



St Leonard's Welcomes You in Jesus' Name

'Come to me, all of you who are heavy laden, and I will
give you rest' Matthew 11 : 28



Pastoral Letter from the Minister

After the pancakes of Shrove Tuesday we find ourselves at the beginning of Lent in the Church calendar. Lent has two main purposes. Firstly we remember how Jesus was led out into the desert by the Holy Spirit, where he fasted for 40 days and nights. The Gospel tells us that He was ministered to by the Angels.



The other purpose that Lent has for us is to prepare ourselves to be closer to God, in mind body and spirit, for Easter.

The current uncertainties over lockdown and infection rates, along with new more aggressive variant virus strains, means that we may have a fairly restricted access to our Church buildings over Easter. We just have to hope and pray.

Fortunately, in spite of several of us having had the COVID virus over the past year, none of our members has succumbed to it. We have had to stay at home while some dear souls known to us have left this life and had a minimal private family funeral service. I hope that sometime in the Summer we may be able to hold a memorial service when we can mark their passing and give thanks to God for their lives among us.

After a decent amount of snow, that gave such pleasure in the park for children, mums and grandmas, Spring seems to be upon us with glorious bird song and flowers of many colours pushing up through the ground.

Spring and Easter come together well, with signs of new life. All this helps us celebrate, along with nature, the new life offered to lost people who turn to Jesus to heal their souls.

Easter resurrection tells us all that God has something better in store for us if we just follow Jesus. No matter what evil the world and the ruler of this world throws at us, it has already been defeated by Jesus the Messiah on the Cross.

People make a lot out of Valentines and hearty symbols at this time. If you have a cross, then please wear it openly and joyfully this Easter.

(Rev) D.K Prentice

Online Worship Calendar

During this time of continuing
Lockdown our Sunday worship will
continue online.

Services can be accessed each
week via You Tube or St Leonard's
Facebook page.

Over the next few weeks the
services will be led as follows:

Sunday 21st February
Rev Edward Andrews

Sunday 28th February
Rev Donald Prentice

Sunday 7th March
Rev Edward Andrews



Sunday 14th March
Rev Donald Prentice

Sunday 21st March
Rev Edward Andrews

Sunday 28th March
Rev Donald Prentice

Recordings of each service are also
available in CD format by
contacting John Carson
Tel: (01309) 674541.
Email: j.carson2@btinternet.com

Visit www.stleonardschurchforres.org.uk

Letter from the Guild President

Dear Ladies of the Guild,

I trust this finds you all safe and well.

These are very difficult times for all of us as we are again in lockdown. The restrictions have severely curtailed out social lives for now. But hopefully now that most of us have received our vaccinations things will improve.



It is very disappointing that we were unable to meet up for our Guild meetings but I hope we will meet up as soon as the loosening of restrictions allow. I know it is very difficult for all of us as we were not able to meet up with friends particularly in this cold weather. But I hope you are all trying to keep in contact with family as much as possible through the telephone, computer and even pen and paper.

When we all get back to normal it will lovely for us all to meet up again and I hope that will be soon.

God Bless you and keep you safe.

June

Congregational Statistics 2020

Roll as at 31st December 2019 - 137

Admitted by Certificate of Transfer – 1

Admitted by Profession of Faith – 2

Removed by Death – 5

Removed by Certificate – 3

Removed for Other Reasons – 6

Roll as at 31st December 2020 – 125

Adherents – 3

Supplementary Roll – 13

Cross Images Wanted

The Moderator of the General Assembly, Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair, is currently promoting a nationwide search for people to seek out and photograph pictures of crosses in their local neighbourhood, as part of a photographic competition, 'Hidden in Plain Sight'.

How many can you find in the Forres area? Remember they will not always obviously look like a cross at first glance.

Fabric Update

No sooner had work on the church roof been satisfactorily completed than we were confronted by an unforeseen accident.

Water seeping through part of the tower escalated to such an extent that it brought down the ceiling in the east staircase of the vestibule - much as it had done a few years ago in the west staircase. As you can imagine it has left behind a considerable mess and it is not yet clear whether insurance will cover part of the cost of repair.

Once the better weather arrives K2 will return to carry out further repair works on the tower. Vital repair work will also be carried out on the stone masonry around the windows and some of the coping stones in the boundary walls require repointing.

All in all we never seem to reach the end of necessary repairs to our building, but that's hardly surprising given its age!

Pastoral Care

If you know of anyone in the congregation who would like a phone call from a member of the Pastoral Care Committee, please let Joan Paterson know. The Committee would also like to be kept informed of anyone who is ill or in hospital.

Prayers for the Nation

Each Sunday evening at 7.00pm Christians across the country are invited to join in an ecumenical Prayer for the Nation. Copies of the prayer can be found on the Church of Scotland website and on Facebook

Financial Summary

I have been requested, along with Derek Charteris, our Treasurer, to provide a short, up to date summary of our finances to show what effect the current restrictions are having on these.

At the outset, I would like to thank all members and adherents who have faithfully given throughout the period since the first lockdown restrictions, either by keeping their monthly standing orders running, by switching to a monthly standing order or by handing in WFO envelopes or donations to either Derek or myself. This has helped greatly in our being able to meet our outgoings so far.

The following figures (adjusted to account for non-regular, 'one-off' transactions) will illustrate the effect that lockdown and restricted numbers, when open, have had on our financial situation. I have taken the account balances as at the end of January 2020 and compared them with those at the end of January 2021 and these are as follows: -

As at end January	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
General Account	1,978	1,013
Reserve Account	7,456	4,722
Fabric Account	29,350	19,135
Fabric Deposit With		
121 George Street	10,235	Nil
Youth Ministry Account	2,605	2,020
Benevolent Account	<u>1,621</u>	<u>1,622</u>
Total	<u>53,245</u>	<u>28,512</u>

General Account Summary		
	Jan. 2020	Jan. 2021
Open Plate	£512.19	£40
FWO	£1034	£623
Standing Orders	£1017	£1082
Total	£2563.19	£1745
Hall	£4263	£0

You can see that there has been a very significant drop between the two dates. We have felt severely both the loss of regular weekly income and the revenue from hall lets.

From the balances seen above, we can only use the General and Reserve account funds to meet ongoing, regular expenditure. Over the past two months we have not had to meet our Ministry and Mission payment to 121 George Street as this is spread over ten months. From next month on we will have to pay in excess of £2,600 each month to cover this.

Also, we have to meet a repair bill for the collapsed ceiling in the east tower the cost of which may or may not be covered by insurance and, if not will impact significantly on the balance of the Fabric Account. Over and above that, we have queried our electricity bill, which was huge in October and, as a result, we have temporarily stopped the regular monthly standing order. We will have to meet the agreed cost of this and subsequent months when the dispute is resolved. and this could be significant.

From all the foregoing, you can see that, if we are to remain viable, we need the support of all members to make up the 'lost' revenue caused by not being able to meet regularly.

I would ask you to consider all the above facts prayerfully.

John Carson, Finance Convener

New Mission Strategy

At a recent meeting the Kirk Session began discussion about putting together a new Mission Strategy for St Leonard's as we seek new ways of furthering our work and witness and expanding our fellowship.

One of the issues discussed was the existing dearth of certain age groups within the church, notably those in their 20s, 30s and 40s. Elders are currently pondering how best to address this key challenge, but would also welcome views from those in these age-groups. So if you have access to younger relatives, neighbours or friends, can you please ask them what would attract them to join/get involved in our church fellowship and let your Elder know their response. Your help in doing this would be much appreciated.



The Lent Encounter is a brand-new way to help you focus on the Bible, the life of Jesus and your own life, in the run-up to Easter. Sign up and you will receive a daily email throughout Lent. You will get beautiful pictures, Bible verses, practical challenges and personal reflections to help you encounter the Bible more deeply. To sign up go to the Bible Society website - www.biblesociety.org.uk.

Walking the Path A Christian Poem for Lent

Today my journey begins.
I will walk the winding path
That you have set before me.
I will leave behind the comforts of yesterdays –
The stability of life without unforeseen change
Where I am the captain of my soul,
The master of my destiny,
And the ruler of my fate.
But now I leave the wide, empty fields
And enter through the narrow gate –
Where I depart from my crumbling kingdom
And admit that I'm not fit to rule.
I choose to become a servant of your will
And refuse to feed mine any longer.
I choose to be weak
And in the process grow stronger
With every piece of me that gets replaced with you.
I don't know where you will lead me.
And if I'm honest, I'm terrified
Because every inch of my mind
Is telling me that it's foolish
To venture into the unknown with
Only faith as my guide.
But my heart knows that faith is more than enough
And when the road gets tough,
You'll be there by my side.
My spirit soars singing
That I shall be released,
As soon as I find that I've lost myself
And discover that you have increased.

James Farley

A Prayer for Lent

Dear Lord,
Your Word reveals to us a simple truth,
that sin entered this world
through human folly
in believing we could be like you,
and permeated history
through envy, selfishness and greed.
Yet sin, which holds us tight
within its grasp
cannot resist a heart that is touched
by your grace through Jesus Christ,
cannot contend with Living Water
pouring into hearts and souls.
Your Word reveals to us a simple truth,
that sin is defeated
and we can become
the people we were always meant to be,
by your grace through Jesus Christ. Amen

Unscramble Lent

Can you unscramble these special occasions associated with Lent?

1. YESHWAEDADNS (3,9)
2. MNPUYLASDA (4,6)
3. VRPSAESO (8)
4. ADNTMYURHASDUY (6,8)
5. EYKOELHW (4,4)
6. YFYRDSOTA (5,4)

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