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The Record

September 2022

Vol. 2022/3



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

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Frontpage: Queen Elizabeth and queen Beatrix talk to the children of our congregation. Read more on our website, where Reverend Dr John Cowie, pays tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and reflects on her 2007 visit to Amsterdam for our 400th anniversary celebrations.

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Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

There is a story from the United States about a minister who was moving from one Church to another and from one State to another. He tells how he was picked up at the airport by the Church secretary who was to drive him to his new home. As they pulled out into traffic he noticed the bumper sticker on the car in front which said, "Welcome to California.... now GO HOME." So not exactly a warm welcome to sunny California. It immediately clouded his enthusiasm for his new congregation!

I wonder if there are times in our lives, whether at Church or at home or in other social settings where we make people feel less than welcome?

In Paul's letter to the Romans, (ch 12 v 13) he exhorts his fellow believers to be "given to hospitality." Our Bible is full of exhortations to be hospitable, from encouraging us to welcome the stranger in our midst, to offering a drink to those who are thirsty.

In our church meetings in Lausanne we have been thinking about what is essential for us in a time of dwindling resources. The words 'welcome' and 'hospitality' come up time and time again.

During the recent pandemic we have all had to curtail some of our social events and this has been a great sadness and makes it difficult for new people in particular to build relationships and get involved. Some would say that socialising is not part of our key remit as a church. Our Bibles tell us a different story. Our faith is one of community and we look for and discover community in our relationships with others.

Our welcome and worship begins at the door of the church and continues through worship to the fellowship that is offered by the hand that offers a cold drink or a cup of coffee when worship is over.

My prayer is that we can continue to extend our welcome to each and all and make sure that no one, whether new to our fellowship or not, feels uncared for, ignored or unloved.

To show someone loving hospitality may just be the first step to showing that person the way to heaven.

My God bless you all.

Gillean

Consistory Report

You might imagine the summer period to be a quiet one as some of our activities stopped for the summer and we were able to go on holiday again. Consistory had its summer break in August, but our new Scriba-Team started preparing itself for its new task.

Building Community: The Pentecost Festival on 12 June was a very lively gathering, with a presentation of almost 25 groups and activities. About 30 people filled out a form for more information regarding one of more activities. All leaders/coordinators received the list of names and email addresses of people interested and made contact with the relevant people. Now that summer is over, we will start setting up teams to support volunteers and align activities.

We were also curious to find out why you choose to come to church or rather to follow livestream services and your thoughts on other aspects of live church so we are very thankful to everyone who took the trouble to fill out the questionnaire. You can read more about the outcome further on in this Record.

Vacancy Period: The proposal of the Presbytery Planning Committee, regarding the allocation of 5 FTE Church of Scotland ministers for churches in the International Presbytery as part of the Church of Scotland plans to address a shortage of ministers was discussed in the June Presbytery meeting in Bochum, Germany.

Rev Derek Lawson, convener of the Presbytery Planning Committee gave a report on the affairs to date, including the discussions with the PMPIG. This is the committee of the Church of Scotland that assesses all Presbytery plans. Our plan needs to be discussed and accepted within the Presbytery, then by PMPIG, after which it will be taken to the Faith Nurture Forum of the Church of Scotland which will then make the final decision.

In Bochum two proposals were put to a vote in the Presbytery meeting:

- 1) A distribution of the allotted 5 FTE ministers via linkage of churches within countries
- 2) Calling non Church of Scotland ministers when the number of 5 FTE is reached (this is the preference of the ERC).

The ERC Consistory feels strongly in favour of proposal two. Proposal 1 is generally accepted but we felt the need to officially inform the Presbytery Planning Committee at this stage already that linkage is not a form we regard as viable for our own situation. We have therefore sent a letter to Rev Derek Lawson, convener of the Presbytery Planning Committee, clearly stating the position of the ERC Consistory ahead of the proposal being sent to the PMPIG.

The discussions will continue in the October Presbytery meeting.

Locums: On 11 September we said goodbye to Rev Scott Guy and his wife Adrienne who served our church from the beginning of July.

In our service on 18 September, we welcomed back Rev Dr. John Cowie and his wife Gillian. John will be locum minister until 13 November.

Scriba Team: Handover of the Scriba role to the new team. After the June Consistory meeting, the idea of forming a team to take over the Scriba-position from Heleen Koning was worked out further by Rev. Gillean Maclean with Elisabeth IJmker, Mattia Falcone and Sies Plokker.

Consistory agreed to this set up and was very pleased that Elisabeth, Mattia and Sies are willing to take over. The congregation was informed via the notices in a June service and the newsletter in which Heleen indicated that she needed to step down per 1 August 2022 and that three elders would take over as a team.

Elisabeth, Mattia and Sies took the Oath de Fideli during the Consistory meeting of 8 September and the team was then officially presented to the congregation by Rev Gillean MacLean in the service of 11 September, Elisabeth was sadly absent as she was abroad on that date.

Consistory offered a heartfelt vote of thanks to Heleen for all her work as our Scriba in the past 10 years.

Position of concert manager: Anja Polstra stepped down from her role as concert manager as of 1 August. She is not able to combine this position with her current job. Consistory, together with the music director, is urgently looking into ways to find a new concert manager or set up a team.

We thank Anja for the great work she has done in the past year as concert manager!

Membership matters: Maria Hooghiemstra passed away in July.

Rev Scott Guy proposed admitting Robert Brunn and Maurice Winter into membership by Profession of Faith. Consistory were happy to approve. Bob and Maurice were admitted in Scott's last service with us on 11 September.

Other topics: On 8 October we will have our Mulanje Mission Charity Concert. We discussed ways to promote this concert and this good cause. You can find more information elsewhere in the Record.

On 1 July we hosted a celebration of the 350th (+ 1) anniversary of the HH. Johannes en Ursulakapel in the Begijnhof, our neighbours opposite us.

Just before the start of the September meeting, we learned of the passing of Queen Elisabeth II. We prayed for the Queen, her family, the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth.

Please note that the Consistory meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month. Consistory has a short informal gathering via Zoom on the other Thursday evenings.

If you would like to participate in a Consistory meeting or bring forward a topic, please let us know Scriba Team scriba@erc.amsterdam



Who is your Interim Moderator?

Rev Gillean Maclean

As Interim Moderator, it is my job to look after the Church of Scotland side of your business as the English Reformed Church in Amsterdam. I am appointed by the International Presbytery and it is part of my job as a minister of the Church of Scotland to freely offer my time in this way.

I can help you find locum ministers who can provide cover during the vacancy and I have enjoyed many a sociable visit to Amsterdam and met some fascinating people. I hope that you enjoy the variety that these very different ministers bring to the ERC.

When we are ordained as ministers of Word and Sacrament, we agree to offer our time and talents to the wider work of the Church. It is my honour to serve you in this way alongside my responsibilities to the Scots Kirk in Lausanne until such time as you may call your own minister.

I was born and brought up in Scotland and trained first as a Registered Nurse but after studying Divinity in Aberdeen, I have now been in full-time ministry since 1993, almost 30 years. I have served in island, city and University settings in Scotland and will now conclude my full-time ministry in Lausanne, Switzerland. I will retire next July and return to live in Inverness in Scotland.

I have been married to James for 47 years and we have three wonderful talented daughters and four incredible grandchildren (I am not biased at all). All of them living in Scotland.

Here in Lausanne, if there is time off there are many options for visiting the mountains and the lakes but I must say one of my favourite pursuits is a cruise trip on the Lake on one of the paddle steamers. It is even possible to have lunch on board which makes it a wonderful way to spend a day off!

I look forward to seeing you all from time to time over the next months.



Gillean

Finance Report

January-July 2022, amounts in €

	2022	2021	2022 vs 2021
Income			
Donations	46.365,38	60.351,56	-13.986,18
Collections	11.924,70	0,00	11.924,70
Church hire	11.395,80	9.376,00	2.019,80
Concerts	3.098,80	1.190,00	1.908,80
Weddings	800,00	0,00	800,00
Church shop	0,00	0,00	0,00
Flowers	0,00	0,00	0,00
	73.584,68	70.917,56	2.667,12

We have had four remarkable locums so far who have led us with very good worship and wonderful messages. I believe it is still a joy for all attending church services or following them online, as it is for me, even though we do not have a permanent minister.

Financially, our total income till July improved by 4% compared to the same period in 2021. That is 73.584,68 this year and 70.917,56 last year. This is also a 2% increase on the first quarter of this year.

However, as you can see, donations have dropped considerably (23%) this year but collections, concerts, church hire and weddings have made up for the drop.

Total expenses have fallen by 15% compared to the same period last year. Nevertheless, we have a deficit of about € 17.000 at the end of July. This is mainly due to subsequent costs of 9.000 for the church maintenance carried out last year and the reduced income from the church hall.

My guess is that our income is slowly but surely improving. However, I am not sure that all those who have either stopped donating through the bank or who are donating less have swapped to giving collections in church. I therefore hope and pray that you can get back to donating as before and I urge those who are yet to contribute to reflect on doing their part.

As always, we thank everyone for your contribution to our congregation. We are very grateful to you for taking responsibility to support and sustain our beautiful church.

Donations can be made to: English Reformed Church, IBAN

NL44 ABNA 0547 6235 50.

Charles Vandepuye, treasurer

Music Notes

A new season is upon us and the choir is SO looking forward to it! After missing two Christmases and two Easters, we have high hopes for the 2022-2023 church year - and we hope you'll be in church to share it with us! After a much deserved summer break, the choir is back to their weekly rehearsal routine and will be singing frequently in Sunday morning services. September 11th will be our first outing, quickly followed by the 25th, when we'll mark our annual Harvest Thanksgiving - with a shared meal after the service. Good music and good food! How can you pass that up?

Our choir has also been invited to participate in a choir festival organized by the Council of Amsterdam Churches (Raad van Kerken Amsterdam). This will be a concert on Saturday, 15 October in the Waalse Kerk, starting at 14:00. Besides our own choir, there will be choirs from other churches and traditions, including the Orthodox Church, the Old Catholic Church, and others. We are pleased to be able to share our rich musical heritage at the ERC with choirs from these other traditions. Please do join us for that concert!

Richard and The Choir

**Saturday, 15 October:
Choir festival Waalse
Kerk, starting at 14:00
hrs**

Coffee Morning

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

Upcoming dates are:

October 4th

November 1st

December 6th

You are most welcome!

Contact Joke de Bruin or
Sies Plokker for more information



ERC & consistory thank our scriba Heleen

Judi addressed Heleen during the service on Sunday September 11:

Dear Heleen,

I have been given the privilege of saying a few words of heartfelt thanks on behalf of Consistory for your outstanding work as our Scriba.

You have performed this key role with tireless energy and dedication and deep personal engagement.

Always smiling and positive, never complaining about any of the tasks you had to perform and never daunted by new challenges, your willingness to go above and beyond has been an inspiration.

With your phenomenal organisational skills and your wealth of knowledge about our church and everyone in our community, you managed to make the task look almost effortless - something which we've discovered to be far from the case, witness the fact that we now have a team of three people to carry out your scriba duties!

But what stands out most of all is your warmth, kindness, graciousness and generosity of spirit in everything you do.

So thank you once again for being our Scriba for all these many years.

Judy Haynes-Smart
on behalf of Consistory

Photograph by Bram Sizoo



Christian Education

The Bible study resumes, led by Rev John Cowie. There will be a live meeting at the Manse, but you may also join via Zoom. A hybrid meeting! We meet on the first and third Wednesday of each Month.

Contact Peggy Krol or John Cowie (at the Manse)

Letter from Heleen : Thank you!

I do not know exactly when I started making the minutes of the Consistory meeting, but it must have started somewhere in 2010, to help out the then scribe Fiona. Before Fiona and Allan moved to Scotland in 2014, I had the honour of substituting for Fiona twice when she was on “maternity leave”.

When the question was raised if I would be available to be the next scribe, I decided to postpone the decision until after our new minister, Rev Dr. Lance Stone, was inducted and we had had the chance to work together for a while. Maybe he was looking for other qualities than the ones I could bring? Our collaboration worked out fine and on 5 January 2015 I accepted Consistory’s request to officially take on the position of Scribe.

What does a scribe do? He or she facilitates Consistory by preparing the meetings (agenda, documents etc), making minutes, organising the Annual General Meeting, providing the Presbytery with information about the congregation etc, all in close co-operation with the minister and elders. In a vacancy period, the scribe is also the main go-to person for information and communication which took on an extra dimension due to the Covid pandemic. A lot of the work is done “behind the scenes”.

Although we are still in a vacancy and trying to build up church life after the lockdowns, I had to decide it was time for me to hand over the responsibilities. A concurrence of things led up to this decision, all personal: a demanding full-time job, the need to free up time for people near and dear to me and some minor health issues that could become more serious if not attended to (which basically means, get some rest once in a while...).

I have felt privileged all these years to serve our wonderful congregation and our church in the role of scribe, to meet so many great people and learn new things.

I thank you all, members of the congregation, Susan, Richard, Anja, all elders in the past 10 years, Jolmer, Rev Gillean MacLean and especially pastor Lance Stone for your trust, support, advice and your friendship. And Adjoa and Hans for their patience.

I was very happy to learn that Elisabeth IJmker, Mattia Falcone and Sies Plokker agreed to take over as a Scribe Team, which will be a first for our congregation. I wish them every blessing in their work and I know that they will experience your support in their work just as I did.

You will still see me in church of course and on consistory. And I am looking forward to continue contributing to the life and work of our congregation in other capacities.

Thank you again!

Heleen Koning

MMH Benefit Concert - 8 October, 2022

Connaught Brass



“A thrilling young ensemble at the start of what is sure to be a major international career” (Great Birmingham Brass Fest), Connaught Brass are quickly making a name for themselves as a fresh talent in the chamber music world. Already set to perform at London’s Wigmore Hall and in the Lucerne Festival Debut Series, the ensemble’s ability to manipulate and unify sound earned them 1st Prize in the Inaugural Philip Jones International Brass Ensemble Competition 2019. Vibrant, spirited and bold...

The MMH benefit concert had been originally planned for last winter, but the pandemic got in the way. But now it is finally HERE! The Mulanje Mission Hospital Benefit Concert will be live in the church on Saturday, 8 October 2022 at 20:00.

For many years our church has supported this hospital in Malawi. We provide on-going aid on a regular monthly basis, but we also sponsor one large fund-raiser in the form of an annual concert. These are always splendid programs performed by first-class musicians. This year we will be featuring a brass quintet, the Connaught Brass. This promises to be a very exciting concert!

You can read more about Connaught Brass and hear recordings at: www.connaughtbrass.com. The quintet is generously offering this

concert to us without taking a fee. This concert is also being co-sponsored by Ferrandou Musique (www.ferrandou.org) who are paying travel expenses and lodging. We are most grateful! This means ALL proceeds from ticket sales go entirely to MMH.

Over the years we have funded many capital improvement projects at the hospital, including a new digital X-ray machine, solar power, renovation of various wards, etc.

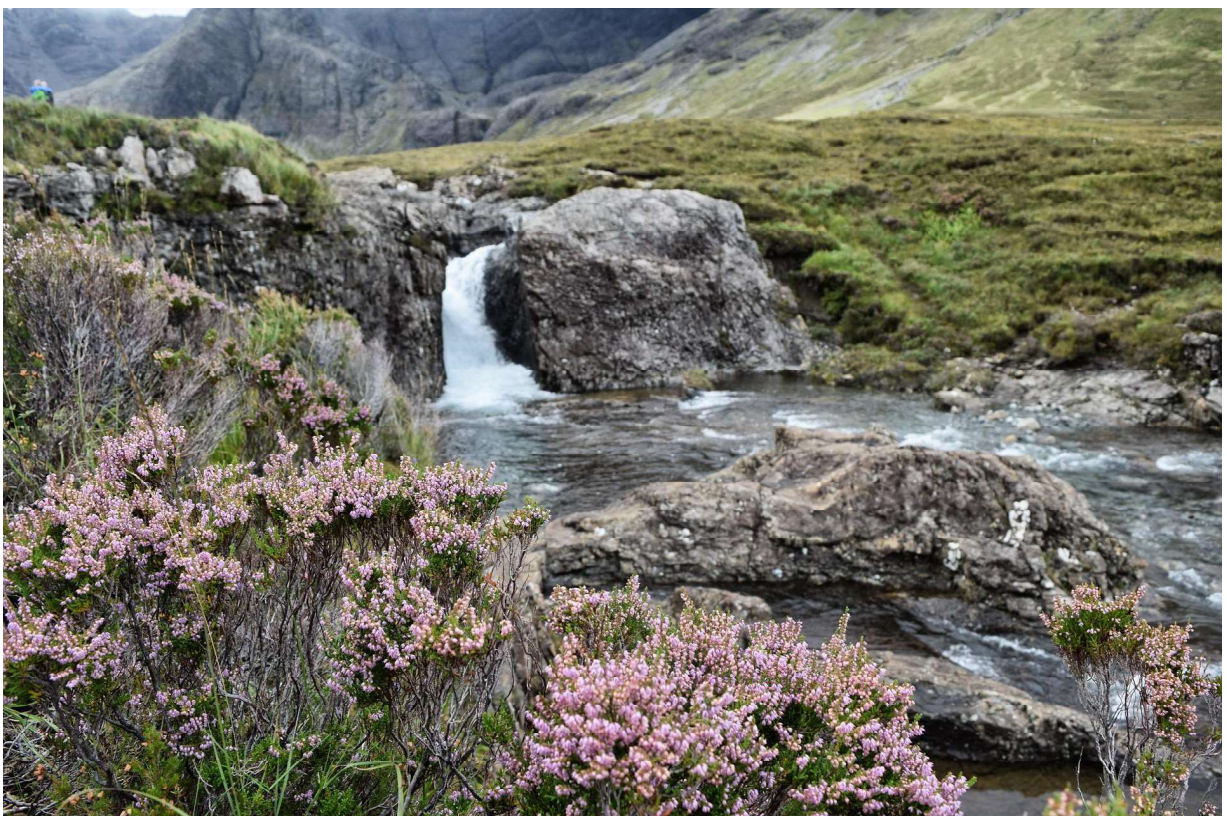
This year funds are needed to build and set up a dedicated Eye Clinic. Blindness due to cataracts can be treated with a simple operation under local anaesthesia.

Please help us give Malawians back their eyesight, and order your tickets via Eventbrite.nl. Or buy a ticket at the door on 8 October.

By scanning this QR code you will be directed to our concert page on Eventbrite. Tickets can be bought using iDeal.



Mark the date on your calendar! You won't want to miss this splendid concert! And please invite your colleagues, neighbours, friends and relatives to come along too.



Poem for Queen Elizabeth II: Floral Tribute

Evening will come, however determined the late afternoon,
Limes and oaks in their last green flush, pearly in September
mist.

I have conjured a lily to light these hours, a token of thanks,
Zones and auras of soft glare framing the brilliant globes.

A promise made and kept for life - that was your gift -

Because of which, here is a gift in return, glovewort to some,
Each shining bonnet guarded by stern lance-like leaves.

The country loaded its whole self into your slender hands,
Hands that can rest, now, relieved of a century's weight.

Evening has come. Rain on the black lochs and dark Munros.

Lily of the Valley, a namesake almost, a favourite flower

Interlaced with your famous bouquets, the restrained

Zeal and forceful grace of its lanterns, each inflorescence

A silent bell disguising a singular voice. A blurred new day

Breaks uncrowned on remote peaks and public parks, and

Everything turns on these luminous petals and deep roots,

This lily that thrives between spire and tree, whose brightness

Holds and glows beyond the life and border of its bloom.

By SIMON ARMITAGE, Poet Laureate

What does it mean to be poor?

George Meerveld sent this contribution.

Some time ago a rich father sent his pampered son to a small farm far from western urban centres to discover and experience what it is to be poor. The son stayed 5 days and nights. When the son had returned home, the father asked him what he had learned about poverty. Did you learn anything staying with these poor people?

The son answered:

- * We have one dog; they have four.
- * We have a small swimming pool which needs to be cleaned often. They have a brook with crystal clear water in which you can see fish swimming.
- * We have electric lights in the garden; they have the stars and the moon.
- * Our garden goes to the hedge of our neighbours, theirs to the horizon.
- * We buy bread; they bake it.
- * We buy concert tickets; however, they hear the concerts of birds and chickens and the farmer on the farm sings concert works.
- * We use the microwave, but their food tastes much better.
- * We close and lock everything to protect ourselves against all kinds of wrongs and evils; they sleep with open windows and doors.
- * We live with the mobile, PC, TV, DVDs, etc.; they are connected to the sky, the water, green fields and the shade of trees.



Thank you, said the son, for showing me how poor WE are!!

Every day we become poorer and poorer, because we don't notice how beautiful nature is which our Creator has given us.

We are all constantly busy with wanting, buying, having, instead of being satisfied with what nature gives us...

Thank you George for sharing this story.

Cooking at 'de Kloof'

After a month off in the summer, we resumed cooking at de Kloof, on Saturday morning, September 10th.

Anyone who has volunteered knows it's great fun getting to know others, and not just chopping vegetables! So please send me an email if you want to be added to the list of volunteers for October.

We even have two volunteers in September celebrating their wedding anniversary whilst volunteering!

Greetings from Giles

Blindness in Mulanje, Malawi

Cataract is the leading cause of blindness globally, and cataract blindness accounts for over half of the estimated 6 million blind people in Africa

Malawi has a population of approximately 14.8 million with a total of 7 ophthalmologists...

Scientific research from rural Malawi reveals that cost was cited as the major barrier to cataract surgery, followed by lack of awareness, fear of surgery, lack of expectation about the surgery, distance to the operation and bad service.

What is cataract, what causes it, and how is it treated?



Cataract is a cloudy area in the lens of the eye, that slowly leads to decrease in vision. In Dutch it is called 'staar'. At first, colours fade, and the patient has trouble seeing at night. Later, blindness occurs, leading to increased risk of falling and depression.

Cataracts are most commonly due to aging, while diabetes, smoking and drinking alcohol are risk factors.

Treatment is the surgical removal of the lens, and replacement with an artificial lens. Local anesthesia is used on the eye.

In Malawi, men are more likely to get treatment for blindness than women, while women have a higher life expectancy than men.

Gender specific approaches may be needed to reach both male and female patients.

By starting an Eye Clinic at Mulanje Mission Hospital, affordable, reliable care will be made available in this rural area.

Will you help us by donating and coming to the benefit concert on October 8?

Zikomo kwambiri! Thank you very much!

Sascha Sizoo, medical officer MMH 1999-2003

Results from the ERC Questionnaire 2022

In July and August we asked you for your input regarding your attendance of services in the ERC, either in person or via the livestream.

Thank you very much for your participation; we received more than 60 responses.

In this article we share some of the outcomes of the questionnaire with you. We will also provide a few interesting statistics about the use of the livestream in church. Thanks to the web team for this information.



*Drawing by H.P. Schouten (1747-1822),
Stadsarchief Amsterdam/ City archives*

Members who used to come to church every week or every other week before 2020 now tend to attend the in-person services less frequently.

Around 60% of respondents (sometimes) follow the services online: around 80% favours worshipping in church.

Those following the service via the livestream do this mostly at 10.30am (real time). A small proportion listens to the service later on Sunday or during the week.

The online services allow members of the congregation who otherwise would not be able to attend the services to participate. For example: people who live far away from church or abroad; vulnerable people who need to limit exposure; people with other commitments that prevent them from attending in person.

Respondents who express a preference for attending the service in church list as their reasons: the enjoyment of worshipping in person; the appreciation of the fellowship and socializing with others; singing hymns.

With respect to what we could do to make it more likely that people attend Sunday services in person, respondents recommend the church takes more active steps to reduce the risk of Covid and other infections (surface cleaning, ventilation, asking people with symptoms to stay home, etc.), and organizing more opportunities for social interaction and fellowship, both in church and after the service.

A vast majority appreciates and reads the Newsletter every week which is great.

Finally, most of the respondents have been coming to church for some time, with a peak for those having been with us > 10 years.

We have been using livestream equipment in church since 2020 and it is good to see that many of you appreciate this opportunity to follow the services when you would not otherwise have been able. Some interesting livestream statistics:

- * Since the start of recording, at least 3,700 people have followed our services online.
- * The best viewed service from the perspective of viewing time was the 2020 Christmas Eve service.
- * The best watched service in 2022 was the Easter Sunday service with 216 views.
- * After the Covid measures were lifted in early 2022, and over the last 3 months, we achieved between 110-180 views and the number of concurrent viewers (basically those who watch the service live) is around 20-30 persons, while the remainder watches the service later on the day or during the week.
- 50%-60% of the viewers watch from the Netherlands and the remaining proportion is spread over almost all continents, with the UK and US among the highest number of views.

Consistory will further analyse your input from the questionnaire, but it is already clear that we will continue with the weekly Newsletter and livestreaming the services, so we can make sure people can follow the Sunday services and other events who otherwise would not have been able to.

We shall also emphasize the fact that everyone should feel safe to go to church, such as keeping distance, wearing a face mask when you would like to, and other related measures.

Thanks again for your valued feedback, it is important to us all.

Thijs Glasz , on behalf of Consistory

Fellowship opportunities

20s&30s group: contact Elisabeth IJmker, updates on Facebook. We meet for lunch on the first Sunday of each month.

The group has arranged a short evening act of worship, **Compline**, on the first Sunday of each month at 21:00 via Zoom.

The **Men's group** had a planning meeting for the coming year on 15 September.

Choir rehearsal: Tuesday evening at 19:30. If you would like to get involved contact Richard Zook.



Coffee at the Hortus Botanicus



The new season started with a coffee morning in the Hortus Botanicus in Amsterdam.

There was time to walk around and admire the plants and trees. We also enjoyed the butterflies.

Lunch was shared afterwards.

We hope that you will join us in October at the church.

A letter from Thorsten

Dear Friends, greetings from Scotland!

As part of my journey into ministry, I did a "summer placement" of six weeks in Orkney. I chose to go there because I wanted to experience what it means to be Church in a more remote place of Scotland - so I thought, why not Orkney?

It was an experience of contrasts. My supervisor for this placement was Rev Fraser Macnaughton of Kirkwall Cathedral. And Kirkwall Cathedral is not a remote place. Every day at least one cruise ship arrives in Kirkwall and then from 10 am to 4 pm, the small and beautiful town of Kirkwall is flooded by tourists, who all visit the Cathedral and also of course, Orkney's famous neolithic sites. The Sunday services at the Cathedral are what I would call "high church style". About 200+ worshippers, including many visitors, liturgical candle lightening, every Sunday a robed choir singing from the ancient choir stalls in the apse behind the pulpit accompanied by the majestic organ. Twice during my placement, I climbed up the stairs into the high-rising pulpit to preach - I can say this was an elevating experience.

But my visits to the more remote islands made an even more memorable impression.

There is the little congregation on Flotta. I went there twice to lead a Wednesday afternoon service, and 33% of Flotta's population came - well, 16 people, including a young family. *(church picture on next page)*

I also went to Sandy, another island. After two hours on the ferry to get there, I was welcomed very warmly at the pier. It was one of the few days with a blue sky and sunshine, and after the service, we had coffee and tea outside the little church.

With Rev Marjory McLean, I went to Hoy one Sunday, and after the service, they proudly told me a lot about their congregation and their little church, which was built in 995. No, this is not a typing error - the first church building, of which there are still some remains visible, goes back more than a thousand years!

Or my visit to Stronsay: 90 minutes by ferry to get there, and then taking the inter-island commuter plane, which seats eight people, to be back in Kirkwall in 8 minutes.

The communities' history and the situations on all these islands are so different. Some struggle with declining populations and are facing the closure of the last shop. In contrast, Sandy's population is growing; they even reopened the local primary school some years ago. This gives me even more admiration for the fact that the people are committed to maintaining church life on each island. An elderly lady played the quirky harmonium, just the melody with one hand, but it made all the difference for our singing. On another island, a group starts down-loading recorded sermons from the internet on Fridays because the connection is extremely unreliable and they want to make sure it's ready by Sunday morning so that they can watch it together on a little screen in the church. The five ministers in Orkney have developed a plan for the future to serve the people in Orkney in the best way possible despite all the logistic challenges.

I am grateful to all the people who welcomed me and almost did not let me go again; they shared their stories on the island with all their challenges and how proud they are to be Orcadians.

And of course, I also took my time to explore Orkney's historic sites like Skara Brae, Ring of Brodgar, Ness of Brodgar, the tombs on Rousey, and Highland Park Distillery... and I even had four afternoons with sunshine during my six weeks ...

If you have not been to Orkney you should go there! And feel free to contact me if you want to experience the hidden treasures of Orkney. behind the tourist attraction *Thorsten*



Flotta church and Orkney cathedral

Goodbye Scot and Adrienne Guy

Just before the end of Scot's time as our locum Minister, I was happy to find out a bit more about him and his wife Adrienne:

Why did you consider coming to Amsterdam / the ERC?

Rev Eric Foggitt, your previous Interim Moderator, called me and asked if I would consider coming to Amsterdam for 3 months as your Locum Minister. At this point I had been retired for a year and was beginning to feel that I was perhaps ready to take up a temporary Locum post - so the phone call came just at the right time. After some discussion and prayer with Adrienne, I decided that I would like to take up the offer.

Was being a locum minister here as you expected, or not at all?

Being your Locum Minister has exceeded all expectations. As a congregation, you have been welcoming, thoughtful and kind and I have very much enjoyed leading the worship each week and getting to know people. I have particularly appreciated Richard's gifted playing, especially the thoughtful choices he makes for the music in worship. I have received many encouraging emails following the Sunday services and feel we have come to know many of you well in a short space of time. Adrienne and I have been asked out for meals and day trips and have enjoyed exploring Amsterdam and some of your other towns and cities. It has been a privilege for me to serve as your Locum Minister and I will continue to pray for you when we return to Scotland.

Where do you live permanently? Did you miss home?

We live in the Scottish Borders in a village called St Boswells, which lies 40 miles south of Edinburgh. We moved to St Boswells in May 2021 after living in Aberdeen for over 22 years.

We have felt so at home here in Amsterdam and in the Manse that we haven't missed Scotland and have been able to keep in touch with our family through FaceTime.

Can you tell our readers a bit more about your professional and family life?

Adrienne and I have been married for 44 years and we have 3 children (2 daughters and a son) and 6 grandchildren (4 boys and 2 girls).

Adrienne retired from her post as a Head Teacher in 2019. She managed a Primary School (children aged 5 - 11) with a Nursery (children aged 3 - 5) in Aberdeenshire.

After studying at the Scottish College of Textiles in Galashiels, I worked for the designer clothing company Jaeger. I then attended Edinburgh University to study Theology and became Minister of St Andrew's Lhanbryd & Urquhart Church in Moray (situated between Aberdeen and Inverness).

In 1998, I became the Minister of Northfield Church in Aberdeen and remained there until I retired. When I return to Scotland, I will be the Locum Minister of the Selkirk Churches near where we live.

Do you have any special hobbies or interests?

Since I have retired, I have taken up Long Bow Archery which I really

enjoy. The club is called the Ettrick Forest Archers and dates back centuries. We use traditional wooden longbows and arrows.

We also like to go for walks and there are many well-known trails around where we live such as the St Cuthbert's Way. Adrienne likes to spend time researching into her family tree. We also enjoy meeting up regularly with family and friends.



Thank you Scot and Adrienne!

Sascha Sizoo

The H4H bus excursion to Twente

Every year our "club" of four churches around the Spui organizes a day's outing. This year's event, a bus trip to Twente, was organized by our friends from the Krijtberg, the RC church on the Singel just across from the Spui, and what a delightful day it was! The weather was - as we've become so used to - splendid, sunny and warm. The tour was completely fully booked, with around 50 people climbing onto the bus for our 9am departure, the 1st of September. Yes, it was a rather long trip to get us all the way over to Twente, but the ride was through gorgeous countryside and the bus was full of fascinating people engaged in lively conversation.

Our first stop was in Oldenzaal (just north of Enschede, if you want to get your bearings.) There we visited the Sint Plechelmus Basilica, dating from around 1150, the tower being added in 1240, with further Gothic additions in the 15th and 16th centuries. After a very interesting tour of the building we enjoyed a delicious lunch in a nearby restaurant. But soon we piled onto the bus again to head to nearby Tubbergen and its St. Pancratius Kerk. Here we were treated to the splendour of the gorgeous collection of stained glass windows, all created by five generations of the glaziers family Nicolas. Bible stories from the Old and New Testaments mingled with symbols of the church and saints, all created in various styles over a period of 125 years fill all the windows of the church. Again, a very informative tour was given to us by local volunteers.

Then it was once more on to our next and final destination, Saasveld. Here again was a church dedicated to Sint Plechelmus, who was a missionary from Ireland. As was explained to us, an Irish missionary,



who spoke a related and familiar sounding language, received a much warmer welcome in this Saxon area than did the Franks from the south. This church, built in 1926, is much more modern than the first two we visited, but it also has stained glass windows by some of the younger generations of the Nicolas

family. The surroundings are also quite beautiful, the church yard and gardens surrounding the building having been the site of a former castle for 700 years.

After a brief service of worship in the church, with some readings, prayers and singing, we boarded the bus again for our journey back to Amsterdam. The ride through the beautiful farmland of the Overijssel countryside was one of the highlights of the trip, and it made the journey to and from the east of the country as enjoyable as the lovely sites we visited.

People from all four churches of the H4H were on the tour, but I'm afraid the ERC was the least represented. That was a great shame, as a delightful day out was missed! I thoroughly enjoyed the journey, the sites, and the lovely people I met and spoke to.

Do watch for next year's excursion and get your name on the list early!



Richard Zook

Maria Hooghiemstra

On 20 July Maria passed away at the age of 70 after being ill for quite a while.

Maria was part of our congregation for more than 20 years. She enjoyed the contacts and friendships, was a faithful participant of the Coffee Mornings and she volunteered as a guide.

In the last months it wasn't possible for her to come to church anymore. A number of people from our church visited Maria regularly, as well as our locum ministers. She really appreciated the contact and visitors.

Maria was laid to rest at the Natuur-begraafplaats in Koedijk, a beautiful, tranquil spot in nature.

Maria, rest in peace.



Membership

New members by profession of faith

September 11 2022

Maurice Winter

Robert Brunn

In memoriam

Maria Hooghiemstra

November 4, 1951 - July 20, 2022



Scriba Team



Elisabeth, Mattia and Sies take the Oath de Fideli during the consistory meeting on September 8th.

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>	06 25362826
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



English Reformed
Church Amsterdam

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