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Easter is a time for reflection, and for renewal and hope. As we move into Spring, as well as lighter and longer days, there is much to celebrate and look forward to in and around St Giles', some of which we seek to highlight in this edition of the St Giles' News.

We have a sneak preview of the launch of Project HeritAlge, an update on '900 Voices' and an insight into the magnificent work underway creating new banners as part of our 900<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. As you read, you will want to have your diary to hand - we give dates for a Summer Garden Party (with thanks to generous hosts, Tony and Maureen Toft), the forthcoming Royal Mile International Piano Series and a Scottish Poetry Library event paying tribute to Robert Fergusson, hosted by Canongate Kirk. We highlight the important work of the Edinburgh Clothing Store and 6VT, both of which receive much appreciated support from the St Giles' Neighbourhood Group. We report on smart changes introduced as part of our commitment to the Eco-Congregation initiative, an upgrade to the exterior lighting of the Cathedral and the ongoing essential repairs and maintenance under the committed stewardship of the General Committee. We hope you enjoy the newsletter, starting with an inspiring and thoughtful welcome from our Associate Minister.

# Welcome



Happy Easter to you all!

Easter Sunday may be over, but in the life of the Church the season of Easter continues for several weeks until the festival of Pentecost. In our worship, we will be reflecting on some of the stories of how those first friends of Jesus reacted to the events in Jerusalem, first the trauma of watching their Lord and friend be arrested and die on a cross, and then the confusing stories of Christ's resurrection. It was such joyful Good News: the powers of hate and death had not been able to defeat the God of Life in Jesus Christ.

And yet, we also get a sense of their trepidation and uncertainty as they wait for the Spirit of Christ to comfort them and to enable them to continue the work that Jesus started. Some hid in a locked room in Jerusalem because they were afraid. Some went home, back to their old, familiar jobs. It almost looked as if it was all over.

Those stories seem to represent a time of growing up for the disciples. They could no longer just tag along when Jesus said, "let's go to Galilee", or follow his instructions when he said, "go and teach, go and heal!" They seem to be a bit lost. They could do nothing without that Spirit which Jesus had promised them, and which would open their hearts and their mouths and inspire them to reach out to those around them to share the Good News. Christ had called them to be his disciples, his messengers, and that calling would be renewed, and many would hear their message.

It is easy to become disheartened, in our personal lives and in our life as a congregation, to feel that the glory days are over, and everything is crumbling away, that nothing will ever be as bright and wonderful as those golden days we remember. But that's not what we learn from the lives of those first friends of Jesus. Their experience teaches us that there will be life after death, and that God's Holy Spirit will enable us to do what might seem impossible just now.

In our 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, we at St. Giles' have chosen to remember that we have 'A High Calling'. In the 900 years of the history of the Cathedral there will have been plenty of difficult times when it won't have been easy to discern the right way forward. But those followers of Christ who have gone before us persisted in their determination to spread the Gospel from this place on the High Street, to serve God and neighbour in the parish and beyond, and to find the resources for the purposes of Christ's ministry and mission. May they be an inspiration to us all to develop a vision of how to continue in their footsteps, trusting that God has work for us to do even today, and calls us to share God's love with all whose lives we touch.

With every blessing,

Sigrid



## Summer Garden Party **SAVE THE DATE**

As they have done on two previous occasions, Tony and Maureen Toft have very generously offered their beautiful garden for a congregational gathering after the second service on Sunday 30th June.

Manicured lawns, birch trees, flowering shrubs and rockeries interspersed with interesting sculptures provide a superb setting for people to gather and socialise at Hermitage Gardens. A more agreeable context could not be imagined for such an event, especially if the weather were kind to us. On both occasions, previously, we were blessed with beautiful bright days and we hope it will be so, once again.

There will be a sandwich lunch and a glass of wine. To help with catering numbers, we would ask that guests reply to the invitation which will be sent out nearer the time.

**Sunday 30th June**

## 900 Voices update - gaining momentum!

900 Voices is a participative project by Zoë Irvine with Lindsay Perth and Jules Rawlinson. It has been commissioned as part of St Giles' momentous 900th Anniversary celebrations. 900 Voices is an opportunity to be part of a collective narrative through recorded conversations. These recordings will become part of a sound installation in the Cathedral, which will launch in August as part of Edinburgh International Festival.

We have been delighted at how many people are coming forward and getting involved from St Giles' and beyond.

The conversations, on the themes of belonging, connection, and community, have been fascinating so far. I have had the great pleasure of doing lots of interviews myself and an observation I have thus far is that *belonging* means a great many things to different people. So right at the start of the interviews it has been extremely interesting to ask each interviewee if they use the word *belonging* themselves, and what it means to them. There is far greater diversity in response than I ever imagined. I will share some extracts in the next newsletter!

The 900 Voices production team has grown in number, we have welcomed Becky Milling as Assistant Producer and Jen Souter as Community Liaison and Workshop Support. Storyteller Claire McNicol is devising workshops for schools, Joseph Flower and Anne-Marie Ireland are helping with the transcription process and sound file management. Petros Tsaftaridis has been doing tech consultancy to make sure the 900 Voices tech spec works with the Cathedral's sound system.



We have also had the opportunity to do some tech tests in situ. It has been wonderful to hear voices coming through the different speakers in the Cathedral. The sound system throughout the building is usually used with all speakers working together, reinforcing live speech. What we are doing for 900 Voices is sending different signals to individual speaker zones. There are 26 speaker zones, which can all work independently. Establishing this with chief steward John Andrew and the Cathedral's tech support team we have been able to see how this works in practice and it's amazing!



Part of the creative team, Jules Rawlinson is a composer, sound designer and expert in 'procedural audio'. After hearing how voices sound in the Cathedral, Jules and I have now begun to think about the composition work in earnest.

The composition of the spoken word installation will consist of a series of instructions for a computer programme. The result will be ever-changing combinations of voices and thoughts. Whilst this is technically exciting with many possibilities, our guiding principle in this process will be honouring and sharing what people have said.

Find out more about Jules' previous works here <https://www.pixelmechanics.com/>

Lindsay Perth is the public artist who is behind 900 Voices' social engagement strategy, reaching out all over Edinburgh. Lindsay is also designing all the visual elements of 900 Voices including the project website [900voices.org](http://900voices.org) She has a wealth of experience creating participative and socially engaged art works.

You find out more about Lindsay's previous work here <https://lippio.org/>

## GET INVOLVED

Would you like to be interviewed for 900 Voices? Drop us a line on [hello@900voices.org](mailto:hello@900voices.org)

Throughout April and May we will be holding RECORDIST WORKSHOPS in St Giles' every Wednesday from 15:00 - 17:00. So if you think recording might be of interest to you, or you'd like to get involved in some other way, come along. We can talk over what we're doing and show you the kit. It is very straight forward.



*Zoë Irvine, lead artist on 900 Voices.*

Zoë is an artist, sound designer and educator living and working in Edinburgh. She has a long history of working with recorded conversation and participative practice. You can see examples of previous work here

<https://www.zoeirvine.net/>



# The Edinburgh Clothing Store

A huge thank you must be given to St Giles' for all the support it has given to the Edinburgh Clothing Store over many years but particularly over the last year.

The Edinburgh Clothing Store, 156 Lower Granton Road, is an independent registered charity which aims to provide, free of charge, clothing, bedding, curtains and towels to individuals and families who are in genuine need. All must be referred by a registered caring agency.

Over 120 different agencies refer people. These include Social Work Departments, Health Visitors, Women's Aid, Shakti, Refugee Team, School Welfare Officers, Hospitals, Homeless Hostels, SACRO, Job Centres etc.

Since Covid restrictions were lifted, we have returned to offering face-to-face appointments to those who are referred. They can come to choose what they would like to have. We also offer telephone appointments to those who are housebound. Over the phone, measurements are taken and colour and style preferences noted and subsequently the required items are put together and then collected by the referring agent.

It is always a pleasure to see the clients delighted with what they have been given - to see a child's face when he or she receives a particularly cosy onesie, winter jacket, football strip or hoodie; to see a man going to an interview transformed both in appearance and with the confidence he has discovered wearing the smart clothes he has been given; or a mother's face when she knows her child will now be the same as others in his or her class or to know that her family will now be warm in bed - these are some of the reasons that the ECS is essential and why we continue to need your support.

Unsurprisingly, with the increase in the cost of living, requests for help have increased. This has happened at the same time as donations of good, fashionable and clean second-hand items have reduced as many people are wearing their clothes longer, or selling their desirable items online. With the increases in the cost of clothing and many more items requiring to be bought in order to meet the need of our clients, our expenditure is rising. The Clothing Store receives no government or council funding and relies totally on voluntary donations to fund our running costs. The service is run entirely by volunteers.

I cannot thank you all enough for your support to date. Please may I ask you for your continued support for the most vulnerable and needy in our community? It will make a huge difference to so many people.

Thank you.

*Fiona Stimpson  
Manager*



# Christian Aid Week



Christian Aid week falls this year from Sunday 12th to Saturday 18th May. The support that this charity is able to provide to projects across the world is significant, for example teaching people skills to earn a better living or farm their land in a more productive way. Christian Aid also assists with helping people in specific crises that occur, whether that be earthquakes, floods, war or famine, and collaborates with other aid agencies to maximise the impact of the help required and provided.

Your donations are gratefully received and to that end we will as usual be holding the annual Christian Aid envelope collection in the Cathedral on Sunday 14th May. Cash or cheque donations can be given in this way on that day and, if you are a UK tax payer, please consider Gift Aiding your donation, to enable Christian Aid to increase your gift by 25%. The Gift Aid forms are on the envelopes.

If you prefer to donate online, you can do so at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk>, where you can also find much more information about the work that Christian Aid does.

## Canongate Events

As we look forward to a closer relationship with Canongate, we will be bringing you more information about their public events and our combined activities.



### **ROBERT FERGUSSON EVENT**

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the untimely death of the poet Robert Fergusson, whose much-loved statue is just outside the gates of Canongate Kirkyard where he is buried. The Scottish Poetry Library has organised an evening to celebrate his extraordinary life and times at 7pm on Wednesday 1st May in Canongate Kirk. Poetry, music and conversation will be provided by writer James Robertson, academic Professor Rhona and musician Tommy Reckless. Remaining tickets available on Eventbrite <https://bit.ly/3TA786S>

### **EVENING SERVICES**

The monthly united evening service between the two congregations continue as ever. On Sunday 28th April the guest preacher will be The Right Revd Sally Foster-Fulton, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. All welcome!



# A Spring Update from the General Committee

A further update on the recent, ongoing, and future planned activities on the maintenance and improvements to the facilities and infrastructure in and around the Cathedral to support our worship, events and visitors in our historic building.

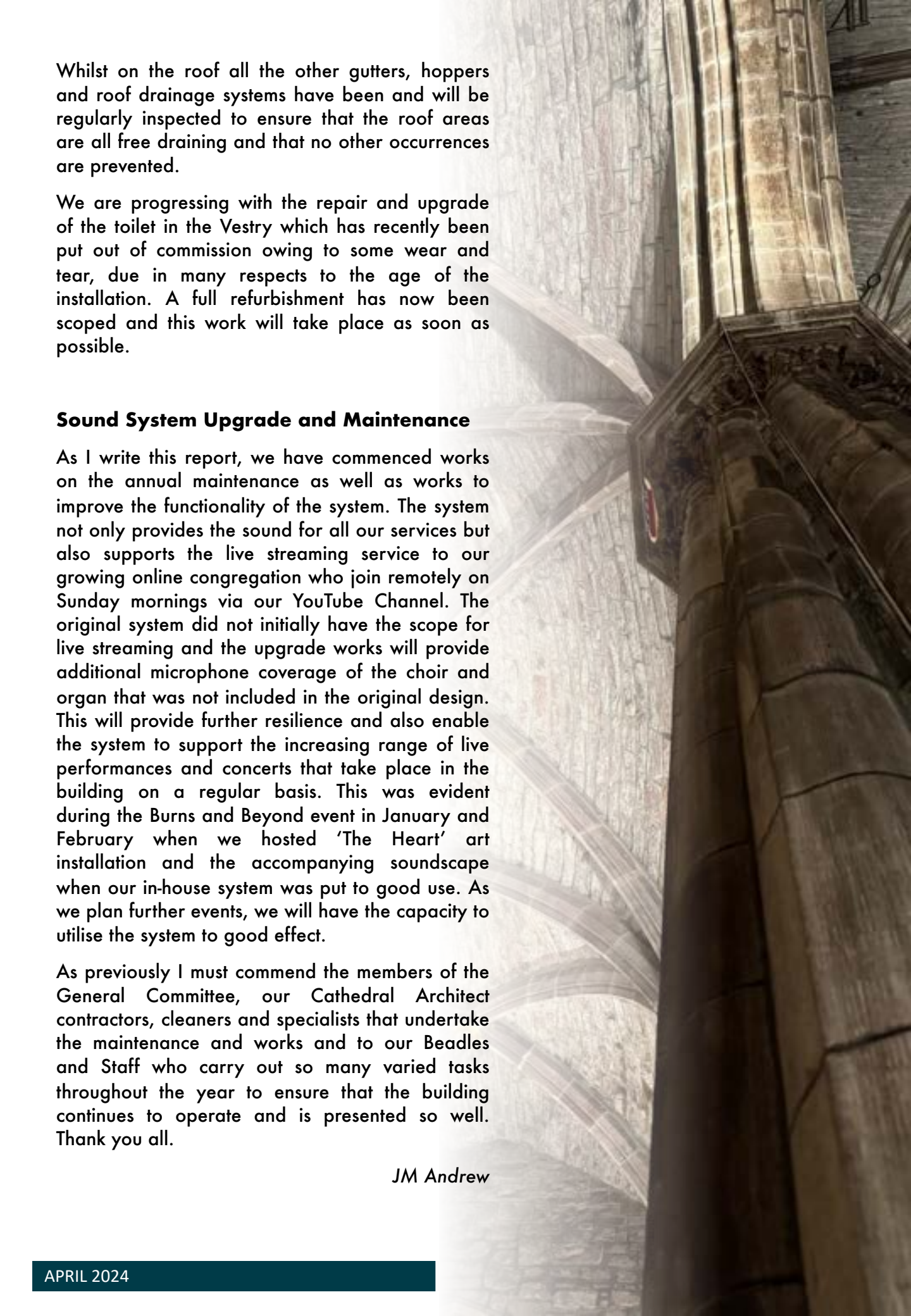
## Exterior Lighting Upgrade

Now that the interior lighting upgrade has been successfully completed with only some minor programming changes to be undertaken, we hope to commence a programme of works to reinstate and upgrade the exterior lighting to the Crown Tower and West Front of the building. The project will also use highly efficient and low energy LED systems and will enhance the exterior of the building as part of our 900<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This has only been possible through generous restricted donations for this upgrade.

## Repair and Maintenance

Inspections by specialist access technicians working with our architect have now identified the possible source of dampness discovered in one of the side Aisles that was reported previously. Following further inspection, no prolonged or significant water ingress was detected, and this area of the building remains in good order. The cause, in this instance, was the periods of increased rainfall during the past few months and the water gathering on the roof before discharging through the rainwater system. Our specialist plumber will reinforce this area in the coming weeks and provide a robust solution to avoid any further occurrence. Following a period of natural drying out, the painted walls in this area will be redecorated as planned.





Whilst on the roof all the other gutters, hoppers and roof drainage systems have been and will be regularly inspected to ensure that the roof areas are all free draining and that no other occurrences are prevented.

We are progressing with the repair and upgrade of the toilet in the Vestry which has recently been put out of commission owing to some wear and tear, due in many respects to the age of the installation. A full refurbishment has now been scoped and this work will take place as soon as possible.

### **Sound System Upgrade and Maintenance**

As I write this report, we have commenced works on the annual maintenance as well as works to improve the functionality of the system. The system not only provides the sound for all our services but also supports the live streaming service to our growing online congregation who join remotely on Sunday mornings via our YouTube Channel. The original system did not initially have the scope for live streaming and the upgrade works will provide additional microphone coverage of the choir and organ that was not included in the original design. This will provide further resilience and also enable the system to support the increasing range of live performances and concerts that take place in the building on a regular basis. This was evident during the Burns and Beyond event in January and February when we hosted 'The Heart' art installation and the accompanying soundscape when our in-house system was put to good use. As we plan further events, we will have the capacity to utilise the system to good effect.

As previously I must commend the members of the General Committee, our Cathedral Architect contractors, cleaners and specialists that undertake the maintenance and works and to our Beadles and Staff who carry out so many varied tasks throughout the year to ensure that the building continues to operate and is presented so well. Thank you all.

*JM Andrew*



## New Banners

The 900th anniversary of St Giles' was an ideal opportunity for the commissioning of a new set of banners for the sanctuary. This is also the 900th anniversary of the city of Edinburgh and St Giles is the city's patron saint.

When the choir wanted a logo for their new gowns, they chose my design based on the seal granted by the Pope in 1467 when his Papal Bull conferred collegiate status on the church. Returning to the seal and looking at mediaeval manuscripts, I found also the inspiration for the new banners but, as our Associate Minister remarked, the deer on the seal "looks like a wee pet dog." Consequently, I have made the deer more life-size in the new banners. I have also exaggerated the scale of the arrow, so that it can be seen clearly from the other end of the church, since it is such an essential part of the legend of the hermit who saved the deer's life by accepting the wound to his hand.

I made the pulpit fall first, using a limited palette of blue, white and gold, hand-painting the deer and the saint's face and hands. It is sewn on the reverse of the blue silk which is also used for the Saint Andrewstide banners.

The design for the banner itself changed slightly after I hung the full-scale paper cartoon on a banner in the church. I had already dispensed with the lozenge shape in the seal because of the narrowness of the face of the pillar from which it would be suspended. I also dropped the city shield to complete the composition.

With Georgina Chapman, a member of the St Giles' Banner Guild, who was the mastermind behind the construction of our other banners, we set to the making of the first of the four banners. This seemed to take much longer than we had anticipated, because of the amount of detail involved in the original seal. We have now completed the first banner and the Banner Guild has made all the component parts of the other three banners.

We have 7 volunteer stitchers from the congregation and from the Costume Society, together with members of the Banner Guild. From the beginning of March, we meet weekly in the Holy Cross Aisle to construct the other three banners. Our first task is to layer the fabric (i.e.: the backing, the wadding and the black silk for the front), tacking lines of thread 4 inches apart to stabilise the surface onto which we will sew St Giles, the deer and the other details. This will involve both hand-sewing and machine-sewing.

We met in the Holy Cross Aisle each week in March, varying days to accommodate people's commitments. Future dates of work in progress will be advertised in the Friday bulletin. Anyone who wishes to come and see us working would be welcome.

*Sheana Stephen Ashton*



# The Royal Mile International Piano Series



As spring arrives our musical offering in St Giles' is also producing some new shoots. As you will all be aware we host many concerts here in St Giles', and concerts promoted by outside organisations are an important and growing part of our income. In a new endeavour we are now collaborating with one of our external promoters to launch the Edinburgh Royal Mile International Piano Series. The idea for the series was developed by Warren Mailley-Smith in collaboration with Tringa Kasneci, our Music and Performance Coordinator, and the Heritage and Culture team; this is a curated series focusing on British talent and built around Beethoven piano sonatas.

Warren Mailley-Smith cemented his profile as a concert pianist in 2015 with the performance of the complete solo works of Chopin from memory in a single concert series in London. Warren has developed a close association with St Giles' through his Piccadilly Sinfonietta series of concerts. Through his good auspices we now have in the cathedral a wonderful new Steinway piano in addition to our own instrument.

Warren opens the series on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April at 6.30pm; each concert lasts an hour and in his programme he has paired Beethoven's *Waldstein* Sonata with works by Schubert, Chopin and John Ireland.

Tyler Hay (15<sup>th</sup> April), a prizewinning young pianist who showed a prodigious talent at an early age, features the music of two nineteenth-century giants of the piano world, Charles Alkan and Frederic Chopin alongside his chosen Beethoven Sonata, Op 31 No 2 in D minor, *The Tempest*.

Julian Trevelyan (22<sup>nd</sup> April) pairs Beethoven with the music of Brahms; Julian has appeared in concert all over Europe and has many competition successes to his name, most recently receiving the Silver Medal at the 2023 Horowitz Competition Kyiv-Geneva.

Simon Callaghan (29<sup>th</sup> April) concludes the series with a concert featuring Beethoven's *Pathétique* Sonata and Schumann's *Carnaval* Op 9. Described as "a master colourist of the keyboard" (Classical Explorer) Simon Callaghan performs internationally as a soloist and chamber musician and has a distinguished discography to his name.

Further details of all these events can be found on the St Giles' website where there is also a link to ticket sales; it is going to be an exciting venture and something which we can develop further in the future.

# Eco-smart moves

St Giles' has for some time now been signed up to the Eco-Congregation initiative, promoting ways in which member churches can reduce their carbon footprint and increase their contribution towards reducing the rate and impact of climate change.

One of the measures we have more recently adopted, though, and are looking to expand, is that of smart metering. The most recent change is that the meter relating to external illumination of the building from the West side is being switched to a smart meter.

The idea of having a meter that doesn't need to be physically read, but instead transmits its metrics straight back to the supplier is not new. It is perhaps under-appreciated, though, as an environmentally-friendly strategy.

Free expertise is always handy, and in this case, one of the country's top renewable energy finance specialists just happens to be married to St Giles' Treasurer. Adam Forsyth had this to say:

"A fundamental issue with electricity is that it cannot be stored efficiently in meaningful quantities. This means that supply and demand have to be matched in both place and time. While energy storage technology is making progress it is unlikely that the time challenge will ever significantly diminish. Understanding demand and how it varies in time and place is key to creating efficiencies in power networks. While transmission and distribution companies have been good at doing this in aggregate, to date truly detailed, granular data has been unavailable. The introduction of smart metering is changing that."

So, while it is helpful for the Beadles to have to supply fewer meter readings, it is also helpful for the planet that our usage is available to be monitored in real time by the people whose job it is to spread our energy supply as thinly as possible.

We've made a start on smart metering St Giles', but we will be trying to do more.

*Amanda Forsyth, Treasurer*



# Project HeritAlge



In the December issue of the St Giles' News, I introduced Project HeritAlge, and am pleased to provide an update in this edition. We are really excited to announce that we will be launching the completed product in May. We are in the finishing stages now. The artists at the University of Glasgow were grateful to receive some of our external scans of the Cathedral which sped up the process of building a digital St Giles'. We are also planning a trip to Dalmeny Kirk to scan their twelfth-century door to help us recreate twelfth-century St Giles' - the first recreation of its kind.

So from May, visitors will be able to see how St Giles' evolved over its 900-year history, by first (digitally!) destroying the Romanesque St Giles' and then building the gothic St Giles' (providing they answer the questions correctly). The game will be available both on a touch screen in the Cathedral and online, so people both near and far can learn about St Giles'. Michael Harris has very kindly provided music (only for the online version) so those playing online can play along to Michael on the organ.

Heritage and Culture are excited to bring Project HeritAlge to our visitors and see it as an important step in providing a visitor experience worthy of 900 years of history.

*Stephen Preston,  
Deputy Head of Heritage and Culture*

# A Big Thank You from the 6VT



The February edition of the St Giles' Newsletter included information on the distribution of the Poor of the Parish Fund. 6VT was one of the recipients. Dot Horne, their Executive Director, wrote the following thank you to the Cathedral which we thought you would like to see.

Dear All

We just want to let you know that your donation of £1250 that we gratefully received will be put towards our Terrace Tots service. Terrace Tots is currently for young parents under 26 and their children. We provide a weekly group for the parents and children. Most of these parents face multiple barriers in life, e.g. lone parents, no extended family supports, low income, food and fuel poverty etc.

At Terrace Tots we concentrate on supporting the emotional needs of the parents and the practical skills of parenting a child and managing a home successfully. Individuals receive one to one help on matters such as debt, housing issues, fuel efficiency, cooking on a budget, childcare.

During the group we provide a range of experiences that the family can enjoy together and make special childhood memories.

Parents can build peer relationships with others in similar circumstances and they can contact our team whenever they need a bit of support.

Most of the children who are currently attending are under 2 and some of our plans over the next few months include "Buggy Safety" which will teach them how to negotiate train travel with a buggy. We are going to take the little ones for their first swim and are planning a range of healthy cooking lessons.

We sincerely thank you for your support.

Kind Regards

Dot Horne





## Membership

### New members

*"In the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body... and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13)*

Rev Richard Frazer

Lynn Kennedy

### Deaths

*"If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord;  
so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." (Romans 14:8)*

Rev George Wilkie

Rev Bill Armitage

Janet Burgess

Joan Kidd

## 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) – as examples:

Sigrid Marten, Associate Minister

Michael Harris, Master of the Music

Mark Batho, Session Clerk

Sarah Phemister, Head of Heritage & Culture  
Beadles

[SMarten@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:SMarten@churchofscotland.org.uk)

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

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

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

[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 Cathedral 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, John Andrew and Keir Eunson, who have provided their photographic skills for several of the images in the Newsletter.