



The Record

February & March 2014
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The English Reformed Church
Begijnhof 48, 1012 WV Amsterdam
www.ercadam.nl

February 2014

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The Record

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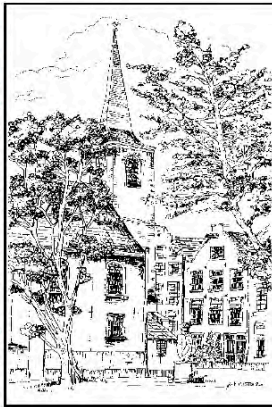
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From our Interim Moderator

Dear Friends,

I presume many of you will have been wished “a Happy New Year” or “A Guid New Year tae ane an’ a” as we’d say in Scotland. Here in Paris the greeting is “Bonne Année” and you can use that greeting right up to the end of January! But is it realistic to think that our fortune in life will change simply with the calendar rolling over to 2014? Of course not! However, people everywhere are expressing the hope of a new beginning with the start of a new year. This is especially appreciated when things have not been going so well in our lives. Changes of fortune can happen at any time. An unexpected promotion; a devastating illness; an accident; surprise good news. In fact every new day offers us the chance of a new beginning, as well as the potential for trouble. Jesus said, “Do not worry about tomorrow. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (Matthew 6:34).



So while we have no control over what the year will bring, we can look forward in hope with the promise of Jesus that he is with us always, through the good and bad. More than that, we look forward in hope to things in our own lives and the lives of those around us. We have hopes for our Church. We have hopes for the world. We turn these “hopes” into prayers and seek God’s way for the year ahead.

Here at the ERC Amsterdam we pray for the congregation as it meets week by week in worship, praying for the visiting ministers and others who participate in leading the services. We pray for the Consistory as it works to ensure that everything is covered and attended to for the well being of the congregation. We pray for every member, especially in times of need. We pray for the Nominating Committee and for the ministers who have applied for the post of minister of the ERC, may God lead them all to the right person. We pray for the induction of a new minister whenever that is and pledge, even now, to support them with our whole hearts, that together we may see the congregation grow in strength in the year and years to come.

Maybe that’s enough to be going on with! May I wish you all a good 2014. Good in the sense that you will know the goodness of God in your life and in your Church, and so we will give thanks for all the fresh opportunities He gives us, every day.

Supporting you in prayer,

Jim Cowie (Interim Moderator)

Consistory Meeting, December 2013

At the end of the year Consistory looked back at a very eventful 2013. The farewell of John and Gillian Cowie after 23 years of service to our church and the transition into the vacancy period made Consistory face challenges. It took a while before it was fully experienced what a minister does, not only in leading services and gatherings, but also behind the scenes in pastoral work and connecting the various groups and tasks to fulfill. With the support of the Interim Moderator, Rev. Jim Cowie, the visiting ministers and the work and commitment of so many members of the congregation, we were very grateful to conclude that we are doing well, with of course as always, room for improvement.

Rev. Alan Garrity, who was with us in December to lead all the Christmas services, was welcomed in the meeting as guest.

Membership matters: *George Sampong* was admitted into membership by Profession of Faith.

Anniek van Engelenburg was admitted into membership by transfer from the Protestant Church in Amstelveen.

Youth work: Consistory agreed to enable a few teachers of Sunday School/Junior Church to attend the *Geloven in Opvoeding* conference offered by the Protestant Church of the Netherlands (PKA) on January 24 and 25.

Celeste Majcher will start her maternity leave on December 31, 2013. Her tasks will be taken over by members of the congregation involved with Sunday School, Junior Church, the 20s/30s group and Consistory.

Finances: The income and expenditure sheet of October was distributed and discussed. If the special costs (Church Hall renovation and representation) are taken out, the figures are quite reasonable.

The upcoming fundraising project, co-ordinated by Baafi, was discussed. Initially the main focus was the refurbishment of the Church Hall. Now it seems wise to broaden the focus of the appeal. This will be discussed in the next meeting.

The treasurer presented a proposal for the 2014 budget. In the budget the costs in relation to the appointment of a new minister are incorporated. Due to rules of the Church of Scotland, the ERC has to cover the costs of moving (from the Dutch border to Amsterdam) and costs for the manse.

The presented budget for 2014 was approved by Consistory, with words of thanks to Thorsten for all the work he put into compiling the budget.

Other matters: The new website of the ERC has gradually been completed with all necessary functionalities. However, we still have an issue with publishing sound files of the sermons. Also a separate concert page will be made. We work towards solving these issues by the end of February.

In January and February Rev. John Bell will take a number of services. The other services will be led by members of Consistory and various guest preachers. In March the Right Rev. David Arnott will be with us. Rev. Alan Garrity will return in April.

In January no official Consistory meeting was held, but a social gathering to start off the new year refreshed. We did look back at the Christmas services and special events such as the Christmas party and Nativity play and the wonderful music in all the services. A big thank you to all who participated!

The next Consistory meeting will take place on 10 February. *Heleen Koning*

Finance Report

January–December, 2013, amounts in €

Income	2013	2012	Change
Donations	71,488.02	66,610.22	4,877.80
Collections	56,756.90	60,143.49	-3,386.59
Church hire	21,043.10	18,632.20	2,410.90
Concerts	14,884.74	17,264.95	-2,380.21
Weddings	5,915.00	11,037.50	-5,122.50
Church Shop	787.30	925.68	-138.38
	170,875.06	174,614.04	-3,738.98

The past year was a challenging one. First and foremost there was the departure of the Rev. John Cowie and his family. It is interesting to see all the administrative steps that need to be taken at such a time: tax authorities, insurance, municipal changes, pension... well, I learned a lot!

In addition to this we accomplished two exciting projects: major maintenance work on the church itself and the renovation and remodelling of the church hall. Even though we received contributions from the municipality for both the church and the hall, both projects had quite a negative impact on the funds of our congregation and of the foundation *Friends of the English Reformed Church*. Consequently, we closed the year with a deficit and the funds of the foundation were depleted by 40%. Details will be presented in my annual report, which I will present at the Annual General Meeting on 23 March.

I want to take this opportunity to express special thanks to Susan Polstra, Olja Bučo and Kenneth Ewen for being responsible for concerts, weddings and other special occasions—these continue to contribute to the income of the congregation. In the context of the two large maintenance projects my gratitude goes to Seppo Stout and Heleen Koning—for the countless hours you spent working for the church.

But most importantly I want to give thanks and praise to God, who continues to bless us and enables us to come together to worship and to share our gifts.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me any time at:

treasury@ercadam.nl or (0294) 772934.

Thorsten König, Treasurer

The Friends Foundation:

“Friends of the English Reformed Church”

The English Reformed Church in Amsterdam’s Begijnhof has been home to an English-language congregation since 1607, but it has been a gathering place for over 600 years. The present building is over 500 years old and requires constant care and maintenance.

In 1970 a friend of the church, Mr. Gerard Rhee, registered a foundation called the “Friends of the English Reformed Church” (legally referred to as a *Stichting* at the Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce). The aim of the foundation was to give support in any way possible to maintain the presence of the church in the city as a place of worship, as a concert venue and as a meeting place for many people and cultures. The board of the *Friends Foundation* is chaired by the Minister of the church and further consists of Henk Keizer, secretary; Jolmer Gerritse, treasurer; José Monkau and Thijs Polstra.

Over the past forty years the *Friends Foundation* has carried out its task through involvement in two major building restorations in 1972 and 2006, the development of the concert programme at the church, the acquisition and renovation, by the Friends Foundation, of the Manse in 2000 and many other acts of support for the work of the church using gifts and legacies from members and supporters of the church.

Few buildings in Amsterdam are more loved and treasured than the English Reformed Church. The Begijnhof setting, the unique culture, and its historical place in the city make it a very special place. The Manse offers a suitable home for our interim and future Reverends and families, and the many ways it facilitates church activities such as the weekly Bible studies, the minister’s office, and various meetings and church socials.

2013 Overview & Outlook

During the year €134,000 was paid by the *Friends Foundation* to cover the costs of the 2013 refurbishment part of the church building, resulting in a 40% depletion of the reserves. Thankfully income from donations, including legacies, were slightly above the level of those in the previous year.

By 2015 the final part of the 5-year refurbishment plan of the church building is to be completed for an estimated cost of €60,000, to be solely covered by reserves of the *Friends Foundation*.

We want the *Friends Foundation* to be able to rebuild the reserve fund to allow us to offer help in a timely way when future problems arise. We are grateful to all those who have supported the *Friends Foundation* in the past and those who offer their support in the future.

You can give your support through single gifts or through annual or monthly donations, by bank transfer to:

ABN AMRO Bank, in the name of *Stichting Friends of the English Reformed Church*, account number 62.41.80.069 — IBAN NL90ABNA0624180069 — BIC ABNANL2A; or in cash in the treasury box in the vestibule of the church; or through a bequest.

As an affiliation of the English Reformed Church the A.N.B.I. Status applies to donations to the *Friends Foundation* as well. Further information can be found on the church website www.ercadam.nl.

The accounts of the *Friends Foundation* are consolidated with the accounts of the English Reformed Church. The accounts are audited yearly by the audit committee of the church and are available, presented and approved at the Annual General Meeting of the English Reformed Church.

In case you have any questions regarding the *Friends Foundation*: please contact me at: friends@ercadam.nl; or: English Reformed Church, Begijnhof 48, 1012 WV Amsterdam; or: 020-623-4675.

Thank you for your support!

Jolmer Gerritse,

Treasurer, Friends Foundation

Ministers in the Coming Months

In the coming months we will be welcoming various ministers and preachers to our church to help lead the Sunday services and provide pastoral help. On 9 February the service will be run by our Consistory, and we welcome Jan Michael back to preach in that service. The next Sunday, 16 February, the Rev. Andreas Wöhle from the Lutheran Church on the Spui will be our preacher. For the last Sunday in February and for all of March we are happy to have the Right Rev. David Arnott to lead services. And for the month of April, including all of the Easter services, we welcome the Rev. Alan Garrity back to our church.

Coffee Mornings

The monthly Tuesday coffee mornings are open to anyone who would like to join in some informal fellowship. The gatherings are hosted by various people at their homes, and begin at about 10:30am. If you would like more information about the coffee mornings, or if you would like to host a coffee morning at your home once in awhile, please contact either Elly Kalf (020 6479174) or Sies Plokker (020 4707944).



The next coffee mornings are:

11 February	George Meerveld	Amsterdam North
4 March	Ans & Charles van Saagsvelt	Hoofddorp
1 April	Elly Kalf	Amsterdam
6 May	Joke & Herman de Bruin	Amsterdam

Julia and Michael Ordained!



Two of our former Student Associate Ministers have recently become ordained ministers in the Church of Scotland, and are now serving in their own churches in Scotland. Congratulations to Julia Lewandowska, who is now the minister of Kirkwall East linked with Shapinsay, two churches on the islands of Orkney and neighbouring Shapinsay. Julia was the interim minister in the two churches a few years ago, and helped the two congregations merge into one partnership. Two people from our church, Lucy Correll and Lilian Cooper, travelled to Orkney to witness Julia's ordination and to bring her greetings and best wishes from our grateful congregation. At left we see Julia beaming after her ordination ceremony.

Congratulations also go to Michael Mair, the new minister of St. David's Church in Broomhouse, Edinburgh, and also to his wife Laura. Michael's ordination was only a few weeks ago, and Elisabeth van Oudgaarden was able to attend the ceremony and bring good wishes from our congregation. Rev. John Cowie and Gillian Cowie also attended Michael's ordination. In the photo at right we can see that Michael is already feeling comfortable in his new role as minister.

We're so proud of the good work both Julia and Michael do, and will do, and we remember them fondly for the good work they did when they were with us in Amsterdam!



The Mulanje Concert 2014



The annual Mulanje Concert was held on the evening of 29 January in our church, and again it was a great success. *Tim Kliphuis & Friends* provided us with a wonderful taste of “gypsy jazz”! Our deep gratitude goes to Tim Kliphuis (violin), Roy Percy (bass), Nigel Clark (guitar), Charles Watts (cello), Frank Brakkee (viola) and Janneke Prooijen (violin) who gave their time and talents, taking the audience on a magical musical journey.

Special thanks goes to the regular supporters in our congregation, the organisers and not forgetting our main sponsors: *Wilde Ganzen*, *Impulses*, *Stichting Inter-Adam* and Rotary Club Amsterdam International. These donations, together with proceeds from the concert, will be used for improving water supply and sanitation at **Mulanje Mission Hospital** in Malawi.

It is not too late to participate in this fund-raising event. Donations can be made to: English Reformed Church NL32ABNA0547623550 Please mark the payment “MMH Project”.



The ERC - A Personal Review

The first time I came into contact with the English Reformed Church, the congregation was in exile. People had left the Begijnhof in solemn procession a year earlier, and had found refuge in an empty church on the Rokin. This was not a schism; it was one of the many times in the history of the building when restoration was in progress.

That was in 1974, and in 1975 I came as a voluntary associate - voluntary, because there was no money to pay for a full time post. So I was given a room in the manse and 300 guilders per month pocket money. At that time the languages spoken by members were almost exclusively Dutch and English in a variety of accents, as had been the case since the congregation's foundation. There were a few Indonesian and Korean members, but most were native Nederlanders and citizens of the United Kingdom and its former colonies. The hymn book, purchased in the nineteen seventies, showed little indication that it was being used in the 20th century, the language of prayers had only recently moved from Elizabethan to standard English, and the ministers did everything.

I look back on those days with great fondness: the congregation was very welcoming of a 25- year- old with long hair and an exotic taste in ties. In what was called the International Club I made friends whom I still have, and it was a great privilege to serve under the Rev. Colin R.M. Bell who was no relation and my exact opposite in many ways.

But I would never want to turn the clock back, because in the last 30 or so years the congregation has moved from similarity to diversity and from black and white to colour. I have preached in the summer months for most years since 1977 at the invitation of successive ministers, and have marvelled at the ways in which the church has changed. It is now a truly international community and exhibits far more variety in its life and ministry than has ever been evident before.

There may be a vacancy at the moment as regards a permanent minister, but the congregation has not slowed down. People have stepped forward to lead Bible Studies and the Bread Service, members of the Consistory have led Sunday worship on several occasions, the music programme is much more diverse and employs the talents of people of all ages, the link with Mulanje Hospital ensures that the congregation does not live for itself, and the sharing of pastoral care for members and visitors is much more extensive than I can remember.

Whether it is speaking to the children of the Sunday School or greeting people at the door, the visibility of people from over 30 different nations is a constant reminder that the Christian Church was born at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit brought different ethnic and language groups into one community. Not every church can celebrate that, but it is important that the English Reformed Church does.

So it was with great joy that on January 26th the family service was planned by people at a workshop, and six adults and two children (not forgetting the two young pianists) helped to celebrate the baptism of Noelia Obando who can claim four nations and five languages in her immediate family background - and this in an English speaking church in a Dutch city.

Whoever becomes the next minister in the Begijnhof is not coming to a collection of lost souls looking for a leader. It is a great tribute to John Cowie that his trust in and affection for the congregation has enabled potentials and talents to blossom. These are gifts his successor must surely cherish and encourage. Under God, the best is always yet to come.

John L. Bell

Concerts in Our Church

9 Feb.	3:15pm	Camerata 1800, Evert Jan Schuur (violin), Frank Wakelkamp (cello); Ursula Dütchler (forte piano): "Camerata 1800 Goes Romantic": works by Beethoven, von Weber & Schubert.
16 Feb.	3:15pm	Amsterdams Bach Consort: "Bach, Barbaars": works by Johann Sebastian Bach.
22 Feb.	8:15pm	Cello8tet Amsterdam: eight cellists play "Canto Ostinato" by Simeon ten Holt.
23 Feb.	3:15pm	Kamerkoor Airone: "Macht en Muziek": works by Sweelinck, Purcell, Debussy, Taverner, Gaskill, etc.
2 March	3:15pm	Rachel Ann Morgan (mezzo soprano & harpist) with Geraint Roberts (tenor), Edward Witsenburg (harp) & Chris Witsenburg (harp): annual concert of music celebrating St. David's Day, the patron saint of Wales.
16 March	3:15pm	Adrienne Visser (soprano), Bert Visser (tenor), Ian Spencer (bass), Kana Yamaguchi (piano), Carole Spencer (flute), Thijn Vermeulen (piano), with oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon: "Classically Modern": works by Handel, Mozart, Gershwin, Kern, Schönberg, Thuille, Manookian, etc., including classical, spirituals, songs from musicals, etc.
22 March	3:15pm	La Rosa Projectkoor: "Rond the Baltische Zee": a combination of Scandinavian and Baltic music with works by Jennefelt, Stenhammer, Komulainen, etc., & with intermezzo jugglers "the Flying Meatballs".

Tickets may be obtained at the church 30 minutes before the concert. Should you require more information, updates and changes are listed on the church's website and copies of the concert lists are available in the foyer of the church.

News from the Nominating Committee

We are very pleased to report that extending the closing date of our call for a minister until the end of December 2013 had the desired effect of attracting many more responses from potential candidates. From these responses, we ended up with a total of seven eligible applicants.

So we have now progressed to the next very exciting and challenging phase of our quest, which is a wonderful and encouraging way to start the New Year. After carefully reviewing the applications, the Committee has made an initial selection of the most suitable and promising candidates and sent out 3 invitations for interviews which have all been accepted. We are now in the process of setting up interviews to take place in February and March.

Please continue to support the work of the Committee with your prayers as we move forward into this next crucial phase.

Committee members:

Astrid König	Baafi Sekyere
Charles van Saagsvelt	Elisabeth van Oudgaarden
Heleen Koning	Jolmer Gerritse
Judi Haynes-Smart	Margaret Richards
Peggy Krol	Rosemarie Tiggelovend (secretary)
Sies Plokker	Thijs Glasz (convener)
Thijs Polstra	

A Paperless Record

The Record is also available by e-mail. If you would like to receive your copy of *The Record* by e-mail instead of through the post, please let Susan Polstra know. Her contact details are inside the back page of this *Record*.

20s/30s Bible Study

The 20s/30s group has a Bible Study which meets every second and fourth Sunday of the month. We meet after church for lunch and a Bible discussion, sometimes in the Church Hall and sometimes at the home of one of our members. The theme for the next few months will be from the series *The Armour of God*. If you are interested in the 20s/30s group, contact Celeste for more information: youth@ercadam.nl.

The next bible discussions will be:

9 Feb.	Church Hall
23 Feb.	Home of Jared Penner
9 March	Home of Anne & Patrick Brown

Bible Study

Don't forget the weekly Bible Study at the manse, J.W. Brouwersstraat 9 in Amsterdam. Led by members of Consistory, it is open to anyone who would like to learn more about the Bible and discuss it with others. Every Wednesday evening from 7:30pm, unless otherwise announced in church.

Church Library on Website

Most of us know about the church library in the church hall. Many of us have borrowed books there, or just browsed through what's on offer.

You can now look for books online, on the ERC website: www.ercadam.nl. You can find the library at the end of the line of options on the home page, after 'news', 'our church', etc. When you click on 'library' you will first find an introduction, and then you can search for books by 'authors' or 'categories'.

Ladies' Dinner Meeting

Several of the women in our congregation meet about every five weeks for dinner and conversation, sharing our experiences of life and faith. We meet in each other's homes and take turns organising a theme about which to talk. We have tried to reach as many women as possible but realise that, inadvertently, we may have missed some. It is an all-age group from young to much older! If you would like to join us and are not yet on our contact list, please e-mail Peggy—peggy.krol@planet.nl

An Open Church

Our church remains open 4-5 days a week for visitors, thanks to the help of a group of generous volunteers who give a few hours of their time to be present in the ERC during the open church time. There are thousands of people who pass through our doors on these open days.

Helping with the guiding in the church is a lot of fun. We do it in pairs, so that the volunteers are never alone in the church.

We are always in need of new volunteers. If you have 2-3 free hours, either every week or every now and then, please consider joining our group of helpers. No experience necessary!

If you are able to help out, or just want more information, please contact open-church@ercadam.nl for more information, or speak to Els Nooij at church.

Come and help us keep the church open!

BREAD: Mid-Week Worship Services

Supper with reflection and worship

The BREAD service is an informal meditative service led by members of the congregation using a blend of different worship styles and including a short meditation on a theme. It is held monthly at 19:30, beginning with soup and bread. The service begins at 20:00 and lasts approximately 45 minutes. We end with coffee and perhaps something sweet.

The BREAD service usually takes place on the second Thursday of each month. The next BREAD services will be held on 13 February, 13 March and 10 April. It would be great to see you there! Please do come and share with us.

For more information see Veronica Garcia-Robles.

Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life"



Food Bank

These are hard times for a lot of people in our city. If you would like to help out those who are going through difficulties financially, a good way is to help stock the Food Bank (*Voedselbank*) in Amsterdam. You are welcome to bring non-perishable food items and other household items such as toothpaste, soap, etc. to our church on Sundays. A box will be provided in the vestibule of the church for these items. It's a good way to help our neighbours!

The Flower List

You can help us keep fresh flowers in the church for all our services and throughout the week. If you would like to remember someone or mark a special occasion, you might consider sponsoring the flowers for one or more Sundays. We ask for a €15 donation for this.

If you are interested, you can write your name on the Flower List which hangs in the Consistory Chamber. You can give your donation to Susan Polstra or to one of the Consistory members on duty, or make your donation through the church's bank account (details on the inside cover of this *Record*), marked "Flowers".



Births

Thaddæus Bræcht de Jong
20 December 2013
Andræw Philip Malcolm Majehør
27 January 2014

Baptisms

Ivy Joannæ Mærvæ Frietman
15 December 2013
Jim Mason Henløy Frietman
15 December 2013
Havila Gracæ Isabel Situmzang
29 December 2013
Nozlia Annæ Susanna Obando
26 January 2014

Death

Ernst Albertus Kummer
1932-2014

Do you have news or an article you would like to see in *The Record*? Give your contributions to me at church or send them to:

Susan Polstra
Marnixkade 67-2
1015 XX Amsterdam
E-mail: susan.polstra@xs4all.nl



The deadline for the next *Record* is March 20th...

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