



PostNL
Betaald
Port Payé
Pays-Bas

The Record

December 2014

Vol. 2014/6



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

Rev. Dr. Lance Stone
Minister
minister@ercadam.nl

Heleen Koning
Interim Scriba
scriba@ercadam.nl

Thorsten König
Treasurer
treasury@ercadam.nl

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

Olja Bučo
Organist, Choir Director
organist@ercadam.nl

Kenneth Ewen
Concert Manager

Christa Oudshoorn-Hobo
& Veronica Garcia Robles
Sunday School Superintendents

Nancy Sekyere Owusu
Crèche Duty Rota
creche@ercadam.nl

Astrid König
Junior Church Coordinator
juniorchurch@ercadam.nl

Els Nooij
Church Guiding Coordinator

Church

IBAN: NL44 ABNA 0547 6235 50
SWIFT address: ABNANL2A

Friends of the English Reformed Church
IBAN: NL90 ABNA 0624 1800 69

Church Hall

J.W.Brouwersstraat 9
1071 LH Amsterdam
020 6722288

Wittgensteinlaan 161
1062 KD Amsterdam
06 13097756

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

Marnixkade 67-2
1015 XX Amsterdam
020 6224158

Hemonystraat 26c
1074 BR Amsterdam
020 4701980

concertorganiser@ercadam.nl

sundayschool@ercadam.nl

Roomtuintjes 197
1093 TB Amsterdam
020 6933521

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

openchurch@ercadam.nl

Begijnhof 48
1012 WV Amsterdam
020 6249665

NZ Voorburgwal 282A
1012 RT Amsterdam
020 6225916

Minister's Message

Dear Friends,

For some years I taught in a theological college in Cambridge and was out of pastoral ministry, and one thing I really missed during those years was going through the high and holy seasons, especially Christmas and Easter, with a congregation. I was of course still a member of a church, but because of certain commitments I had I did not get nearly so caught up in the celebration of Christmas and Easter as when I was actually pastoring a church. I sometimes used to get to the week before the big day and it would suddenly strike me that it would soon be past and over and that somehow it would have passed me by. Especially at Christmas time I would feel that I had been very caught up in all the trappings that go along with the season – shopping, writing Christmas cards, going to various parties and events – but that somehow the “heart of the matter” had escaped me.

That was one of the joys of returning to pastoral ministry and taking on two churches in Cambridge. Each year I became immersed once again in the stories, the narratives, the build-up, the extra services, such that by the time Christmas or Easter was over I felt that I had really done it justice – and that it had done its work on me. Each year I felt that in some deep way my life had been enriched and even transformed. And of course going through the high and holy seasons with a congregation is such a communal thing – it creates community. It is a shared experience and you come through such times feeling closer not only to God but to fellow believers.

We all know what a fraught and crazy season Christmas can be. But it can be a wonderful season too, one in which we approach the holy ground of profound mystery – the mystery of the Incarnation, of God becoming flesh, of power and majesty being laid aside and weakness and vulnerability being embraced. Such mysteries, however, require careful handling. They need to be approached carefully and with due preparation. We need to give time to them. That is why a special programme has been drawn up for Advent this year (*see page 8*). It includes activities for children and adults together each week and also a series of three bible studies on Wednesday evenings. Could I invite you to carefully consider attending these and making them part of your Christmas preparations?

I am so looking forward to Advent and Christmas this year. I am so looking forward once again to journeying through this wonderful festival, only this time with a new congregation, a new community. I pray that it will be an enriching experience for us all.

With very best wishes to you and gratitude to you for the warm welcome extended to me and Sally during these past few months,

Lance

Consistory Meetings, October & November

Pastor Lance Stone chaired his first Consistory meeting in October, after his induction the previous weekend. Lots of issues needed to be addressed.

Membership matters:

- *Otis William*, son of Elise Bijkerk and Nick Sadler, would be baptized on 26 October.
- *Janis*, daughter of Susan Agbor and Elvis Ngah, would be baptized on 16 November.
- *Pastor Lance Stone* was admitted into membership of the English Reformed Church by transfer, through his induction.
- *Elisabeth van Oudgaarden* informed Consistory that she has accepted a position as OBGYN consultant in a hospital in Cumbria, England. She will move in the beginning of next year.

Consistory: Since there are no guidelines in the Church of Scotland, nor the *Protestantse Kerk Nederland*, supporting the present age limit for members of Consistory, we decided to abolish the aforementioned age limit. This means that from now on a member of Consistory may continue serving after reaching the age of 70.

The discussion about the procedure for choosing new Consistory members, started in June, continued. A proposal for a more transparent procedure was discussed at the November meeting. The discussion not only concerned the procedure for choosing new members but also the distinction we make between elders and deacons (not now common in the Church of Scotland), the number of Consistory members and the period of serving on the Consistory. The tasks of elders towards pastoral care of the congregation was also discussed. We will be continuing the discussion at our next meeting. The aim is to have the changes in effect at the beginning of the new year.

We need at least two new members on a shorter notice and would therefore follow the present procedure for those.

Stichting Het Begijnhof: In October the court had ruled in favour of the *Stichting Begijnhof* (Begijnhof Foundation). The dispute between the ERC and the Stichting centered around times, access and control. Due to a number of circumstances the ERC had not been able to present the court with a defense. The ERC has now changed legal representation and our new lawyer drafted a complaint immediately after the ruling. A committee of members of the congregation and others with legal and historical knowledge will be assisting Consistory and the lawyer in this case. The ruling of the court had no immediate consequences. In the coming period we will continue to seek contact with the board of the Stichting Het Begijnhof and our neighbours.

Finances: The income and expenditure sheets of August and September 2014 were discussed. The prognosis is satisfactory: income and expenses are in line. This is the result of lower costs on wages during the vacancy period. However, the declining income is a matter of concern, in light of the budget for 2015. The budget, based on the same level of income as 2014, shows a deficit of €25,000, to be taken from our reserves. We have to work towards bringing back our income (mainly collections and donations) to a higher level. Fundraising will be needed.

The budget proposal for 2015 was approved by Consistory.

Mulanje Mission: Ruth Shakespeare, administrator of Mulanje Mission Hospital in Malawi, had been in Amsterdam the previous weekend. She had a meeting with some members of the Mulanje committee, Pastor Lance and a representative of the Rotary Club.

Other matters: Pastor Lance Stone and Presbytery Elder Baafi Sekyere had represented the ERC at the Presbytery of Europe meeting in Budapest in October. Given the fact that congregations outside of Europe are now part of the Presbytery, it was decided to rename the Presbytery. From now on it is to be called the International Presbytery of the Church of Scotland.

The next Consistory meeting will be held on 1 December.

Heleen Koning

Finance Report

January-October 2014, amounts in €

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>Change</u>
Income			
Donations	47,186.15	57,798.15	-10,612.00
Collections	37,715.45	45,417.81	-7,702.36
Church hire	18,701.50	17,291.80	1,409.70
Concerts	8,331.00	11,908.24	-3,577.24
Weddings	6,962.00	5,315.00	1,647.00
Church shop	206.00	687.30	-481.30
Flowers	<u>164.11</u>	<u>297.32</u>	<u>-133.21</u>
	119,266.21	138,715.62	-19,449.41

When you read this *Record*, I will have finished the preparation of the 2015 budget for our congregation. Our income is still significantly lower when compared to 2013, and I have no indication that this will change. Therefore our budget for 2015 currently has a financial gap of about €25,000, which we can only compensate by using our savings reserves.

Unfortunately, with the current financial situation we are in the uncomfortable situation of having to use our reserves just to be able to satisfy our immediate obligations. For years we employed a student assistant minister and later a youth worker, who did great work among our young people and the 20s/30s group. Because of the difficult financial situation I was not in a position to include the position of a youth worker/youth minister in our budget for 2015. Therefore I urge each and every one of you to think and pray about your financial priorities and how you are able to support God's ministry in our congregation. It would be great if we could not only close 2015 without a deficit, but have even more to employ a Youth Worker or a Youth Minister!

As always, if you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me anytime at treasury@ercadam.nl or (0294) 772934.

Thorsten König, Treasurer

Christmas Services in Our Church

Tuesday, 16 December, 8:30pm (20:30)

Carols by Candlelight

*Festival of Lessons & Carols followed by
coffee and cakes in the church*

Wednesday, 24 December, 10:30pm (22:30)

Christmas Eve Service

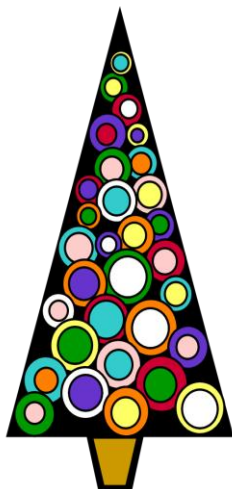
Doors open at 10:00pm

Thursday, 25 December, 10:30am

Christmas Day Service

a family service

All are welcome!



Christmas Party!

Everyone is invited to our annual Christmas Party on Saturday, 13 December at 3:00pm! The party will be held at our Church Hall, Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 282A.

We ask you to bring along a treat, either sweet or savory, to share with others. And if you are bringing children along to the party, please give the child's name and age to Heleen Koning or one of the Sunday School teachers so that Santa can take that into consideration.

We hope to see you all there!

The Clock is Back and Ticking!



After almost a year, the clock has been repaired and is back in the sanctuary of the church. The clock maker, by the name of Menno Hoenkamp, has reported as follows:

- *the clock work is of solid construction and was made around 1800, and is, after the repairs, in good condition

- *as a result of the repair work, the clock has become almost silent and there will be no more need for it to be stopped for concerts, as has been confirmed by our concert manager Kenneth Ewen

- *the front has been dusted and cleaned and looks refreshed

- *the clock maker has re-installed it in the frame more solidly and has assured us that it cannot be pushed back, an accident that happened previously

- *on the front of the clock there are three holes:

- the top hole is for regulating the clock when it is running slow or fast, by very marginal and careful adjustments of not more than 5 degrees of the clock work with a special key

- the middle hole is for weekly winding of the clock, by 16 turns, for which the clock maker has provided a new key

- the lower hole is for stopping the clock, by using a special instrument

The clock maker has warned us that if the clock, especially the regulation of it, is not handled with the utmost care, the clock work could be severely damaged again.

In the meantime, enjoy the almost silent ticking!

Jolmer Gerritse

Special Advent Events

Christmas is coming! Get ready! Here is a programme of Bible Study and activities for adults and children to help us prepare for Christmas. You are all quite welcome to join us for one or all of these!

Wednesday, 3 December

5:00pm-7:00pm

At the Lutheran Church on the Spui

Children & adults together,

Activities + food

Theme: Shepherds

7:30pm-9:00pm

Same location

Bible Study

Theme: Shepherds

Sunday, 7 December

2:00pm-3:30pm

Meet at our church

Children & adults together:

Ice-skating!

3:30pm-5:30pm

At our church,

Christingle service

Tuesday, 9 December

5:00pm-7:00pm

At the Lutheran Church on the Spui

Children & adults together,

Activities + food

Theme: Mary

Wednesday, 10 December

7:30pm-9:30pm

At our church,

Bible Study

Theme: Mary

Wednesday, 17 December

5:00pm-7:00pm

At the Lutheran Church on the Spui

Children & adults together,

Activities + food

Theme: The Wise Men

7:30pm-9:30pm

Same location

Bible Study

Theme: The Wise Men



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, or occasionally at other locations such as a cafe or restaurant. We begin at about 10:30am. If you would like more information about the coffee mornings, or if you would like to host a coffee morning at your home once in awhile, please contact either Elly Kalf (020 6479174) or Sies Plokker (020 4707944). We would love to have you join us!

Here are the dates and locations of the next coffee mornings:

2 December	Pat Rood-van Beem	Sassenheim
6 January	Café Luxembourg	Amsterdam
10 February	George Meerveld	Amsterdam North

Cooking at *De Kloof*

De Kloof is a shelter for homeless people in the centre of Amsterdam. Our church is committed to cooking a warm lunch at the shelter every second Monday of the month. We need about three volunteers for this. The group begins cooking at around 9:00am and we are finished at about 3:00pm. It is fun to cook together, and it's for a great cause.

The next dates when we will be needing volunteers are 12 January, 9 February and 9 March.

If you would like to help, or if you have any questions, please contact Gillian Walker at dekloof@ercadam.nl. We could use your help!

The Bread Run!

Every Saturday someone from our church picks up the leftover bread products from a large bakery in the centre of Amsterdam and delivers them to a wonderful charity, also in the city centre, that provides a warm meal for homeless and needy folks every day.

A few members of our church have been helping out with this project for many years now. Some of these steady volunteers are moving on, or have already done so, and thus we are looking to replace them. If you have a car, or access to a car, and are able to help one Saturday each month for a pickup at either 8:00pm (off-season) or 9:00pm (high tourist season), or even if you can help every now and then, please consider chipping in to keep the important "bread run" going! We could really use your help!

For more information please contact Gilles at 020-3882778 or email him at gilles@alice.nl. Thank you!

Concerts in Our Church

12 December, 8:15pm: Amsterdam singing group Angels, with guests the Christmas Belles: “SnowAngels”, Christmas songs from around the world, some classics in original arrangements.

13 December, 8:15pm: Balkankoor Slavuj conducted by Ivo Boswijk: 25-voice choir sings folk songs from around the Black Sea.

14 December, 3:15pm: Coro Encanto conducted by Felix van der Hombergh: “Um Inverno Quente” (A Warm Winter), a Portuguese winter programme, from motet to folk song, 16th-20th century.

19 December, 8:15pm: Final concert of vocal project “Hartstocht naar het Oosten” (Yearning for the East) conducted by Tatiana Lina: traditional polyphonic songs from Georgia. Guest performers: Amsterdam singing group Angels with polyphonic songs from many countries.

21 December, 3:15pm: Plantagekoor and Vocaal Ensemble Amadeus with instrumental ensemble: works by Purcell, Mendelssohn, Elgar, Howells, Vaughan Williams, etc., with some Christmas carols.

28 December, 3:15pm: Nationaal Gemengd Jeugdkoor (National Mixed Youth Choir) conducted by David Wilson-Johnson: “Ding Dong Merrily: An English Christmas”, works by Bach, Mendelssohn, Rutter and Tippett, with Christmas carols for the audience to join in.

25 January, 3:15pm: The Amsterdam Cantorij conducted by Felix van der Hombergh: “Ultimi miei sospiri”, Flemish polyphonic music with works by Verdelot, de Monte, Richafort and de Rore.

Tickets can be purchased ½ hour before the concert. For more information on concerts at the ERC, see the folders in the church vestibule or check the website: www.ercadam.nl

Warm clothing for the homeless

We will be gathering warm clothing for various homeless shelters on two Sundays: 7 and 14 December. If you have any extra coats or jackets, scarves, warm hats or gloves, please bring them along to the church service on that day, and we will make sure they get to people who need them this winter.

For more information contact Susan Polstra at churchofficer@ercadam.nl

Baptisms

Otis William Sadler

26 October

Janis Ngah

16 November

Food Bank

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

Church Library on the Website

Most of us know about the church library in the church hall. Many of us have borrowed books there, or just browsed through what's on offer. You are all welcome to make use of the library!

You can now look for books from our church library online, on the ERC website: *www.ercadam.nl*. When you click on 'library' you will first find an introduction, and then you can search for books by 'author' or 'categories'. Happy reading!

A Paperless Record

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

Editor:

Susan Polstra

Marnixkade 67-2

1015 XX Amsterdam

churchofficer@ercadam.nl

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

Members of Consistory

Mattia Falcone	Amstelkade 166-III 1078 AX Amsterdam 06 27853671
Giles Francis	Nieuwe Uilenburgerstr. 3-H 1011 LM Amsterdam 020 3200197
Thijs Glasz	J. Israelslaan 12 1401 CP Bussum 035 6910408
Thorsten König <i>Treasurer</i>	C.P. van der Leestraat 36 1396 JP Baambrugge 0294 772934
Heleen Koning <i>Interim Scriba</i>	Wittgensteinlaan 161 1062 KD Amsterdam 06 13097756
Peggy Krol	Biesboschstraat 22-3 1078 MS Amsterdam 020 6767804
Elisabeth van Oudgaarden	Corn. van Alkemadestraat 14 1065 AC Amsterdam 020 6157764
Christa Oudshoorn-Hobo	De Wijde Blik 22 1189 WK Nes a/d Amstel 0297 775877
Baafi Sekyere	Roomtuintjes 197 1093 TB Amsterdam 020 6933521
Rev. Lance Stone <i>Minister</i>	J.W. Brouwersstraat 9 1071 LH Amsterdam 020 6722288
Seppo Stout <i>Property Convener</i>	Roeselarestaat 17 1066 SW Amsterdam 020 6798698