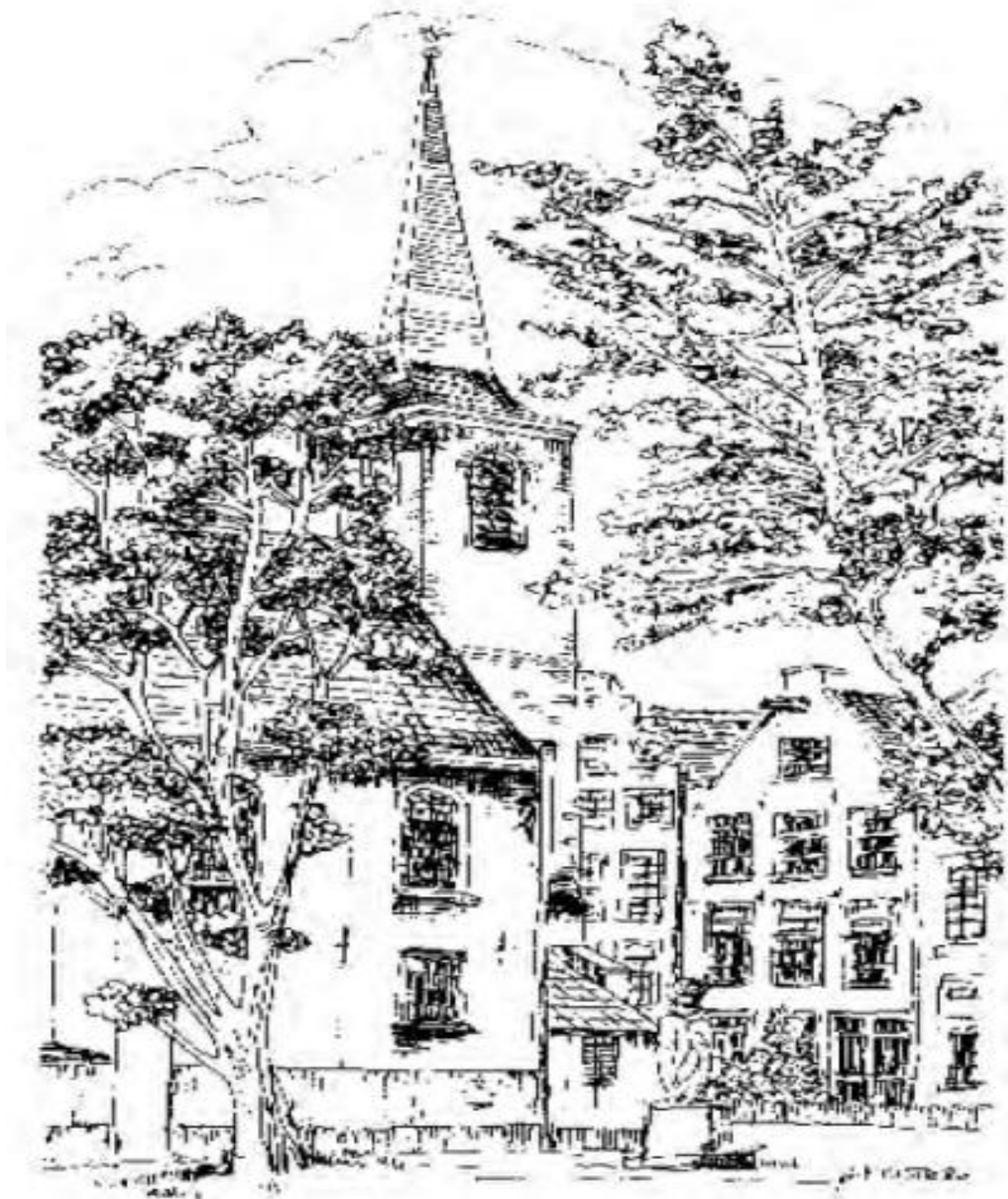


The Record



August - September 2016
Vol. 4

The English Reformed Church
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Minister's ³ Letter

Dear Friends,

When I wrote my last letter I was about to head off for Edinburgh for the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and I said then that I would report this month on the proceedings – so here are a few reflections on what happened.

The week began with an inspiring service in St Giles Cathedral on the Sunday morning. St Giles is a beautiful space and the church was full, the singing strong and the choir superb. Off, then, to a good start. In the afternoon a public event was held in Princes Street Gardens, 'Heart and Soul', which profiled the church and its work in a festive atmosphere.

When it came to the business, those interested can peruse the proceedings online but it's worth recording here a few of the proceedings.

- The Assembly has agreed to extend its position on civil partnerships to include same-sex marriage. This means that the Kirk upholds the traditional teaching that marriage is between a man and a woman, but it allows individual churches to dissent from that position if they wish to call a minister in a same-sex relationship. This, of course is a glorious 'fudge' and it could be argued that it leaves no-one on either side of the debate content. However, given the strength of feeling on both sides, this was probably the best outcome if the Church is to avoid a serious split. Meanwhile the Theological Forum, a kind of theological think-tank, is working on publishing material on the subject of marriage for next year's Assembly.
- Important for us at the English Reformed Church was that the International Presbytery Act was passed, which slightly changes our status in the Church of Scotland. The Presbytery of Europe, the grouping of international churches of which we were a part, is now the Presbytery of International Charges and is seen as less of a missionary arm of the Church of Scotland and more as a Presbytery just like any other.

Minister's Letter ⁴ Continued

- One highlight of the Assembly was a visit by Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who addressed the Assembly to acknowledge to signing of The Columba Declaration – an agreement that allows closer co-operation between the Church of Scotland and the Church of England.
- A decision was made that the church would disinvest from companies that take more than 15% of their turn over from fossil fuels.
- There was a celebration of 50 years of admission of women to the eldership, featuring some of those admitted then.

These, at least to me, were some of the more interesting debates and moments of the Assembly. Other matters, however, left me uneasy. For example, a deliverance was passed which supported the Remain campaign in the (then) forthcoming referendum over membership of the European Union. As someone who voted to remain this nevertheless troubles me as it seems to me to be an issue over which the Church should pass no opinion. How can the church commit its hundreds of thousands of members to one or other side of the debate? And who knows ultimately, what God thinks about it or, for that matter, if God has any opinion on it at all? More controversially the Church voted against corporal punishment with a measure that would commit the government to completely ban the smacking of children. Again, I personally support that position but wonder if there are not more occasions when the church should have a full debate on issues - but without taking a vote which effectively excludes the opinions of huge numbers of members.

Anyway – enough of the Assembly. For me it was a good week with a welcome opportunity to meet up with friends and to reconnect with people I haven't see for years. There is something impressive about the general Assembly of the Church of Scotland, even though it now represents a body that only a tiny fraction of the population attend.

Best wishes to you all for a happy Summer!

Lance

Consistory Meeting Report ⁵ June and July 2016

The summer has started and Consistory had her last meeting before the holidays on the 4th of July.

Membership matters

On July 17 we welcomed the following new members of the ERC in the service: *Salonée Paul, Emma Oosterling, Bianca Schriek, Madeline Brown and Charles Brown*. Madeline and Charles would be baptised.

Riet van Hoek was admitted to the Eduard Douwes Dekkerhuis in Amsterdam Noord.

Hilde Neels and James Lawrie would start teaching Sunday School in the Fall. Ana Laura Saieg has stopped teaching and we thank her for all her work.

Family service and communion

After a discussion in *the Worship & Christian Education committee*, Pastor Lance introduced the proposal to Consistory: instead of the Family Service on the final Sunday of the month, the Communion service on the first Sunday will now be a Family Communion, including baptised children. Pastor Lance will also offer a blessing for people who do not participate in communion. This was discussed with parents in two meetings who received this proposal positively. It will be brought forward to the congregation in a church meeting, to be held on July 25th after the service. Consistory decided to have the first Family Communion Service on the 4th of September.

Lay Assistant's Report

Veronica reported on the Family Picnic which was held on May 29 with a turnout of 19. The idea came from a meeting with parents, who suggested an activity for the children to bond & get to know each other a bit better.

Sunday School: attendance has dropped significantly in recent months. Quite a number of children stay in church. After the summer we will look into ways to see how we can involve more children.

Prayer

Beginning on June 19th a Prayer after the service rota will start: each Sunday someone will be available after the service to pray with people.

Consistory Meeting ⁶ Report - Continued

Committees

Outreach & Social Committee: unfortunately the June Picnic was cancelled due to a bad weather report for that day and lots of rain in the previous days. It was decided to reschedule the picnic and combine it with Harvest Thanksgiving, moving it one week ahead to September 18.

The committee also initiated a “Knit in” on July 16, to support refugees.

The Property Committee prepared the start of the maintenance work inside and outside the church and the cleaning of the organ. The work will be carried out in the period between July 11 and August 15.

The Publicity Committee met in June and talked about the Record, updating the Liturgy sheet and a “house style guide” for ERC publications.

Coffee Rota

After five years of dedicated work Johan Sloet de Villiers handed over the co-ordination of the coffee rota to Anniek van Engelenburg and Sally Stone. We thank Johan for all his work (also behind the scenes) over the years. Coffee after the church service is an important part of fellowship in the ERC. We thank Anniek and Sally for taking over and wish them well.

Finance

The income and expenditure as per the end of May was presented. We are currently facing a deficit of a bit less than €10.000.

General Assembly in May

Pastor Lance & Judi reported on the 2016 General Assembly. Please see Pastor Lance's Minister's Letter on page 3 and 4 for more details.

Other points

Baafi Sekyere, Thijs Polstra and your scribe represented the ERC at the induction of Reverend Derek Lawson, the new minister of the Scots Kirk in Rotterdam, on the 8th of July.

Consistory will meet again on the 5th of September. If you have a topic you would like to bring forward, please contact me.

Heleen Koning (scribe@ercadam.nl)

Knitting as Prayer



After our very successful Knit-In at the church on July 16th when we knitted squares for blankets for refugees, Dinda Gorlée wrote this meditation:

The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom we have received. (Rom. 5: 5)

Learning to knit is a magical struggle with yourself. First: everyone remembers in school days the sweaty work of nervous trainee-knitters. Contributors to the Knit-In witnessed one-dimensional woolen thread being transformed into the three-dimensional square. Learning to knit something like the simple pan-holder makes the beginner knitter happy. The toil of body and mind gives way to ecstatic joy, once the basic handiwork of knitting is mastered.

Second: for the indefatigable knitter, initial learning soon grows into a flow of hand-knit artifacts. From simple shawls and socks, the knitter acquires the practical skill to knit fashionable designs: sweaters, hats, scarves, and gloves. The finished objects display a professional finish. The knitter displays creative activity through works of art.

Third: the routine revolutionizes the knitter. The art of knitting activates the body, but it also liberates the human spirit into knitting for spiritual health: as a silent cure for nervousness, smoking, mental strain, depression, and insomnia. Knitting finds work for idle hands, keeping fingers occupied, while the spirit becomes free from the knitting work. The spirit finds a new view of the world that is neither mechanistic nor supernatural, but recognizes the instinctive yearning of the physical for the sacred. And knitting involves dialogue. The inner monologue with oneself ends when the practical exercise of knitting is mastered and we enter into the dialogue of sharing the life of other knitters (believers). We undertake the spiritual evolution of individual growth as our living stories fill the church as with prayer.

Knitting starts simply as a domestic, aesthetic activity, but the knitter experiences the body being uplifted into spiritual prayer. As the object of attention prayer becomes creative and even therapeutic as we converse with others and with God. The art of knitting becomes the spiritual gift of Heaven, almost a psychoanalytic treatment to heal yourself and others.

Prayer starts as the cry for assistance, hoping for help from God. Prayer to oneself can perhaps leave a kind of vacuum but there is plenty of room for conversation about the finite matters of the world with the infinite God, and room to help others—as realized in the organisation of our Knit-In for refugees. Let us hope that the prayers connected with the church's Knit-In include the communion with the community of believers and with God.

Dinda L. Gorlée

Who's Who ⁸ in the ERC

Meet Charles Vanderpuye



Photo courtesy of Charles Vanderpuye

It was 26 years ago that Charles Vanderpuye first set foot in the ERC. "I was raised in an Anglican family in Ghana, very religious. So when I came to the Netherlands and we settled in the Amsterdam area it was my first wife Marcella who introduced me to the English Reformed Church. I felt and still feel at home here. I've been to the Anglican Church in Amsterdam, but my heart lies here". Charles & Marcella's children Catherine (25) and Nii Addo (20) were brought up in the church & attended Sunday school until they moved back to Haamstede in Zeeland with their mother.

Charles was part of the auditing committee for four years. "Jolmer Gerritse was treasurer at that time. Together with John Wenge I checked the accounts of the previous year. It was an honour to do this work." Charles, a financial professional, works as a self employed financial controller for NGO's and also commercial companies. In his free time he does volunteer work for the Ghanaian Community. "I am the chairman of Recogin [the Representative Council Of Ghanaian Organizations in the Netherlands]. This organisation does a lot of work to enhance the position of Ghanaians in the Netherlands via e.g. computer lessons, Dutch language lessons, projects geared towards good relations within the community and with other groups." Charles goes back to Ghana each year. "Last May I went with Catherine. My mother, brothers and sister live there".

Mary Annor, who works in a hospital in the food department, and Charles have been together for 12 years. "Mary attended another church at first. Later on she decided to come to the ERC and she became a member". Mary's eldest children Charles (20) and Madeline (18) join them in Sunday Worship, as does Lesley, their youngest son (10). "Madeline and Charles decided themselves that they wanted to be baptized and profess their faith," which they did during the July 17 service.

When asked what he misses most from Ghana, living in Holland, Charles quickly answered "friends and family, the food and hearing music everywhere...And when I am in Ghana I miss the rhythm of daily life in the Netherlands". Charles and his family enjoy the best of both worlds, having two homes.

Then I asked about his family name, Vanderpuye, which appears to be Flemish. He said, "that can be traced back to the Dutch presence in Ghana in the 18th century. You find quite a number of Dutch surnames in Ghana. My name was spelled the Dutch way (Van der Puye), until one of my great grandfathers wanted to trace his descendants of the name and he started to put all the words together into Vanderpuye."

Charles still visits his Anglican church when he is in Ghana. "I was a mass server, i.e. an altar clerk. One of my fellow servers is now the bishop of Accra Anglican Diocese. Strange idea that that could have been me. But we all have our own paths to follow."

Interview by Heleen Koning

ERC Member Notices

New Members:

- July 17: Salonée Paul
- July 17: Emma Oosterling
- July 17: Bianca Schriek
- July 17: Madeline Brown
- July 17: Charles Brown

Baptisms:

- July 17: Madeline Brown
- July 17: Charles Brown
- July 24: Norah Lise Munnik

Deaths:

- July 13: Herman de Bruin

(More information about Herman to be included in the next Record)



Photo of Sea of Galilee by Veronica Garcia-Robles

Sea of Galilee

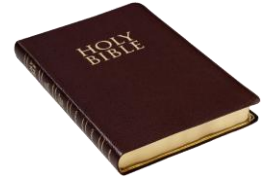
by Veronica Garcia-Robles

The stillness of water
 Upon the horizon
 Stretches in clouds
 Up to the sky,
 Where Capernaum's wind
 Whispers through egret wings
 And falls to a watery past,
 Where the water recalls
 Being calmed in its storm
 And washing the footsteps of Christ,
 When He looked up to heaven,
 Walked on the sea,
 And raised his eyes towards Galilee.

Veronica wrote this poem inspired by the view of the Sea of Galilee on her first trip to Israel. The poem was also previously published in the Morning Glory literary magazine.

Midweek Fellowship, Services & Studies

Our Midweek Fellowship ceases during the month of August but resumes in September.



Bible Study: **1st and 3rd Wednesday** of the month

For our Bible Study / discussion, we will be watching a recent series entitled 'The Story of God' presented on TV by Morgan Freeman, which gives an interesting introduction to all the major world faiths. This series begins the 7th of September in the home of Jens and Ingrid Zimmermann-Sørensen at Quellijnstraat 126A. Phone: 020-770-1341.

Taizé Service: **2nd Wednesday** of the month

Our joint Taizé service with our Begijnhof Chapel neighbors continues to meet once a month. If you have never been to a Taizé service, please do consider joining us! It is a contemplative service, in which Taizé music is chanted and we sit in silence to meditate. This short service helps greatly to quiet our busy minds and open our souls to God! You are welcome to join us at the next service which takes place on the 14th of September at 19:30 at the ERC.

Ladies Fellowship: **Last week** of the month

"The Ladies Fellowship will NOT be meeting in July due to the vacation period. We do plan to meet again on the 25th of August. Please be sure to put the date in your agenda. More information will be sent out in August. For those who have not yet been able to attend, we start out by having dinner together and afterwards a time of fellowship. We are for the time being, looking each month at a chapter from the book, *Experiencing God's Peace* by Elizabeth George from the Series 'A Woman After God's Own Heart'. If you would like to join us but are not on the invitation list, then please contact me at: peggy.krol@planet.nl or call me: 020-6767804 and I will gladly add you to the list. All ladies are most welcome!"

Men's Group: **Last week** of the month

The Men's fellowship group continues to meet on the last week of the month. For more information regarding meeting dates and times, please contact Jaap Maas at jj.maas@upcmail.nl. All men are welcome to join!

Choir News & Special Music



A Musical Note



With summer here and the church calendar thinning out, it's a good time to look back on the past season. I hope you'll all agree with me that the choir had a splendid year! They worked very hard and brought their enthusiasm to every rehearsal and service. As I reflect on my first year as director of music, I must say the choir certainly gave me a great deal of satisfaction, and from the many positive and enthusiastic comments I heard, I think the entire congregation shares my feelings. I was extremely pleased with all the choir did and I can't express enough my appreciation.

They are now having a well-deserved rest but before you know it, the new season will be upon us. You will have noticed that the choir grew considerably in size in the past year but there is always room for enthusiastic singers. If anyone is interested in joining the choir next season, please don't hesitate to contact me. We will start rehearsing again the last Tues. of Aug., the 30th.

As the choir sang on their last Sunday, "Sing on, Dance on!"

Richard

Special Music during Church Services

Aug. 14:	Persephone Abbott
Sept. 11:	ERC Choir
Sept. 25:	ERC Choir

Upcoming Concerts in August & September

Sun. 28 Aug. 3:15 pm

Orkest Barock Sommer
 Conductor: Simon Murphy
 Loes van den Hoven: trumpet

Program: Egidio Romualdo Duni: Overture *Les deux chasseurs et la laitière*; Niccolò Piccinni: Overture *La buona figliuola*; Joseph Haydn: Trumpet concerto in e flat major. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: The Prague Symphony no 38 in D major, K 504

Sat. 3 Sept. 8:15 pm

Taílde Ensemble
 Taíssa Poliakova Cunha: piano
 Matilde Loureiro: violin

Program: *Exile and Nationalism*

This recital begins with a baroque sonata by Giuseppe Tartini. Then the theme *Exile and Nationalism* echoes in works by Ludwig van Beethoven, Antonin Dvorák, Dmitri Shostakovich and Johannes Brahms.

Sun. 11 Sept. 3:15 pm

Trio Cantabile
 Andrea Wittchen: soprano
 Augusto Valença: tenor
 Jack de Bie: piano

Program: *Berlioz Fantastique*

Concert songs, arias and duets; La Damnation de Faust; Benvenuto Cellini Tes Troyens; Les Nuits d'Été and Franz Liszt :2 Études d'Exécution Transcendante for solo piano

Sat. 17 Sept. 1:00 pm

Het Rietveld Ensemble
 Elisabeth Perry: violin
 Chris Duindam: violin
 Richard Wolfe: viola
 Matthias Naegele: cello
 Nancy Braithwaite: clarinet

FREE CONCERT WITH VOLUNTARY COLLECTION

Program: Robert Fuchs: Quintet for clarinet and string quartet Op. 102; Arthur Bliss: Quintet for clarinet & string quartet

Sat. 17 Sept. 8:15 pm

Joana Gama: piano

Program: *SATIE 150 - A celebration in the form of an umbrella*; The pianist Joana Gama celebrates the 150 anniversary of Erik Satie's birth. In this piano recital, works of the French composer will alternate with those of composers such as John Cage, Carlos Marecos, Arvo Pärt, John Adams & Alexander Scriabin.

Thurs. 22 Sept. 8:15 pm

Het Hemony Ensemble
 conductor Simon Groot
 David Jansen: harpsichord & organ
 Willem Mook: lute

Program: *Iconoclasm, a turning point in Dutch music*; Antoine de Févin: The Requiem Mass from Occo-codex; Various arrangements of psalm melodies for organ and for voice and lute; Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: Settings of three psalms

A Note About Family Services / Holy Communion

As from September there will be one change in our pattern on worship – the monthly ‘family service’ will no longer happen and instead children will stay in church for a family Communion on the first Sunday of the month, with an invitation to all baptised people of any age to participate in this sacrament. This comes about after considerable discussion among the elders and also with parents, who have been supportive of the change. Ultimately parents will have discretion over whether or not their children partake of Communion and a blessing will also be offered to anyone of any age for whom Communion may be felt to be inappropriate.

The change comes from the conviction that there are really no good reasons for separating the two sacraments, baptism and Holy Communion. Baptism is the sacrament of initiation into the church and Holy Communion is the sacrament of nurture and growth – and both are necessary for Christians, whatever their age or stage in the faith. I have produced a small pamphlet on the subject, ‘Children and Holy Communion’ which is available in the vestibule of the church if you wish to consider more carefully the arguments for including children in Communion. Suffice to say here that Christian denominations like ours that practice infant baptism recognise that for many people (not all) belonging to the church comes before belief, and that the Christian life throughout is one of ‘faith seeking understanding’. This applies to children as much as anyone and their participation in Communion comes before understanding, which is a life-long process.

Communion is often linked with what is known as ‘Confirmation’, when a person baptised as a child makes a personal and conscious commitment to Christ. Confirmation as such has no clear Biblical basis, though there is a place for some such ‘ownership’ of commitments made on a person’s behalf by their parents. There is, however, no good reason at all for linking this to sharing in Holy Communion.

For further exploration of this issue I would direct you to the pamphlet mentioned above, or feel free to grab me and talk to me about it.

Lance

ERC Youth News and Activities

Youth Programs available during Summer services:

Crèche:

Open for 0 - 3 year olds during the Church Service

** Please note that the Sunday School and Junior Church does not meet during the July/August Summer break*



Photo by
Veronica Garcia-Robles

On Sunday, May 29th, the ERC Sunday School and Junior Church families enjoyed a joint Potluck Picnic at Vondel Park beside the playgrounds. All in all, there were 19 people present. We had a great time relaxing, talking and having fun together! Thanks to all who came to enjoy the day with us!



Photo by Veronica Garcia-Robles

Summer Activities

- July 9: Junior Church Bowling at De Kegel, A'veen (15:00 -17:00)
- July 30: Sunday School Play Gathering at Tunfun (15:00 - 17:00)
- Aug. 14: Sunday School 'Messy Church' Gathering at ABC Treehouse (12:30 - 14:30pm)
- Aug. 27: Junior Church Movie Night at the Manse (16:00 - 18:30)

Church Notices



Church Potluck Picnic

Our Church Potluck Picnic, which was earlier postponed due to bad weather, will now be taking place after the church service on **Sunday, August 28th** at the Beatrix park, weather permitting. Please be sure to put this date in your calendars and join us for some good food & great fellowship!



Harvest Sunday Thanksgiving

Our traditional Harvest Sunday Thanksgiving Potluck will be taking place after the service on **Sunday, September 25th**. All are welcome to bring, share and enjoy good food and fellowship! More information to be further announced during church services as the time for the event nears.



Mulanje Mission Hospital Fundraiser

This years' fundraiser for the Mulanje Mission Hospital will be a one-person dramatic presentation of Chares Dickens' 'Christmas Carol'.

Date and time: **Thursday December 8th at 7.30 pm** at the church.

More details to follow.

Special Notice:

The Record is going paperless for environmental & cost saving reasons.

We understand that some may prefer to keep receiving the paper version of The Record. If you'd like to continue getting the paper copy of The Record, please contact the ERC Lay Assistant, Veronica Garcia-Robles, via email at layassistant@ercadam.nl or call so she is aware (the number is listed under "Contacts" on page 2).

The Record is currently available online on our ERC website. You can also sign up for our newsletter, which links to our online copy of The Record at: <http://www.ercadam.nl>.

This is the LAST paper issue of The Record before we go fully digital.

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**English Reformed
Church Amsterdam**

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