

NORTH LEITH PARISH CHURCH MAGAZINE

March 2024



Dear Friends

Easter can bring thoughts of joy and celebration. Easter can bring to mind thoughts of sadness and contemplation. As Christians we are reminded of the pain and suffering Jesus endured on the journey to the cross and while He was nailed there for all to see. His path was one of unbearable pain, torture, and death. Even while Jesus knew that he was fulfilling the promises of his father, Jesus experienced every emotion for us. His tears, heartbreak, and pain were not for himself but for each believer. He died so that we may live.

He was pierced for our wrongdoings, he was crushed for our crimes the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We are like sheep that have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way.

The promise of Easter is found for us all in knowing that he rose from the tomb and lives today, and he sits at the right hand of God his Father.

Easter is a time to remember and give thanks to God. May the love and sacrifice of Jesus be remembered as we celebrate our risen Lord. Each moment of the life of Jesus had purpose. God had a plan for his son, and God has a plan for each one of us. Peace to you all.

Your friend in Christ

Karen McKay, Interim Moderator

And finally, from me to all of you:

In December 2021 I was asked by Presbytery if I would be the Interim Moderator for North Leith Church “this would be a different type of Interim Moderator” I was told and how right they were.

You welcomed me with open arms, and you have all supported me in many different ways over the last two years and three months. We have had a journey full of learning, excitement and with a lot of different emotions. Throughout all of this you have never lost sight of what we were trying to do and that it was something that needed to be done to survive as a Church.

You will still face many different challenges and possibly some changes. Keep your cherished memories of the past, keep remembering these as they will help to sustain you but do not let them hold you back from trying new things, from being a new congregation and faithful Christians in Leith.

God has a plan he will continue to guide and sustain you on this journey as he has done before. I leave you with my blessing and wish you all well in your exciting new future as North and South Leith Parish Church.

All my love,

Karen

Memories of a Member

Behold my God a Church is closing
Whilst its memories are yet bestowing
Gifts of Grace and Kindly Spirit
The likes of goodness to inherit

The sanctuary is where we gather
To hear and seek our Sunday Father
And lift our hearts with praises ring
to Jesus and His Kingdom sing

The stained glass windows aye inspire us
To serve the Lord and sing in chorus
To with the Little Children suffer
The passing years of now or never

I met some lovely friends when here
Enjoyed some happy meetings dear
Although our Church is sadly closing
This member's heart is ever glowing

And so we carry all this onward
To help and heal the right way forward
Our memories will well remain
With fragrance in the grand refrain

With prayers for Peace and Posterity

Written on Wednesday 21 February 2024 by Norma Anne Macarthur

From Rev John Tait

Well, here we are, approaching the significant and historic change that has been overarching my time with you, as Locum Minister, since February 2023.

It's a time of much upheaval – in emotions and memories, as well as a time of excitement as we work alongside our friends of South Leith,

forming together the new congregation of North and South Leith Parish Church.

God is with us always - in the past, wonderful days of our memories, and also walking alongside us on this strange and shadowy path we find ourselves following.

In our efforts to enable this move forward to be as positive and caring as possible, our services on 17th and 24th March are focussing on being inclusive. We are sharing memories in different ways and also singing some favourite hymns.

The service on 17th March is being called 'A Service of Consolation at a Time of Loss'. This service is primarily for the North Leith congregation; those worshipping faithfully here during difficult times, without their own minister and treasuring the comfort of shared fellowship in familiar, beautiful surroundings. Their need for consolation and renewed hope is the greatest as they prepare to move on into the future, under God's guiding

The service on 24th March is being widely publicised and many people in the community will have received special invitations – including the Lord Provost and our local Councillors. However, anyone can come to this service. So please spread the word to all who would like to be there, especially those also having happy memories of North Leith.

This last Sunday service will be on Palm Sunday and will include Holy Communion. At the end of the service we will mark leave-taking from the building with appropriate words, actions and symbols.

I look forward to sharing in these services with you all and in being part of North and South Leith Parish Church with you as well.

I have enjoyed my time as Locum Minister at North Leith, meeting and working with so many lovely people.

God bless you all.

John

Conclusion

I heard an echo of the past
From the fourteen hundreds on,
That many thought was going to last
Until North Leith was gone.

Ministers, Kings, and people cried
"A Parish Kirk"
As the foundation stones were laid
To service North Leith folk,
From gentleman to maid.

Yon parish grew accordingly
In worship and in faith
The glory bells outdoing
Henry's canon and Rough Wooing

But modern times they came on fast,
As echoes faded from the past,
And the raven cried NEVERMORE
Benorth the brig, down to the Shore

Aye, North Leith's still here
But her kirk is gone
Remembered only in a sunset song,
Sung when Easter time draws near

For He, our Lord, is not forsaken
Nor to death is taken
Great buildings, houses, they may fall
Yet Jesus teaches love is all.

He is in every nook and cranny
In every child, and their Granny
He dictates the word of mouth
Be it North, or be it South,
Or be it both as one
Our guide remains the Son.

Alan Addison

A message from Rev Iain May

At the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in April 2023, the Rev David Cameron, convener of the Assembly Trustees, said, “This is a critical time for the church as we make the essential changes needed to lay a sustainable foundation for the future..... A growing, flourishing church is within our reach, but we must let go of the old structures that no longer serve us and embrace a new and different future. God's love is enduring, and so must be our worship, witness, and mission of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.” These wise and profound words were part of the preamble before the discussion and subsequent vote on the way forward for the church nationally and locally.

On the 31st of March, Easter Day, North Leith Parish Church and South Leith Parish Church will come together to form the new parish church of North and South Leith Parish Church. From that day, it will be a new beginning for us all. The union of our two congregations is a historic occasion and a time of sorrow and loss for many. It is never easy to change, especially when losing a crucial part of your identity and connection. Agreeing to close the North Leith buildings was not easy for all concerned. Buildings do mean a lot to so many people. Over many generations, North Leith has been a place of worship, celebration, and sad times. Loss is never easy.

Yet, forming the new congregation is an opportunity to ensure we can sustain a strong Christian presence in North and South Leith. Together, our new congregation will shape, develop, and be the witnesses to a new and fresh expression of the Good News and Mission in our part of our fine city. Accepting and embracing our different experiences, understandings, skills, and talents will ensure we become united brothers and sisters in Christ.

The apostle Paul wrote:

“There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given to believers by the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve. But they all

come from the same Lord. There are different ways the Spirit works. But the same God is working in all these ways and in all people. The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all" (1Cor 12:4-7)

There will be many challenges ahead as our two ancient churches come together. Our churches have traditions dating back centuries, but we do not live in the past. Let us cherish our past, remember it, and celebrate it when and where we can, but also let it not hold us back from being the new congregation and faithful Christian presence in our current time and place.

This is the last edition of a newsletter under the name of North Leith Parish Church. Yet it is also a new beginning, folks are working on a new parish magazine, name to be determined! It is also the last time I will write as the Minister of South Leith Parish Church. From Easter Day, I will be the Minister of North and South Leith Parish Church. This is not an end, only a beginning for all of us. I will be with you over the coming months to help and support you all as we, the North and South Leith Parish Church congregation, come to terms with all that this new parish can be.

With my blessings and prayers

Iain

Upcoming Holy Week Worship Services

Monday 25 March at 7.30pm in South Leith church

Tuesday 26 March at 7.30pm in Pilrig St Paul's church

Wednesday 27 March at 7.30pm in Leith St Andrew's church

Thursday 28 March at 7.30pm in St Margaret's Restalrig

Friday 29 March at 7.30pm in North Leith church

Sunday 31 March at 8.30am in the secret garden in the Kirkgate graveyard

Sunday 31 March at 11am Easter Day service in the newly named North and South Leith Parish Church in the Kirkgate

On Easter Sunday at 7pm Newhaven Parish Church will host an Easter Songs of Praise evening. A warm welcome is extended to all.

Church Family

We are sad to record the following death since the last magazine:
Mrs Margaret Stuart, of Gordon Street, on 31 January

Magazine

This will be the last North Leith Parish Church magazine.

Many thanks are due to the people who have contributed, in any way, over the past while to the magazine in this format.

A special thanks this month to Norma and Alan who have written the lovely poems in this edition. These will be read by the poets themselves at our special March services.

As has already been said, work has started on producing a new regular newsletter for members and friends of the new North and South Leith Parish Church of Scotland. You can look forward to that, probably starting with an April 2024 edition.

In the meantime we wish a blessed Easter Time to all our readers.

