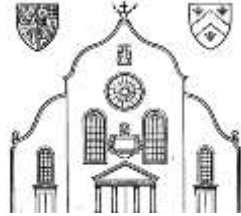


**CANONGATE KIRK
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE
& EDINBURGH CASTLE**

www.canongatekirk.org.uk

Newsletter May 2025



MINISTER'S LETTER

Twice last month I found myself on the train heading south, first to get to London to preach for the Scots Guards at their so-called “Black Sunday” service in the Guards Chapel, and then to Durham to be part of the impressive Royal Maundy service in Durham Cathedral. Whenever I take the east coast line I always take a book for the journey, and an iPad to watch a film or read the paper or listen to music or do the crossword or answer emails. And I usually take a pen and paper to jot down my most profound thoughts for next week’s sermon. But for the first hour at least I completely ignore all of that and simply sit staring out of the window. The counties of East Lothian and Berwickshire are where I grew up and I love to look out at those familiar fields and coastlines rushing by, especially when the tracks cling so closely to the cliff tops that you can practically smell the sea, or a family of deer thinking themselves unobserved slip out from the edge of the woods to graze in a field.

The Scots word “glaikit” accurately describes the way I sit staring glaikitly out of the window. It can mean “silly” but it can also mean thoughtless, without thinking, and I enjoy every minute of it, without thinking about anything in particular. I do turn eventually to the things I’ve brought with me, until the great cathedrals of Durham and York and Peterborough catch my eye, and I just have to look out glaikitly once again.

We were blessed by the cherry trees in the Kirkyard this year, which were in full radiant bloom for Holy Week and Easter. But now that the blossom is falling like confetti there is a sense of Spring gaining momentum and new life and growth all around us. Whatever else the season brings our way, and whatever the demands made of us, see if you can spend even a minute or two staring out of the window, literally or metaphorically. And be thankful for God’s great faithfulness.

*Summer and winter, and seed-time and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.*

Neil Gardner

PARISH REGISTER

BAPTISMS

13th April James Andrew Houliston Waring

20th April Raya Jane Maupon Zoega-Akran

“Then he took them in his arms and blessed them.”

WEDDINGS

4th April Alexandra Roberts & Joshua Thorneycroft

4th April Ashley Vance & Scotty Fowler *at St Margaret’s Chapel*

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

FUNERALS & MEMORIAL SERVICES

24th April Lt Col Sir Andrew Ogilvy-Wedderburn Bt *at Alyth*

25th April Verity Shaw

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

We have learned of the death of Major-General David McDowall CBE on 24th April 2025. Some members of the congregation will remember David from his time as Governor of Edinburgh Castle (2007 -2009) and perhaps not least for his insisting on piping in the haggis at our Burns Supper in Whiteford House!

PARISH GROUPING

New Minister for St Giles’

The Revd Scott Rennie was inducted to his new charge at a special service on Tuesday 29th April. Neil was invited to take part and a number of our congregation were present both for the service in the Cathedral and for the reception in Parliament Hall afterwards. We keep Scott and the congregation of St Giles’ in our prayers at this time and look forward to welcoming him to Canongate Kirk in due course.

United Evening Service

Meanwhile, our next monthly united evening service in conjunction with St Giles’ takes place in Canongate Kirk at 7pm on Sunday 25th May. As usual a quartet of singers from the Cathedral choir will be in the gallery. All welcome.

GOVERNOR’S INSTALLATION

No sooner had the Minister of St Giles’ been inducted than the Governor of Edinburgh Castle, Major General Bob Bruce, was formally installed in a colourful parade on the esplanade on Wednesday 30th April. After being greeted by the Lord Lyon and his court in all their finery, the Governor was presented with the key to the Castle and his banner hoisted on the flagpole above the drawbridge. The Minister of Canongate Kirk, as Chaplain to the Governor, offered a prayer and blessing before the troops marched off.

YEHUDI MENUHIN SCHOOL CONCERT

On Friday 2nd May at 6.30pm join us for our annual treat from some incredibly talented young musicians from Surrey performing music by Ravel, Chopin, Debussy, Brahms and Bach. Not to be missed! All proceeds to Kirk funds. Tickets £15/£7.50 on the door or from <https://www.musicinblairatholl.org.uk/tickets/>

OPEN KIRK

There is a new rota in the foyer for volunteers to sign up for Open Kirk on Saturdays and Sundays from May to September between 11am and 1.30pm or 1.30pm and 4pm. There is also another rota for weekdays if anyone wants to sign up on an ad hoc basis now that the tourist season has started up again.

BBC RADIO 4

The Minister is once again recording the *Prayer for the Day* series on BBC Radio 4 to be broadcast at 5.43am on Saturday 3rd May then every morning from 5th – 9th May. There is no need to set your alarm so early, you can catch up on BBC Sounds <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/b006qmpj> for one month after each episode.

CANDIDATE IN TRAINING

On Sunday 4th May we will be joined by Andrew Henshaw, a candidate in training for ministry in the Church of Scotland, at the beginning of a placement with us. We look forward to having Andrew with us for the next couple of months.

CRAFT CLUB NEWS

Moving its monthly slot from the second Wednesday of each month to the second Monday has proved to be a success for our Craft Club and resulted in enthusiastic newcomers joining the group. Why not join them? Everyone is welcome, experienced crafters and non-crafters alike. The next date will be Monday 12th May from 6.30pm – 8.00pm in the Harry Younger Hall. The Craft Club had a sale of delicious baked goods after the service on Easter Day to raise money for one of its current projects – purchasing white wool to knit baby blankets for babies baptised at Canongate Kirk. A very impressive total of £319.10 was raised. Thanks to all who baked, and those who came with generous appetites! If anyone is interested in knitting a baptism blanket at home, please get in touch with the Craft Club organisers via the church office - all supplies will be provided.

MARIE CURIE

The daffodil box in church over April raised over £120. Many thanks to everyone who contributed.

CHRISTIAN AID BOOK SALE

The book sale is returning to Edinburgh New Town Church (formerly St Andrew's & St George's West) in George Street and takes place from Saturday 10th to Friday 16th May (except Sunday). Drop-off times for books are 28th April – 2nd May and 5th - 7th May between 9am and 8pm.

CONTACTLESS MACHINE

Please be aware the 'Payaz' contactless machine in the Kirk foyer has allowed us to set up different donation values, or lets the donor choose the amount. Where applicable we can also claim Gift Aid on donations. The first time you use the machine you will be asked if you wish Gift Aid to be applied. If yes, just follow the steps on the screen. Once you have registered for Gift Aid, so long as you use the same card, you will not be asked again.

SUNDAY OFFERINGS

We are grateful to everyone who supports the church financially in the variety of ways, including contactless, that are now available. Many members of the congregation still prefer to put something in the offering bags when they are passed around during the service. If you give by other means, please feel free to pass the bag on to those sitting alongside you so that everyone has an opportunity to give their offering.

PALACE EXHIBITION

Royal Portraits – A Century of Photography at the Kings Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse, charts the evolution of royal portrait photography from the 1920s to the present day, bringing together photographic prints, proofs and documents from the Royal Collection and the Royal Archives, including works from Cecil Beaton and Dorothy Wilding to Annie Leibovitz and Rankin. Open daily until 7th September <https://bit.ly/4gmsNZU>

YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU!

There are now 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!

TRUSSELL TRUST

We continue to collect donations for Edinburgh foodbanks supported by Trussell Trust. Non-perishable foodstuffs and toiletries can be brought any Sunday and left in the basket in the foyer.

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Office Hours: Mon + Wed + Fri 9am – 1pm, Thurs 9am – 12 noon. Closed Tuesdays

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