

## What's inside

- New monarchs
- New ministers
- New lights
- New committee members
- New microwaves
- New Christmas stock
- New music
- New traditions
- New staff
- New challenges

“For everything there is a time and a season” and as summer gives way to autumn, this issue marks change in many forms. First and foremost, of course, is the retirement of Calum MacLeod from the St Giles’ pulpit. The reception we held for him and Missy, and the arrangements being put in place to lead St Giles’ in its next steps, are described within this Newsletter.

Almost as important was the very busy, very public, very complex ceremonial to present His Majesty the King with the Honours of Scotland, as had been performed for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth seventy years ago. We have reports from the Chief Steward, the Master of the Music and the leader of the Banner Guild on some of the myriad activities that surrounded that day in July.

While there are many weeks to go until the season of Advent is upon us, the Shop has to plan ahead, and we called in to catch a flavour of the uniquely St Giles’ elements of their festive stock. And of course, we’re changing the light bulbs – for most households, this is a rather simpler task than for the High Kirk, and the General Convenor has some news for us on that.

There’s change, too, in the Kirk Session, as the roles of Treasurer and Communications Convenor are passed to new bearers. For the news on this, and other changes in Cathedral life, please read on!

## Farewell and Thank you

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September the congregation said its farewells to Calum and Missy. After the two morning services which Calum conducted, we held a reception in the Moray Aisle to mark his departure and to wish him and Missy well for the future. Sigrid Marten thanked him on behalf of the Clergy for all he had done to support the worship at St Giles' and, personally, for the friendship he had offered her since her arrival at the Cathedral. Wishing to offer a suitable gift, she had turned for inspiration to John Knox but unable to find a Playmobil figure of him, she had managed to find Martin Luther instead, which she hoped provided an adequate substitute!

I then spoke on behalf of the Congregation, reflecting on Calum's 9 years as our Minister. I thanked him for his leadership through times of financial crisis, the pandemic and during the more recent Royal occasions, when the eyes of the world had been upon the Cathedral. And I thanked him too for being our Parish Minister, Sunday by Sunday.

The congregation had contributed to some gifts and I was delighted then to present him and Missy with some beautiful silverware and jewellery made by our own Sheana Ashton.

Calum rounded off a lovely occasion by reflecting on his time at St Giles' which, despite the challenges, he had found rewarding and fulfilling.

*Mark Batho, Session Clerk*



## Meeting the interim moderator

I write this as the Interim Moderator appointed by Presbytery. By way of personal introduction, I was ordained in 1981. I had parish ministries in Argyll, Glasgow and Edinburgh after which I served as Presbytery Clerk and then Principal Clerk of the General Assembly. I retired from that post at the end of June 2022.

An Interim Moderator takes the place of the parish minister in chairing meetings of the Kirk Session, allowing them to take forward their responsibilities. Beyond that I am answerable to Presbytery for the continuing life of the congregation. Given the breadth and range of the Cathedral's worship and witness this is a more complex task than it would be in a "normal" parish church. At the moment, I am still doing a lot of meeting and listening to help me understand all that currently happens as well as getting sight of what the future may hold.

My first impression is that St Giles' is blessed with a great number of talented and committed people, whether staff or volunteers. It is a privilege to get to know them and see what they do – it is genuinely inspiring. I hope to be a useful member of this great team.

Looking ahead there are challenges.

One is celebrating the Cathedral's 900th anniversary year. Having been the minister of Colinton when it passed that milestone in 1995, I believe that this can be a pivotal moment. We can look back and see continuity amid the changing patterns and configurations of the cathedral building and congregation. We can get a sense of how we got here – an essential insight for future work. While we may have events that honour the years now gone, this is also a time when we can take the first steps along the next stretch of the road. The risen Christ is ahead of us on that path calling us to follow – where might he lead the people of St Giles' in their next century?

There are other "rocks in the road" of course. There is the outworking of the Presbytery Mission Plan which says that one day there will be a union of St Giles' and Canongate. How should we step into that process? There are serious financial issues which need to be addressed. There is the possibility of charging visitors with the chance to improve their experience as well as funding for the future witness of the Cathedral. There is the continued development of how the wonderful building might host to concerts and cultural events. The core activities of worship and pastoral care must continue without a parish minister in post. Some of these challenges will require bespoke St Giles' solutions but there are things to be learned from elsewhere and contacts have already been made.

I consider it a great privilege to be Interim Moderator over these coming months and I ask for your prayers and forbearance as I seek to do my best for the High Kirk of Edinburgh.

*Rev Dr George Whyte*



## Parting gifts

The principal part of the presentation to Calum was a pin tray in fine silver (20cm x 10cm). The hand engraving is of a sprig of sea holly, the modern floral image, rather than the traditional thistle. I designed the tray to look like a Japanese wood block print. As in a Japanese print, the signature - my hallmarks - are part of the design, rather than being on the reverse, as in most silver objects.

I thought it appropriate that Calum receive the first cufflinks featuring the new 900 St Giles' logo, designed by Keir Eunson from Heritage and Culture. They are made of gold-washed silver, with the coronation hallmark. A bookmark based on the crown spire was also presented.

Missy received two pieces of my jewellery. I thought both of these were to her taste, as she already has a few of my pieces in her collection. 'Off Centre' is an opera length necklace with a hammered silver disc, labradorite beads and freshwater pearls. 'Highland Line' is a necklace of Picasso jasper beads and handmade crushed silver beads. All the jewellery and silver bear the Edinburgh hallmark.

I was delighted to have been invited to make the silver and jewellery for the presentation.



*Sheana M. Stephen DA*

## Neighbourhood Group Christmas Events

This year's Advent Appeal will be on behalf of two local charities that help needy people: the Edinburgh Food Project and the Gateway Project. The latter helps people moving into new tenancies by supplying basic home goods. The appeal will run for the four weeks preceding Christmas.

The Neighbourhood Group will also be undertaking a Christmas Street Collection on Friday 15th and Saturday 16th December on behalf of Streetwork (subject to the granting of a licence). We will be seeking help from the congregation and friends to fill a number of one-hour slots for people to collect either in the Princes Street area or around the Cathedral. Your help with the collection would be greatly appreciated.

Look out for further details on both of the above in the Weekly Bulletin.



## Appointing a new Minister

Now that Calum has left us, we are faced with the daunting challenge of calling a new Minister. Never an easy process, this will be much more complicated this time because of the terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan. This says that we are on course ultimately to unite with Canongate Kirk. Our Elders gathered on 23<sup>rd</sup> September to begin to try to understand what this means for us in terms of finding a new Minister. We were guided in this by our Interim Moderator, George Whyte.

The purpose of our meeting was not to reach any decisions but to begin the process of discerning our way forward. We agreed that our starting point for this should be to establish, with Canongate, a 'Parish Grouping' – which is what the Presbytery Plan requires us to do. Essentially this means that we should work with Canongate to build upon our existing collaborations so that, increasingly, much of what we do, we do in common. So, we agreed that we should begin discussions with Canongate about setting up a mechanism to develop our collaboration. This, of itself, does not change anything in terms of our teams of Ministers in the two churches, our separate Kirk Sessions or our finances, which remain separate. But it is a starting point for a growing relationship.

It is against this background that the selection of a new Minister will have to take place. Some of the questions we will have to ask are:

- Do we want to try to call a Minister to lead us through the transition to a united parish? And if so, how would that person fit into the Team Ministry that will be established once the parishes unite?
- Alternatively, is there merit in our looking at an interim arrangement (in effect a short-term appointment) to lead us in our planning for a union?
- How long might the period of transition last, before we unite?
- How do we get ourselves into a financial position whereby proceeding with union is a realistic prospect?

There are other questions beside these and none of the questions have obvious answers with which everyone will necessarily agree. But nevertheless, our first meeting was a positive one. We believe we can, with patience, pragmatism, deep thought and prayer, find a way through these issues and ultimately create a thriving and purposeful united parish on the Royal Mile. And we are committed to keeping our congregation, our friends and supporters fully in touch with what is happening at every stage.

*Mark Batho, Session Clerk*

The following pair of articles highlight two very different ways in which next year's 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations are already beginning.



## Microwaves

"By the way, I've nothing to cook on": not infrequently, one hears this said at the food bank by people experiencing homelessness.

When they are given a Council tenancy, such a lack can often continue to be a problem.

The Gateway Project, administered by Bethany and Fresh Start, with Council financial support, aims to help unaccommodated individuals by providing essentials for their new homes. For example, each month, Bethany supplies around 70 microwaves to provide low energy, low-cost cooking.

As part of our contribution to the St Giles' 900th Anniversary events, the Neighbourhood Group has undertaken to fund microwaves for this scheme, at a cost of £5000. This will help give 98 new households a starting point as they try to begin a more settled life. We hope that this, in its admittedly limited way, might be a lasting legacy in the lives of needy people after next year's anniversary.

The following report was written by two Bethany representatives in the Gateway Project.

The Gateway Project is an Edinburgh Council-funded project to provide basic furniture and home goods to households moving into a new Council tenancy. The service is provided by a consortium made up of Bethany Christian Trust and Fresh Start. The consortium provides beds, bedding and other furniture when available and we also provide microwaves, table-top fridges, pots and pans, toiletries and other household items.



*Continued overleaf...*



The Gateway Project delivers to around 95 households every month and the transformational impact on the lives of individuals and families who have endured homelessness is very significant. Through our follow-up conversations with people who have used the Gateway Project, we hear many stories of the difference that receiving furniture and home goods can make at a point where households are experiencing desperate difficulty.

Although Gateway is a Council-funded project, it is a "donation-based" model, which means that it is dependent on gifts and donations from organisations and individuals who want to be a part of what we are doing to transform people's lives. We are always in particular need of donated beds and sofas. It's through the generous support and donations from many sources that we are able to keep the project going and make a difference in Edinburgh.

A recent example - and one for which we are very grateful - is the contribution of the Neighbourhood Group from St Giles' Cathedral, who raised funding to cover the cost of almost 100 microwaves. This generous support will provide almost 100 households and up to 300 individuals with the means to cook their first meals in their new homes - and to take an important first step towards writing a new chapter in their lives.

*Luke Wilson, Head of Retail and Daniel Wright, Warehouse Manager,  
Bethany – representatives in the Gateway Project.*

## Music news

This month the Cathedral Choir are hard at work preparing for the first performance of the latest commissioned work for the St Giles' 900 Choirbook. Helen Grime's *Missa brevis* will be given its premiere in the Sounds on Saturday concert on 28<sup>th</sup> October at 5.30pm. Tickets for the concert are available on Eventbrite. It is the fourth of the five works which the Friends of the Music have commissioned for the Choirbook, a major undertaking as part of the St Giles' 900 celebrations. The *Missa brevis* will also be heard (in our usual practice, without the Sanctus and Benedictus) on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October at the 9.30am Communion Service.

The choir has a busy term; a couple of weeks later they will be travelling to Paisley Abbey for a concert with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November, along with the choirs of St Mary's Episcopal cathedral Edinburgh and Paisley Abbey, to celebrate George McPhee's 60 years as Organist of Paisley Abbey, a post he took up in 1963 having previously been Assistant Organist to Herrick Bunney here at St Giles'.

Christmas follows hard on the heels of this and the first event to look forward to is our Christmas Favourites and Carols for All on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 5.30pm, with the Cathedral Choir in the company of Carnyx Brass. Tickets for this ever-popular event, which helps us to raise funds for the Neighbourhood Group, are available from Eventbrite.

*Michael Harris*

# The Church in Scotland and the Challenges of our Time

The challenges faced by the Church in Scotland today are myriad in number and complex in character. In one sense, there is nothing unusual in this and the Church has faced challenges throughout its history and their relative complexity and character has been addressed in different contexts and cultures with remarkable flexibility and adaptability. The particular challenge that faces the Church in our time is the fact that the culture which has sustained the form of the Church, as we have known it, is itself shifting radically. This cultural re-formation is one that is very likely to continue and unlikely to reach a settled place at any time in the foreseeable future.

The Church of Scotland is one part of the Church in Scotland and, as presently constituted from 1929 onwards, was created as a united Church with the purpose of establishing a basis for ministry and mission throughout Scotland. As we look back over the last century or so since then, we may conclude that, until the turn of the millennium, it was relatively successful in providing this basis. However, in the last quarter of a century its capacity to do so has progressively diminished. As said, the Church of Scotland is a church created through a union. Equally, it is a church whose constitution (Article VII of the Articles Declaratory) provides the basis for the creation of future unions where possible. As we look back over the last century, we might well ask how successful has it been in realizing this particular goal?

The challenge faced by those concerned for the unity of the Church is this: How do we respond to this cultural re-formation from the place where we are? One embryonic response has been the shared articulation, with partner churches, of that which we share in common and hold together as one. Thus, in a series of Declarations, our relationship to; the Church of England (Columba, 2016); the Scottish Episcopal Church (Saint Andrew, 2021) and the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland (Saint Margaret, 2022), has been articulated in the context of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and of our place within our shared terroir. Such Declarations are a beginning and not an end. Nevertheless, it is good to begin from somewhere and if our shared articulation acts as a catalyst in the shaping and re-shaping of the Church then, in the providence of God, we shall have begun to live out our response to the prayer of our Lord 'that they may all be one...so that the world may believe'. (John 17: 21)

As stated, there is at present a significant cultural re-formation taking place within our society. Our response should be a reflective discernment of the will of God for our time and potentially a significant re-formation of the form of the Church in Scotland. In so doing, we may yet overcome the barriers to unity and shared life together that have marred the Church's witness for too long.

*Rev Dr John L McPake, Ecumenical Officer, Church of Scotland*



## Introducing Alex Hayward

We sit down with the newest member of the Heritage and Culture team

### Have you always lived in Edinburgh?

I'm originally from Devon, but moved in 2016 to study Painting at Edinburgh College of Art. My portfolio day was my first trip to Scotland. The moment I alighted from the train I knew this was the place for me!



### What brought you to St. Giles' and what was your first impression?

I started church-crawling whilst holidaying in the Norfolk Broads, and it sparked a keen interest in church history. Work-wise, I supported studying and my art practice with supermarket employment. After 8 years, I felt very stuck. I loved studying painting, but opportunities for art graduates are very rare. Joining St. Giles' has made me so happy. My first impression was 'Wow - it's busy!' We're so lucky to welcome people from all over the world. I get to discuss and share not just St. Giles', but the wider systems and customs of our little island. I relish being encouraged to reflect on how these things originated and evolved, what they mean, and how to consider them today.

### Part of your role is to deliver tours - do you have a favourite part of the cathedral?

I like it all, really! But I can be relied upon to dislike most modern additions to church buildings. Right angles have their place, but post-war design seems bent on banishing ornament and curves altogether. Oh, actually, the bell tower! I love the bell tower - she's a beacon of drama and loud noises, much like myself.

### You are also a painter! Do you find inspiration from the building?

Absolutely - I've not made work related to St. Giles' yet, but I'd love to have a small exhibition when I do. I've looked a lot to the theatre for inspiration recently. That's led me to collaborate with the choreographer Matthew Bourne and to show paintings alongside some of his ballets.

### What is your best Edinburgh day trip?

Living in Trinity, I'd walk into town on the Warriston Path. It's a real nature corridor - I see foxes and badgers there all the time, and the birdsong is incredible. Use Cornell's ornithology app Merlin to identify bird calls (Owls at night, too!). Stop off to see my favourite paintings in Edinburgh, Duncan Grant's self-portrait in the Portrait Gallery, and Singer Sargent's 'Lady Agnew' in the National. Get Eggs Benedict from J. Wallis on Forrest Road. They put sriracha in the hollandaise and it's scrummy. Seek a perch with a good view and read an essential Edinburgh text, 'The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie' - alternatively Miriam Margolyes can read you the audiobook! Find some charity shop treasure (ideally in Stockbridge - it's remarkable what the wealthy cast off, but I'm glad they do). Close your day by enjoying the sunset from Calton Hill - edified, nourished by delicious food and proud of your bargain. A rather prescriptive itinerary, but it works for me!

I'd like to say thank you to the staff and volunteers across St. Giles' for making me so welcome. I truly feel I have the nicest job in Edinburgh!

## Honouring the new King

We take a look back at the Honours service and the the work that went on behind the scenes to make it happen.

### Preparing and delivering the Honours of Scotland Service

Following months of planning and preparation, St Giles' Cathedral was again the focus of royal ceremonial when on Wednesday 5th July 2023 a National Service of Thanksgiving and Dedication took place for Their Majesties The King and Queen on the occasion of the Presentation of The Honours of Scotland.

Planning commenced in January 2023 and unlike the preparations for the Service and Vigil for her Late Majesty the Queen in September 2022 which had been in place for many years, the design and planning for The Honours of Scotland Ceremonial required a format and new planning prepared that was appropriate for the occasion. Many stakeholders, partners and colleagues that had been heavily involved in Operation Unicorn also played a key role in planning the arrangements for the ceremonial that was the overall responsibility of The Lord Lyon, Scottish Government, and the Dean of the Chapel Royal in Scotland.

The format of the service was arranged as a full ceremonial with the key component the presentation of the ancient Scottish Crown and Sceptre together with a new Sword commissioned for the ceremony and named the Elizabeth Sword after the late Monarch. The ceremonial was also planned to include the Stone of Destiny as part of the service.

The layout of the Sanctuary was changed to accommodate a table for the Honours to be placed and following much discussion and investigation it was decided that the use of the Lorimer Table located in the Preston Aisle and used for the ceremonial in 1953 was just too awkward and heavy to move easily and a new simpler table was constructed. This was positioned where the Eagle Lectern and steps are normally placed.

Much discussion on the seating allocation took place and the final list of 550 attendees was drawn up by the Protocol and Honours Team from the Scottish Government.



The service and ceremonial elements were to be televised live by the BBC Scotland Events Team. Much had been learned from the Service of Thanksgiving for the late Queen and the arrangements for supply and installation of their equipment very much built on that experience. It was a huge bonus that the friendships and relationships with the BBC team that had been built up over many years for the previous televised service were used again, saving significant time and disruption.

As St Giles' has a busy weekly calendar of worship, concerts, visitors and events, especially during the summer period, detailed thinking was required to ensure that potential disruption was kept to a minimum during the works. A true sense of collaboration made the task so much easier and the reuse of items from the earlier broadcast made for an easier installation.





Following the confirmation of the date of the ceremonial, long hours of final planning meetings and detailed rehearsals were arranged, and a full schedule of activities prepared to enable the broadcast installation works required to be finalised. Additional stills camera photography was also required to ensure that the printed media also had photos for publication in the following days.

As we neared the delivery of the ceremonial and following the Coronation and Trooping the Colour ceremonies in London, His Majesty took much more personal interest in the service and the many pieces of music that had been commissioned. Not only did this extend the length of the pre-service music, and the

music played during the service, it also introduced a significant number of additional musicians, soloists and fanfare trumpeters that would perform in the Cathedral. Additional microphones were required, camera positions altered, performance areas prepared, and further monitors provided to assist the conductors responsible for the musical elements. This additional pre-service musical element was also broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and coordinated with the external ceremonial that was taking place outside on the Royal Mile and West Parliament Square.

Delivering a full ceremonial with a live international television audience is not a simple feat and following a number of full rehearsals everything was ready to go. The BBC Radio 3 broadcast was scheduled to go on air some 90 minutes - and the television audience 45 minutes - before the commencement of the service at 1.30pm. The service that was initially planned to last 45 minutes was now, with the additional music, lasting over an hour. With the processions from the Castle and the Palace of Holyrood house, including the service, and the return to the Palace, we were required to come off air at 3.47pm following the flypast of the RAF Red Arrows down the length of the Royal Mile. Would we make it, and would everything work out to time?



Everything worked like clockwork and on cue the service started with a new Royal Fanfare. Everyone was in the correct place and the weather provided a fine summer day for those watching outside. The Honours of Scotland were presented, and their Royal Majesties and Highnesses exited the Cathedral on time and returned to the Palace of Holyrood house. The Red Arrows flew trailing red, white and blue smoke down the Royal Mile and the broadcast ended bang on time.

Within hours the Cathedral had returned to normal, all the broadcast equipment was removed, trucks and vans packed up and returned from whence they came, and the visitors returned – normality resumed.

A significant success and thanks to all the St Giles' team working behind the scenes in the Cathedral that made it happen during the weeks and months beforehand and especially on the day. Praise also to the music team and choir who, under Michael Harris, had to fully integrate all the musical items and performances. It is sometimes difficult to understand how these major events take place so successfully but without the dedicated and selfless team working in St Giles' none of this would have been possible. Thank you all.

*John M Andrew*

## A bit of sewing

When John Andrew approached me one Sunday and said, "You have been standing still for too long: I have a sewing job for you," little did I know what it was for, or indeed how large the job was.

A new oak table had been constructed and it needed a white cover to display the Honours of Scotland for the service on 5th July, before the King and Queen.



Then John told me the dimensions: the table was 3m 30cm in length, by 1m in width and 90cm in height – large! This required a finished cloth of 5m 10cm by 2m 80cm. The linen I already had came nowhere near this, so 12m by 2m 20cm had quickly to be ordered from London. And, of course, it was needed immediately! My banner ladies rallied to the sewing cause.

Having realised at once that neither the kitchen table nor the dining table could cope, we commandeered the Lower Aisle from Heritage and Culture. Armed with sewing machine, metre rulers, right angles and cordless iron, we set to on the Thursday morning for a job that had to be completed and handed over on the following Monday morning. The old maxim 'Measure twice, cut once' became 'measure three or four times' before cutting. Three of us worked on the Thursday, two on the Friday, by which time we had three sides hemmed and the join seamed. On Saturday, four of us finished sewing the hems, mitred the edges and ironed the cloth. We were able to hand it over to John Andrew, rolled and ready to deliver to Historic Environment Scotland (HES).





We returned on 4th July, the day before the ceremony, to starch and iron the cloth in situ in the cathedral. We knew that velvet-covered metal fittings were to be screwed to the table through the cloth to hold the sword and sceptre; imagine our feelings when we arrived to find that this had already been done by HES but that unfortunately the table cover which we had sewn so precisely had been screwed in place squint and inside-out! We coped: using four cans of spray starch, moving the ironing board up, down and along, with one person paying out the extension lead and two people ironing, the job was completed in two hours. The end corners required careful folding and sewing to ensure there would be no hem to trip over during the next day's ceremonial presentation. While we worked, it was fascinating to watch the TV crew setting up 'shots', see Thomas Maxwell up a ladder create his magnificent floral displays and hear the musicians rehearse.

We had only just covered the beautifully ironed and starched white cloth with plastic sheeting when the police team came along wanting to upturn the entire table to search for bombs!

Not only had we been making the table cover, we had also made green velvet cushions for the Thistle Chairs being used by the Royal party. The velvet of the cushions had been dyed a green to match that of the chairs and of the Thistle robes of the King, Queen and Prince of Wales. Then, on the Tuesday morning, the day before the event, we were suddenly told that further cushions would be required for the wooden chair in which the Princess of Wales would sit. So, as soon as the work on the table had been completed, we dashed home to make two more cushions. I had only dyed enough velvet for the three Thistle Chairs. Luckily, I had some other green velvet and, using two of my own cushion pads, we made up the cushions and returned to the cathedral.

The Banner Guild was delighted to be part of the St Giles' team that made this historic ceremony go so well as it was beamed round the world.

*Sheana Ashton*



## The Honours of Scotland Service Music

The preparation of music for a special occasion always takes time and thought; the musical preparations for The National Service of Thanksgiving and Dedication on the occasion of the presentation of The Honours of Scotland were however in an altogether different league.

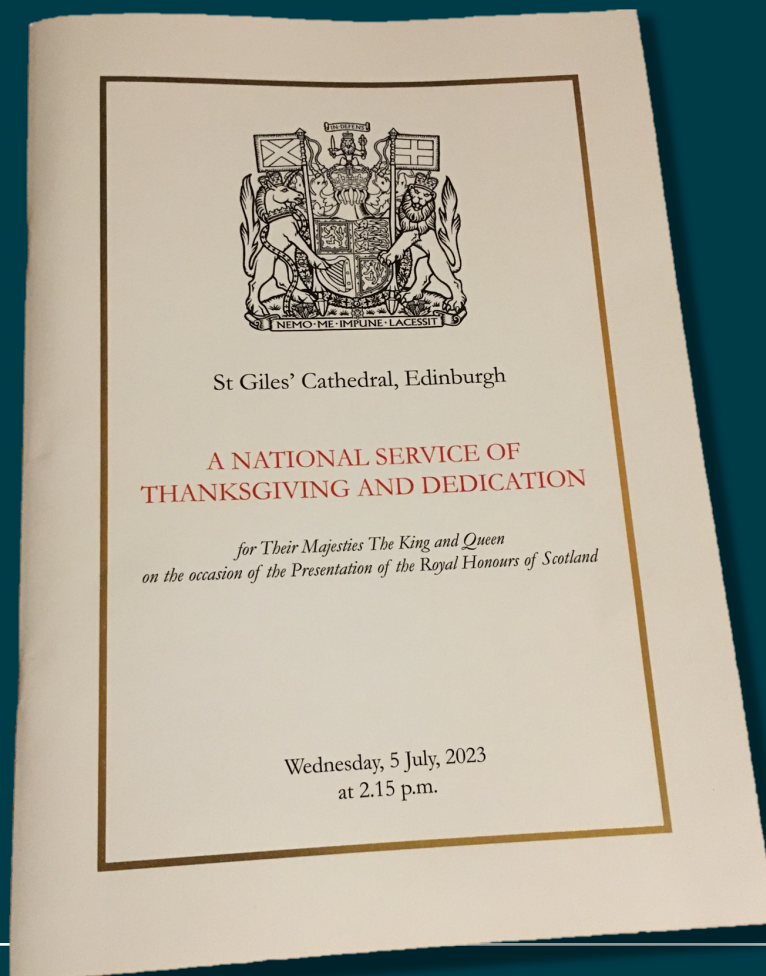
Whilst there was of course much more notice of the date of the service than there had been last September for the service for HM The Queen, the real work did not begin until after the Coronation in Westminster Abbey in May. Such events always require a large degree of collaboration, and in this case there were many different musicians and organisations involved. Central to the whole process was the desire of HM The King to have a showcase of Scottish artistic talent, which meant that the Cathedral Choir were joined by the young singers of the newly formed Chamber Choir of The National Youth Choir of Scotland as well as instrumentalists and soloists who sang and played both before and during the service. The whole organisation of these many additional elements was led by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra administration in collaboration with the Royal Household and St Giles'.

Once all the musical elements were agreed, and much remained fluid until only a few days before the service, the rehearsals with all those involved began in earnest on Monday 3rd July. There was much to consider in terms of logistics and the positioning of the various individuals and ensembles, with the bulk of the instrumentalists in the Preston Aisle, the fanfare trumpeters behind the choir at the foot of the organ, and the Chamber Choir in front of the Cathedral Choir; space was certainly at a premium.

Timing was also a crucial element, and, with much planning, it was a relief to reach the beginning of the service with everyone in the correct place and all the pre-service music (nearly two hours of it) concluded and ready for the arrival of Their Majesties.

With such a widely spread layout of musicians the task of conducting the musical forces when they were combined was certainly challenging; we were much aided by technical assistance from the BBC crew in providing the necessary visual relays. The climax of all this came at the conclusion of the service, where the final hymn, 'Christ is made the sure foundation', was accompanied by the strings, in an arrangement by our own choir member, Andrew Carvel, with the addition of a trumpet obbligato in the final verse composed by young Scottish composer Jay Capperauld and played by star young trumpeter Aaron Azunda Akugbo. With the strings completely out of sight, my conducting was relayed via Michael Bawtree who had been directing many of the earlier instrumental items. If two conductors was a luxury, three might be seen as rather excessive, but in the final recessional, the newly composed March: The Call of Lochnagar by Paul Mealor, the addition of the Fanfare Trumpeters of the Royal Air Force directed by Squadron Leader Richard A Murray meant that I had two sub-conductors. The March certainly brought the whole ceremony to a foot-tapping conclusion.

*Michael Harris*





## Neighbourhood Group Disbursement of Funds

In addition to the £5000 donated to Bethany Christian Trust for the Gateway Project (see article elsewhere in this issue), the Neighbourhood Group recently made contributions totalling £5400 to the following charities:

Holy Trinity Foodbank (£1000), Grassmarket Community Project (£1000), The Welcoming (£1000), Fresh Start (£400), Edinburgh Clothing Store (£400), Streetwork (£400), Rock Trust (£400), 6VT (£400), Cunningham House (£400).

The charities concerned have expressed their thanks to everyone for these funds which will assist them with their ongoing work for the homeless.

## Faith Will: 'Your faith is powerful, so is your will'

Working in partnership with Christian Aid, the Church of England and Quakers in Britain, the Church of Scotland are encouraging congregations to talk about gifts in wills and to increase awareness in churches through a new joint legacy initiative, Faith Will.

Church leaders from all three denominations are inviting members of their congregations to have conversations about legacies and to consider leaving a gift in their will to their church and Christian Aid.

"Everybody leaves a mark of some kind. Giving people the space and tools they need to consider all aspects of their lasting legacy is something we ought to be making time for", said the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rt Rev Sally Foster-Fulton. She states that "faith communities coming together for Faith Will amplifies our voices and raises awareness. We always do things so much better when we do them together. This is a great opportunity for Church of Scotland congregations to benefit from partnership working."

According to research by Remember a Charity, currently only around 24 percent of wills contain a specific legacy bequest. Christian Aid believe wills can tell a powerful story of someone's faith and the choices we make and, once we have looked after friends and family, can ensure our values live on for generations to come.

A range of resources are available through Faith Will to support conversations and provide help to those considering leaving a legacy. For more information, please visit <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/faith-will/faith>

## Lighting Update

As reported in previous editions of the Newsletter we are improving the internal lighting in the Cathedral following generous funding from a donor and benefactor.

I am pleased to report that good progress has been made and that the main chandeliers and window ledge lighting units have all been refurbished and are now operating using LED technology. The works have involved dismantling and removing each chandelier and window ledge unit in turn then renewing the lighting units and power supplies before cleaning and minor upgrading before replacing the unit in place. Anyone who has worshiped in or visited the Cathedral in the last week or so will have noticed the major improvements in the overall lighting within the building. This improvement not only provides upgraded lighting but will reduce the power consumption by nearly 75% and provide a significant contribution to our Eco-Congregation commitment.



Work continues on the project with the electrical team now concentrating on the replacement and improvement of the lighting located in the Sanctuary, Choir and Organ in the centre of the building. Additional works to replace the control systems and other operational requirements will continue in the following weeks and it is planned to complete the project before the busy Christmas period.

I realise there has inevitably been some minor disruption during the project and your patience and support continues to be appreciated.

The overall project will provide a significant improvement to the lighting used for all our activities including worship, concerts and events and will be a positive outcome as we approach our 900<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2024. I will continue to provide further updates in future editions of the Newsletter.

*John M Andrew, General Committee Convenor*



## Uniquely St Giles' – new items in the Shop

Irina and her team in the shop are constantly working hard to keep the shop stocked with good-quality items that spark the imagination and prompt visitors to take home a permanent souvenir of their experience. In the next issue of the Newsletter we will have the chance to see some of the items specifically designed with the 900<sup>th</sup> celebrations in mind; but as (like all good retailers at this time of year) Irina prepares for the Christmas season, some of the beautiful things the shop stocks are worth a look. And in case you were wondering why we didn't wait to mention these until the December Newsletter – we are genuinely concerned that some things will have run out by then!

Our Christmas card this year is quite literally a work of art. Local artist Gill Bertram has produced a suitably festive portrayal of St Giles', in line with her established style which aims to capture the joie de vivre of Edinburgh. There are representations of the building available to hang on the tree, too – a hand-stitched depiction of the Cathedral in black and gold, and a very beautiful tile version, as well as gold- and silver-coloured roundels. The Cathedral Choir has a new CD, "Sing Psalms" (AGD005) released this year, the latest on the Cathedral's own Aegidius label which also includes "On Christmas Night" (AGD002), a selection of carols old and new.

There are non-seasonal items too, to attract all tastes and budgets. The finely-crafted jewellery made by Sheana M. Stephen makes a very special gift. For the artist in the family, there's a small St Giles' sketch pad and pencil – small enough to fit in the pocket, ready for every opportunity. Bookmarks aplenty, and a set of St Giles' colouring pencils will provide gifts for all ages. A selection of coasters, depicting either St Giles' or a bagpiping angel make a smart addition to any drawing room. The very popular "Angel with Bagpipes" reproductions are sadly running low in stock again, but Irina hopes to replenish supplies in the new year – in time to captivate the many people who will join us in the celebration of our 900<sup>th</sup> year. There are exciting plans for some items specifically referencing the 'St Giles' 900' events, and we look forward to bringing you more news about those in our next issue.





## Changing of the guard

The meeting of the Kirk Session on 11<sup>th</sup> October will see the simultaneous handover of two batons; those of Convenor of the Communications Committee and of Treasurer of St Giles'. Niall Lothian has kept a steady hand on the tiller of the Kirk's finances through the stormy waters of the Covid crisis, and is now stepping back, ceding control of the 'Treasurer's abacus' to Amanda Forsyth – a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Amanda, in turn, will be handing her responsibilities for Communications over to Emma Caskie-Potter.

"Given the truly eye-watering deficits I've reported as Treasurer over the last three years (look at our accounts on St Giles' website to see the figures involved), you would be entitled to ask how the Cathedral doors are still open," said Niall. "There are three strands to the answer: First, the generosity of the congregation in responding to the cry for help as Covid lockdowns bit in 2020 was terrific; as a result, we have drawn on the Covid Recovery Fund month-by-month to cover our shortfalls, but there's not much left in the pot; second, as a result of the ingenuity, enthusiasm and can-do spirit of our Heritage & Culture team, voluntary income from visitors continues to grow and has returned to pre-Pandemic levels; and third, we've been deferring full payment to the Church of Scotland of our annual *Ministries & Mission* levy (recently re-badged *Giving to Grow*)."

"But sadly, these efforts are not enough to secure our future. Keeping the Cathedral watertight, ensuring our lighting, sound and fire systems are fit for purpose, looking after our staff in accordance with best practice and paying the gas bill continue to outpace our income. The only way the doors will remain open is for us to move to mandatory visitor charging as quickly as possible. My successor, Amanda Forsyth, will help lead this major project – all going well, she might be able to break the sequence of deficits and report a surplus before too long, enough to invest in our future and to pay our commitments to 121. I know she'll appreciate every help you can give her."

Amanda said "Niall's work to set St Giles' back on the path towards financial health after the multiple blows it has been dealt in recent years has been nothing short of extraordinary. The congregation and Kirk Session owe him a heartfelt vote of thanks for the careful stewardship of our scarce resources; on a personal level, I know that my task will be more manageable because of Niall's labours."

"I'm also very grateful to Emma for picking up the task of Communications Convenor, and to the whole Communications Committee for the huge difference their work has made in the past two years, keeping all of our audiences informed of the tasks, events, successes and challenges faced by St Giles' every day."





**On Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October The Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland joined St Giles' for a service to celebrate Harvest. They brought with them some unusual visitors to West Parliament Square - and some fantastic produce to complement the congregation's donations.**



## And finally...

It has been a tremendous privilege to convene the Communications Committee for the past two years as we collectively find new and better ways to spread the news of the life in our Kirk. By definition, communication cannot take place in isolation, and every single member of the committee has to take credit for the great strides we have made in this time. I am certain that, under Emma's cheerfully competent aegis, even greater progress will be made, and she has my own thanks and best wishes.

*Amanda Forsyth, Communications Convenor*

## Contact information

St Giles' staff and office bearers can be reached by email on addresses in the style [firstname.lastname@stgilescathedral.org.uk](mailto:firstname.lastname@stgilescathedral.org.uk) or [jobtitle@stgilescathedral.org.uk](mailto:jobtitle@stgilescathedral.org.uk) - some examples are shown below:

Sigrid Marten, Associate Minister

[sigrid.marten@stgilescathedral.org.uk](mailto:sigrid.marten@stgilescathedral.org.uk)

Michael Harris, Master of the Music

[michael.harris@stgilescathedral.org.uk](mailto:michael.harris@stgilescathedral.org.uk)

Mark Batho, Session Clerk

[sessionclerk@stgilescathedral.org.uk](mailto:sessionclerk@stgilescathedral.org.uk)

Sarah Phemister, Head of Heritage & Culture

[sarah.phemister@stgilescathedral.org.uk](mailto:sarah.phemister@stgilescathedral.org.uk)

Beadles

[beadle@stgilescathedral.org.uk](mailto:beadle@stgilescathedral.org.uk)

Several members of the team also monitor the [comms@stgilescathedral.org.uk](mailto:comms@stgilescathedral.org.uk) address, which can be a good way to get a general question directed to the right person!

### Useful telephone numbers:

The Minister's Secretary

0131 225 4363

Beadles' Office

0131 226 0672

Cathedral Shop

0131 226 0673

Finance Office

0131 225 8683

Heritage & Culture

0131 226 0674

## Picture credits

We wish to thank Peter Backhouse and Keir Eunson, who have provided their photographic skills for a number of the images in the Newsletter. We would also like to thank Ivar Struthers, who has kindly allowed us to use his image of St Giles' at sunset on the front cover.