

**St Margaret's Episcopal
Church, Leven**
Victoria Rd, Leven KY8 4EX

Our Eco-friendly Journey



We are committed to making our church community and buildings as eco-friendly as possible. This statement celebrates our environmental activities – achieved, in progress and planned.

Our grounds and buildings:



Our church is a single-aisle late-Victorian stone building situated on a corner of a busy road in a semi-residential area of Leven, within a 5-minute walk of the High Street. There is a brick church hall (1902) at the west end and the vicarage (1976) is situated within its own plot of land to the east.

Our church and church hall occupy less than half a hectare of land, most of which is laid to grass and/or gravel for ease of vehicular access. There is a brick electric sub-station directly behind the church hall with step access from the road.

All our buildings are surrounded by grass and/or flower beds. There are five mature trees, well-spaced along the south and west-side of the church near the stone boundary wall, and four saplings, one by the church hall, one in the front of the church, and two in the back by the car park.

Photo: Rowan saplings behind the church hall (2024).

Heating, lighting, and windows: We have contacted **Business Energy Scotland**, who have provided us with a number of recommendations, some of which we are able to take forward immediately, and others of which involve applying for large grants. The vestry is taking each forward, as and when able. Due to our architecture, solar panels are impractical.

Our congregation:

St Margaret's had been in an interregnum for five years until the Reverend Bonnie Evans-Hills joined as priest-in-charge from May 2020. Our environmental journey, in the sense of a concerted effort on the part of the Vestry to influence and improve our environment, began after the Covid lockdown was lifted on 9 August 2021. The church had closed at the start of lockdown and did not re-open until late summer 2020. A small congregation re-formed and the new Vestry elected in 2021 introduced a standing agenda item on the environment.

Our outreach:

Before and after lockdown, some members of the congregation were actively volunteering in environmental or green projects such as nearby Silverburn Park, but there was no formal link between the church and any local or national environmental groups. We have joined Eco-Congregation, and Rev Bonnie contributed to their YouTube videos during Creation Season 2023. Rev Bonnie, along with a member of the Vestry, attended an Interfaith Prayer Vigil at COP26, in October of 2021. In September of 2023 we began a series of talks on environmental issues, to be held each year during Creation Season. One of our formal links grew out of those talks and the Vestry now supports an environmental initiative (Bat's Wood, SC049338) at Levenmouth Academy where Rev Bonnie is on the Chaplaincy team.

Green work undertaken to date:

Our green work includes:

- The reclamation of a strip of land facing the road alongside the church hall. This is now a wild garden along with over 100 daffodil bulbs coming through in the spring.
- Planting trees on the grounds not only where older trees have died but also in new ground.
- Recycling advertising for the community and consistent use in the church and church hall.
- Purchase of Fairtrade products for refreshments in the church hall.

Photo: Wild garden along church hall (2024).



Our public outreach work:

Our public outreach has taken different forms:

- We are holding occasional (twice annual) sales of second-hand clothing and bric-a-brac, which enables recycling and the re-use of items that would have gone into landfill.
- Our **public talks** during Creation Season, 2023, involved collaboration with Greener Kirkcaldy and Bat's Wood, Levenmouth Academy. We expect to make further connections each year.

Photo: Clothing provided for our sales (2024).

Challenges:

- Our financial situation
 - Listed building constraints
- Our built environment
- Our shape and size

Ambitions:

The Vestry has four environmental ambitions for 2024-2027:

1. The next stage for our buildings involves a major piece of stonework repair. Cement mortar was previously used in place of lime mortar, which has meant some of the stonework is crumbling. This will entail considerable fundraising to rectify, as well as all of the paperwork involved in getting listed building permits.
2. To continue building links with community environmental organisations especially with the considerable initiatives in Leven & Methil to provide bike and pedestrian pathways.
3. To build on the work we have done in our wild garden, possibly providing bird boxes, etc. Planting more wildflower spaces to continue to feed bees and insects, and adding some bug hotels.
4. To continue to explore our theological and spiritual calling to participate within the whole of God's Creation including challenging our views by bringing expert speakers into the church hall as part of our community outreach.

Photos (left to right): Rev Bonnie with Duncan Zuill of Bat's Wood in the church (2023); Open Day sign at front entrance to church (2024); Climate Change (Greener Kirkcaldy) talk in church hall (2023)..

