



**LEITH AND
RESTALRIG CHURCH**

APRIL and MAY

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) 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

This is a reduced version of the magazine for general publication. Members and adherents who would like more information should contact the Church office.

WELCOME TO THE APRIL AND MAY 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, May 21st 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.

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.

Thursday 23rd April Games and afternoon tea

Thursday 28th May to be confirmed Borders Railway

IN LARCH, Leith Walk Building.

1B Pilrig Street. EH6 5AH Wheelchair users - please ring the bell at Pilrig Street, middle door

Oasis of Peace

Wednesdays at 10.15 (Open Doorway)

Open Doorway café 10.30-12noon

9th and 23rd April

14th and 28th May

Midweek Worship

on the last Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm Entry by main door on Leith Walk

FROM OUR MINISTER

Dear Friends

I started to go down with a cold last week and thought I was recovering over the weekend. I thought I would save writing this article until the Monday deadline – today – when I was bound to feel better. Unfortunately, colds do have a habit of kicking in just at the point when you think you've defeated them, and that's what's happened here. Today is easily the worst day of this cold, so far, as a headache has joined the sore throat, cough and bunged-up feeling. It is only a cold. I can't complain, and I know that, but it is really annoying. You can't ever be sure of what a cold is going to do. One day it feels like it's definitely on the way out. Next day, it's cemented itself in your soul!

Plans are useful, we all know that, but we also know that a plan B is useful if the original plan doesn't go to plan. I have no plan B. I need to write this article, and it's slower work than usual, as my head feels like a pile of mince. If I had been able to see the future, I would have written it a few days ago, but the future always remains frustratingly beyond our reach – even though some people claim to be able to see it. None of them seem to win the lottery though.

We're entering the season of Easter, when Jesus enters Jerusalem in what looks like a triumphant procession but, a few days later, is arrested, tried (sort of) by Herod and Pilate, and is then crucified and buried. All this is offset by the resurrection on the third day. Frequently, when Jesus led his disciples around the towns and villages of Israel and Palestine, he told the disciples that he would be put to death. Also, that he would rise to life. It's as though Jesus could tell the future, even if his disciples usually struggled to take it in. What happened at Easter seemed to be a surprise to them, despite Jesus plainly telling them what would happen several times. You'd think they would have made plans.

But, of course, preparing ourselves for death is one thing, and experiencing loss is quite another. We're never quite ready for that final moment, even if we know it's coming. As human beings, we're somehow not well equipped for future planning, let alone for future insight. Theologians argue about this, just as they argue about everything. Some theologians say that Jesus did know what was going to happen to him. He was God, after all, and he gave the disciples advance warning of his forthcoming death. He knew Judas would betray him. He knew he'd die on a cross, and he knew he'd rise again after three days. He talked to his disciples about it, and not just once but on many occasions. The gospels all make this plain.

Other theologians take a different view. They say that the gospel writers added in these prophecies afterwards. They say that Jesus, although son of God, was also fully human, and couldn't have known exactly what the future held for him. Also, if it all was predestined, that makes the Roman and Jewish authorities mere robots, without free will. It leaves Judas without responsibility for his betrayal if somehow it *had to* happen that way, if he had no real say in the matter. It makes the Easter story feel inauthentic if God is just a puppet master in the heavens, manipulating events that the characters have no control over. But the gospel writers, they say, made Jesus seem aware of the future because they wanted to emphasise a supernatural quality and power.

We could easily tie our heads in knots just by thinking too hard about all this. Here's my opinion, for what it's worth! I think all the humans involved did have choices, and they did act with free will. If they had made different choices, perhaps things would have gone differently, but God would still have found ways to show how mercy, forgiveness and love would ultimately win out over the forces of bitterness, revenge and hate. That is the core meaning of the Easter story, and we can see it playing out throughout Jesus' life in everything he said and did. Whether he could tell the future or not isn't really the point. The point is that God, and God's love, is already in whatever the future holds. We just have to journey to it in faith.

Just as today I just had to start typing on my keyboard, believing that something would be written in the end, slow work or not.

Rob Mackenzie (minister, LARCH)

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.

Kenny Mackenzie

Our Church Officer, Kenny Mackenzie, has stepped down as Church Officer and Convener of the Worship Team with immediate effect for personal reasons. Kenny has been Convener of the Worship Team for many years, and Church Officer at St Margaret's for some time. He has been valued in both roles and his willingness to continue at LARCH has been greatly appreciated.

We wish him a well-earned rest from his duties.

Stuart Lithgow
Session Clerk

Little Larch Nursery

We have recently had power installed in our new Sensory room and hope to have this operational soon with the sensory equipment.

With the better weather, our attention is now being turned to making the outdoor space a bit greener -

- One large, and one small willow tunnel have been built and these are already starting to show signs of growth.
- We were fortunate enough to have a few trees and Buxos Hedging donated and these have been used to section off the play areas and make the site more attractive.
- Students from Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) have helped to shape and Turf a mound of earth, which they are calling a Micro Arthur's Seat (without the Crag!), which the children will just love to play on this.

We still have a lot of space to fill, so donations of plants and shrubs will always be most welcomed. Ideally, we also want some fruit trees but these need to be purchased, so if you would like to sponsor a fruit tree, then please let me know.

DIY Skills are constantly in demand for both repairs and building new play areas from pallets. It is amazing what can be achieved in a few hours.

If you would like to visit the Nursery, then I would be happy to show you around. Just get in touch.

Christine Peace

Contacting the Property Team

The Kirk Session & Property Team are responsible for the ongoing maintenance, operating functions, legislative & statutory

requirements and, more importantly, the future of no less than 11 separate and significant buildings within the property portfolio that we have collectively inherited. Most of this falls to a small but dedicated team of volunteers, led by Alex Dickson, our Property Convener. The team has been very busy since the union and has carried out a huge amount of work.

However, it has become apparent over time that some members of the congregation may be unaware of the volume of ongoing work in relation to property. Nor are they aware of the pressure this can put on members of the team, not least because they all also have other roles/responsibilities within the church. This can lead to the perception that jobs are not being tackled, or not being tackled as quickly as they would like. This is certainly not the case. The team tries very hard to ensure that all requests and queries regarding property maintenance are investigated and resolved timeously.

With this in mind, we would like to remind all members of the 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 board at McLaren Halls and at LARCH Leith Walk.

Whilst it may seem convenient to report matters face-to-face before or after a Sunday service, please note that this is valuable time to allow team members to worship and socialise. **Our preference is for you to use the methods outlined above to contact us on property matters. You should only be raising issues face-to-face on a Sunday if the situation is urgent or if it is an emergency.**

Thank you for your cooperation.

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. We are looking for donations of new or unused items to be used as prizes, such as toiletries, fancy goods, stationery, clothing accessories, ornaments, jewellery, alcohol and soft toys.

Please hand in your donations on any Sunday till the end of May.

SORRY: we cannot accept bric-a-brac, books, electrical items, clothing or perishable goods.

If you require help to bring these items to church, please let Stuart know. His details are below.

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 (0777 225 1988) or by email at session.clerk@larch.org.uk for further details.



St John
Ambulance



St John
Ambulance
**FIRST
AID**



Defibrillator (Defib) and CPR Training Opportunity

St John Ambulance is offering Defib and CPR training.

If you are interested in taking part, please speak to **Alex Dickson**.

A sign-up sheet is also available in McLaren Halls (Noticeboard).

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

URGENT !!! - THE CARE VAN NEEDS YOUR HELP !

CARE VAN

Driver needed for Care Van

We need an occasional driver for one of our teams. This would involve collecting the van from Bethany premises in Jane Street and driving it on a set route via Waverley Bridge and the Grassmarket, setting off around 8.30pm and arriving back around 10.30pm. It would be on the first Wednesday of the month - but only every *other* month so just a few times a year. Training can be provided. Sandra will be happy to provide more information to anyone who can help.

Thank you, Sandra



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

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



HOME BAKING STALL in aid of Guild projects:

Bibles for Bairns • Operation Hope Egypt

A huge **THANK YOU** to everyone who came to our Bake Sale, we raised **£205** which is amazing.

Thanks again



Irene B - The Guild

Leith and Restalrig Church – Kirk Session

We recently held an Elders' Conference to begin the development of our plans for Mission and Outreach. We learned that our parish contains over 28,000 people, over half of which are adults under the age of 45. A quarter of the people in the parish live alone. We looked at needs in our community. One of the overarching themes identified was loneliness. Other themes which emerged included mental health issues, addiction, children and families and poverty. We also welcomed Kay Haggarty from SEECOS Gracemount (Southeast Edinburgh Church of Scotland) who gave an interesting talk on what they have been doing to develop mission in their area. A key message from Kay was how starting something in the community led to other things, and the importance of identifying gaps and plugging into existing services. Nikki was thanked for all her hard work in planning and facilitating the conference.

At the service on Sunday 15 March, some of the initial ideas from the conference were brought to the congregation, both to keep them informed of key points from the discussions but also to gather further ideas on what we can do, both personally and as a congregation to help build community and reduce loneliness.

Other items agreed or discussed at recent Session Meetings include:

- Advertising for a second Minister - there is a group working on the parish profile; the Presbytery Vacancy Advisory Committee had been appointed and will be invited to a future Session meeting.
- It was agreed to issue Personal Information Update forms to all members of the congregation, either by email or by post, as we were aware that the information we held was not as up-to-date as it should be.
- The roll was attested; as of 31 December 2025, we had 402 communicant members, 10 adherents and 91 on the supplementary roll.
- A small team has been established to look at how LARCH Leith Walk could be redeveloped to make it more flexible for our future needs as a congregation and for the wider community.
- Both boilers have been replaced at LARCH Restalrig. The boiler at the Open Doorway in LARCH Leith Walk has also been replaced.
- New LED lighting has been installed in the small hall, Hanlon Centre and entrance hall at the McLaren Halls. The lighting in the entrance hall now comes on automatically when it senses someone in that area in order make entering and exiting the building safer, especially for those less-familiar with the position of the switches. An unfortunate consequence of the improved lighting is that it shows up the need to refresh the décor. It is planned to do this once funds become available.
- The manse in Pilrig Street is now up for sale.

- Session approved the removal of ivy from LARCH Restalrig and this was carried out. It was important to get this done as ivy can cause damage to stonework.
- Session discussed a proposal for the use of 'The Den' (a small upstairs room at LARCH Leith Walk) as a creative space for Christian artists. The room is presently used as a storage space. It was agreed to investigate the proposal further, including the practicalities involved and bring it back to the next Session meeting.
- Leith St. Andrews building - Presbytery has agreed to push back the date of the sale to the end of 2026 to give Leith St Andrew's Trust time to find the funding to purchase the building.
- It was agreed to run a tombola and information stall at the Leith Gala Day on 13 June. Whilst we have a reasonable number of prizes held over from last year, there will be an appeal for more items – please see the separate article in the magazine. We are continuing to raise funds for The Ripple. However, any items left over this time (hopefully none since the sun will be shining 😊) will go towards our new 'charity of the year'.

With every blessing

Stuart Lithgow
Session Clerk

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.

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

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)

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.

Unfortunately, there has been a delay in getting the same form out to members who receive communications by post. This should hopefully reach you soon 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

Raise funds for us for FREE

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Join as our supporter today at:
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Just search for:

Leith and Restalrig Church of Scotland

8,000+ retailers will donate to us whenever you shop with them



JOHN
LEWIS



Start at the
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Click out
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like to shop



Checkout:
prices are exactly
the same!

The retailer sends
a % of your spend
to easyfundraising



They pass
it on to us
:)

Plus, you'll get...



Exclusive retailer offers



Competitions



A warm feeling inside!

Over
£60m
raised for UK good causes

£0
extra cost to anyone

Holy Week & Easter Services

Palm Sunday 29th March 📍 LARCH: Restalrig
11am Communion Service in the Sanctuary.

Wednesday 1st April 📍 LARCH: Leith Walk
10.15am Open Doorway Oasis of Peace Prayer Service.

Maundy Thursday 2nd April 📍 LARCH: Leith Walk
7pm - please bring some food - communion will be celebrated.

Good Friday 3rd April 📍 LARCH: Restalrig
7pm Service in the Sanctuary.

Easter Sunday 5th April 📍 LARCH: Restalrig
7am early Service in the garden - tea/coffee afterwards.

Easter Sunday 5th April 📍 LARCH: Restalrig
11am all-age Service in the Sanctuary.

All are warmly
invited to join us
at any or all of
the services.



Scan for more info:



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



LARCH - MCLAREN HALLS PLAYGROUP

**LARCH Restalrig McLaren Halls,
48 Restalrig Road South, EH7 6LE
Every Thursday – 9.30-11.30am**



LARCH RESTALRIG



LARCH LEITH WALK