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The Record

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Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

For some years I have been very interested in the subject of Christian community. In my first charge in Aberdeen I lived in a small city-centre community and I have long been a great admirer of the Iona Community in Scotland, the Taizé community in France and L'Arche communities in various countries around the world. I believe that the gift of salvation is communal and corporate through and through, drawing me as an individual into relationship not only with God but also with other believers who make up the Body of Christ. The New Testament has a Greek word for it—*koinonia*—and we catch tantalizing glimpses of it in passages in the Book of Acts where the Holy Spirit has been poured out and Christians find themselves bonding together in a profound sharing and a common life. We also sense something of what *koinonia* means in books like 1 and 2 Corinthians where it is being violated, as Christians are forgetting their corporate responsibilities to one another.

Koinonia, fellowship, is a particular challenge to a church like ours with a scattered congregation which can make it difficult to gather together as often as we might like, and where work schedules also limit our availability to one another. For some, attendance at worship on a Sunday morning is, for various reasons, about as much commitment to the church as we can manage, and even then possibly only occasionally. This may be inevitable and understandable, but it does put a limit on the growth of community, especially in a church like ours where people are continually coming and going and we are constantly saying 'hello' and 'goodbye'.

There are, however, things that we can do to enhance our *koinonia*. For example, communication is vital. People only feel they belong if they feel that they know what is going on (that's why this church magazine, *The Record*, is so important). Likewise, it is very important that we make the very most of the times when we do gather together – especially Sunday morning – and that these are opportunities for deepening relationships, for welcoming and getting to know new people and for communication.

As I write this letter I am anticipating a Consistory Evening and Away Day next weekend. At the start of a new year, four months into my ministry here and with three new elders ordained to the Consistory, this is a good time for us to get together and to review the life of the church and consider our priorities for the coming year. For this time away I have written a short paper giving some of my reflections on the church as I see it thus far. Thinking about what I have written for discussion, it strikes me that most of it – directly or indirectly—concerns this issue of community. Most of my observations and suggestions are about how we can improve *koinonia* amongst us. I do not want to pre-empt our discussions but I imagine that some changes will result and some new initiatives will emerge. I am not a believer in change for change's sake, but if and where the church is asked to embrace change in the near future it will, I think, be spurred mainly by this concern.

I very much hope that the new year has begun well for you and that in the coming months I will get to know many of you better—and enjoy a rich experience of *koinonia*.

With best wishes,

Lance

Consistory Meetings of December & January

Looking back at a festive Christmas period, with special services (involving the children in a Nativity play), Advent activities, a more than full church on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and giving thanks to all who participated and helped, the New Year started.

Membership matters: *Nick Thomas* and *Laura Elliot* were accepted into membership by resolution of Consistory.

Reint Huizinga had his planned foot operation on 23 January.

Lotty Veelbehr was admitted temporarily into a nursing home for rehabilitation after having a few falls in her home.

A number of people have come forward expressing the wish to become members of our church. Consistory is planning a form in which new members would be welcomed during a service.

Consistory: *Mattia* informed Consistory that he would be leaving for London early in the new year to work for his company there for about half a year. *Mattia* will remain serving on Consistory.

Following up on the decision made at our last meeting (members of Consistory are elders, the term 'deacon' will not be used), a proposal was discussed about the number of years an elder can serve on Consistory. It was decided that it would be four times six years. At the end of each six-year term an evaluation would be held.

Judi Haynes-Smart, *Laura Elliot* and *Nick Thomas* accepted the nomination by Consistory to become elders. After reading the edict on two consecutive Sundays, the new elders were ordained in the service of 25 January. The deacons *Christa Oudshoorn-Hobo*, *Mattia Falcone*, *Giles Francis*, *Thijs Glasz* and *Heleen Koning* made the transition into eldership.

Heleen Koning accepted the nomination by Consistory to become the new Scriba.

Plans were made for the Consistory retreat on 30 & 31 January.

Stichting Het Begijnhof: With the court case appeal about the opening times of the Begijnhof still pending, Pastor Lance and two members of Consistory met as neighbours with some residents of the square in a cordial atmosphere. Everyone would like the matter to be resolved.

Finances: The income and expenditures of October and November 2014 were discussed. We were very grateful to see that the letter of appeal sent out to the congregation at the end of last year resulted in kind donations in the order of €7,750. The fundraising committee will continue to work on various plans, such as giving the donations chest in the vestibule of the church a more prominent position.

Other matters: Pastor Lance Stone will be away on February 15 and 22. Members of the congregation will preach on these Sundays.

On the second weekend of March Baafi Sekyere and the minister will be attending the meeting of the International Presbytery (the new name of the Presbytery of Europe). The Rev. Douglas Gay from Glasgow will be leading the service then.

The next Consistory meeting will be held on 2 February.

Heleen Koning

Finance Report

January-December 2014, amounts in €

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014 vs 2013</u>
Income			
Donations	75,462.91	71,488.02	3,974.89
Collections	47,230.99	56,756.90	-9,525.91
Church hire	22,370.30	21,043.10	1,327.20
Concerts	14,265.50	14,884.74	-619.24
Weddings	7,837.00	5,915.00	1,922.00
Church shop	206.00	787.30	-581.30
Flowers	<u>114.26</u>	<u>-291.59</u>	<u>405.85</u>
	167,486.96	170,583.47	-3,096.51

I am delighted to present you with a first glimpse of our church's accounts for 2014. I will provide a full, consolidated report at our Annual General Meeting later this year.

The good news is that our total income is almost back to that of 2013. This gives me confidence that we can achieve a balanced budget in 2015 if we maintain our efforts to support our congregation.

The appeal fund campaign at the end of the year resulted in an extra income of €7,750, so far.

I want to express a BIG THANK YOU to all of you who contributed to the appeal and also a huge thank-you to all of you who support our congregation in any other way, helping to live and spread God's Good News!

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

Thorsten König, Treasurer

Our AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the English Reformed Church will take place on Sunday, 22 March, after the morning service. We aim to begin at about 12:00.

Reports about how our church fared last year will be provided. We hope as many of you as possible will want to grab a cup of coffee or tea and join us for the meeting!

See you on March 22nd!



Burn's Evening

On 24 January we celebrated the 250th birthday of the Scottish poet Robert Burns at the manse. After enjoying the traditional Burns Night food, each and every one of us shared and recited a favourite poem, which made the evening even more special and memorable.

Photo: Jens Anders Wejsmark Sørensen

BREAD: Mid-Week Worship Services

supper with reflection and worship

The BREAD service is an informal meditative service led by members of the congregation using a blend of different worship styles and including a short meditation on a theme. It is held monthly at 7:30pm, beginning with soup and bread. The service itself starts at 8:00pm and lasts approximately 45 minutes. We end with coffee and perhaps something sweet.

The BREAD service usually takes place on the second Thursday of each month. The next BREAD services will be held on 12 February, 12 March and 9 April. It would be great to see you there! For more information see Veronica Garcia Robles.

Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life"

Holy Week Services

The Easter services this year will follow their usual pattern, with one new addition. These are as follows, with a word of explanation about the additional Easter Service of Light and Renewal of Baptismal vows:

Maundy Thursday, 2 April, 8:00pm: Maundy Thursday Holy Communion service

Good Friday, 3 April, 7:30pm: service with our choir

Saturday, 4 April, 9:00pm: Easter Service of Light & Renewal of Baptismal Vows

The Saturday service is a wonderful way of welcoming in Easter Day (it should really be held either at midnight or very early on Easter Sunday, but we will hold it at 9:00pm on Saturday, on the principle that in the Jewish calendar the day begins on the previous evening at nightfall). This is a service, rich in symbolism, in which we recall the great acts of God in creation and redemption and the banishing of darkness by the light of the risen Christ. The service, which lasts about 45 minutes, ends with a renewal of baptismal vows and a recommitment to following Jesus. All are welcome!

Lent Bible Studies

During Lent we will be holding Bible Studies on Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm, running from Wednesday, 25 February through to Wednesday, 25 March. There are five sessions in all.

These will take the form of a series on Mark's Gospel from which our Gospel readings in church each Sunday are mostly taken this year. We will be using a book written by Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, called *Meeting God in Mark*, which is based on a Lent course he led some years ago. It comes highly recommended.

The shortest and most condensed of the Gospels, Mark is often commended for getting to the very heart of Jesus' ministry and of what it means to be a disciple.

Sunday School/Junior Church

We are greatly blessed with a dedicated group of teachers for our children—but we could always do with more! Does anyone think that God might be calling them to join the rota of teachers—either Sunday School (ages 4-11) or Junior Church (ages 12-15)? We could especially use some more helpers for the Junior Church. If you think you might help, please let me know.

Pastor Lance

Message from Elisabeth

This comes from Elisabeth van Oudgaarden, who recently moved to England after being a very involved member of our church, and for many years a member of our Consistory:

By the time you read this we will hopefully be settled into our new home in Cumbria. Anna is still at St. Peter's School in York, but will move after the summer holidays... probably to Oakham in Rutland.

I am going to work in Whitehaven hospital, which is on the coast, about 65km from Carlisle. I have met a few of my colleagues already and we are a very multicultural group—just like the ERC. Cumbria is also facing changes in the health services, but the large distances with small roads makes concentration of health care more difficult.

I will miss you all and plan to visit regularly, certainly at first as my house in Amsterdam has not yet been sold. I would love to have visitors, so if you are over in the lakes, please let me know.

Best wishes,

Liz & Anna

Scaw cottage, Scaw Road, High Harrington, Cumbria, CA14 4NG

elisabethvanoudgaarden@gmail.com

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:

10 February	George Meerveld	Amsterdam North
3 March	Joke & Herman de Bruin	Amsterdam
14 April	Ineke van Staay	Amsterdam

Request

Due to especially difficult and complicated factors, one or two of our church regulars urgently need to find some work. Does anyone have any jobs needing done? If so, please contact Pastor Lance.

Income Tax Deductions of Church Donations

The English Reformed Church is part of the Protestant Church of the Netherlands (*PKN, Protestantse Kerk Nederland*). All PKN member churches collectively have the so-called A.N.B.I status, which makes donations to our church and the *Stichting Friends of the English Reformed Church* (Maintenance Fund) deductible from Dutch income tax.

(see: <http://www.protestansekerk.nl/steunons/ANBI/Paginas/ANBI.aspx>)

If you should have questions in this respect, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Thorsten König, Treasurer of the ERC, or:

Jolmer Gerritse, Treasurer,

Stichting Friends of the English Reformed Church

Begijnhof 48, 1012 WV Amsterdam, The Netherlands

(friends@ercadam.nl)

ERC bank account numbers are listed on the inside cover of this Record

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 it 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. Unfortunately we do not always have enough volunteers to help pick up the bread. *Right now we are in dire need of one or two new volunteers!* 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!

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

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. We will be needing more volunteers in March and April.

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!

Concerts in our Church

7 February, 3:15pm: Julian Haggett, organ: works by Bach, Buxtehude, Byrd and Leighton. *Free ERC concert!*

7 February, 8:15pm: Raymond Honing (traverso, flute, alto flute, bass flute), Keido Schichijo (piano) & Antje Lohse (mezzo soprano), Operation Kriss Kross: works by Debussy, Schoenberg, Honing, Berio, Satie, Weill, etc.

14 February, 1:00pm: Blackheath High School Chamber Choir from London, England: works by Handel, Bach, Mozart, Franck, Rutter, Chilcott, etc. *Free ERC concert!*

15 February, 4:00pm: ABC Ensemble, conducted by Benjamin Bakker: Nikki Treurniet (soprano), Patrick Pranger (baritone), Jacco Lamfers (piano) & Lodewijk Crommelin (piano); “Ein deutsches Requiem Op. 45” by Johannes Brahms.

22 February, 3:15pm: Airone Chamber Choir: works by Lassus, Janequin, Pärt, Bennet, van Dijk, etc.

1 March, 3:15pm: Annual St. David’s Day concert: Rachel Ann Morgan (mezzo soprano & harpist), Carol Williams (soprano), Geraint Roberts (tenor), Hans Brons (bass), Ernestine Stoop (harp) & Edward Witsenburg (harp): music for voice and harp in honour of the Welsh national celebration of St. David’s Day.

28 March, 1:00pm: The Choir of New College, Swindon, England: works by Bach, Mozart, Stopford, Rutter, Tavener, Chilcott, Leonard Cohen, Simon & Garfunkel, Ballard/Silvestri, and David. *Free ERC concert!*

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

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 on the inside back page of this *Record*.

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!

Birth

Martin Alexander Tindaon
29 November 2014

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!

Flower List

There is a flower list hanging in the Consistory room in our church. If you would like to sponsor flowers for a certain Sunday, you are welcome to add your name next to the date you choose. We ask for a €15 donation to cover the costs of fresh flowers each Sunday. You can transfer this donation using the church's bank account listed inside the cover of this *Record*, or you can give a cash donation on Sunday to either Susan Polstra or one of the Consistory members on duty. Thank you for your support!



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

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