The next edition of the St Giles’ News is scheduled for circulation towards the end of January.

In the interim, this Supplement has been produced to keep everyone informed of some of the extensive activity that is taking place during the next few weeks as we move through Advent and then into the busy Christmas period.

Much of the information contained in this supplement has already appeared as part of the Intimations on the back page of the Orders of Service and additionally highlighted on the Cathedral’s website—www.stgilescathedral.org.uk.

Christmas Gifts—Cunningham House

The Neighbourhood Group would greatly welcome Christmas gifts of a practical nature for the residents of Cunningham House. Such gifts would typically consist of warm clothing—such as socks, beanies, gloves, sweaters (etc.), plus toiletries and some ‘goodies’ such as sweets. The vast majority of the residents are men. Gifts can be handed to the Beadles who will store them safely until they are delivered to Cunningham House before Christmas. Please do not wrap the gifts so that they can be fairly distributed by the Cunningham House staff.
St Giles’ Cathedral
Advent Appeal 2019

St Giles’ is once again supporting the Edinburgh Foodbank Appeal to help combat food poverty over the Christmas season.

The Appeal will run during four successive Sundays, beginning on 24 November.

Tinned and packaged food is preferable

Bags of food, labelled ‘Foodbank’, should be left behind the ramp at the west end of the church. Please help if you feel able.

For those who might find it easier, cash donations from which we can buy appropriate food would be equally welcome.

Contact: vashtton20@gmail.com

See below for more information

ADVENT APPEAL SUNDAYS
24 November, 1, 8 & 15 December

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The Grassmarket Mission needs YOU!

The Grassmarket Mission is looking to recruit two new Trustees to join its Board, one of whom would take on the role of Honorary Secretary. Established in 1886, the Mission’s main objective is to address problems of social exclusion as a consequence of poverty, hunger, loneliness and homelessness. It does so on a non-denominational basis to advance citizenship and community development.

To facilitate this, the Mission offers grant assistance to organisations that meet these principles, primarily within the local community. In 2009, in conjunction with Greyfriars Kirk, the Mission jointly set up and funded the Grassmarket Community Project and that close connection continues today.

St Giles’ has had involvement with the Mission over a number of years, through past and present Trustees. Currently the Board is seeking to add two Trustees to its membership and is looking for individuals whose value sets align with the activities of the Trust. The role of Honorary Secretary will become vacant in January 2020 and, as such, good organisational and administrative skills would be required for this position. Trustees are volunteers who are interested in the advancement of opportunities to support some of the city’s most vulnerable residents to enhance their lives and achieve their potential, despite past or current adversity.

You can read more about the work of the Mission and the Grassmarket Community via the website at https://www.grassmarketmission.org/

The Board meets quarterly in Edinburgh from 4-6pm. Individuals interested in joining the Board should contact Elaine Crichton, Honorary Treasurer of The Grassmarket Mission by Dec 31st 2019. Elaine can be contacted on 07841 421837 or elaine.crichtonee@gmail.com

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About the Advent Appeal

As in previous years, the Minister has given his permission for a foodbank appeal to be held during the season of Advent.

The Advent Appeal has always struck a chord with the congregation, coming just before Christmas, its sense of plenty and its cheerful celebration. It is perhaps salutary to be reminded of the many in our society who have so little and for whom there seems not much to celebrate.

Last year, the Advent Appeal brought in 1.25 tonnes of food, which was transported, during the four weeks, to the Trussell Trust warehouse for distribution among the local foodbanks in the city. It was a remarkable response from the congregation.

As well as the actual foodstuffs, a considerable sum of cash was donated, often gift-aided, to the appeal. A proportion of this was spent, at the time, to augment the food actually brought into the church. However, with the permission of the donors, a good part of the money was used to set up a fund for use throughout the year, purchasing at times particular staples in short supply. This fund was supported, financially, by the Neighbourhood Group. It is still being used, month by month, to plug gaps in the stock held for distribution by the Trussell Trust warehouse. Thus, as well as the 1.25 tonnes of food delivered last Advent, by the end of November this year an additional 2 tonnes of food staples will have been purchased and delivered.

This corporate contribution from the congregation has been greatly appreciated and the name of St Giles’ is now well known and respected in Trussell Trust circles. All of this is a quiet, practical Christian witness, endeavouring to meet the needs of those who, sadly, struggle to survive in the midst of a prosperous city.

This year, the Advent Appeal will begin on 24th November, the Sunday before Advent, since Advent 4 would be too late to deliver to the warehouse, closed during the Christmas week.

More than anything, basic foods in tinned or cartoned form are needed. Large cartons of fruit juice and long-life milk are always included in each person’s food allocation. Tins of meat and of fish, tins of fruit and of vegetables, tinned soup and rice, tins of custard and nice pudding, coffee, sugar, pasta and rice, pots of jam and packets of biscuits would be very welcome. Donations must have a long shelf life.

The Advent Appeal has always been successful. Hopefully, it will be so, this year too.
Christmas Can Collections

We need some help!

Once again, the Neighbourhood Group is seeking volunteers to help with the Christmas Street Can Collections taking place on Friday, 20 and Saturday 21 December. The funds raised this year will be donated to Cunningham House, situated in the Cowgate. Cunningham House is part of CrossReach and provides shelter for (mainly) homeless men. Each year, with help from the congregation, choir and other friends, we usually manage to collect about £3,000. However, the success of the can collections is totally dependent upon voluntary help to ‘rattle’ the cans within the city centre with each shift lasting for an hour. Over the two days, we are licensed to have five collectors on duty at any one time and, as the first shift starts at 10.00 and the last at 15.00, we need volunteers to cover 30 shifts each day. If you feel able to help with one or more shifts, please contact –

Simon Bolam - simon@simonbolam.co.uk – 07850 790051

FreshStart Cookers for Christmas Appeal

Since it was established by a group of churches in 1999, St Giles’ has been a keen supporter of the work undertaken by FreshStart—mainly through the provision of household goods to help them create their well known starter packs for distribution to homeless people as they move into their own accommodation. However, at Christmas time, FreshStart seeks to raise funds to provide cookers on the same basis as the starter packs. St Giles’ through its charitable funds has gladly supported this appeal and all of us are encouraged to consider giving a donation to help FreshStart at this time of year. If you would like to make a donation then please visit their website—www.freshstartweb.org.uk

This is the 14th Can Collection organised by the Neighbourhood Group and if we can manage to get sufficient support then we can potentially raise a very respectable amount of money. Of all the things organised over the Christmas period, this is the one that just seeks a small amount of time but does not involve personal expenditure or the donation of goods.

As the overall age of the congregation increases, the ‘traditional’ number of helpers is diminishing—nonetheless with the help and enthusiasm of others, we have so far almost reached the point where we have a full team for the Friday but we remain thin on the ground for the Saturday and would therefore hugely welcome some added support.

Saturday, weather permitting, is a good day for collecting money so we don’t want to miss out on that opportunity.

If you haven’t already done so, please would you consider helping the Neighbourhood Group for an hour or even two—particularly on the Saturday. A greater number of collectors obviously equates to extra funds for Cunningham House and the homeless.

Please help if you are able.
‘Discovered Lives: Ladies of St Giles’, 1587-1672’
Dr Rosalind K Marshall

The century after the Reformation was a time of turmoil in Scotland. The careers of the principal statesmen, lawyers and ministers are well-known, but what about the women who were also prominent in society? They have been almost entirely ignored. Now however, their identities have been discovered in the record of special seats built for them in Edinburgh’s great church of St Giles’, making it possible to investigate their dramatic and often touching life experiences. So, if you have ever wondered about who used to sit here four hundred years ago, you will find the answer here!

All proceeds from the sale of the book will go to the Cathedral funds.

Dr Rosalind K. Marshall’s previous books include biographies of Mary of Guise, Mary, Queen of Scots and John Knox, as well as full-length histories of St Giles’ Cathedral and Iona Cathedral.


‘Nevile Davidson: A Life to be Lived’
Andrew G. Ralston

A new biography of Dr. A. Nevile Davidson, Minister of Glasgow Cathedral from 1935 until 1967 and Moderator of the General Assembly in 1962, has been published by Wipf & Stock Ltd.

Dr Davidson took part in many services at St. Giles and was a close friend of Charles Warr (Minister of St Giles’ 1926–1962).

The new book draws on personal reminiscences and on the collection of papers and diaries deposited by Dr. Davidson’s wife Peggy in the National Library of Scotland – a source which has never been systematically studied before, and which sheds new light on one of the most distinguished Scottish churchmen of the 20th century.

Further information, endorsements and some sample pages can be found on the publisher’s website: https://wipfandstock.com/neville-davidson.html

Copies are available via mail order (£9.99 + £2.50 P&P) from Andrew G. Ralston, 15 Thomson Drive, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 3PA. All proceeds go towards the Society of Friends of Glasgow Cathedral.

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