LEITH AND RESTALRIG CHURCH

JUNE AND JULY 2026

larch.org.uk Scottish Charity no. SC012680

LEITH AND RESTALRIG CHURCH (LARCH)
MINISTER REV. ROB MACKENZIE

We welcome articles and thank you letters from members and friends. Articles are published in both the printed magazine and on-line, unless otherwise arranged with the co-ordinators (eg, for the online version, where personal information is concerned, either names and other details are omitted or specific permission to use details has been received). All contributors must provide their name, please, which is normally attached to the article. We reserve the right to edit articles. Changes other than spelling or grammar will, where possible, be discussed with the contributor. The views expressed are those of individual contributors and not necessarily those of Leith and Restalrig Church or the Church of Scotland

The church office is the address for all correspondence.

Office Hours (Angie Egan, administrator) are as following:
Mondays from 8.30am to 4.30 pm at the Leith Walk office
Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8.30am to 12.30pm at the Restalrig office. The church offices are within the McLaren Halls and Leith Walk Building
Intimations for Church events should be sent to the Church Administrator at mail@larch.org.uk by lunchtime on Wednesday.

Minister Rob MacKenzie: AMacKenzie@churchofscotland.org.uk
Session Clerk: Stuart Lithgow session.clerk@larch.org.uk
Treasurer: Mark Wexelstein treasurer@larch.org.uk
LARCH: Restalrig Building,
Restalrig Road South, Edinburgh, EH7 6LF
McLaren Halls and Hanlon Centre, 48 Restalrig Rd. South, EH7 6LE
LARCH: Leith Walk Building 1b Pilrig Street, Edinburgh EH6 5AH
LARCH Easter Road Building 410-412 Easter Road EH6 8HT

WELCOME TO THE JUNE AND JULY 2026 MAGAZINE

Thank you very much for all the articles and posters. It is excellent to have so much information. Any items for the next edition should be received by July 21st and emailed to:
Richard at thorburnr2000@yahoo.com or
Catriona at catriona6849@gmail.com

SUNDAY SERVICES - 11am in LARCH RESTALRIG BUILDING
and on Facebook and YouTube, to watch live or later.

IN THE McLAREN HALLS, including Hanlon Centre

Restalrig Road South, Edinburgh, EH7 6LE:
Craft Group, Every Wednesday, 2pm-4pm Hanlon Centre
Guild – resumes in the autumn
The Book Group meets on the last Tuesday of the month.
Thursday Club Meets monthly in the McLaren Halls, unless otherwise stated. Contact the church office for more details.
Thurs 25th June - Pub games and fish supper
Thurs 23rd July - BBQ

IN LARCH, LEITH WALK BUILDING

1B Pilrig Street. EH6 5AH
Wheelchair users - ring the bell at Pilrig Street, middle door
Oasis of Peace
Wednesdays at 10.15 (Open Doorway)
Open Doorway café 10.30-12noon
11th and 25th June
10th and 24th July
Midweek Worship on the last Wednesday of each month at 7pm
See back page for further details
Our website has a News page with a list of everything happening in more detail. Please use this link https://larch.org.uk/news/

Leith Festival Gala Day – Saturday 13 June Leith Links 10am-5pm



Full details on page 15 or on our website for further details of what LARCH is doing.
https://larch.org.uk/

This year's joint Leith Festival Service will be held at North and South Leith Church on Sunday 14th June at 11am.
THERE WILL BE NO SERVICE IN LARCH THAT DAY

From our minister:

Dear Friends,

I'm writing this on the hottest day of the year so far. The window is open, it's 6pm, and the room still feels like a sauna. That said, when I lived in Italy, the summer temperature could be 37 degrees for weeks on end, with high humidity, and there was no air conditioning – just a ceiling fan. Somehow, although no one ever gets fully comfortable with that kind of heat, you just accept it and grow to expect it. In Scotland, it's less expected, and we do complain when the summers are long, cloudy and cool. There's no pleasing us!

When we look back at the twentieth century, the Church of Scotland seemed fairly comfortable for the first half of it. But the problems were already there – too many buildings too near each other, especially in the more affluent areas, the huge expense of fabric upkeep, an expectation that its position as the 'national church' would always continue. It also expected people to come to it, and put little emphasis on equipping people to reach those beyond its walls. It moved slowly, often holding on to moral and social positions that were out of step with a quickly evolving society.

Not everyone in the church was blind to these problems, of course. Some spoke out, others took action, many of those did both. But they were largely ignored. Even today, that legacy survives among decision-makers and in the church law, which frequently makes it impossible for congregations to respond effectively to current needs – both the needs of their parishes and their own needs. The 'traditionalists" have paralysed the Church of Scotland for many years, taking advantage of its deathly slow processes and arcane legal procedures which make real change arduous to achieve. The position of women holding offices in the church changed in the 60s and 70s but too slowly for the church to be perceived as progressive. The same when it came to accepting gay relationships, and, even today, congregations have to 'depart' from the so-called 'traditional' position of the church, to call a gay minister. The so-called 'traditional' position is still its official position even though the vast majority of its members do not hold this position. It sends a message to people outside the church that it is a fusty institution unable to meet the challenges of today's world.

The same goes when it comes to mission. When we sell a building, it used to be that all the money from sales had to go into fabric. Now, a small percentage can be used to finance mission projects in communities. At last! But it is too little and too late. If the church were serious about mission, it had to allow a far greater sum from its sales to be used for outreach and to train both members and potential workers (not just ministers) to be equipped for this work. Congregations have been saying this for many years now, as a matter of urgency and have not been fully heard. We all know that buildings need upkeep, and insisting that congregations need to hold at least £400,000 per church building in their fabric accounts, in case repairs are needed, might seem prudent. But far more radicalism was (and still is) needed. Could it be that we needed to sell almost *all* the church buildings, and use the money purely for mission, for work in communities and for grassroots worship? We could then either use community facilities for worship, and/or go back to an early church style of worship, meeting in people's houses in cell groups, and coming together for

other projects. The current way the Church of Scotland operates feels to me like a recipe for managed decline rather than a radical plan for growth.

The Church of Scotland, I think, needs to be far more radical in its approach, not just to survive (which does seem to be the goal of current plans) but to thrive and help the communities it serves to thrive as well. If it just tinkers around with things, sets "action plans" (as if it were a business), and demands the kind of reports it's always demanded from congregations now for decades – reports which are filed away somewhere and achieve *what*? – then it's going to sink into oblivion. Of course, that doesn't mean the gospel will meet the same fate. There is evidence of renewed interest in the Christian message among younger people, and many in other age groups are trying to find fresh spiritual meaning for their lives. Churches will appear, and are already appearing, that will help people with those spiritual searches. The Church of Scotland has the opportunity to be among them and needs to take it now.

Rob Mackenzie (minister)

So far we have raised £1212.44 - a fantastic amount! If you haven't had a chance to donate, you can donate to the LARCH virtual envelope

online: https://caw.christianaid.org.uk/envelope-2026/leith-and-restalrig-church

OASIS OF PEACE



Wednesdays 10.15am at LARCH: Leith Walk EVERYONE IS WELCOME to attend this short service where we sing some hymns, pray for others and have a reflection or discussion on a Bible passage. It lasts around half an hour and we finish with tea/coffee and a chat. We take a break in July and August

CAN YOU HELP?

Urgent – Care Van Driver needed. Contact the office for more details, or see our website.

Defibrillator (Defib) and CPR Training Opportunity St John Ambulance is offering Defib and CPR training (See website or sign up sheet on Noticeboard in McLaren Halls).

Children & Families - Our website has up to date information or contact the church office.

Church Officer – Leith and Restalrig Church

We have decided to use a team of volunteers on a rota basis for the Church Officer duties. If you would like to be added to the Rota for the Church Officer, please let Angie know.
mail@larch.org.uk

PRAYER CORNER



Please remember members of the congregation, their families and other friends in your prayers. Names are read out at the Services on Sunday and Wednesday. To include someone, please either add the name to the Prayer Book in the entrance to LARCH Restalrig building or email Rob: AMacKenzie@churchofscotland.org.uk

GETTING INVOLVED

Could you spare a few hours a week to make a real difference in Leith?

At Edinburgh Northeast Foodbank, we believe that good food should be accessible to all and that food poverty is an injustice. Working in partnership with four Church of Scotland congregations and Trussell, we provide emergency food and compassionate support to local people in crisis.

We're looking for people who:

- Are reliable and enthusiastic
- Enjoy building positive relationships
- Can commit a few hours each week
- Want to make a practical difference in their community

Volunteer Roles Available:

1. Foodbank Centre Volunteers (Monday–Friday)
   Help welcome guests and distribute food parcels.
2. Warehouse Volunteers (Monday, Wednesday & Friday)

Help prepare and pack food parcels. Please note: this role involves moving and lifting crates and requires a reasonable level of fitness.
Full training provided. No previous experience needed, just a willingness to help.
Interested?

Email: katiea@edinburghne.foodbank.org.uk
Phone: 0131 553 5694 // 07469643621

The Minister and Kirk Session of Leith and Restalrig Church

invite you

to

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

on

Sunday 28th June 2026 at 11 am, in the Restalrig Building

This is the Lord's Table. Anyone who loves God and responds to Christ's invitation to join together in this feast is welcome to join us in the celebration.

As well as wine, there are cups of plain water on the serving trays, please take whichever you prefer.



THANK YOU

We have received thank you notes from many members for prayers, flowers, cards, visits, phone calls, texts and support received following illness, celebrations, bereavements and accidents.

Little Larch Nursery

The nursery is now at full capacity with 24 children and a waiting list. Many of our children have additional support needs which proves challenging for the Staff, as the Council are slow to provide extra supervisional support.

The Sensory Room is now up and running and the children love it. We hope to hear soon about a grant from Local Energy Scotland towards the cost of installing Solar Panels to make us more sustainable and reduce electricity costs.

When time permits, the staff are busy with the planting of shrubs and seed, and we have guidance and support from one of the parents who is a horticulturalist.
Thank you to all who have donated plants, and please continue to keep us in mind when you are splitting shrubs etc in your garden.

We are constantly requiring support with DIY jobs, especially joinery work, so any help is appreciated. When the chldren are off for the summer we have a list of jobs to be tackled - repairs and painting - so if you can spare a couple of days, then please get in touch.

Our large section of Astroturf on the site is underused and we now want to open it up to community groups at a small fee.
If for example, you know someone who wants to run Outdoor exercise classes, Teach Tai chi, Play Boules etc... then we want to hear from them.

If you would like to visit the Nursery then I would be happy to show you around.

Christine Peace

Leith and Restalrig Church – Kirk Session

Work continues apace as we are about to enter the summer months. As always, a lot of work continues behind the scenes, some of which is mentioned in this article, and the efforts of everyone involved are greatly appreciated.

Items agreed or discussed at our most recent Session Meeting in May include:

- Advertising for a second Minister – the Presbytery Vacancy Advisory Committee attended the meeting, explained their role, offered support and made some comments on the first draft of the Parish Profile which continues to be developed.
- The Committee also informed us that Nikki Kirkland, our OLM, could not continue to be Interim Moderator for the second ministerial post, despite receiving previous advice to the contrary. Nikki was thanked for carrying out the role till now. We have recently been informed by Presbytery that Rev Lourens de Jager, minister of Meadowbank & Willowbrae, has been appointed as our Interim Moderator.
- We have also been informed that we must now draw up a Congregational Action Plan as part of the vacancy procedure which covers all the various aspects of church life. The work to complete this document is underway thanks to members of the various teams involved.
- Refurbishment of Leith Walk building - the team working on this are about to start drafting a Business Plan - this will come to the next Session meeting in June.
- Session was informed that the Pilrig Street manse was under offer. Since then, I am pleased to announce that an offer has been accepted, subject to all the usual legals.
- Service outside - you'll remember we had a service outside last summer and were very lucky with the weather - we plan to do that again this summer (provisional date 2 August).

- Session agreed to hold a special service on Safeguarding later in the year.
- Session agreed to invite Pauline Wilson from the Stewardship team at 121 to the Session meeting in October to discuss a possible Stewardship campaign for Spring 2027.
- Session discussed a full report on the roof of the Leith Walk building. A similar survey has since been carried out on the Restalrig building and McLaren Halls. Inevitably, these reports have highlighted a number of issues in all three buildings which require attention. Thankfully we will have the money from the sale of the Pilrig manse to cover the cost of these repairs.
- Proposals from the Worship Team on what should happen if people take ill during a service were agreed with a slight amendment.
- It was agreed to purchase two new noticeboards for the Leith Walk building (similar to those installed at Restalrig) and that these should be installed lower down than the existing boards to make them more noticeable to passers-by.
- It was also agreed to run a Church News PowerPoint before each service for those who do not have access to the internet.
- It was agreed to undertake a fire risk assessment at Leith Walk in light of proposals for the use of 'The Den' as an artists' space.

With every blessing

Stuart Lithgow
Session Clerk

Update of Personal Details – PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN

Those of you who receive communications by email should by now have received a request to complete, as fully as possible, a form to update your personal details and to return it by the end of March. The response to these has been patchy at best and so **I would urge members to complete and return their forms as soon as possible, even if you think we have all your correct details.** If you cannot find the email, please just let us know.

By now, those members who do not have an email address should have received the same form by post and **we ask you to complete and return it as soon as possible.** A stamped addressed envelope has been supplied.

Please be assured that all personal information will be processed and stored in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

It is vital that you always inform us of any changes of personal details so that we can keep in contact.

Stuart Lithgow
Session Clerk

Contacting the Property Team

There are various ways you can report maintenance issues:
Phone Angie at the office on 554 7400 (Mondays 8.30-4.30, Wednesdays and Thursdays 8.30-12.30)
Email property@larch.org.uk
Note the issue on the Property Reporting Sheet which is on the notice boards at McLaren Halls and at LARCH Leith Walk.
Thank you for your cooperation.

FLOWER CALENDAR



If you would like to donate church flowers for an anniversary of a loved one, a celebration or any other reason, please choose your date and put your name on the top line of the flower calendar which is in the vestibule of the McLaren Halls (notice board opposite the kitchen door).
NB - Dates that are popular will have to be shared and weddings take priority.
Donations for the Flower Fund can be put in the box located in the Sanctuary vestibule. If you wish to donate or suggest flowers for someone who might appreciate them, please speak with Shona or Stuart, or let Angie know in the office, so that this can be arranged. You can also email the Pastoral Care Team on pastoralcare.team@larch.org.uk OR Lisa Innes (lisa.innes@gmail.com)
Thank you - The Pastoral Care Team

LARCH CHURCH REGISTER

We're sorry to record the news of the recent death of a member.
Details of deaths of members are available to members and adherents from the church office
OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH THEIR FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

Notifying us of the death of a member
In order to ensure that all relevant parties are informed, if you hear of the death of a member, please contact as many of the following as possible:
Rob (AMacKenzie@churchofscotland.org.uk or 07803 293528)
Angie at the office (mail@larch.org.uk or 554 7400)
The Pastoral Care Team (pastoralcare.team@larch.org.uk

LEITH FESTIVAL GALA DAY – SATURDAY 13 JUNE

The **Leith Festival Gala Day** will be held on **Saturday 13th June**. As well as an information stall, we once again intend to run a tombola stall to raise funds for our 'charity of the year, the Ripple Project. SORRY: we cannot accept bric-a-brac, books, electrical items, clothing or perishable goods. The latest date for handing these in to church is Sunday 7th June, thank you.



We are also looking for anyone who can help to volunteer on the stall, even for an hour or two. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

Let's hope and pray for better weather than last year. 😊

Please contact Stuart Lithgow by email session.clerk@larch.org.uk for further details.

🌿 OPEN DOORWAY @ LARCH Leith Walk

Pause. Breathe. Drop in.

Looking for a calm space in the middle of your week?
Come by **Leith & Restalrig Church (LARCH) Leith Walk** for a relaxed, welcoming evening.

✨ What to expect

Your time, your way:

- Chat with someone friendly
- Ask questions or explore faith
- Sit quietly and reset
- Take a moment to pray or reflect
- Grab a free tea or coffee

No pressure. No expectations. Just space to be.

📍 When & Where

Last Wednesday of every month

7:00pm – 8:30pm

📌 LARCH, Leith Walk, 1B Pilrig St, Edinburgh EH6 5AH

💬 Why come?

Whether you're curious, need a breather, or just fancy a warm drink and good company — **you're welcome here.**

🌐 Find out more. larch.org.uk. *(Scottish Charity No. SC012680)*