places of worship. The seriousness of the problem – and the urgency of the need for change – cannot be over-emphasised and made for some sombre sessions on the Mound.

In these weeks after Easter and Pentecost we are reminded so often in our Bible readings how the early Church faced up to the uncertainty of the way ahead with faith and hope. We can but do the same, and trust that the anchor is not just for the Boys Brigade.

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.*

Neil Gardner

PARISH REGISTER

Baptism

26th May Teddy Louie Frances Buchanan
“Then he took them in his arms and blessed them.”

Wedding

13th May Lauren Dempster & Douglas Hutcheon
“Those whom God has joined together, let not man divide.”

Memorial Service

19th May Peter de Vink Huntly Cot, Midlothian
“Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

NEW PROCURATOR FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Many congratulations to Jonathan Brodie KC, a member of Canongate Kirk, who has been appointed Procurator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The role entails providing legal advice across a vast array of topics, covering both Church and civil law, and representing the Kirk in legal settings. Jonathan’s father, the late Dr Peter Brodie, was minister of St Mungo’s, Alloa, and Moderator of the General Assembly in 1978.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY FREE ON-LINE SUPPLEMENT

Life and Work magazine have issued a free four-page summary of the key decisions, debates and speeches from the General Assembly which can be downloaded and shared:

<https://www.lifeandwork.org/resources/general-assembly-2023-special-supplement>

LUNCHTIME CONCERT

On Saturday 3rd June at 1pm our organist Simon Leach will give a concert together with acclaimed cellist Kim Vaughan. This was originally scheduled for Marchmont House in the Borders, but will now take place here in Canongate Kirk. The programme will include music by J S Bach, Vivaldi, Couperin, Faure and Saint-Saëns. They will also play a new work by the Scottish composer Helen Leach. Tickets £10/£5 in aid of our music fund.

CRAFT CLUB

Our Craft Club meets regularly on the second Wednesday of each month, with the next meeting on Wednesday 14th June from 6.30 – 8pm in the Harry Younger Hall. All crafters (and non-crafters) welcome!

EVENING SERVICE

Our monthly united evening service with St Giles’ will next take place at 7pm on Sunday 25th June here in Canongate Kirk. As usual a quartet of singers from the Cathedral choir will be in the gallery. All welcome to this short reflective service.

OPEN KIRK

We are fortunate to have regular support on Sunday afternoons at the moment but there is an opportunity for volunteers to help with Open Kirk on Saturday afternoons too, now that the early rush of weddings is over. If you can help, please add your name to the list at the back of the church or have a word with Lesley Wallace for more information.

SUNDAY COLLECTIONS AT CHURCH

We have reintroduced our former practice of taking the collection DURING the morning service. We are conscious that nowadays many of the congregation give generously by direct means and should certainly not feel obliged to put something in the collection bag as it is passed along the pew. The contactless machine will remain in place in the foyer set for

donations of £5 a time. Gift Aid envelopes are available in the pews and these need to be filled in with your details to enable us to make a claim.

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.

HOLY COMMUNION

The common cup will now be available in the King David Aisle for those who would prefer to use it during the Sacrament of Holy Communion and individual glasses will still be circulated around the main body of the Kirk.

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.

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. 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.

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.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

WDP Scottish Committee are holding a 'Gathering' at St Matthew Church, Tay Street, Perth PH1 5LQ on 17th June 2023 from 10.30am to 3.30pm. There will be tea and coffee from 10am

and a light lunch will be provided. There will be some interesting speakers and an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas. The meeting is open to men and women who would like to know more about the World Day of Prayer. All welcome.

CONCERTS AT CANONGATE KIRK IN JUNE

Saturday 3rd June 1pm

Simon Leach and Kim Vaughan Music for Organ and Cello £10/£5 on door

Saturday 3rd June 7.30pm

Open Orchestra Grieg and Smetana (*Free Admission*)

Thursday 8th June 12 noon

Stephanos Praise Mission Choir from South Korea (*Free Admission*)

Friday 9th June 1pm

Tarira Choir from Faroe Islands (*Free Admission*)

Saturday 10th June 7.30pm

Calton Consort *Sublime to Ridiculous* £15/£10 on door

More details on our website <https://www.canongatekirk.org.uk/>

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH FOODBANK

The team at Holy Trinity Church in Westerhailes have asked us to share information about the Holy Trinity Food Bank, open every Tuesday from 2 – 3pm at 1 – 2 Hailesland Place, EH14 2SL. The foodbank and its volunteers provide crisis support for those in immediate need or help and a referral is not needed. It has been in existence for many years and relies on donations to continue. If you would like to donate please contact Fiona.watson@holyltrinitywesterhailes.org.uk.

HELP WITH TECHNOLOGY

Ace It Scotland based at Nicolson Square is a local organisation helping people over 50 tackle digital technology such as laptops, phones and personal computers. Their friendly volunteers offer free one-to-one IT coaching sessions and can help with online banking, grocery shopping, emails, video calling, prescriptions - just about every aspect of modern life which now seems to be on-line! More details on leaflets at the back of the church. To book an appointment call T: 0131 667 2053 or email: info@aceit.org.uk

EXHIBITION AT MUSEUM OF EDINBURGH

Local Foreigners – the Human Face of Immigration is an exhibition at the Museum of Edinburgh (opposite Canongate Kirk) featuring photographs of people who have moved to Edinburgh from other countries and made the city their home. Each person has chosen a cherished object to display. The exhibition is an extension of Local Foreigners, a project by Maryna Sulym an immigrant from Ukraine. Until Sunday 10th September. Admission free. For more information visit <https://localforeigners.org/>

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

Kirk Secretary Imogen Gibson (office) canongatekirk@btinternet.com 0131 556 3515

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

Website: www.canongatekirk.org.uk  @CanongateKirk  @canongate.kirk

Scottish Charity SC 015251