



**LEITH AND
RESTALRIG CHURCH**

DECEMBER 2025

JANUARY 2026

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.

Please note the church office is the address for all correspondence.

Office Hours (Angie Egan) 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.

Intimations for Church events should be sent to the Church Administrator at mail@larch.org.uk by lunchtime Wednesday.

Minister Rob MacKenzie AMacKenzie@churchofscotland.org.uk

Session Clerk Stuart Lithgow session.clerk@larch.org.uk

LARCH: Restalrig, Restalrig Road South,
Edinburgh, EH7 6LF

The church offices are within the McLaren Halls and in the Leith Walk Building

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 8H

larch.org.uk

Scottish Charity no. SC012680

WELCOME TO THE DECEMBER AND JANUARY 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 24th January 2026 and emailed to:

Richard at thorburnr2000@yahoo.com or

Catriona at catriona6849@gmail.com There is also a box for short articles or thank you notes in the entranceway to LARCH: Restalrig.

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

INTIMATIONS: If you have any intimations for Church events for inclusion in the weekly mailing, please send them to the Church Administrator at mail@larch.org.uk (12 noon) each Wednesday.

Oasis of Peace, Wednesday Meditative Service,
Open Doorway Larch Leith Walk**

Craft Group, Every Wednesday, 2pm-4pm Hanlon Centre

Guild -We meet at 1.30pm on alternate Tuesdays

The book club meets on the last Tuesday of the month at 10.00 am in the Hanlon Centre, McLaren Halls * Coffee served at 11.00am. ALL WELCOME even if you haven't read the book.

Café 2nd and 4th Thursdays Open Doorway Larch Leith Walk**

Thursday Club Meets in the McLaren halls, unless otherwise stated. See page 9.

*LARCH: Restalrig Building, and McLaren Halls including the Hanlon Centre: Restalrig Road South, Edinburgh, EH7 6LF

**Open Doorway LARCH, Leith Walk Building. 1B Pilrig Street EH6 5AH Wheel chair users - please ring the bell at Pilrig Street, middle door

**THERE ARE DETAILS OF SERVICES AND EVENTS ON THE
CENTRE PAGES AND THROUGHOUT THE MAGAZINE
ALL WELCOME TO EVERYTHING**

From our minister

Dear Friends

Last night, Scotland beat Denmark 4-2 and qualified for the World Cup, so the entire nation is in a state of euphoria. People are watching the genuinely remarkable goals over and over, almost as if we need to keep seeing them to believe they really happened. It's been a long time since we last qualified in 1998 and, no matter how good the games are at the tournament, it's never the same when we're not involved.

It helps to have a stake in whatever is happening. Some companies pay employees partly in shares, as an encouragement to make things work as well as possible. I was hearing recently about a friend of a friend who was a computer geek. He got a job seven years ago working for a company developing Artificial Intelligence, and they paid partly in company shares. He had almost no money when he started. He is now worth £80 million!

Sometimes, events don't seem to affect us much but, the minute they do and we feel personally involved, we become driven in a way we hadn't before. Naturally enough, people who have a family member affected by an illness or syndrome often become very knowledgeable about it, and find creative ways of raising both awareness and money for scientists and doctors researching and experimenting for cures.

The church, of course, carries out its work purely from donations from members, all of whom would feel a deep sense of loss if its life and work ceased. We all have a stake in what's happening and we give to the church because it feels important to us.

When Jesus called his disciples, they partly followed him because they knew what he stood for and it made sense to them. There were

many itinerant teachers around at the time who would gather disciples and tour around the towns and villages, teaching and healing. Jesus was one of those but clearly, he made a huge impact wherever he went. He was talked about and made both friends and enemies. His disciples – both the ‘twelve’ who went everywhere with him, and those he made along the way – were involved in his mission, whether also preaching and healing, or in telling others what Jesus had done for them. Again, they had a stake in the new movement and felt passionately about it.

We’re approaching the Advent season, and then Christmas. Officially, ‘Edinburgh’s Christmas’ is sponsored by various groups - you can read their names on posters scattered through Princes Street. They have a stake in making sure people spend lots of money on the multitude of stalls, pop-up restaurants and events taking place this winter. It has nothing to do with Christmas really! The birth of Jesus – becoming one of us, living among us, bringing us a way of renewal and hope, a fullness of life – won’t be mentioned at all in those commercial zones. But it’s what we have a stake in, as a church congregation, and as part of the human race. We have a story to tell, in our words and actions, that can bring about a more compassionate society, where people are treated with generosity and justice, and where people’s talents are nurtured and valued. It’s a story in which God reminds us of his presence among us, bringing newness of life, which we can share with others and which then may spread further than we might believe possible. It doesn’t need sponsorship or profit, it just needs us to make our stake count. It’s the meaning of the season and it’s potentially life-changing. Let’s start from where we are and make Christmas a true and meaningful celebration this year.

Rob Mackenzie (minister, LARCH)

Accessing Pastoral Care

By email to pastoralcare.team@larch.org.uk

By phone to the Church Office on 0131 554 7400

Should you require urgent pastoral care, please contact:

Our minister, Rob Mackenzie, on 07803 293528 OR

Our Session Clerk, Stuart Lithgow, on 0777 225 1988



Photo by Brett Sayles on Pexels.com

OASIS OF PEACE' at LARCH: Leith Walk each Wednesday at 10.15a.m. 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.

There will be a break after Christmas until Lent.

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



LARCH CHURCH REGISTER **OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 2025**

We're sorry to record the news of the recent death of four of our members.

OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

Leith and Restalrig Church – Kirk Session

As we move at pace towards the season of Advent, the work of Session also continues at pace. Here are some key matters which we have dealt with over the past two months:

- Rev Matthew Ross has resigned as Interim Moderator for the 2nd Minister following his appointment as Minister of North West Lochaber Parish Church. We thank Matthew for all his advice and support and wish him well in his new Charge.
- Presbytery approved the appointment of Nikki Kirkland our Ordained Local Minister (OLM) as our new Interim Moderator. We thank Nikki for volunteering to do this. This will now allow us to move forward with the appointment of our 2nd Minister.
- Nikki, along with our new Outreach and Mission Team, has also been busy organising some different worship events at LARCH Leith Walk (more details can be found in this magazine) as well as looking at future uses of the building.
- Our Youth and Family Worker, Judith Rolls, organised another successful and well-received Family Open Day and a family film show during the October school holiday week. She also supported Little Larch Nursery in their Halloween Light Party which was well-attended with lots of positive feedback. She continues to build positive connections with a variety of groups within the parish and has obtained approval from North and South Leith Church to make approaches to Leith Academy with the aim of running a film club.
- Rev Douglas Paterson is continuing to carry out a number of visits to members, as well as attending Sunday morning worship and coffee time afterwards. This has been appreciated by many.
- Session invited Darren Philips from Stewardship and Finance to give a presentation on the different types of stewardship and set out three sources of income – giving, grants and generation.

Session will be looking to mount a stewardship campaign some time in 2026.

- Work is ongoing to decide which of the manses will be sold to generate much needed income.
- Session discussed the need for training and establishment of clear regulations when preparing food on the premises.
- A 'Lone Working Policy' was approved and risk assessments carried out with employees. This policy, and the guidance it contains, is also of relevance to anyone who is likely to be in any of our buildings on their own. Copies are available on request from Angie in the office or me.
- New arrangements for flower distribution were approved. Details to follow in the next magazine

To some, it may seem that the work and decisions of Session are a bit of a closed book. Please be assured that we make every effort to avoid this. Session meetings are open for anyone to attend and approved minutes are available on request from Shona or me at session.clerk@larch.org.uk, through the office or just ask when you see us. We welcome your opinion on the various matters we deal with, whether you agree or disagree with decisions.

With every blessing

Stuart Lithgow
Session Clerk

~ FREE ~

FAMILY STAY 'N' PLAY

10am - 12 noon

Monday, 5th January 2026

Activities
Games
Crafts
Refreshments

All children must be accompanied by a responsible adult

McLaren Halls
48 Restalrig Road South
Everyone Welcome

Email: mds@larch.org.uk for more info

 Leith and Restalrig Church (known as LARCH) is a Scottish Charity, SC012680, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

The next Stay'n'Play at McLaren Halls will take place on Monday 5th January. Families are most welcome to come and join us between 10am and 12 noon for games, activities, crafts, and refreshments - all free of charge.

Judith is looking for volunteers to help welcome people to the halls, make tea/coffee for visitors, and ensure the event runs smoothly. If anyone would be willing to come and help on the day, please let Judith know.

Christmas SERVICES



Everyone welcome - we would love to see you!

SUNDAY
14/12

Nativity Service

11am

LARCH Restalrig, 27 Restalrig Road South

WEDNESDAY
17/12

Carols on the Steps

7pm

LARCH Leith Walk, 1a Pilrig Street

SUNDAY
21/12

Gift Service

11am

LARCH Restalrig, 27 Restalrig Road South



Coffee and Carols

7pm

McLaren Halls, 48 Restalrig Road South



Family Christmas Eve Service

6.30pm

LARCH Restalrig, 27 Restalrig Road South



Watchnight Service

11.30pm

LARCH Restalrig, 27 Restalrig Road South



Christmas Day Service

10.30am

LARCH Leith Walk, 1a Pilrig Street

Little Larch Nursery

Thanks to the Edinburgh Tool Library for building the undercover eating and sleeping area. It is a solid structure - just what we needed to replace the temporary Gazebos, which were too flimsy to withstand the windy conditions on site.

Prior to Christmas we hope to have our Sensory Room build completed. This has been possible with funds donated by SPIFOX, the Scottish Property Industry's charity who do great work supporting children's charities across Scotland.

In our weekly Church News we are asking for clothes for 2-5 year olds. Being a fully outdoor nursery the children require regular changes of clothing and some parents have indicated that they do not have enough clothes to send the children in each day with clean, dry clothes - Jumpers, Trousers, Tops, Socks, Underwear, Coats. As we are now in winter, the warmer the better. I am happy to collect.
Christine Peace



NEW OUTDOOR NURSERY

Spaces available, be quick!!

2-5yrs!!

Book a visit!!

LITTLE LARCH NURSERY

07578772771
littlearchnursery@gmail.com
<https://www.littlearchnursery.com>

LITTLE LARCH NURSERY
www.littlearchnursery.com

At the end of October Little Larch Nursery hosted a Light Party and opened their doors to welcome the community in to join them for some lovely seasonal activities. It was great to see so many families enjoying the evening - well done to all of the Little Larch team for organising such a fantastic event.



Little Larch Nursery will be working their magic again as they organise a Christmas event and everyone is invited to join them on Saturday 13th December. Please do make the time to visit the nursery at 8a Loaning Crescent (bowling green) between 10.30am and 12pm to join in with the festivities.

To support the nursery, and to share some Christmas spirit with the wider community, we are going to be singing some carols at 11am. If you would be willing to come along

and sing, or play an instrument, please let Judith know - either email her or leave a message with the church office. Thank you. (If you can't make it along to the event, you might like to show your support by contributing some home baking or mulled wine?)

LARCH CHRISTMAS CHURCH FAYRE

The Fayre on 15th November started LARCH festive calendar with a bang and certainly seemed to get everyone into the festive spirit. The success of the Fayre was largely due to the great support of everyone involved.

Firstly, we would like to thank the generosity of everyone involved who donated to the various stalls.

We would like to thank everyone who helped decorate the halls and set up the Fayre on the Friday night.

A special message to the Craft Group who work tirelessly throughout the year fundraising for the Church.

Our kind door lady who welcomed everyone with a smile and a chocolate!

The wonderful Tea Teams and Kitchen Team for keeping everyone fed and watered.

Each individual person who served on a stall.

The Claremont Players for creating a festive atmosphere, Santa and his elf helper who ensured every child went home happy.

One last thank you to the Counting Team for counting and banking the proceeds. With the result of all the above hard work we were able to raise, so far, the huge amount of **£3,680.**

**Thank you to everyone for their continued support.
The Fellowship Team @ LARCH**

CROSSREACH

Many thanks from Crossreach to all members who ordered cards and calendars from the Crossreach Christmas Catalogue. The total of all orders received amounted to £240. All profits from these sales go directly to fund the caring work of Crossreach right across Scotland.



1 Tinned soup	2 Shampoo	3 Pot/Instant Noodles	4 Tinned tomatoes	5 Rice	6 Deodorant
7 Biscuits	8 Sweet/Chocolate	9 Tinned fish	10 Coffee	11 Jam	12 Breakfast cereal
13 Tea bags	14 Cup a Soup	15 Long-life fruit juice	16 Instant mash potatoes	17 Tinned vegetables	18 Cooking sauces
19 Tinned potatoes	20 Tinned meat	21 Toilet rolls	22 Rice/custard pudding	23 UHT long-life milk	24 Tinned fruit

Edinburgh NE Foodbank

Registered Charity in Scotland 44944

I'm sure we're all familiar with the typical advent calendar where you open a window each day of Advent and receive a little message, image or, more usual nowadays, a little treat.

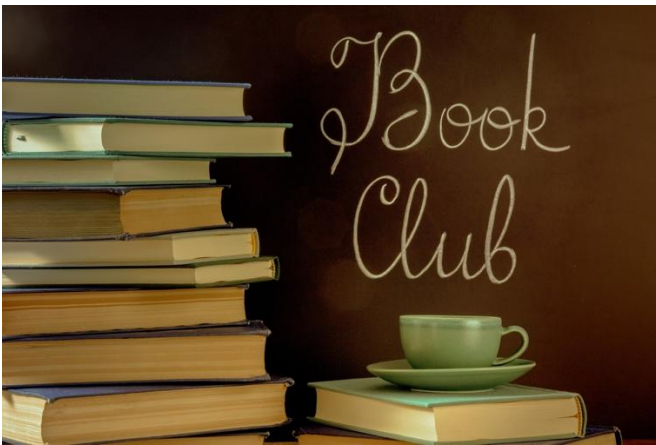
We would like to turn this idea on its head with a Reverse Advent Calendar where you **give** rather than receive. The idea is that we would like you to buy an item for the Foodbank for each day of advent (or as many as you can manage) and then bring them to our **Christmas Gift Service on 21 December**, though we will accept items on any Sunday in Advent. Items particularly in demand at the moment are non-perishable foodstuffs and toiletries, as well carrier bags, though you are not limited to these.

Feel free to add some Christmassy items too, though if doing so, please try to bring these donations as early as possible so that they can be distributed in time for Christmas. There are donation baskets in the vestibules at both LARCH Restalrig and Leith Walk.

THE OPEN DOORWAY CAFE – at LARCH Leith Walk will next take place on **Thursday 11th December** from 10.30am to noon.

Everyone is welcome to drop in for a refreshment (no charge but donations are welcome), you can have a chat or some quiet time and prayer and a chance to look around our wonderful sanctuary.

Thursday 25th December. There will be a service, but no open doorway at Larch Leith Walk at 10.30 on Christmas Day.



Just a reminder that our book group meet in the LARCH church hall on the last Tuesday of the month at 10 am.

We are reading a fun title "The Private Life Of Spies by Alexander McCall Smith.

Our 1st meeting is on the January 27th 2026.

All are welcome, and we have a coffee break at 11am when we choose what we will read for the following month. We conclude at 11:30am.

Happy New Year to all readers.

Dorothy.



FLOWERS

If you wish to donate flowers, there is a sign-up sheet on the left-hand noticeboard as you enter the large hall at the McLaren Halls. Please note that for each Sunday, there are two boxes, one to show you are donating flowers and one to indicate that you wish to arrange the flowers yourself. Please ensure you sign the correct box or boxes!

Donations for the Flower Fund can be put in the box located at the back of the Restalrig Sanctuary.

If you wish to donate or suggest flowers for someone who might appreciate them, please speak let Angie know in the office, so that this can be arranged or email the Pastoral Care Team.

on pastoralcare.team@larch.org.uk .

Wishing all at Leith and Restalrig Church a very Happy Christmas and New Year. Love and Blessings, Irene E.

Catriona and Bill wish everyone at Larch a good Christmas and all the best for 2026.

Sending love and best wishes for a very happy Christmas to our Church friends old and new. Joanne and Steve

John and Lisa would like to wish everyone at Larch a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Wishing everyone at Leith and Restalrig a wonderful Christmas and all the best for 2026. Stuart

Thank you for the cards and best wishes you sent me for the arrival of my great grandson. Irene E

Thank you for the lovely flowers I received last Sunday – a welcome surprise. Catriona B

THE CARE VAN

The Care Van has an ongoing need for donations of casual street clothing such as woolly hats, jogging bottoms, sweatshirts, tee-shirts, warm jumpers, socks, and underwear. Also, basic toiletries, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes. ALL donations are very gratefully received - thank you.

Please pop donations into the collection bag at the church entrance, or hand in to either of the Church Offices:- LARCH LEITH Office Tel: 0131 554 7400:(Mondays 0830-1630) or LARCH RESTALRIG Office Tel: 0131 553 1876 (Wednesdays & Thursdays 0830-1230). Please call the relevant office first. Thank you

THURSDAY CLUB

24th January 2026 Burns Supper Evening,

26th February 7.30pm AGM

Please contact the church office for further details



LARCH CHARITY OF THE YEAR

The Ripple offers local children & young people aged 6-18yrs a varied programme of play, activities and educational opportunities designed to encourage, develop & reinforce their skills and self image in a safe and supportive environment. We take a family centred approach to our youth work that includes providing assistance with challenges our families are facing.



Christmas by candlelight

Featuring the

CAPITAL CONCERT BAND

Carols, Christmas music and much more

**At Leith St Andrew's Parish Church
410-412 Easter Road.
Leith EH6 8HT**

Saturday 13th December 2025 at 5pm

Tickets £8 (£5 concessions)

Family ticket £20 (2Adults 2children)

**Tickets available from
Capital concert band@blueyonder.co.uk
www.capitalconcertband.co.uk
from members or at the door**

**Capital Concert Band
is a recognised Scottish Charity
Charity Number: SC035673**



OSCR
Scottish Charity Organisation
www.oscr.org.uk
Registered Charity
SC035673

