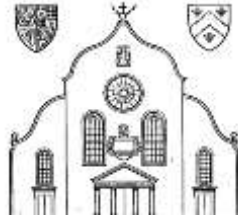


**CANONGATE KIRK
THE KIRK OF HOLYROODHOUSE
& EDINBURGH CASTLE
www.canongatekirk.org.uk**

Newsletter

December 2025 & January 2026



MINISTER'S LETTER

Every year St Margaret's Day is celebrated on 16th November, the day she died at Edinburgh Castle in the year 1093. It was her son King David who founded the Abbey at Holyrood in 1128 and so we've always had a special connection with Margaret, Queen and Saint of Scotland. It could be said that she had a lot more to do with our native land than our official patron saint, Andrew, who is also celebrated around this time of year! This year St Margaret's Day fell on a Sunday and for our morning service that day I was able to borrow a striking icon of her. It's part of a contemporary set painted on the lids of discarded ammunition boxes from Ukraine, and poignantly sets her saintly reputation for kindness and compassion against a backdrop of war and conflict that has endured from her day to ours. The icon came through an organisation called Sunflower Scotland, an Edinburgh-based charity that delivers aid to hospitals in Ukraine, and particularly supports children who have been disabled or orphaned as a result of the ongoing conflict there. This year the Kirk Session has agreed that Sunflower Scotland will be the focus of our Christmas Appeal – donations may be given by way of retiring offerings after any service from Sunday 21st through to 28th December, or handed in separately to the office. Let kindness and compassion prevail through war and conflict.

Those services begin with our Lessons and Carols on Sunday 21st December, when we shall once again be joined by friends from the Edinburgh Royal Warrant Holders' Association, and continue with the traditional Watchnight Service at 11.30pm on Christmas Eve and a Family Service at 10.30am on Christmas Day. All members and friends of the Canongate family will be more than welcome! Holy Communion at 10.30am on Sunday 28th December draws not only our Christmas season to an end but all services in Canongate Kirk until Easter. The redecoration of the interior of the sanctuary is due to begin early in the New Year, and the first phase will last for at least three months. During that time Sunday morning services, starting at 10.30am on 4th January, will be held in our Harry Younger Hall at the top of Lochend Close. It will certainly be a more informal setting than we are used to, but probably considerably warmer too for the time of year?! So do come and join us as together we look forward to reoccupying a freshly painted sanctuary, and in the meantime have a very Happy Christmas.

Neville Gardner

PARISH REGISTER

BAPTISM

2nd November

Hector Anson Bentley Laing
"Then he took them in his arms and blessed them."

FUNERALS

3rd November

Isobel Gardner

Dunbar

6th November

Margaret Holligan

Croft an Righ

14th November

Bobby White

Inverleith Place

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

MEMORIAL SERVICE

28th November

James Hepburne Scott

Wiltshire

SUNDAY MORNINGS IN ADVENT

30th November

Advent 1/St Andrew

Holy Communion

7th December

Advent 2

14th December

Advent 3

Sacrament of Baptism

21st December

Advent 4

Lessons and Carols

The Morning Service on Sunday 28th December will incorporate the Sacrament of Holy Communion – because of the redecoration programme, this will be the last service in Canongate Kirk until Easter. There will be no Evening Service on 28th December, and the next one will take place in St Giles' Cathedral at 7.30pm on Sunday 25th January 2026. Please note the slightly later start time.

STEERING GROUP UPDATE

We are now into our last month in the Kirk until Easter 2026. Contracts for the redecoration have been signed, storage of Kirk "furniture" has been planned and a specialist company has been appointed to take down, clean and reinstall the Military Colours, so dear to all of our hearts. Only the red chairs in the Kirk and the lectern will go with us to the Harry Younger Hall. We will, however, also bring down from the Kirk the Communion Silver on each of the last Sundays in the months up to Easter. Operating for three months in the hall will present some challenges but none that cannot be overcome. We are committed to trying to continue to provide coffee/teas following each service. One such matter is the cleaning up after each Sunday service. The Cleaner's contract expires on 31 December and we are not at this uncertain time renewing it. We therefore hoped that perhaps some members, in pairs, might occasionally volunteer to sweep, dust and wash down the necessary areas some time in advance of the following week. If there are insufficient volunteers to do that then we can work out something else, we just thought that with the current committed spirit within the congregation being what it is, then perhaps it is a task some people would wish to share over the three-month period. Events to help offset the significant costs of the project have proved to be very successful. The *Dreams and Nocturnes* Concert returned £1,020 and donations following Becca Ye's wonderful piano recital took in £730. Tickets for the Christmas Supper are selling well, which as well as paying for a lovely supper will attract further funds towards the project. Hopefully we can have a couple of other social congregational gatherings whilst in the hall.

FUTURE FUNDRAISING EVENTS

On Friday 12th December at 6pm the Pipes and Drums of the Scots Guards are holding an event called *Talent Among Heroes*. Admission is free with retiring collection for our redecoration

project. Then on Tuesday 16th December our congregational Christmas Supper will take place in the Harry Younger Hall at 6.45pm. As this year's supper is also a fund raising event towards re-decoration of the church in 2026, tickets are at the slightly increased price of £20.

CHRISTMAS CHOIR

Our annual service of Lessons and Carols takes place at 10.30am on Sunday 21st December. With this in mind our usual 'home-grown' choir is invited to gather round the piano for rehearsals at 9.30am every Sunday from now on. First timers welcome! Please come if you can, previous experience not necessary.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Previous editions are now on sale in the foyer of the Kirk at the bargain price of £2 per pack of 10, either size. We have also received a generous donation of a number of new Heritage type cards which are individually priced at £3 each for the small size and £4 for the larger. Please put money in the donations box – all sales will go towards Kirk funds.

WASHBAGS FOR CRISIS AT CHRISTMAS

We have once again been asked to help supply washbags to Crisis, the local charity for the homeless. These can be brought to church or handed in at the church office up to and including Sunday 21st December. Gender neutral washbags are preferred however this isn't always easy to achieve so male and female washbags would also be welcome. These can be filled with any selection of toiletries, but no razors, or hand sanitisers which contain alcohol. A suggested list of items includes shower-gel, soap, shampoo/ conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrush, flannel and anything else you would usually find in a washbag.

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICES

You might like advance notice of the fact that members of the congregation would be welcome to attend any of the following charity carol services:

Thursday 4th December	6pm	Armed Forces Carol Service
Wednesday 10th December	6pm	Crisis Homeless Charity Carol Service
Thursday 11th December	7pm	Order of St John Carol Service
Sunday 14th December	4pm	Royal British Legion Carol Service

CONCERTS IN DECEMBER

Saturday 6th December	5.30pm	Calton Consort
Friday 12th December	6pm	Army Piping and Drumming Event
Saturday 20th December	7.30pm	St Andrew Camerata

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CAROL SERVICE

On Wednesday 17th December the Scottish Parliament will be holding its annual carol service. The evening will consist of traditional Christmas carols and readings and include contributions from Members of the Scottish Parliament and community groups and will take place in the Parliament from 6.15pm to approximately 7.30pm. Festive cheer will also be provided in the form of traditional Christmas fare, including mulled wine/fruit juice and mince pies served in the Main Hall following the service. Ten places have been reserved for members of the congregation. Please contact the office to add your name to the list if you would like to attend.

CRAFT CLUB

Next month's meeting of the Craft Club will be on Monday 8th December 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.

REMEMBRANCE 2025

Our traditional service of Remembrance took place on Sunday 9th November and marked not only the 80th anniversary of the end of WW2, but the centenary of the founding of 603 Sqn in October 1925. Thanks to all who donated after the service to help raise £478 for the Scottish Poppy Appeal.

NEWS FROM HOLYROODHOUSE

A new initiative called **Community Connections** will explore themes each month from across the Royal Collection and the history of the Palace of Holyroodhouse, led by Fiona Johnston, Communities and Access Lead. These sessions are designed for a local audience to have a positive impact on loneliness, social connections, and wellbeing and mental health. The next event looks at Royal Traditions and is on Wednesday 10th December from 3pm – 4.30pm. Admission free but booking essential on <https://bit.ly/4pFXU7T>

The Palace will be holding its annual **Christmas Shopping Evening** on between 5pm and 7.30pm on Thursday 4th December in the Palace shop. There will be food tasters, a drink on arrival and discounts too!

Drawing the Italian Renaissance is the latest exhibition at the King's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse. Exploring the diversity and accomplishment of drawing across Italy between 1450 and 1600, the exhibition features around 80 works by over 50 artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian alongside lesser-known artists, all drawn from the Royal Collection, which holds one of the world's greatest collections of Italian Renaissance drawings. Open Every Sunday, Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday until 1st March 2026. For booking and more information go to <http://bit.ly/3Joxwjm>

FESTIVE STAYS 2025

Could you lay an extra place at your table this Christmas for an international student? Each year the charity EIL UK receives hundreds of applications from international students studying at British universities hoping to experience Christmas or New Year in a British home. If you could offer friendship and host an overseas university student for a 3-night stay between 24th and 27th December 2025, drop us a line at host@eiluk.org to find out more about this rich and rewarding experience and how you can be part of the HOST UK programme.

SUNDAY OFFERINGS

These will be available shortly. However, as we are now having to pay bank charges on all cash paid into the bank, we would encourage you to consider switching to a monthly Standing Order if possible. Please contact the Treasurer, Jenifer Davidson jeniferdavidson@btinternet.com for more details. Thank you to those who have already made the switch.

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 foyer.

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.			
https://linktr.ee/canongatekirk Scottish Charity SC 015251			