LEITH AND RESTALRIG CHURCH
OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 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

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 and the weekly newsletter 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
Office, McLaren Halls and Hanlon Centre,
48 Restalrig Rd. South, EH7 6LE
The church office is the address for all correspondence.
LARCH: Leith Walk Building 1b Pilrig Street, Edinburgh EH6 5AH
LARCH Easter Road Building 410-412 Easter Road EH6 8HT

WELCOME TO THE OCTOBER and NOVEMBER 2026 MAGAZINE

Thank you very much for all the articles and posters. Any items for the next edition, including general Christmas greetings, should be received by November 19th 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.

PLEASE NOTE: REMEMBRANCE SERVICE, SUNDAY 8th NOVEMBER at 10.50am

REGULAR EVENTS IN THE McLAREN HALLS and Hanlon Centre
Restalrig Road South, Edinburgh, EH7 6LE:
Craft Group, Every Wednesday, 2pm-4pm Hanlon Centre
See Irene Banks for further information
The Guild – resumes on 1st October see page 8
The Book Group meets on the last Tuesday of the month.
Thursday Club Meets monthly in the McLaren Halls, unless otherwise stated.

REGULAR EVENTS 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 Morning 10.30-12noon every Thursday
Open Doorway Evening last Wednesday of each month at 7pm
See back cover 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/



OASIS OF PEACE
Wednesdays 10.15am at LARCH: Leith Walk

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

From our minister:

Dear Friends

Summer seems to have flown by. It's already feeling like autumn but, although the leaves will start turning brown and will fall from the trees, and the weather will grow increasingly cooler, autumn is a time of newness every bit as much as spring. It's when the organisations and groups that have shut down for the summer holidays start up again. And, for many, it's the beginning of a new session. The football season begins (did it ever end? These days, only for a few weeks). And the gentle breezes of summer find their true energy once more!

John Keats understood that people naturally lamented the transition from the positivity of spring and summer to the long months of autumn and a coming winter. His famous poem, *To Autumn*, takes us on a tour of the seasons. The days would grow darker, colder and shorter, but Keats wasn't altogether saddened:

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too.

Keats addresses autumn and declares the memory of spring over. Instead, the music of autumn is playing for anyone who has ears to listen. The lambs bleat, the crickets sing, the robin whistles, the swallows twitter, and (most strikingly of all the descriptions in his poem), the gnats *mourn*. This isn't seen as a negative. What happens in autumn also happened in spring – the lambs were bleating then too, and we can guess there was also similar mourning. There is a similar growth but also signs of decay in summer, which sets budding more

> And still more, later flowers for the bees,
> Until they think warm days will never cease,
> For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

There is linear time. Linear time is a forward-pointing arrow. What we think of first when we look at a clock or a calendar. Time moves forward. One season follows another and we can never go back to what there was before. We age, everyone at exactly the same rate. Every year we become one year older and there's no way to put the brakes on. Linear time is relentless.

There is also cyclical time. Many people in East Asia think of time in this way before any thought of linear time. Cyclical time is more like a circle. It is history repeating itself over and over. The same months every year, the cycle of seasons – spring, summer, autumn, winter – endlessly playing themselves out, the same human dilemmas, the same mistakes. "There is nothing new under the sun", wrote the writer of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament. Or there's the Elvis Costello lyric from his song 'Beyond Belief':

> History repeats the old conceits:
> the glib replies, the same defeats.

Keats seems more of a cyclical time guy. He holds together both the decay and the promise of autumn, just as there is both decay and promise in every season of life. We're often directed only to the decay by newspapers and social media doomscrolling, and sometimes even in the conversations we have in everyday life, but the promise is also always alive. Wherever we go, God has already journeyed there before us. God is the author of time, the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, and promises that "three things are eternal: faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love" (I Corinthians 13: 13).

Caitlin Kimball reports at the U.S. Poetry Foundation site:

'"I have two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your Loveliness and the hour of my death," Keats wrote to his would-be love, Fanny Brawne, that summer. He had watched his own brother die of tuberculosis just a few months before, and his medical training would have made clear to him the likelihood of his own fate. As he roamed the stubble-plains of Winchester in September, tubercular bacteria were already colonizing his lungs. A few months later, the illness worsened and his doctor advised him to curb his writing to preserve what was left of his vitality. That summer of 1819, the season of Keats's flourishing that culminated in *To Autumn*, would be the poet's own autumn.'

Winter came for him in 1821. But his words still live among us today. The cycle of time and the linearity of time, continue simultaneously today, and into the future, where God is already waiting and new flourishing can begin.

Rob Mackenzie, minister LARCH

To Autumn

John Keats (1795-1821)

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
  Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
  With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
  And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
    To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
  With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
    For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
  Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
  Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
  Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
    Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
  Steady thy laden head across a brook;
  Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
    Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?
  Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
  And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
  Among the river sallows, borne aloft
    Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
  Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
  The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
    And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

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.

The new session of the Guild commences on 1st October. We look forward to seeing everyone again and hopefully any new members who will be made most welcome.
Here are the dates for the above:

2026
Oct 1. Nikki Kirkland - Ordained Local Minister
Oct 15. Reminiscent Quiz
Nov 5. Eric Fisher – Memories of 1970 Commonwealth Games
Nov 19. Scottish Afternoon - Marjory McMahon
Dec 3. Christmas meal

2027
Jan 21. Ministry Team
Feb 4. Eric Fisher - Sing-a-long
Feb 18. Moira McDonald - Chaplain to the King
Mar 4. Irene Malcolm - Knitted Gospels
Mar 18. Bring-n-Buy and AGM.

Irene Taylor
Guild Secretary

LEITH ST ANDREW'S TRUST

Can you help keep the doors open for future generations? Join Leith St. Andrew's Trust SCO53426

The Trust has just a few days to keep Leith St Andrew's church in community hands. The building is due to be sold off and if it's sold to a private buyer, all the brilliant groups who use it now – like the foodbank, brownies, concert band, dance school and perinatal support group – will be kicked out and the community will lose access to the building completely.



Leith St. Andrew's Trust is a registered charity set up to buy the building and keep it in community hands instead. They are proud Leithers who've been working hard for more than two years to make this happen, and now they need our help. The Scottish Land Fund are deciding at the start of October whether they will give them the funding they need to buy the building. They've said they need to know that the building will be truly community owned and managed in order to grant them the funding. They've set an ambitious target of recruiting 800 members or 20% of the local community by this date. This meant having as many people in the local community as possible signed up as Leith St. Andrew's Trust members by Tuesday 22nd September. As a result of this they have had to temporarily reduce the size of the community they are targeting for membership. (A map showing this area is available in our weekly news.) Don't worry though after they have the funding you will be able to join as an associate member.
By joining Leith St Andrew's Trust you'll become part of their

mission to ensure this building stays part of the community, you'll have full voting rights at their upcoming General Meetings and Annual General Meetings, and be eligible to stand as a trustee.
All of that for just £1 a year!
You can join right now by clicking the following link: https://members.leithstandrewstrust.org/join
This is a pivotal moment for the trust's mission to bring this historic Leith building into community ownership. For more than a century the building has been a place for people to come together, and they want to preserve that legacy for all Leithers, now and for years to come.
The Trust has made some fantastic progress towards keeping Leith St Andrew's at the heart of our community in the two years since the trust was established and they hope you can join them for the rest of this exciting journey.

CROSSREACH CHRISTMAS CARD & CALENDAR CATALOGUE

The Crossreach Christmas Card & Calendar Catalogue is now available on the table in the Church vestibule or in the Hall. Please feel free to pick up a catalogue and take it home to look at at your leisure. If you would like to order any cards/calendars please fill in the order form attached to the catalogue and either hand it to Christine Edington, or place it in the envelope marked CROSSREACH ORDERS on the table in the Church vestibule. The last Sunday for receipt of orders will be Sunday 18th October. All profits made from the sale of goods from the Catalogue go directly to help the wonderful work which Crossreach does caring for vulnerable people all over Scotland. Thank you in advance for any support which you feel able to give.



LARCH CHURCH REGISTER

Deaths

We are saddened to share news of recent bereavements within our Parish Community. We ask that you keep the families and friends of those who have passed in your thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.

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). If you are up to arranging them that would be great, you don't have to do big displays, they **can** be put in vases.

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 Angie know in the office or email the Pastoral Care Team on pastoralcare.team@larch.org.uk or Lisa Innes (lisa.innes@gmail.com)

Thank you - The Pastoral Care Team



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.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

OCTOBER

4 October - Harvest Thanksgiving - donations of non-perishable food will be welcomed for the Food Bank
11 (or 18) October - Guild Dedication Service - date to be confirmed with Guild
18 (or 11) October - Bereavement Service
25 October – Communion

NOVEMBER

8 November - Remembrance Sunday **10.50am**
15 November - Safeguarding Sunday
21 November - Church Fayre 11am-1pm More information will be coming out in weekly news.

DECEMBER

3 December - Craigentinny Tree Lighting Service
13 December - Gift Day (donations to Cash for Kids or the Food Bank)
16 December - Carols on the Steps (7 pm, Leith Walk)
20 December - Nativity
21 December - Coffee and Carols (7 pm, McLaren Halls)
24 December - Christmas Eve all age and Watchnight services (Restalrig)
25 December - Christmas Day service (10.30 am, Leith Walk)

LARCH - CHRISTMAS FAYRE

📍 Saturday 21st November 2026 11 am – 1 pm
McLaren Halls, 48 Restalrig Road South, Edinburgh, EH7 6LE

Donations Accepted from 4th October 2026
Further details from Church Office

There will be a donation box at the door of the Church or alternatively donations can be dropped into Restalrig Church Office either Wed or Thurs 0900 – 1200
Unwanted new gifts (NO bric a brac)
Chocolate
Wine
Books/Jigsaws
Raffle Prizes
If you have any difficulties bringing your donation(s) innplease see Mary or Katrina or contact the Church Ofiice

Further information about the craft and baking stall
See Irene Banks or contact via the Church Office



Weekly Christmas choir rehearsals in the Sanctuary starting Sunday 18 October, 9.45am before church service

The choir will be singing at Craigentinny Tree lighting service (3 Dec)
Coffee and carols (21 Dec)
and a December Sunday service (date tbc)
Everyone welcome

AUTUMN WORSHIP WORKSHOPS

Rob is planning to run two workshops on the theme of Worship in October, both on Sunday afternoons after church (bring a packed lunch) in the McLaren Halls. They will each last about 60-90 minutes. No one will have to stand in front of an audience and read anything out loud. The workshops will be accessible for everyone of all abilities and experience (or lack of), and also entertaining!

Sunday 11 October – a workshop on how to create public prayers, using, words, silence, images, and responses, and whatever else.

Sunday 25 October – a workshop on how to create an entire order of service: hymns, prayers, readings, reflections and other creative items, and how to blend them as a unity. We won't create all of these individual things, just use existing elements to build a whole service.

If you think this probably isn't for you, then it most probably is! And you will have fun too.

McLaren Halls Redecoration - POSTPONED

Due to exceptional circumstances outwith our control, we have sadly had to postpone the redecoration of the McLaren Halls. We will rearrange this for a convenient time later on. Huge apologies to everyone concerned.

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

Edinburgh NE Foodbank
Together with Trussell

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

Leith and Restalrig Church – Kirk Session

September traditionally sees the restart of many of our groups, as well as those outside groups who also use our halls. It is great to see all this activity taking place and we wish all those involved a wonderful year ahead filled with fun, friendship and happy memories.

Items agreed or discussed at the Session Meetings in August and September include:

- Advertising for a second Minister – the vote to depart from the Church's traditional practice in relation to human sexuality took place in the August meeting. The vote was unanimous to depart from this position.
- Once a few tweaks to the Congregational Action Plan are agreed, this, along with our completed Parish Profile, will be passed to the Vacancy Advisory Committee for approval. Once this happens, we can begin the next stage of appointing a Nomination Committee and advertising the post.
- Refurbishment of Leith Walk building – it was agreed that any major redevelopment should be put on hold until we have a clear vision for the use of the building. A small team was set up to discuss this, taking into account previous discussions at the two Elders' conferences, the responses received from the congregation on ideas for addressing the issue of loneliness, as well as our mission to the parish as set out in the Presbytery Plan. It was subsequently agreed that the building should host a 'Well-being centre' for the local community with various initiatives proposed involving food, a warm hub, clothes bank and groups that nurtured well-being, alongside existing worship and Open Doorway activities. A small planning group was established to take forward these proposals. When appointed, the second Minister would be very much involved in these and other initiatives in the Leith Walk building. It was

also agreed that some upgrades will be required to the kitchen and toilets in light of these proposals.

- We are looking for a new Safeguarding Coordinator (or coordinators). When Catriona took on this role, she requested that it would be on a temporary basis only. She has done a wonderful job in sorting out everything in relation to safeguarding for our united congregation, so everything is in a good place for someone else to take over. Many churches have joint coordinators to share the load and this is something we would be happy to have at LARCH. Please consider whether you would be willing to take on this role (either alone or alongside someone else) to allow Catriona to step aside - you can talk to Catriona or Ginny if you want to find out more.
- Work has commenced on repairing the roofs at Leith Walk and Restalrig. Almost inevitably it seems, further works come to light once contractors are on site and have the chance to examine the buildings more closely. There are further roof timber repairs at Restalrig however stonework to the rear of the Leith Walk building has been found to be in a very poor state due to weathering over many years. It requires to be done due to health and safety concerns. This additional work requires to be approved by Presbytery.
- A contractor was appointed to redecorate all three halls, the toilets and the entrance hallway at McLaren Halls in September. However, this did not take place due to the contractor requiring major surgery the day before the works were due to start. The Property Team will now look at alternative dates and the possibility of a different contractor or undertaking painting in one hall at a time.
- Fire risk assessments were carried out in all LARCH church buildings and halls and updated guidance will be issued regarding evacuation procedures in due course.
- St Margaret Apartments – we still cannot access the old office and flat following the fire. It was reported that, as the flat was

unoccupied at the time of the fire, we cannot claim insurance for loss of rental income.

- Leith St Andrew's building – we were approached by a company acting on behalf of one of the mobile phone providers to install a mast in the tower. Initially, this seemed a promising idea as it would have provided much needed income, as we do at Leith Walk which has housed a mast for many years. However, upon receiving the Heads of Terms document which outlines the basis for a contract, it became clear that the proposal could have a negative impact on both ourselves, and Leith St Andrew's Trust who hope to purchase the building as a community resource. Unfortunately, these companies have a great deal of legal right to force such an agreement and so we have been advised by the Church of Scotland Law Department to appoint a specialist law firm which has dealt with similar situations on behalf of the General Trustees to act on our behalf.
- Personal Information Update – there has been a limited response to the appeal for the return of these forms, with only a third of members having updated their details. As part of the Vacancy process for the second minister, we are required to prepare an electoral register of members who will be eligible to elect a Nominating Committee. This register will be based on the information we hold so it is vital we have the most up-to-date details.
- The Ministry Team were intending to organise an Arts Festival for September with follow-up events in October and November. This has now been moved back till next year though a couple of events are planned for the autumn.
- The annual accounts for 2025 were approved by Session. A great deal of work was caused by bringing together the three separate sets of accounts for 2024 from the legacy congregations. Mark was thanked for all his hard work in relation to these.

- The garage which was used by ministers of Pilrig St Paul's has been sold for £25,000 after fees.
- Our MDS, Judith, reported that she was having difficulties communicating with Craigentinny Primary School in order to arrange dates for Meet, Eat and Play. This appeared to be due to a number of temporary appointments to the Senior Leadership Team at the school. It was hoped that things would be sorted out, at least by November, when the Headteacher returns from leave.

With every blessing

Stuart Lithgow
Session Clerk

Update of Personal Details – PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN

A few months ago, all members were sent a request (either by email or post) to complete, as fully as possible, a form to confirm or update their personal details and to return it to the church. Whilst some more forms have come in, we have only received a third of the total due.

As part of the Vacancy process for the second minister, we are required to prepare an electoral register of members who will be eligible to elect a Nominating Committee. This register will be based on the information we hold so it is vital we have the most up-to-date details.

We have included a further copy of the form with this magazine, on page 23. If you have not already done so, please **complete and return the form as soon as possible, even if you think we have all your details, or if your details have not changed.** If you would prefer to do this by email, please contact Angie at mail@larch.org.uk . Alternatively, you may wish to contact Angie on 0131 554 7400 and she can record your details over the phone.

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

If we do not receive your form by the end of September, we may have to phone you. Ideally, we would prefer not to cold call members but we may have no other option. If you receive a phone call, it will be from one of the members of the Pastoral Care Team: Mary Coats, Val McIntosh, Catriona Blackwood, Lisa Innes, Joan Scott, Rob Mackenzie, Douglas Paterson or Stuart Lithgow. We will introduce ourselves and address you by your surname to begin with.

Those members for whom we have no telephone contact details will receive a further letter by post. Sadly, a nil return may indicate that you are no longer interested in continuing to be a member of Leith and Restalrig Church.

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

It is also important to let your next of kin know to contact us should you request or require pastoral care but are unable to do so yourself.

Stuart Lithgow
Session Clerk

Raise funds for us for FREE

with easyfundraising

Join as our supporter today at:
www.easyfundraising.org.uk/support-a-good-cause

Just search for:

Leith and Restalrig Church

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Over **£60m** raised for UK good causes

£0 extra cost to anyone

LARCH - Personal Information Update Form

Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/other):

First name:

Name you wish to be known by, if different from above:

Surname:

Date of birth (optional):

Address:

Post code:

Home phone number:
Mobile phone number:
Email address:
Name of next of kin (first and surname):
Phone number of next of kin:

As part of our pastoral care responsibilities, we would be delighted to keep regular contact, either by phone or a personal visit. In the latter case, we would always phone first to arrange a visit.

Would you like a **regular personal visit (at least twice a year)**? (*State Yes or No)*:

Would you prefer **regular contact by phone (at least twice a year)**? (*State Yes or No)*:

(You can answer "Yes" to both of these questions.)

🌿 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)*