

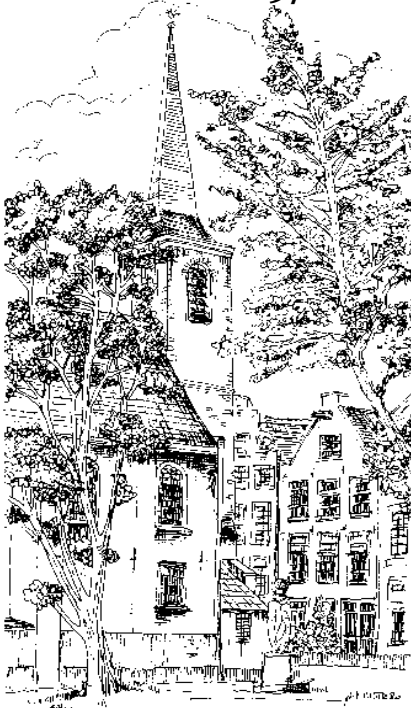


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# The Record

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# Baptisms

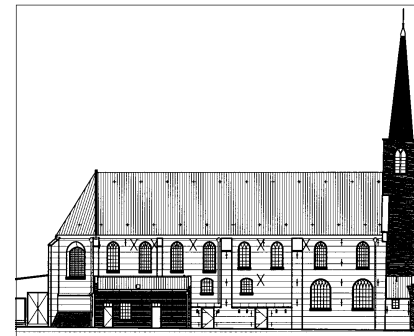
## Jelte Cornelius Gerhard Geerligs

### 22 February

## Maxwell Jos Schickler

### 15 March

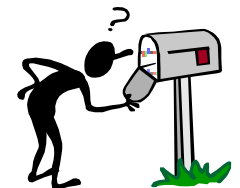
### An Open Church



Our church continues to be open to visitors throughout the week. We now post the opening times on the notice board outside the church. We have a dedicated bunch of volunteers who enjoy welcoming people into the building and providing answers to the occasional question, but we find ourselves needing one or two more names to fill out the rota of helpers. If you are available to spend two or three hours in the church on a weekday, whether it is every week or every now and then, please don't hesitate to ask for more information. You can talk to any of the guides, or contact the coordinator, Alicia Stewart (06-16593167).

Have you got 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 May 20th...

## Bread

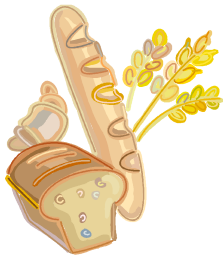
Most of us know by now about 'The Bread Run'. Twice each week someone from our congregation drives down to a large bakery in the city centre at closing time and picks up their leftover bread. The bakery employees put all the bread (sometimes including some very chic, expensive sorts of bread!) into bags and have it all ready for the volunteer to pick up.

The bread is then taken to a local charity which provides a warm meal each day (except Thursdays) for needy and/or homeless people. The bread is a major part of the meals served at the charity. Other charities, with their own volunteers, pick up the bread on other days of the week.

The Bread Run has been going on for many years now, and several people have given an hour of their time each week or two to help out. Recently the group of volunteers has shrunk as people have left Amsterdam, so more helpers are needed. If you have access to a car and have about an hour of free time on either Tuesdays or Saturdays, whether once a week or once a month, please consider volunteering for The Bread Run.

Gilles van den Berge, who has been coordinating the group of bread volunteers for the past few years, is now finding it difficult to find the time for this project. It involves making the monthly schedule and contacting the helpers— about one or two hours per month. If you think you might have time to take on this project (and you don't have to have a car to do it!), please contact either Gilles (020-3882778) or Rev. John Cowie (020-6722288).

Join The Bread Run group of volunteers!



## 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. We begin at 10:30am and end with a light lunch. If you would like more information about the coffee mornings, or need to find out about transportation, please contact Rev. John Cowie (020-6722288).



Forthcoming coffee mornings will be held in these homes:

7 April	Marieke Smith	Haarlem
12 May	Heleen Koning	Amsterdam
2 June	Jose Monkau	Middelie

## Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

Soon it will be Easter again, the day of wonder, the day of Resurrection. The secular world pays attention to Christmas with its midwinter parties, decorations and gifts. However, apart from a few distracting Easter bunnies and chocolate eggs to tempt us, Easter remains a resolutely Christian festival, a day on which we can celebrate together the central wonder of our faith.

It is indeed the most important feast day of the Christian year. We herald it on Palm Sunday, for which the children have already prepared this year's palm crosses. It is the culmination of the weeks of Lent.

Just so that it doesn't come as too much of a surprise, we are encouraged during Lent to take stock of our faith and then to come together with joy and wonder on Easter Sunday, to celebrate the resurrection with songs of praise.

Each of the preceding Easter week services adds something to that dramatic climax in worship together. There is the joy of being led by the children carrying the crosses on Palm Sunday, the quiet remembrance of the disciples gathered together for their Last Supper with Jesus on Maundy Thursday, and the sharing of the always dramatic and powerful Gospel narrative on Good (God's) Friday. During the music from the choir and other musicians we have time to reflect on what we are being told.

Some traditions extend the season back to "Passion Sunday", the second Sunday before Easter. I've never paid much attention to this. It is not because we temperate northern Europeans don't really do passion - just watch us supporting our football or rugby teams. The real reason is that the 'low' church background of my upbringing regards *every* Sunday as a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus.

It seems to me, however, that we need passion in our worship and lives as we strive to be God's people. We celebrate the resurrection, not as a historical fact but as a people who have been dead and are now are alive. We celebrate as people who rejoice to share the grace and forgiveness of God, who are restored in our relationship to our Creator and with one another.

So let's be passionate and excited in our living, let us each wake up every morning ready to accomplish great things in work and life. I don't mean that we should be hungry for success in a selfish and self-centred way. Instead we need to shake and bless the world by being as gracious as God has been to us, and by being imaginative and bold in public issues and generous in our private lives. The news of the resurrection is life to every believer and a blessing for the whole world.

John A. Cowie

## Consistory Meeting, 2 February

One of the topics of the February consistory meeting was the preparation of the Annual General Meeting, which, as always, takes place on the evening of the first Monday in March.

**Membership matters:** Andrew & May Curle, having spent 10 years in the Netherlands, returned to South Africa this month.

Bram & Sascha Sizoo have asked for their membership to be transferred to the church in Zutphen where they are now worshipping.

Consistory also looked into ways to assist church members who might need special attention.

**Finance:** The final accounts for 2008 were discussed. The financial year ended with a total drop in income of 2% and an 8% decrease in expenditure. This means 2008 ended with a net surplus. Given all the financial obligations throughout the year, this is a very good result. The consolidated accounts still have to be audited. The income and expenditure report for January was circulated.

### Fabric Matters:

**Church:** The leaks in the chancel and deaconry have been repaired. A maintenance plan has to be drawn up so that upkeep/maintenance is carried out in a regular on-going cycle. Of course any urgent work will be done as it occurs.

Some changes have been made to the sound system.

**Hall:** A meeting with the municipality to discuss the Hall (among other things) took place in February. Planning and organising of the work in the Hall continues.

There was another leakage, this time in the kitchen, which dripped water down into the Betty Asphalt Theater. It has now been repaired.

### Other matters:

**20s-30s group:** there are now 27 people on the mailing list. Weekly activities continue, with a good number attending each event.

The EcoBible seminar took place on February 7th.

The Ceilidh of January 16th went well and the €484.50 raised was donated to the "Kloof", a homeless shelter.

The church website and the Mulanje website have both been updated recently.

The next meeting was held on March 16th. A report will be available for the next *Record*.

*Heleen Koning*

## ERC Library Book Review

*Continuing our series of reviews of books found in the church library, Leila Wallisser tells us about one of the books from the Chronicles of Narnia series:*

### The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

By C. S. Lewis

"This is the land of Narnia," said the Faun, "where we are now; all that lies between the lamp-post and the great castle of Cair Paravel on the eastern sea. And you-you have come from the Wild Woods of the West?"

"I-I got in through the wardrobe in the spare room." said Lucy.

Because of the war, Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy have to leave their house in London and get sent to a Professor who lives in the middle of the country.

When settled, all of them decide to explore the secrets in the big and strange house. They find a big white room, with nothing except a wardrobe in it. None of them are interested except for Lucy.

Lucy opens the wardrobe and discovers that there is a fantasyland, Narnia, on the other side of it.

She makes friends with the Faun Tumnus, who tells her how it has been winter for years in Narnia.

When Lucy brings them to Narnia, her sister and brothers finally believe her.

They make friends with Aslan the lion, king of Narnia, who tells them about the wicked ice-queen and how he needs their help. Together they embark on a big adventure, trying to destroy the ice-queen and save Narnia!

*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is a great book, full of fantasy, friendship and adventure. It's a beautiful story that makes you want to creep into the book and experience the story, too.

If you would like to read the book, or the six other adventures in the series, you can find a compilation in the church library.



*Leila Wallisser*

## The Route to Ministry

*This from the Church of Scotland:*

Have you ever asked your minister what prompted him or her to train for the ministry? Every story is different – but at some point church representatives got involved to assess if the call was genuine.

In recent years the Church of Scotland has undergone major restructuring and the route to ministry – for full-time ministers, auxiliary ministers, readers and deacons – has been consolidated. Everyone goes through the same enquiry and assessment stages to discern whether they have a call to ministry and what kind of ministry that might be.



The enquiry phase begins with an enquirers' conference (held twice a year in Scotland), and continues with a period of extended enquiry and 5-6 months co-ordinated field assessment. This phase has a dual purpose: to provide you with a supportive environment to explore your sense of 'calling' to Church service and to give the wider Church a taste of what you have to offer.

The enquiry phase concludes with a local review, evaluating your integrity of faith and life, openness to learning, interpersonal skills, reflective skills, and coping with change.

If you are ready to proceed, you are invited to attend an assessment conference. This provides an opportunity to gauge your interactive skills in a group context, to examine your character, beliefs, vocation and general suitability for ministry, and to explore in more depth the areas of life, doctrine, faith journey, etc. which were raised in the local review.

Once you are accepted as a prospective candidate for the ministry, and your Presbytery agrees to nominate you, your training can begin.

For more information, see <http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/councils/ministries/mintraining.htm>.

## Finance Report

*On the following two pages are Finance Reports, one for the year 2008 and one for the first two months of the current year:*

### **Income for 2008:**

<u>Income</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>Change</u>
Donations	71,488.72	80,841.93	-9,353.21
Collections	60,801.81	55,804.13	4,997.68
Church	16,120.75	20,435.37	-4,314.62
Weddings	15,500.00	14,377.50	1,122.50
Concerts	13,199.33	12,221.09	978.24
Church hall	3,926.18	1,793.37	2,832.95
Church shop	2,213.00	-619.95	2,832.95
Interest income	<u>416.34</u>	<u>58.45</u>	<u>357.89</u>
	183,666.31	184,911.89	-1,245.76

This overview for the year is an excerpt of the full audited 2008 annual report. 2008 ended with a small surplus of income over expenditure versus a deficit in the previous year. This surplus has been transferred to the reserves.

**Income:** Total income decreased by 1% during the year 2008, compared to 2007. Revenues from collections, weddings, concerts, church shop, church hall, & interest were higher, while income from donations & church declined.

**Expenditure:** Total expenditure declined by 6% versus the previous year, due to lower costs for wages & salaries, maintenance, printing, stationary & postage, travel, car depreciation, telecommunications, representation, interest expenditure, flowers and other operating costs. Expenses increased for the costs of electricity, water & gas, insurance and bank charges.

**Charity:** Monies received for charity through collections and donations from both the ERC congregation and external charitable organisations increased by 67% versus 2007. As in previous years, the aid continues to be focused on our prime long-term charity project, the Mulanje Mission Hospital in Malawi. Balances are being paid out to the various projects in accordance with their respective requirements.

On behalf of the Consistory, I wish to express our gratitude for the much needed and ongoing support for our church, from members, former members, friends & visitors, both here and overseas.

*Jolmer Gerritse, Treasurer*

*Second report on page 6...*

***Income for January-February 2009:***

<u>Income</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>Change</u>
Donations	9,708.45	16,848.91	-7,140.46
Collections	8,129.85	8,679.49	-549.64
Church	2,948.76	2,778.66	170.10
Concerts	1,061.68	1,332.95	-271.27
Weddings	750.00	3,000.00	-2,250.00
Interest income	493.26	0.00	493.26
Church shop	<u>160.00</u>	<u>420.00</u>	<u>-260.00</u>
	23,252.00	33,060.01	-9,808.01

During the first two months of the year total income decreased by 42%, compared to the previous period. All sources of income, other than those from the church and interest income, declined.

**Costs:** Costs increased by 111% during this period, mainly due to the early redemption of the mortgage on the manse. Furthermore, the church has been confronted by higher costs, especially those for electricity, water & gas, wages & salaries and insurance.

**Charities:** A total of 3,033,07 was received for the various charitable organisations which are supported by the church, and a total of 4,760,00 was paid out during the period.

**Donations:** Through the so-called *Interkerkelijk Contact in Overheidszaken* (CIO) contract with the Dutch Government and the fact that the church belongs to the P.K.N. (Protestant Church in The Netherlands), the church has the AMBI status. For tax efficient contributions, please check the church website or get in touch with me.

Thank you! The Consistory is grateful for the continuous support for the church.

*Jolmer Gerritse, Treasurer*

## Dutch Guilder Banknotes

In case you should come across some Dutch guilder banknotes, the church would be most grateful if you would consider putting these notes in the collection during a church service, or in the church's collection box at the porch.

Thanking you in advance for your kind consideration.

*Jolmer Gerritse, Treasurer*

May 28	1:00pm	The Music Scholars of St. Lawrence College Ramsgate, England: lunchtime concert with choral & instrumental works by Vivaldi, Bach, Bridge, etc. <i>Free concert</i>
May 30	3:15pm	<b>Olja Bučo, ERC organist: works by Bach, Sweelinck, Andriessen &amp; de Klerk. <i>Free concert</i></b>
May 31	3:15pm	Tuppy Trio: Freya Tuppy (violin), Harriet Krijgh (cello) & Hemma Tuppy (piano). Works by Schubert, Strauss & Mendelssohn.

*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.*

## The EcoCongregation

What has the EcoCongregation been doing?

In a one-off, 4-hour EcoBible Study we learned to think about eco matters such as living/eating/consuming/travelling as if God's beautiful creation matters.

Once a month, for three months so far, eight of us have been meeting for a couple of hours to try out the Eco Team project. We are about halfway through.

And it is working! Each month we discuss a topic such as energy in the home, or rubbish, or informed shopping, and we get enough info to start DOING something about it. Finally, instead of only good intentions, we are acting! The project works by setting 3 goals for yourself each month and recording how you are getting on by reading your gas and electricity meters (we did this once we had found them and figured out how to read them!), weighing your rubbish and recycling, and then keeping a graph of these measurements. You then use the tips and info to take it as far as you wish to in helping the environment. Previous eco teams have on average cut their gas and electricity by 15% (also handy financial savings) and their waste to landfill (a big green house gas producer) by 25%. So if we all gave it a go.....! It hasn't been difficult, and it's been great working together. As one young Dutch Christian put it, we're "enjoying more with enough."

If you are interested in joining an eco team or attending a one-off EcoBible seminar, email [lornajohnson@chello.nl](mailto:lornajohnson@chello.nl).

In the service on the 19th of April, in celebration of World Earth Day, the Eco-Congregation will invite you to make one painless action that will save you money (enough for a trip to the movies with a large pop corn!) and cut hundreds of kilograms off your carbon footprint!

Two websites to browse: [www.ecocongregation.org/scotland](http://www.ecocongregation.org/scotland), or [www.operationnoah.org](http://www.operationnoah.org)

## Concerts in Our Church

April 5	3:15pm	Plantagekoor & Vocaal Ensemble Amadeus with instrumental ensemble conducted by Bert 't Hart: works by Bach, Buxtehude, Telemann, etc.
April 11	8:15pm	Joseph Schlesinger (countertenor) & Esther Ebbinge (soprano) with Barokensemble perform Pergolesi's "Stabat Mater" & Vivaldi's "Nisi Dominus".
April 16	1:00pm	Shepshed Singers from Leicestershire, England: lunch concert of sacred works, Renaissance madrigals, folk songs & spirituals. <i>Free concert</i>
April 26	3:15pm	The choir of the 4 Mei Project, Groningen: "I see my shadow dancing", 30th anniversary project with works by Shostakovitch, Theodorakis, etc., & world premier by Dutch composers.
May 3	3:15pm	Duo Bergstem: Gilad Nezer (bass) & Kimball Huigens (piano), works by Schubert, Dvorak, Barber, Brahms, and others.
May 8	8:15pm	Johannette Zomer (soprano) & Fred Jacobs (theorbe): works by Johnson, Purcell, etc. Presentation of their new cd "With Endless Tears."
May 9	8:15pm	Vocaal Ensemble Frascati: works by Monteverdi, Verdi, & Palestrina.
May 10	3:15pm	Vocaal Ensemble Frascati: works by Monteverdi, Verdi, & Palestrina.
May 15	8:15pm	Franz Liszt Kamerkoor: works by Liszt, Dvorak, Andriessen, etc. 25th anniversary concert.
May 16	1:00pm	Treharris Male Voice Choir from Wales: lunch concert of choir and folk songs from England and Wales, spirituals, and songs from musicals. <i>Free concert</i>
May 17	3:15pm	<b>Muidens Fortepiano Trio: ERC member Giles Francis (violin), Matthias Naegele (cello), Ursula Dütschler (forte piano), with Machteld Baumans (soprano) &amp; Nicholas Pape (contrabass). A program featuring works by the brothers Joseph &amp; Michael Haydn, incl. M. Haydn's <i>Divertimento in C for violin, cello &amp; bass</i>; and J. Haydn's <i>English songs for soprano &amp; piano</i>.</b>
May 22	8:15pm	Gary Goldschneider (piano): gala piano recital of Russian music in celebration of his 70th birthday. Works by Rachmaninoff, Shostakovitch & Prokofiev.

## Eco Bible seminar

On February 7th of this year there was the first ecological-biblical seminar organised by our congregation. We had 15 people attending the event, which lasted for 4 hours. Rev. John Cowie opened with prayer. Then Calvin Russell showed us a power point presentation on what ecology actually is. With this knowledge we moved to the biblical part. We had a different list of quotations from the Bible for each of the four small groups. We were thus able to learn more about stewardship as our calling and, within this framework, able to explore various topics including: God as Creator of the earth and of all nature in it, God's call for all of his creation to worship, God's expectation for us to obey Him in our lifestyle, God's blessing upon the different species of plants and animals, and others themes. After very fruitful discussions in small groups, all of the groups reported back to the larger gathering.

After a break we read in groups the material on global warming prepared by Samuel Ayesu, our Master's student in ecology. This was a starting point for discussions about global warming from our Christian perspective. The next part of the study, led by Lorna Johnson, provided us with some practical advice as to what we as individuals can do in the face of the ecological crisis. Not to feel too overwhelmed by too many measures to undertake, we talked about four practical actions:

*\*Switch to Green Choice energy ([www.greenchoice.nl/fairclimate](http://www.greenchoice.nl/fairclimate))*

*\*Cut down on car and plane use (try setting a goal in your family and work: 1 less plane journey per year)*

*\*Buy locally produced food (less air miles, less refrigeration)*

*\*Join a campaigning organisation (e.g. Christian Aid Climate campaign, eco-congregation in this church, and soon ECOTEAMS)*

At the end, Thijs Polstra talked about what we can do in the church building. One of the ideas from the group was to put double glazing on the big window in the church hall where we met.

We had an enjoyable time together – learned more, discovered another dimension of the biblical teachings and thought of the solutions for the ecological problems. For those who couldn't join us, I've got good news: there will definitely be more on the topic in our congregation! See you next time!

*Julia Lewandowska*

## Hosts Needed

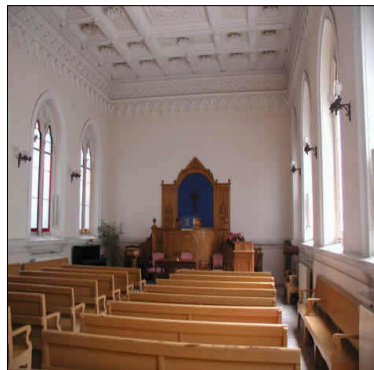
From the 12th to the 17th of June there will be a group of 25 children (aged 13 to 16) from Poland visiting the Netherlands. They are members of a folk group dancing traditional dances in traditional Polish outfits. They will be performing in Amsterdam during this time. The dancers are looking for friendly people who could accommodate them for this time. If you could host one or more people, please contact Julia Lewandowska at [julinek@reformowani.pl](mailto:juline@reformowani.pl) or 06-39121350. Thanks!

## Presbytery of Europe Report



The first of the 2 annual Presbytery of Europe meetings was hosted by St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church of Scotland congregation in Rome, Italy. St. Andrew's, centrally located in Rome, occupies a building which, when it was built as a church in 1885, was not allowed to look like a church. For this reason it can pass as a Florentine palazzo.

The length of the sanctuary lies sideways behind the facade, and is 2 stories high.



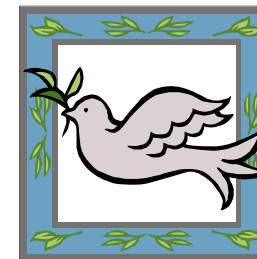
Below it, in the basement, are the church's meeting rooms. The two floors on top of the church, in office layout, are rented out to a government ministry. St. Andrew's minister's office and residence are on the top floor. The large terrace on top of the building – with a breathtaking view of the Rome skyline – is often used for church gatherings.

St Andrew's is a lively congregation, made up of people of many nationalities. Much effort goes into outreach. Recently the front area of the grounds were made available to nearby businesses for parking (much in demand), with the intention to raise funds for the outreach programs. The minister in Rome is the Rev. Willie McCulloch, who many of you may remember. In 2007 he was Moderator of the presbytery, which brought him to our church to take part in the 400th anniversary celebrations.

The presbytery weekend began on Friday morning with meetings of the various committees: Mission, Education and Training, Superintendence, and Finance. Following this, the main presbytery meeting, on Friday evening and on Saturday, saw the committees' recommendations brought forward. Some of the topics that came up included vacancies (Bermuda and Malta have recently been filled; Gibraltar, Fuengirola, Lausanne, Lisbon and Turin are in transition), the effects of substantial currency fluctuation (a share of the support for projects in the eurozone is generated by funds held in sterling), energy usage, expenditure on fabric over a certain amount to go through presbytery, training for the ministry, Lisbon proposing to be fully self supporting, and a proposal for a new manse policy for the presbytery.

Visitors at the meetings included the former and current Moderators of the

*(Continued on page 9)*



## Easter Services at the ERC

**Maundy Thursday Service**

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Thursday, 9 April, 8:00pm

**Good Friday Service**

Choir Service, Reading from the Gospel of John

Friday, 10 April, 7:30pm

**Easter Celebration**

**with a program for younger children**

**Sunday, 12 April, 10:30am**

*(Continued from page 8)*

General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rev. Sheila Kesting and the Rev. David Lunan. The former, who is currently the CoS ecumenical officer, spoke about reaching out to other denominations (the Church of Scotland is not just the Church IN Scotland), how the gift of the gospel can be shared. 'Talk about God' is the theme the current Moderator has for his term. He was interested in seeing how the Presbytery of Europe - because of geographical challenges meeting only twice a year - can still be run as efficiently as a regular CoS presbytery within Scotland, where representatives of the congregations have a meeting once every month.

*Thijs Polstra*