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The English Reformed Church
Begijnhof 48, 1012 WV Amsterdam
www.ercadam.nl

Church contact information

Rev Dr. Lance Stone
Minister
minister@ercadam.nl

J.W. Brouwersstraat 9
1071 LH Amsterdam
020 6722288

Heleen Koning
Scriba
scriba@ercadam.nl

Jan de Jongkade 56
1063 MH Amsterdam
06 13097756

Dr. Thorsten König
Treasurer
treasury@ercadam.nl

C.P. Van der Leestraat 36
1396 JP Baambrugge
0294 772934

Jaap Maas
Property Convener
Property@ercadam.nl

Liederkerkeplantsoen 2
1066 WP Amsterdam
020 3880996

Veronica Garcia Robles
Lay Assistant,
Sunday School Superintendent

layassistant@ercadam.nl

Susan Polstra
Church Officer, Letting for Weddings
churchofficer@ercadam.nl

Marnixkade 67-2
1015 XX Amsterdam
020 6224158

Richard Zook
Music Director
organist@ercadam.nl

Bloemgracht 85
1502 VB Zaandam
075 - 6311419

Kenneth Ewen
Concert Manager

concertorganiser@ercadam.nl

Nancy Sekyere Owusu
Crèche Duty Rota
creche@ercadam.nl

Roomtuintjes 197
1093 TB Amsterdam
020 6933521

Els Nooij
Church Guiding Coordinator

openchurch@ercadam.nl

Jens Anders Wejsmark Sørensen
Webmaster

webmaster@ercadam.nl

Church
Begijnhof 48
1012 WV Amsterdam
T 020 6249665

English Reformed Church
IBAN NL44 ABNA 05476235 50
SWIFT address: ABNANL2A

**Friends of the English
Reformed Church**
IBAN: NL90 ABNA 0624 1800

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

If you are a member or regular attender of the English Reformed Church then it is likely that you will have received recently a letter or email from one of the elders of the church offering to make contact and to meet up - possibly after a service or at some other time. I would like to use this letter this month to say a bit more about this initiative.

In a church like ours, described as 'Presbyterian', elders are set aside and share in the leadership of the church. Traditionally this has included a pastoral role: the pastoral care of the congregation is not just the minister's responsibility but is shared among the eldership. This has taken many forms over the years in Presbyterian churches: sometimes in the past elders have been rather like a pastoral police force, taking rather too much interest in the lives of church members! In other times and places the elders have in practice done very little in this regard, with pastoral care being entrusted to a group who are not elders but have the appropriate skills.

The elders of our church, the Consistory, have decided that it would be good if every member and regular attender had an elder who they can regard as 'theirs', someone who will be their point of contact with the Consistory. Don't worry, this is not the pastoral police and your elder will not be appearing at your door every other day! You and your elder might have an occasional cup of coffee together after a church service, or have a phone conversation from time to time, and should you be changing address or moving away from Amsterdam and away from the church your elder would be someone to notify. The aim is simply to deepen fellowship, to enhance community and communication.

A few people, having been contacted by their elder, have commented that there is some other elder who they know well and who they might be better connected with. I would suggest otherwise, however: the aim here is to extend contacts and relationships and it is good if your elder is someone you do not already know well and who you can get to know and who can get to know you a little bit.

Ours is a church in which there is a great deal of coming-and-going. People arrive and move on all the time and it is sometimes hard to keep track. It is the hope of the elders that by making sure that as many people as possible have some contact with an elder our fellowship and sense of community will be deepened and it will indeed be true, as it says over our door, that 'within these walls let no-one be a stranger.'

All good wishes to you,

Lance

Consistory Report

With spring in the air, the December 2018 meeting seems so long ago, but it is from that meeting onward until the February 2019 one that we are reporting.

Membership issues. On January 13 a special service was held, welcoming the following people into membership:

Cheryl van Coblyn by baptism, as well as Eamon O’Keefe.

Eric Foggitt and his wife Tineke Pietersz, the latter by Profession of faith and Eric by transfer from another congregation.

Annette Kouwenhoven became member by profession of faith. Also Nick and Marja Anderton were welcomed as new members, by transfer from another congregation since November 2018

Hilde Neels’ and James Lawrie’s daughter Rosa was baptised, also on January 13.

We are happy to see that a lot of groups are doing well like the 20-30’s group, the podcast group, Men’s group. Junior church and Sunday school are doing well, which is very encouraging.

Consistory was happy to approve Olivia Decker as Sunday School teacher.

Outreach. In January 2018 a group of ERC members and friends took part in the ongoing church service to provide church asylum for an Armenian family in the Hague, also drawing attention to the issue of the “children’s pardon” for refugees who have been in this country for a very long time awaiting the outcome of procedures. You can find article about the service and the outcome in this issue of the Record.

Mulanje. The Mulanje Mission Charity Concert on November 29 was a great success both artistically as well as turnout. A great ambiance and wonderful music made it a worthwhile evening. We were happy that Ruth Shakespeare could be there as well. A big thank you to all who did so much work in front of and behind the scenes. To Giles and Richard and of course Fred and Ian, who played so beautifully, to Ingrid for coordinating, Thorsten, Ingrid, Nick and all others who helped. And a thank you to Adjoa Kpeto who did the artwork for poster, tickets etc. Thorsten noted that 22K € have been raised for the Mulanje Mission Hospital. Of this amount, 10K € will be transferred to Wilde Ganzen



which, per prior agreements, will add 50% on top of the initial amount and transfer the resulting total amount to the Mulanje Mission Hospital.

Church Community. It was decided to not have a full Burns' Supper (January 2019), but a Burns' evening on 26 January at the Manse.

Finance. Thorsten presented a draft budget for 2019. The following cost estimates were specifically discussed:

Maintenance costs: estimated at around 21K €. Members of Consistory enquired as to whether this estimate might actually be relatively low. Thorsten mentioned that, should the actual maintenance costs be higher than the estimated amount, the ERC can ask for funds to the "Friends of the ERC" Stichting.

Presbytery Dues were estimated at around 8K €. The estimate for 2019 is based on a sliding scale, based on which the estimated Presbytery dues in the coming years are set to gradually increase.

Consistory approved the draft 2019 budget and thanked Treasurer Thorsten König for his prudent stewardship of the ERC's finances.

Thorsten also commented on the ERC's 2018 year-end financials. In terms of income, several donations were received in December by both the ERC and by the Foundation of Friends of the ERC, the latter as contributions toward maintenance costs.

The 2018 year-end Income & Expenditure overview shows a final surplus of approximately 10K €, which will be transferred to the ERC's reserves.

Other competent business. We are looking into ways to provide digital means for collection and the donations box.

News from the publicity committee: the sermons and prayers of intercession can not only be heard on the website, you can also listen to them as podcasts to be obtained from several platforms including iTunes.

On the 2nd of February Consistory had its annual Away Day. We took time to look into the mission of the church: why has God put us and kept us here? A discussion which is not finished. We decided to make a change in the content of the Consistory meetings: once every three months we will not have the standard business issues on the agenda, but focus on a topic. In the May meeting we will continue the work we started on the Away Day.

On the 7th of April the Annual General Meeting will be held in the church after the service. All are welcome.

Next Consistory Meeting will be held on the 4th of March.

Heleen Koning (scriba@ercadam.nl)

Worship at the Bethel Kerk

The decision by the ERC to help with the 24-hour services of worship which took place at the Bethel Kerk in the Hague for 96 days, was initiated by Gillian Walker. This form of protest at the treatment of the Tamrazyan family, from Armenia, who had their asylum revoked by the Dutch government after nearly 9 years in this country, received widespread coverage in the world press.

In reaction, many churches from all denominations came forward to help, and the services began on 26th October last year- exploiting a loophole in Dutch law that prevents police or state interference in a church holding a service of worship. The Tamrazyans were therefore able to live in the church without fear of deportation.

The context of this was broader than just this family, because hundreds of asylum seekers- in particular, children- have been awaiting lengthy appeals for asylum in Holland. Under the current law, a massive 92% have been refused.

Our all-night team visit to the Bethel kerk on Friday 18th January coincided dramatically with the decision by the CDA towards a 'versoepeling' of the so called 'Kinderpardon', the law which has so far exercised so little discretion in asylum cases for children- most noticeably in the case of the Tamrazyan family, who are for a long time already thoroughly integrated in Holland. Two locals who heard the CDA announcement arrived at the Bethel kerk in great excitement and



told us the news. This decision by a major party within the coalition tipped the balance towards a review of the Kinderpardon by the government. Perhaps it was only fortuitous that the ERC was there, but it felt like an answer to our prayers.

Continued on p. 13

Group and pastor Lance (p 13) photographed by Elisabeth IJmker, Lauren Bethel and Maeve Quigley

Holy Week services

Wednesday 17 April 19.30 hrs	Food preparation for Passover * home of Pamela Woolley Nieuwe Keizersgracht 446 1018 VG Amsterdam
Thursday 18 April 18.00 hrs 20.00 hrs	Passover celebration * with food at the church, followed by Maundy Thursday Communion service
Friday 19 April 20.00 hrs	Good Friday service with the choir Organ music from 19.30 hrs
Saturday 20 April 21.00 hrs	Easter Saturday service of light with renewal of baptismal vows
Sunday 21 April 10.30 hrs	Easter Sunday morning service Holy Communion, choir and orchestra

*Passover celebration. For centuries the Jewish people have celebrated the events of the Passover, when God liberated them from slavery in Egypt by re-telling the story. This was the festival Jesus was celebrating in Jerusalem on the night he was betrayed.

We share in a version of this before our Maundy Thursday Communion service.

All are welcome.



Finance Report

Income January - December 2018, Amounts in €

	2018	2017	2018 vs 2017
Income			
Donations	93.692,75	81.337,56	12.355,19
Collections	54.297,72	51.892,76	2.404,96
Church hire	19.502,80	21.544,80	- 2.042,00
Concerts	17.778,00	16.204,24	1.573,76
Weddings	3.325,00	5.675,00	- 2.350,00
Church shop	830,00	860,00	- 30,00
Flowers	- 100,97	- 51,05	- 49,92
	189.325,30	177.463,31	11.861,99

I know you probably can't wait until the AGM in April to hear about last years financial situation of our congregation. Therefore, I'll give you a little preview or appetizer here, but you will get a more detailed account during the AGM.

In 2018 our congregation had no specific major projects scheduled like in the previous year. Nevertheless from a treasurer's point of view it was a challenging year. You may recall the financial reports I publish regularly here in The Record, in which I commented on our financially challenging situation throughout the year. The good news is that during the month of December several of you made a special donation. Consequently, 2018 was the first year that our income increased by 6% in contrast to the steady decline over the last years. What a relief that we could close this year with a surplus of a little more than EUR 10.000, which will become part of our reserves.

Nevertheless, our attention and commitment continues to be required. Because our expenditure increased as well, we only managed to achieve a surplus to replenish our reserves thanks to the contribution from the Salvesen fund (which announced to reduce its support from EUR 10.000 to about EUR 6.000 in 2019), and even more importantly the indispensable and significant support from the foundation "Friends of the English Reformed Church". If we would not have had these extraordinary grants, we would have made a deficit of about EUR

30.000!

I want to encourage you to look out for the annual financial report, which will be available before the AGM and to participate in the AGM. There you will hear more about our Income & Expenditure, the latest status on our discussion with the Church of Scotland with respect to Presbytery dues (some good progress!), and our support to Mulanje Mission Hospital in Malawi.

Contemplating about 2018, I want to thank each of you for your generous support of our congregation with monetary funds, your individual gifts, and prayers. This truly shows that we are all one body in Christ, to His glory.

Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me any time at treasurer@ercadam.nl or (0294) 77 29 34.

Thorsten König, Treasurer

Ash Wednesday service:

Wednesday March 6th, 17.30 hrs
Ash Wednesday service of ashing with other local churches, at the Krijtberg Church, Singel 446.

All welcome.



Visit to Binnenwaai church

On January 8 we had our monthly coffee morning in IJburg, in the church of Alexander Noordijk, on his invitation.



We were delighted to see his church “De Binnenwaai”. After a warm welcome with coffee etc. at a long table we had to make three steps down to the place where the services are held. There is room for about 40 people. Alexander held a presentation for us on the different activities they do, connecting with their neighborhood.

We enjoyed it. It is totally different from our ERC.

Joke de Bruin

Photograph by Els Nooij

2018 Mulanje Mission Hospital concert

As with the previous ten or more years our congregation and supporters of the Mulanje Mission Hospital came together last November to support our annual project. In this edition of the Record I'd like to start by highlighting the target group who benefit from our support.

The catchment area for Mulanje Mission Hospital consists of 111 villages where the main economic activity is subsistence farming. Then there is the wider population of Mulanje district which includes many employees and their families from the tea industry, as well as some patients who travel from further afield in Malawi and even as far as Mozambique.

I also thought it would be good to sketch out the current situation and our objectives. The Mulanje Mission Hospital is equipped with a conventional X-ray machine. This X-ray machine has been in use for over forty years and needs urgent replacement. Developing X-ray films is currently done by hand in an old dark room using potentially dangerous chemicals. In addition, a significant amount of time every week, as there is no electricity, especially in the dry season and then the hospital cannot provide any X-ray services.

Our project will deliver a digital X-ray machine working on solar power ensuring that X-rays can be made 24/7. This will improve emergency care and diagnostic accuracy as well as providing efficient storage and archiving of X-rays.

The Concert

We enjoyed an evening of wonderful music that included Tchaikovsky's suite from the Nutcracker Ballet for four hands. It was organised by our



3 photographs by Jens Sorensen: Ingrid and Medical Director Ruth Shakespeare, the four musicians, and a filled church



musical director, Richard Zook and starred our very own Giles Francis on violin and Fred Edelen on Cello with Ian Gaukroger on piano. Without these special talented people, it would have been impossible to achieve our target and our deep gratitude goes to them all.

Ruth Shakespeare attended the evening and brought

along some wonderful Malawian artwork including lovely paintings that sold like hot cakes.

It takes much preparation and planning to ensure the success of our concert and for this reason I would like to extend my thanks to Thorsten Koenig, Nick Thomas, Jens Sorensen, Sally Stone, Susan Polstra, Kenneth Ewen, Adjoa Kpeto, Joe Hennes, Marc Jory and all the people who helped to clear up after the concert was over.

By December we had achieved our target (which is sponsored and managed by the Dutch NGO Wilde Ganzen).

A huge thank you to all who made donations, attended and participated.

Ingrid Sorensen

MEN'S GROUP NEXT MEETING

Thursday, March 28 to watch
The Last Temptation of Christ

19.30 at Jan Willem Brouwersstraat 9

If you want to be on the mailing list please contact
Jens Sorensen 0681242403 / webmaster@ercadam.nl

Make a joyful noise!

With five Sundays in March, the choir will sing for the communion service on March 3rd as well as the service on March 24th.

These will lead us through Lent and up to Easter, which is relatively late this year but nevertheless fast approaching, and the choir is hard at work on music to make this, once again, a very festive season. The children of the Sunday school as well as the choir will sing on Palm Sunday, celebrating the jubilant entry into Jerusalem.

Holy Week which follows will have several services, the evening service on Good Friday featuring the choir with music reflecting the passion story as it reaches its dramatic climax in the Garden of Gethsemane. Preceding this service will be a 30-minute program of meditative organ music suited to the occasion.

Easter morning will be full of festive music, including both the choir and, this year, orchestra. As is our tradition, you will all have the chance to join the choir and orchestra to raise your voices in Handel's beloved *Hallelujah* chorus. Start practicing! "Come into his presence with singing."

Richard Zook

Concerts in the church

Visit us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/ERCamsterdam/>

Please consult our website or the church newsletter for up to date information on all scheduled concerts <http://www.ercadam.nl/activities/concerts/upcoming-concerts>

For instance: The Rietveld ensemble (photograph by Louis van Nunen) will perform pieces by Farrenc and Martinu on Saturday 23 March at 1 pm



Worship at the Bethel kerk , continued from p. 6

Each member of our team took a service lasting roughly an hour, based on a spiritual theme of their choice. I and everyone else in the team (including two dogs!) enjoyed the whole night, in particular the diversity of worship styles. -We went, for example, from my advocacy of silence to Maeve Quigley's highly energetic 'Power Hour' at 6a.m.!! I was particularly impressed that despite bringing sleeping bags, nobody except myself lay down to sleep for any length of time: It is the only time I have ever fallen asleep during Pastor Lance's services, and will never happen again!

Many thanks to Gillian for organising everything, and also to Thijs for his heroic taxi service from Hilversum to the Hague, via Amsterdam.

It was a privilege and an exciting experience for all of us to be involved!

Giles Francis



Coffee Mornings

The coffee mornings take place on the first Tuesday of each month, a wonderful opportunity for fellowship with members of our congregation who carry the history of our church. Please join if you are interested, you are most welcome to come. You can contact Sies Plokker or Joke de Bruin for more information.



Coffee after the service

Meet your fellow members of the congregation over a cup of coffee after the service each week. And if you enjoy these gatherings, please consider volunteering once in a while or regularly. We always need help in this vital ministry. Please contact Anniek van Engelenburg or Sally Stone (info@ercadam.nl) or put your name on the list on the notice board.

Midweek Fellowship

In recent months in our fortnightly Bible Studies (1st and 3rd Wednesdays) we have been studying the **Book of Revelation**. It's not the easiest book and it can be interpreted in various ways, but we are progressing through it. All welcome!

We continue to hold a service after the style of the Taizé community in France on the second Wednesday with our Roman Catholic neighbours in the Begijnhofkapel. And in the last week of the month the Women's Fellowship and (less often) the Men's Group meet.

Exploring the Faith /Further in the Faith

For some time now I have been running fairly regularly a four week course, 'Exploring the Faith', for people who are thinking of membership, of being baptised, of having a child baptised, of confirmation or church membership - or who maybe just fancy refreshing their faith. The course aims to look at the story the Bible tells and how we as the church fit into it, and even people who are very familiar with the faith have said that they have gleaned new insights.

I am currently running a course and am planning another soon after Easter - I already have several people for that, but there is room for more.

Following on from that... I am running a 'Further in the Faith' group, for people who have done Exploring the Faith but wish to go further, or anyone else interested in deepening their understanding. For this there will be two opportunities each month - once in an evening and once after church on a Sunday. We are going to be looking at a book, 'Simply Jesus: A New Vision of Who He Was, What He Did and Why It Matters' by a leading scholar, N.T. Wright. Anyone interested in either Exploring the Faith or Further in the Faith please speak to me.

Lance Stone

Baptisms

Cheryl van Coblyn

Eamon O'Keefe

Rosa

daughter of Hilde Neels and James Lawrie

New members

Eric Foggitt and Tineke Pietersz

Annette Kouwenhoven

Nick and Marja Anderton



Did you know that the English Reformed Church sends out a weekly newsletter? Receive news about services, activities and events and a PDF-version of the Record automatically.

You can subscribe via the website: www.ercadam.nl

Editor for the Record is Sascha Sizoo - Adema (06 1325 9394),
sascha.adema@hetnet.nl

The deadline for the next edition of the Record is May 22nd, 2019

Members of Consistory

Mathia Falcone	06 27853671
Giles Francis	020 3200197
Thijs Glasz	06 11775459
Judi Haynes-Smart	06 10242250
Thorsten König, <i>treasurer</i>	0294 772934
Heleen Koning, <i>scriba</i>	06 13097756
Peggy Krol	020 6767804
Jaap Maas, <i>property convener</i>	020 3880996
Baafi Sekyere	020 6933521
Ingrid Sørensen	020 7701341
Rev Dr. Lance Stone, <i>minister</i>	020 6722288
Nick Thomas	06 11885017
Laura Elliot	06 26423799
Gillian Walker	06 40586654
Sarah Ying Wang	06 46732109
Pamela Woolley	06 21151921