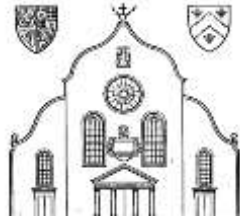


**CANONGATE KIRK
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE
& EDINBURGH CASTLE**

www.canongatekirk.org.uk

Newsletter October 2024



MINISTER'S LETTER

There was a moment during the recent filming of the latest Frankenstein movie outside the gates of Canongate Kirk when the statue of Robert Fergusson was surrounded by actors in period costume – men in boots and black cloaks and top hats, women in bonnets and broad skirts and woollen shawls – and horses and carriages. I'd never seen the statue look quite so contemporary! But it's almost exactly 250 years since Robert Fergusson died on 17th October 1774 at the age of just 24 years old. His death came just a few weeks after his admission to what was known as the Bedlam Hospital, at the end of George IV Bridge, and the tragic young poet was buried in an unmarked grave in Canongate Kirkyard. He hadn't published many poems, but at least one went on to catch the eye and imagination of Robert Burns, who famously described Fergusson as "my elder brother in misfortune, by far my elder brother in the muse." When Burns visited the Kirkyard he identified the anonymous corner where Fergusson had been buried and arranged for it be marked by a headstone bearing a specially written epitaph, which stands to this day on the western side of our churchyard. The etched epitaph consists of one verse, but Burns actually wrote three and the third seems especially apt as we mark the 250th anniversary of Fergusson's death:

*This humble tribute with a tear he gives,
a brother Bard, he can no more bestow;
But dear to fame thy Song immortal lives,
A nobler monument than Art can show.*

Today Fergusson's name lives on, not just in the paving stones of Makars' Court off the Lawnmarket, but in the building that houses the Robert Fergusson Unit of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital in Morningside. His image can be seen in a memorial in St Giles' Cathedral and of course in David Annan's much-admired sculpture set into the pavement outside the Kirk. It's all a far cry from his miserable death and unmarked grave. And a timely reminder of the privilege that is ours as the custodians of what Burns described as "(Scotia's) Poet's dust." We'll mark the anniversary at our morning service on Sunday 13th October and afterwards lay flowers on his grave.

Neil Gardner

PARISH REGISTER

Baptisms

31st August India Rose Edie Callander *at Prestonhall*
Honor Alma Emilia Callander *at Prestonhall*
22nd September George William Thomas Costello
29th September Ruairi Stewart Harrison
“Then he took them in his arms and blessed them.”

Blessing of Marriage

14th September Georgia Taylor & Peter Brodie *at Garvald*
“Those whom God has joined together, let not man divide.”

Funerals

24th September Harry Richmond Muirfield Care Home
25th September Margo Bald Lauder Lodge
“Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

PARISH GROUPING WITH ST GILES’

Organ Recital

On Sunday 6th October our organist Simon Leach gave the “St Giles at Six” recital featuring music by J S Bach, Duruflé, Leighton, James Macmillan and Helen Leach.

United Evening Service

Our next monthly united evening service in conjunction with St Giles’ takes place at 7pm on Sunday 27th October. The guest preacher will be The Right Revd Dr Shaw Paterson, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Afterwards there will be an opportunity to meet the Moderator over a glass of wine in the foyer. All welcome.

Young Adults Group

St Giles’ have established a Young Adults Group for under 40s and would welcome any eligible contenders from Canongate. They plan to meet from time to time and if you are interested please email Rev Sam Nwokoro on sam.nwokoro@stgilescathedral.org.uk

St Giles’ Neighbourhood Group

The St Giles’ Neighbourhood Group is a small group of volunteers who come together to raise money for local charities. They organise fund-raising activities such as a can collection on Princes Street at Christmas and help staff night kitchens for the homeless through the Bethany Trust. They are always looking for new members and would particularly welcome anyone in the Canongate congregation who might like to find out more about their work (with no obligation). Anyone is welcome to simply observe an (online) meeting or contact us to find out more. Please get in touch with Alan Convery at alanconvery@hotmail.com at St Giles’.

HARVEST THANKSGIVING

Our traditional annual service of Harvest Thanksgiving took place on Sunday 6th October. Donations in cash and kind – non-perishable foodstuffs and toiletries – have been passed on to the North East Edinburgh Foodbank network. Many thanks for all contributions. Don’t forget we continue to support this local foodbank network all year round via the basket in the foyer.

SEASON OF REFLECTION AND RENEWAL

Last year this ran from Harvest to Remembrance and gave members and friends an opportunity to identify ways in which they could help with the smooth running of Canongate Kirk Sunday by Sunday, and at other times too. If you're new to the congregation, or feeling more confident about volunteering this year, copies of the original form can be found once again at the back of the King David Aisle - feel free to fill one in and leave it in the box and we'll get back to you!

YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU!

As a result of last year's season of reflection and renewal there are 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!

OPEN KIRK

After the busy summer season when we were open to visitors every day, we have now reverted to weekends only. But they can still be busy and if members and friends of the congregation can take a turn to make visitors welcome on Saturday mornings and afternoons as well as Sunday afternoons, that would be much appreciated. Volunteers can sign up on the board in the foyer. Thank you!

CRAFT CLUB

The Craft club continues to meet monthly in the Harry Younger Hall on the second Wednesday of each month from 6.30pm – 8pm with the next meeting on Wednesday 9th October. The group is open to crafters and non-crafters, skilled and non-skilled alike – you can be sure of a friendly welcome.

ROBERT FERGUSSON 250

'Remembering Robert Fergusson' is a special event organised by the Scottish Poetry Library paying tribute to the famous poet who died 250 years ago this October aged only 24 and is buried in our Kirkyard, as described in this month's Minister's Letter. It will be a night filled with poetry readings, musical performance and discussions about Fergusson's impact on Scottish literature with special guests Scottish writer and broadcaster Billy Kay, authors Andrew O'Hagan and James Robertson, musician Kirsteen McCue and Professor Rhona Brown. Rhona leads on the University of Glasgow project 'The Works of Robert Fergusson: Reconstructing Textual and Cultural Legacies.' The event will take place at St Cecilia's Hall at 7pm on Thursday 17th October 2024. Tickets at <https://bit.ly/3X3zSH2>

CHARITY CYCLE RIDE

A huge thank you to everyone who donated to Duncan's charity bicycle ride from London to Amsterdam, which he completed in early September. His team from Royal London raised over £50,000 for Cancer Research UK - and are already looking forward to next year's charity ride.

CHRISTIAN AID ONE-DAY SALE

A special fundraising event is to be held in Edinburgh's New Town Church in George Street (formerly St Andrew's and St George's West) between 10am and 4pm on Saturday 19th October. A range of items for sale will include books and pictures, ephemera and maps, games

and jigsaws and CDs. There will also be a coffee morning, lunch and afternoon tea to help raise funds for Christian Aid. Further details on a leaflet at the back of our church.

ST MARGARET'S DAY



Advance notice of a special service to be held in Canongate Kirk at 11-30am on Saturday 16th November, St Margaret's Day. Usually on that day a series of short services is held in St Margaret's Chapel in Edinburgh Castle for members and guests of St Margaret's Chapel Guild, but this year as part of the 900th anniversary of the establishment of the Royal Burgh of Edinburgh by King David I (Queen Margaret's son) this one service will be held in our own Kirk of Edinburgh Castle, and all are welcome. Supported by the St Margaret's Singers and shared with representatives of the Scottish Episcopal Church and of the Roman Catholic Church, it will reinforce our connections with St Margaret's Chapel Guild and the tiny chapel that bears her name in the upper reaches of our parish.

SAVE THE DATE: CANONGATE CHRISTMAS SUPPER

Looking further ahead, plans are being set in motion for a congregational Christmas Supper, with carols, to be held in the Harry Younger Hall on Thursday 12th December. Further details to follow, but put the date in your diaries now!

EDINBURGH AT 900

2024 marks the 900th anniversary of King David I introducing a new system of local government into Scotland, and making Edinburgh a royal burgh. To celebrate this anniversary, a range of events will be held across the city until August 2025, and the Museums and Galleries Service will be hosting a number of them at the City Art Centre and Lauriston Castle. All events are free, but pre-booking is essential for most (see individual listings for more information). Details of the city-wide celebrations can be found at <https://edinburgh.org/900/>

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