

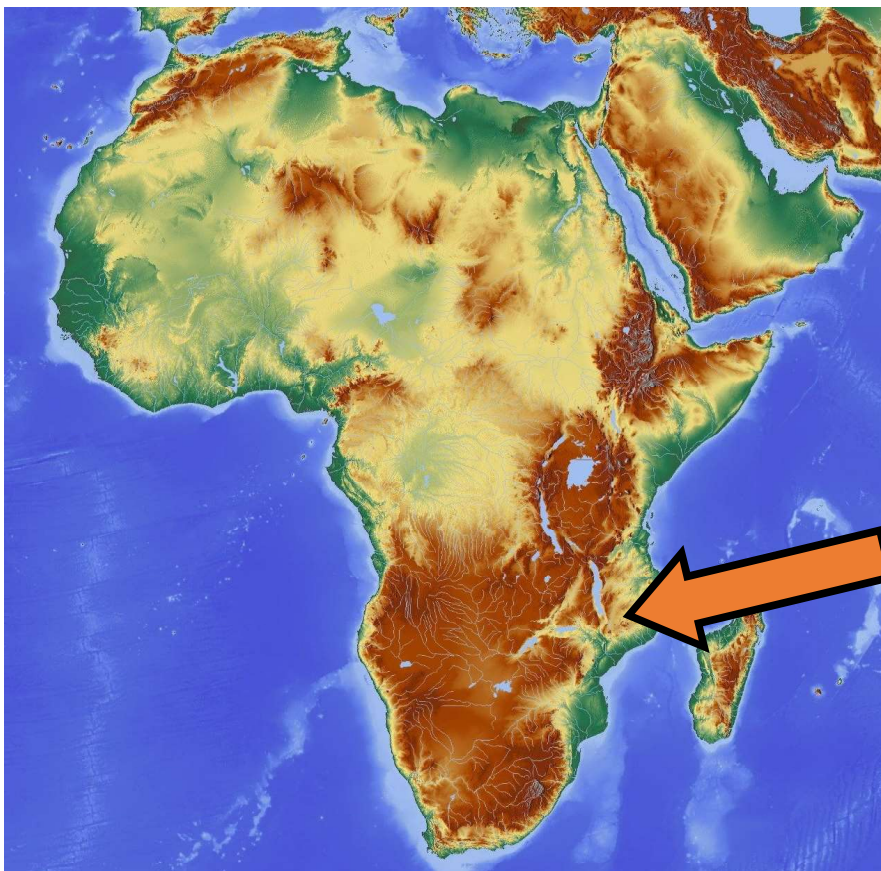


PostNL
Betaald
Port Payé

The Record

March/April 2023

Vol. 2023/1



Cyclone Freddy
leaves trail of
devastation in
Mozambique,
Malawi and
Madagascar.

Emergency
relief needed!

The English Reformed Church
Begijnhof 48, 1012 WV Amsterdam
www.erc.amsterdam

Church contact information

Minister <i>minister@erc.amsterdam</i>	J.W. Brouwersstraat 9 1071 LH Amsterdam 020 6722288
Scriba-team <i>scriba@erc.amsterdam</i>	Elisabeth, Mattia and Sies
Charles Vanderpuye Treasurer <i>treasurer@erc.amsterdam</i>	Fioringras 32 1441 WK Purmerend 06 28066821
Jaap Maas Property Convener <i>property@erc.amsterdam</i>	Liederkerkeplantsoen 2 1066 WP Amsterdam 020 3880996
Susan Polstra Church Officer, letting for weddings <i>churchofficer@erc.amsterdam</i>	Marnixkade 67-2 1015 XX Amsterdam 020 6224158
Richard Zook Music Director <i>organist@erc.amsterdam</i>	Bloemgracht 85 1502 VB Zaandam 075 6311419
Nancy Sekyere Owusu Crèche Duty Rota <i>creche@erc.amsterdam</i>	Roomtuintjes 197 1093 TB Amsterdam 020 6933521
Els Nooij Church Guiding Coordinator	<i>openchurch@erc.amsterdam</i>
Webteam	<i>webmaster@erc.amsterdam</i>

Church Begijnhof 48 1012 WV Amsterdam T 020 6249665 <i>info@erc.amsterdam</i>	English Reformed Church NL44 ABNA 05476235 50 SWIFT address: ABNANL2A	Friends of the English Reformed Church NL90 ABNA 0624 1800 69
--	--	---

Front page: Read more on the situation in Malawi, Mulanje Mission, on pages 11 and 12.

Letter from Bochum

Hello, my name is James McIlroy Brown (Jimmy), originally from Kirkcaldy in Fife, a minister of the Church of Scotland stranded these past 40 years in Bochum, Germany, a city in the Ruhr valley.

As I write these lines, we are already well into the season of Lent, reflecting in worship, study, and devotion on the passion and cross of Christ, but also looking forward, looking beyond to the supreme miracle of the Christian faith - the resurrection and God's amazingly generous promise of a fresh start for Creation, of new life, celebrated at Easter.

It's also a time of year when even the most hesitant of us hobby gardeners get out our trowels, secateurs, and other tools and start clearing away the final remnants of last year's dead leaves and decayed or withered foliage to make space for the outburst of bright blossoms that is about to herald in the spring: crocuses, tulips (from Amsterdam?) and Easter bells. ... Easter bells? Yes, Easter bells: what's narciss in Dutch and daffodil in English is Osterglocke (literally: Easter bell) in German.

Ring the changes: a fresh start for Creation, in each of our gardens. New life, blossoming forth from the dark soil of winter: A host of golden Easter bells (with apologies to Wordsworth). I simply love the image.



But it's not just the season of the (church) year that's ringing the changes. At the ERC, I shall be assuming the

mantle worn before me by Gillean Maclean and, before her, by Eric Foggitt, taking on the duties of Interim Moderator for the ERC vacancy (on the auspicious date of April 1st!) as the third - and, I trust, final - in the series. It's an exciting time for filling a vacancy, and I look forward to supporting you as you seek a new minister for this historic church, taking forward its proud tradition of English-language worship and ministry into a new phase.

It will be something of a homecoming for me, since I was actually a member of the ERC for some years after I first moved to Germany as a young ministerial greenhorn in 1983. I had been advised to "hand in my lines" (of membership) to the nearest Church of Scotland congregation, which happened to be Amsterdam, roughly 200 km from my new home,

Bochum, where I initially served as pastor to a German congregation before later setting up a fair-trade store and drop-in café in the city centre and, later still, helping to establish an international and multi-denominational English-speaking congregation, which I then served for almost 30 years before retiring at the end of 2021.

Geraint Edwards, then minister of the ERC, and his wife Jean became good friends, and they both travelled down to Bochum in 1986 for the church wedding service when my German wife Heike and I got married, Geraint sharing in conducting the marriage ceremony. And John Cowie was a classmate of mine when I studied theology in Edinburgh. So, Amsterdam has become a kind of home from home for me, I suppose.

I look forward over the months ahead to refreshing a few old friendships and making as many new ones as possible too, and I imagine I'm probably as excited as you are to learn who will end up being the new minister operating from the Begijnhof. And when!

As we wait eagerly for that to happen, may the Easter bells in all their glory joyously proclaim new life for you, for the congregation, and for our world. Ringing in the changes that lie ahead.

Jimmy

Annual General Meeting



The 2023 AGM was held after the Service on Sunday March 26th.

Both our current interim moderator, Gillean Maclean, and our next interim moderator, Jimmy Brown attended the AGM.

Coffee Morning

We continue to meet at the church for the coffee mornings, on the first Tuesday of the month.

You are most welcome!

Contact Sies Plokker for more information



Consistory Report

We were blessed in recent months with Rev Graham McGeoch who served as our locum through December and January and who led the Christmas services as well. After a number of weeks of pulpit supply we could welcome Rev Russell Barr back to Amsterdam in March. He was our locum at the end of 2021 which was sadly overshadowed by yet another lockdown and online services. We're delighted to have him and his wife, Margaret, back and we're looking forward to them celebrating Easter together with us.

New elders: In December Consistory started the process to nominate new Elders. Happily, we received enough promising nominations which in turn led to a selection of four candidates.

Concert manager: We are still searching for a new concert manager. Richard Zook has kindly offered to continue acting as the Concert Manager on an interim basis until the vacancy has been filled. We thank him for taking on this task, and especially thank him for his hard work in December which was full of wonderful musical performances in our church.

Membership issues: Reza Motamebi and Ross Marks were admitted to membership by resolution of Consistory. Willem Pardieck was baptized in the service on January 29th and we welcome him as a new member of our congregation.

Budget 2023: Charles presented the budget proposal for the year 2023 in the December meeting. The budget for 2023 reflects a conservative income and some uncertainty due to possible expenses that will have to be incurred once a new minister is appointed. Consistory approved the budget proposal for 2023 and thanks Charles and the Finance Committee for their work on this.

Vacancy period: The Mission Plan of the International Presbytery was finally approved in December which means we are now granted permission to start the process of calling a non-Church of Scotland minister. An advisory committee of the Presbytery has been installed to lead us through the process together with the interim moderator. In preparing for what is to come, we will be working on updating our membership roll to make sure everyone who wants to can have a vote in the different steps of the vacancy procedure. At a certain point (hopefully very soon) we will have to elect a Nominating Committee, which will be carrying out the search for candidates. We hope to put together a committee that reflects the diversity in our church in all aspects. We ask you to reflect on who you think would be suitable for this committee, including possibly yourself.

Annual general meeting: On March 26 we held our Annual General Meeting in church after the service. Our retiring interim moderator Rev Gillean MacLean was present as well as Rev Jimmy Brown, who will be our interim moderator as of April 1st. The annual report was prepared in the period running up to the AGM and was presented and discussed during the meeting. We also discussed the latest developments of the vacancy procedure.

Please note that Consistory meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month. We alternate between online meetings and in-person meetings. Consistory also has a short informal gathering online every fourth Thursday of the month. If you would like to participate in a consistory meeting or bring forward a topic, please contact the scribe team at scriba@erc.amsterdam.

Elisabeth IJmker

Christian Education

The Bible study continues, led by Rev Russell Barr. There are live meetings at the Manse, but you may also join via Zoom. A hybrid meeting! We meet on the first and third Wednesday of each month.

All are most welcome!

Contact Peggy Krol or Russell Barr for more information.

The Eye Clinic

Mulanje Mission Hospital starts eye surgery! In the last Record the brilliant result of the MMH Benefit Concert was reported. Over €10.000 was raised from ticket sales and individual donations. We were delighted that once again Wilde Ganzen assisted, and topped up this amount by €5.278. Meaning that MMH could buy the microscope needed for the eye surgeries, and it was delivered last month. Once again, thank you so much Connaught Brass and Ferrandou Musique!

The first 19 patients were operated on by an experienced team of nurses and clinicians from Zomba Central Hospital. MMH nurses trained at Zomba first and continued learning on the job. On the website of the hospital it says: "Our Eye team outperformed all expectations – they were described as fast learning, well-equipped and ready to continue on their own! From now on we aim at continuing to provide regular cataract surgery sessions. Thank you to all who made this new step possible – it is the culmination of the hard work of many partners and friends."

Bram Sizoo, MMH liason

Finance Report

January - December 2022, Amounts in €

<u>Income</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>Change</u>
Donations	90.447,18	109.606,80	-19.159,62
Collections	22.304,30	3.193,00	19.111,30
Church hire	19.292,80	17.723,00	1.569,80
Church hall	16.081,00	0,00	16.081,00
Concerts	7.247,80	3.659,00	3.588,80
Weddings	800,00	0,00	800,00
Church shop	0,00	0,00	0,00
Flowers	0,00	0,00	0,00
	<u>156.173,08</u>	<u>134.181,80</u>	<u>21.991,28</u>

As we are just two months into the year, it is not reasonable to present just the January figures. I would therefore share some information about our income in 2022 with you. You will receive the full report at the AGM.

Total income increased by 16% in 2022 compared to 2021. There was a sharp decrease in donations but this was annulled by a sharp increase in collections. There seems to be a switch from giving through the bank account to offering at church. Further, there were increases from income from the church hall, concerts and weddings. The church shop has been out of service since the beginning of the pandemic and there were no donations for flowers.

I would like to thank all members who donated via Tikkie or Bank transfer to our church last year and are still committed to donating regularly to our church. I hope others will follow suit to support and sustain our church. I would like to also thank our staff and all who voluntarily support our congregation in various ways (from Sound & Live - streaming right down to serving tea and coffee every Sunday). I encourage those who are yet to contribute to kindly reflect on doing their part.

English Reformed Church
ABN AMRO Bank. IBAN: NL44 ABNA 0547 6235 50

Charles Vanderpuye, Treasurer

Out of the Depths (part I)



Sunday July 10th, at 3.55pm, on the first day of the 2022 summer holidays. My family decided that, rather than driving a long way somewhere to lie for two weeks in the sun, we would instead all participate as trainees in our first race, on a huge sailing ship, from Esbjerg in Denmark.

Feeling thoroughly sea-sick after just 6 hours

underway, I ascended from the cabin to the deck to start my first 4-hour shift with the ship's crew. I looked down and saw sea water covering the deck, realised I had no control at all, and at that moment the ship keeled and I fell backwards with all my body weight onto my left hip.

Extreme pain is sometimes described as a state of ecstasy, though the only such feeling I had was the immediate realisation that I would now have the perfect excuse to get off the ship!-Those 6 hours had soon taught me that sailing is not for me.

It's also a strange feeling to be suddenly disabled and in shock, and to realise that all my plans for the summer and beyond no longer signified. How flimsy our plans seem when we are confronted instead with survival. That my poor family all witnessed my freak accident was at least as traumatic for them as it was for me.

Out of the depths (Psalm 130) - and depths they certainly were: shock, anger, resentment, vanity (how could this happen to ME?), self pity, impatience and guilt. I began to think of Jonah bewailing his lot when the gourd wilted!

And yet all this gradually gave way to acceptance, & indeed gratitude, because it could all have been so much worse. The God given, mystical experience of witnessing a daily miracle- of the body slowly but surely mending itself; of being upheld in prayer; of my family's patience and support; of performing a simple task again for the first time; of lying on my side after 7 weeks only lying on my back. In short, so many gifts from God, that being thankful is surely the only possible response.

Giles Francis

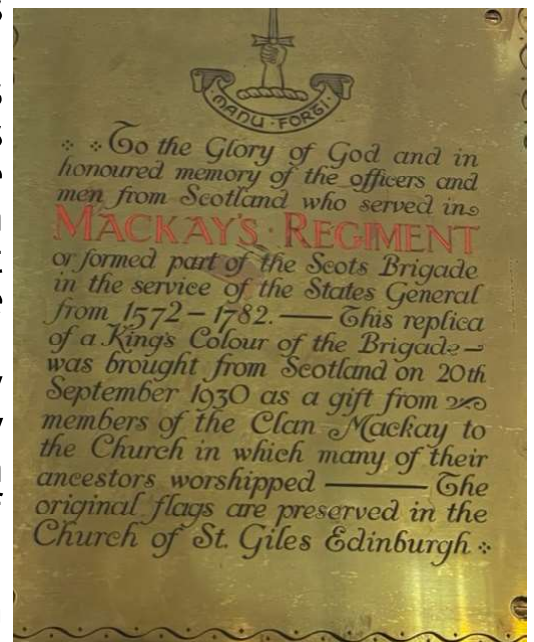
The Scots brigade



On the left side of the church, six flags are hanging. The third of these flags is a worn-out blue flag. Because we wanted to replace this flag, we studied it closely and initially could not determine the origin of the flag. It was clear that it was a regimental flag, but which regiment? In the foreground of the flag are a crown and a thistle with the motto: Nemo me impune Laccessit (No one provokes me with impunity). This is against the

background of the flag of the British Kingdom.

The Mackay Regiment or Scottish Brigade was a military unit made up of Scottish soldiers, often in service of the Dutch Republic. It was formed in the late 16th century and was active until the late 17th century. The Brigade gained a reputation for bravery and skill in battle and was involved in several significant conflicts during the Thirty Years' War and the Eighty Years' War. The Brigade was dissolved in the late 17th century and became partly part of the Dutch forces and partly renumbered as the 94th Regiment of Foot in 1802 which in 1881 eventually became part of the Connaught Rangers.



The regimental colours can now be seen in St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh with copies also in the Netherlands. The flag in our Church is one of those copies.



The Scottish soldiers in the brigade were mostly recruited from the various Scottish Clans and were predominantly Presbyterian. It is therefore likely that they worshipped at the English Reformed Church while they were stationed in the Dutch Republic. Several reverends who served our church through time have borne a surname associated with a Scottish Clan.

Over the years many ex-soldiers

settled in the Netherlands, including Hugh Mackay, whose son, nephews, and grandsons all served with the Brigade. Hugh Mackay was military commander from 1660-1692 and served under William of Orange III (Wikipedia). This branch ultimately became hereditary Chiefs of Clan Mackay and continues to hold the titles of Lord Reay in the Scottish peerage and Lord of Ophemert of Zennewijnen in the Netherlands (Wikipedia). There are also strong connections between the Scots brigade and Bergen op Zoom; during the fight against Louis the Fourteenth in 1678 the brigade was stationed in Bergen op Zoom.

The current flag, which is a copy of the original regimental flag, was handed over to our church on the 20th of September 1930 by Dr George-Hackey (Hackey probably misspelled, meaning MacKay), Lord Reay and Rev. William Thompson (reverend ERC from 1895 until 1935). From 1823 until 1835 the English Reformed Church was served by Alexander B. MacKay, also a member of the MacKay clan.



(Pictures: stadsarchief Amsterdam)

Jaap Maas, property convenor

New Members of Consistory

On March 26th, four new consistory members were ordained: Nicholas Anderton, Ross Marks, John-Harmen Valk and Christina Potharst. We wish them well in the work for the church.



Disaster relief after cyclone Freddy

In March the southern part of Malawi was struck by cyclone Freddy. As has been highlighted on the internet and in the news, the damage is huge.

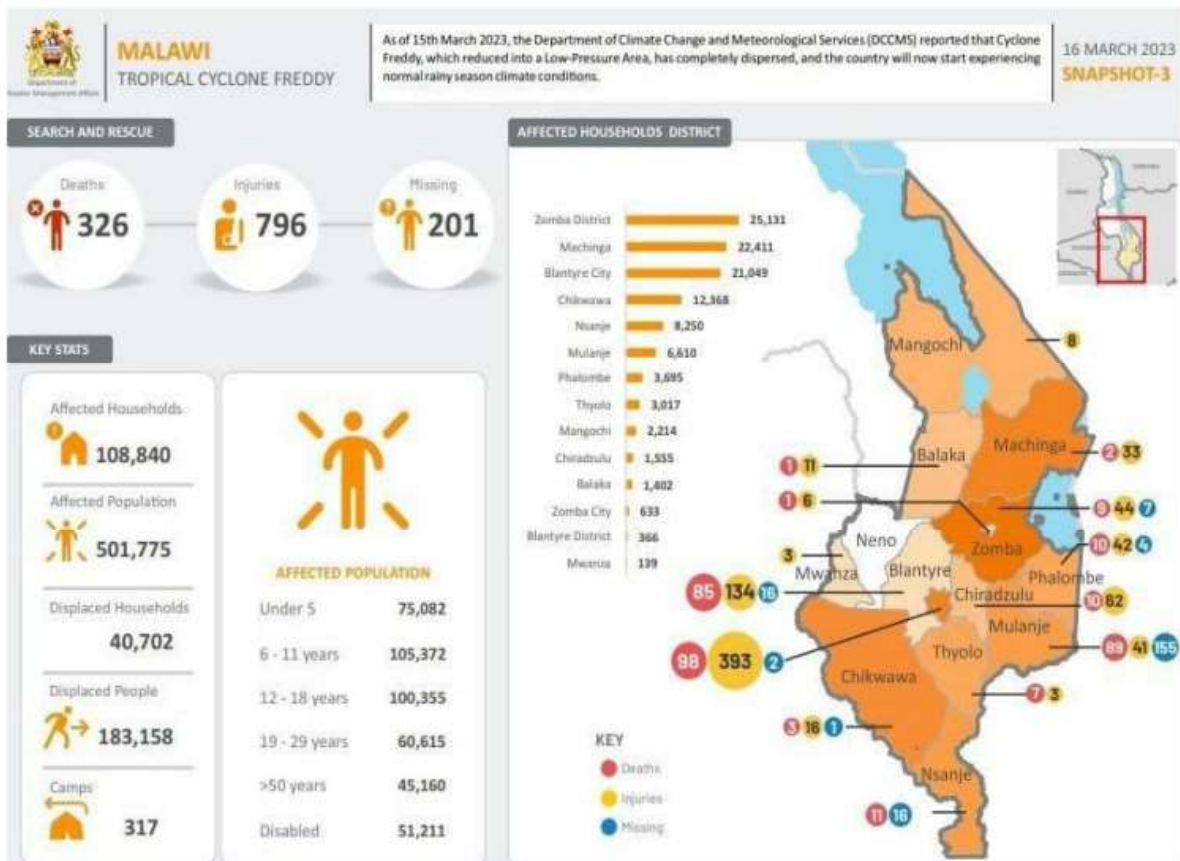
In our area thousands of people have lost homes and crops and there is huge damage to livestock and livelihoods. Already, 100 deaths have been counted in Mulanje District whilst search and rescue is continuing.

A rapid assessment in our catchment area is currently underway through our primary healthcare department; early data suggest that 70% of the maize crop is damaged and 5% of houses and 10% of all pit latrines have collapsed.

Prior to cyclone Freddy, Malawi and Mulanje were in the midst of the worst cholera outbreak in the history of the country. We are expecting cases to peak in the coming days and weeks.

Following Jesus' example to provide for the most needy, we immediately started providing assistance. Immediate needs include: food support (MMH has already started work to feed refugees in camps), emergency health services, repairs to water sources and

Attachment 1: data and pictures, showing effects of the cyclone Freddy in southern Malawi



chlorination of drinking water, and reconstruction of latrines.

MMH carries out extensive multi-year programs in climate-smart agriculture, reforestation and river bank protection. These elements are vital following this disaster.

In the medium term, through our well-established Sustainable Livelihoods program, communities must be assisted with restoration of livestock and gardens. Without such support hunger is sure to follow in this area. MMH has become a respected player in humanitarian aid following our responses to Cyclone Idai (2019) and Ana (2022).

We are partner in the Health Cluster structure with the government and work closely with all stakeholders in our area including the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, our proprietor. We work to the highest financial and professional standards and provide annual financial audits without fail.

We are currently running an emergency appeal via our website and network and hope that you and your church are willing to support our work.

Dr. Arie Glas, medical director MMH, director@mmh.mw



One of the many damaged houses in the area.



A field full of damaged and destroyed crops



First convoy with food to be distributed



Flooding at Nkando bridge (14 March)

Out of the depths (part II)

Wendi suffered a stroke. Here is her experience, written down with some help from Giles.

It happened quite unexpectedly. They were lying together in the big bed on a cold November morning. It was still dark outside. She turned to say something towards him, and her body was stiff and her face turned to wobbly jelly.

And she said, "I can't talk properly."

Soon came the ambulance, and she could no longer walk. Then she stumbled, helped by the ambulance men, up the few steps till they laid her on a stretcher.

Outside the street lamps were going out.

She didn't remember much of the drive to the hospital.

This is for the memory because the days jumble.

Mostly it seems sunny and the roses bloom against the walls. Sweet soft air, but exhausted aching body, & head soon fuzzy.

Moments of hopelessness and helplessness.

Days pass.

But then - I can walk alone with no stick, not pushing a walker. I can read philosophy summaries.

Sometimes feel as if I can talk clearly. In my head verses sprout.

But usually too tired to write them down.

Type little WhatsApps and phone family and friends. Sometimes a huge sense of loneliness, of unloving. Then I remember the great cloud of witnesses.

Down through the centuries - extraordinary stories of all the saints - who from their labours rest.

And I read and think and happily have stored in my memory - still unbruised - a multitude of lines and verses.

All this gives life - and the blessing of the bare-footed man: "Now go into the world of peace. For Jesus walks before you."

Inspiring image.

Despite the flaws and failures and overwhelming vicious cruelty, & uncaring on every side.

Thanks, friends, on we go..

Wendi Shaffer





Holy week and Easter Services

Palm Sunday 2nd April, 10:30 hrs

Maundy Thursday 6th April, 20:00 hrs

Good Friday 7th April, 20:00 hrs

Music from 19:30 hrs

with the choir

Easter Sunday 9th April, 10:30 hrs

with the choir

Membership matters

Baptism

Willem Pardieck
January 29th

Olga Sooudi
March 26th

New Members

Reza Motamebi
Ross Marks
Willem Pardieck
Olga Sooudi
John-Harmen Valk

Cooking at the Kloof: April 8th

The Women's Fellowship: April 12th

The 20s & 30s lunch: May 7th



Happy Easter!

Next edition of The Record: June 2023.
Send your contribution to sascha.sizoo@erc.amsterdam

Members of Consistory

Andreas Decker	06 83172702
Mattia Falcone, <i>scriba team</i>	06 27853671
Judi Haynes-Smart	06 10242250
Elisabeth IJmker, <i>scriba team</i>	scriba@erc.amsterdam
Heleen Koning	06 13097756
Peggy Krol	020 6767804
Sies Plokker, <i>scriba team</i>	06 30365295
Baafi Sekyere	020 6933521
<i>Minister, the Manse</i>	020 6722288
Charles Vanderpuye, <i>treasurer</i>	06 28066821
Giles Francis	06 21401420

Details of new consistory members in
the June edition of the Record



English Reformed
Church Amsterdam

A congregation of the Church of Scotland and
the Protestant Church of The Netherlands (PKN)