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# The Record

## June 2019

Vol. 2019/2



The English Reformed Church  
Begijnhof 48, 1012 WV Amsterdam  
[www.ercadam.nl](http://www.ercadam.nl)

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# Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

The past couple of weeks our church has been touched by sadness as we have gathered for the funerals of two long-standing and much-loved members; Jose Monkau and Lotty Veelbehr. I am grateful that I have to conduct very few funerals in this church and having two so close together was a first for me here. Because Lotty and Jose had been around for so long and had served the church in different ways they were repositories of memories and their passing feels like the severing of links with the past, a cutting of ties to former days.

As I write this, however, I am very aware that we are soon to be losing others from our congregation, not through death but through moving away. So in the next few weeks we will be saying goodbye to two of our elders: Nick Thomas, as he moves back to the UK with Cara, Zahra and Will, and Sarah Wang as she is relocated by her work to Singapore. Nick, Cara, Zahra, Will, Sarah have all made a huge contribution to the life of our church and it's hard to imagine the church without them. And they are not all: I know of several others who will be moving on in the coming months. And thus it always has been, especially in an English-speaking congregation in a city like Amsterdam, but it does seem to be increasingly a feature of modern life. People move around the globe more than they once did, often staying in places for relatively short periods, working on short-term contracts, and it leaves organisations like churches more fluid and less fixed and stable than they once were.

That, of course - thankfully - is only one side of the story. The good news is that there are always new people coming in too. Not a week goes by when I do not greet new people who are 'trying us out', maybe for the first time - and that is quite apart from the many visitors from all over the world who come our way as they visit Amsterdam for a few days. Not all of these people of course 'stick' but several do.

Can I therefore request that more regular attenders of our church make every effort to be on the look-out for new people and to make sure that these new people are welcomed? Every Sunday our liturgy sheet proclaims, 'within these walls let no-one be a stranger', but that does not happen automatically - it needs to be worked at. I am delighted that we have a 'Welcome Desk' and we need more people to staff that. Maybe you could take a turn? But aside from that we must all be sure to greet people we sit beside who we don't know, and to look out for people who are standing on their own over coffee after the service. At our recent Annual General Meeting we devoted some time to discussing this and how we make sure that, indeed, no-one leaves the church 'a stranger'. That way we can be sure that in the midst of much change our church continues to grow and to be enriched.

With all good wishes to our wonderful church family,

Lance

# Consistory Report

In this report I give you a summary of the meetings of Consistory in March, April and May 2019.

## Membership matters

We received notice of the passing of Mrs José Monkau. José passed away on April 25th. José was a long-time member of the church, very active in Coffee mornings and for years she sold cards, bibles and other books after the service. José moved to a home in Volendam a couple of years ago.

After the May Consistory meeting another member of the ERC passed away: Ms Lotty Veelbehr died on May 7th. Lotty was part of our church for more than 60 years. Although her mobility was compromised in the last years, she still enjoyed coming to church especially when the choir was singing, the choir she had been a part of for decades. The Easter service was the last she attended.

Consistory was happy to approve Ivan Digber as Sunday School teacher.

The Voorhoeve-Fleury family transferred their membership to the Doopsgezinde Gemeente.

During the year Consistory will be facing some changes: by the end of June Sarah Ying Wang will relocate to Singapore due to her work. Nick Thomas, his wife Cara and their two children Zahra and William decided to return to England. They will leave in August.

## Mulanje Mission

An extra appeal for Mulanje after the floods in March raised more than €4.000,00.

A Mulanje Mission Charity evening will be held later this year. More details will follow in the next issue of the Record.

## Outreach

The Angels Yarn Bombing initiative is progressing. More and more knitted angels are brought to church, knit-ins are being organised (see elsewhere in this issue) so that people can support and inspire each other. We are working towards Christmas, when the angels will convey our Christmas message to the city.

The Internationale Diaconie Vergadering was attended. The goal of the meeting was to exchange best practices on how refugees could be helped. A follow up with the meeting organizers will take place to discuss how the ERC could best support the causes discussed in the meeting.

A ERCAdam team will participate yet again in the Night of the Refugee (Nacht van de Vluchteling), a sponsored walk (20 km) to raise awareness and funds for emergency aid to refugees.

## Theme focused meeting

At the last Away Day (a retreat day for Consistory) in February we expressed the need to make space in the Consistory meetings for more in-depth discussions around a theme. We decided that we would have three of these meetings a year, starting with the April one. We continued the discussion we started in February around the topic of why God has put and kept our church here. Consistory talked about the importance of prayer life, both as an individual and as a church, the importance of prayers of intercession and what we could do to enhance prayer life within our congregation.

We also discussed a topic brought forward by the International Presbytery: how can we celebrate the multicultural make-up of congregations within the Presbytery? How do we relate diversity to the fact that we have a traditional liturgy, with mainly classical music and a traditional CH4 Hymnary? Diversity should also be reflected in age, nationalities, gender, other denominations and religions. We have a community with the churches around the Spui, etc. But how about building bridges towards other belief systems?

We will continue this discussion in the next theme focused meeting.

### **Property**

We are looking for good options for digital means for collection and for the donation box, accommodating people from all over the world. This would go along with a display of the church's activities to be on show during the week and aimed at tourists and visitors. Unfortunately, neither our own bank nor a Dutch company who presented their app for charities and churches could cater for our specific needs. We are now looking into options from the UK. We hope to make progress with this topic during the summer.

### **Other competent business**

Pastor Lance is looking into the possibility of holding a short service during lunchtime on e.g. Thursdays to pray for the city.

Pastor Lance will be away for four Sundays at the end of July and the first half of August. Rev John Bell will be with us on three Sundays.

Consistory meetings are held each first Sunday of the month (except in August, dates are subject to change in the case of a national holiday). If you have a topic you would like to discuss with Consistory, please contact the minister or the scribe.

*Heleen Koning* (scribe@ercadam.nl)



## **ERCADAM 20 km team in “Night for the Refugees”**

In 2018 we raised more than € 2.000 to help refugees and displaced people in various countries in the world. The money helped provide food, emergency shelter and clean water.

This year we will take part again in the 20 km sponsored walk, which will take place on Saturday, June 15th. You can also join and walk the 10 km walk instead.

Do you want to walk with us this year? And help again? Get in touch with [gillian.walker.ams@icloud.com](mailto:gillian.walker.ams@icloud.com) or [thijsglasz@hotmail.com](mailto:thijsglasz@hotmail.com) or go to <https://www.nachtvandeavluchteling.nl/inschrijving> and join the Ercadam 20 km team.

# 20's and 30's Group

The 20's and 30's group continues to meet every first Sunday of the month for lunch after the service. The group walks over to the restaurant together after having coffee. For any people in their 20's and 30's who are interested in joining, please do contact Veronica Garcia-Robles, the ERC Lay Assistant.

April 7<sup>th</sup> gathering:

*Both photographs by Veronica Garcia-Robles*

The 20's and 30's Group continues to meet for their monthly bible podcast study as well. Though the last gathering was on Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, the group normally meets for these podcast studies on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of every month. These studies have been well attended and discussions are quite interesting.

If you are in your 20's and 30's and would like to attend a podcast study, please contact Veronica Garcia-Robles for more information.



## Junior Church

Junior Church (for ages 12+) continues to meet for their Junior Church classes every Sunday, except when they sit with their families on the first Sunday of every month for Family Communion Sundays.

Classes continue to be interesting for the ERC teens. The most recent class led by Giles, which was studying the story of Tabitha the seamstress, visited an exhibit on sustainable clothing at "Fashion for Good" and discussed how Christians are called to be ethical in their buying choices and how they can be a force for positive change. If you'd like more information about the Junior Church, please contact Veronica, the ERC Lay Assistant and Junior Church Coordinator.

## Sunday School

Sunday School is available every Sunday, except when the children sit with their families on the first Sunday of every month for Family

Communion Sundays. There are two classes, for ages 4-7 and 8-11 years. Parents are asked to pick up their children right after the service in a timely manner, so that the teachers may also be able to get back to the church in time to enjoy the coffee.

Most recently, the children participated in the Palm Sunday festivities by singing and marching in the service. They also decorated a wooden cross with flowers on Easter and displayed resurrection gardens they had made in class.

If you would like more information about the Sunday School, please contact Veronica Garcia-Robles, the ERC Lay Assistant and Sunday School Coordinator.



*Cross made by Richard Stokoe,  
photo by Anna Stokoe*

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## Sermons and prayers available as podcast

A recording of the sermon and prayers is available from the ERC website.



It is also available as a podcast from platforms like Anchor, Google podcasts, and Spotify. You may choose to subscribe and receive notification when a new episode is available.

A podcast is a digital audio file, you can download it on a computer or a mobile device... and listen when and where you like!

# The Times They Are A Changing

It is no secret that Pastor Lance loves Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen and The Stones (of course). As with previous ministers at the English Reformed Church, the children are such an important part of our mission. Recently during the children's talk Giles Francis played the part of a pompous show-off and it made me wonder how many people that day knew Giles like we know Giles! Anyhow, they gave us all a good laugh. Our biggest challenge is making sure that everyone feels (warmly) welcome.



It is not only the new members or visitors that we want to warmly welcome. Making sure that No one is a Stranger can be a challenge. But how to say farewell to people who have become our friends but have to return to their homes or destinations unknown? In my 20 years of being a member of the English Reformed Church I have seen so many children baptized, grown up and new members confirmed and then leaving us. I often wonder how they are. Sometimes we see them again and sometimes not. Whether these people have been with us for one Sunday or many, no matter how much they have been involved we always pray that they feel blessed.

*Ingrid Sorensen*

*Photograph by Ken Rice*

# Summer holidays

Please note that I will be away on holiday from July 22<sup>nd</sup> to August 13<sup>th</sup>.

During that time Rev John Bell of the Iona Community will be living in the manse and conducting worship on July 28<sup>th</sup>, August 4<sup>th</sup> and August 11<sup>th</sup>.

Rev David McMillan will conduct worship on Sunday August 18<sup>th</sup>.



# Midweek Fellowship

In recent months in our fortnightly Bible Studies (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays) we have been studying the **Book of Revelation**. We are now about to embark on some studies in **John's Gospel**. If you have not attended the fortnightly bible Study before, why not give it a try?

We continue to hold a service after the style of the Taizé community in France on the second Wednesday with our Roman Catholic neighbours in the Begijnhofkapel.

And in the last week of the month the Women's Fellowship and (less often) the Men's Group meet.

# Further in the Faith

The 'Further in the Faith' group meets monthly to study together a book about the Christian faith. This is a very lively gathering which is about to embark upon a new book. Interested in joining us? Speak to Pastor Lance.

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# Finance Report

You will not find the usual finance report in this edition of the Record. Thorsten König, Treasurer, is currently attending the General Assembly in Edinburgh.

Next update in the September edition!

*Sascha Sizoo-Adema*

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# Annual General Meeting

*On April 7, around 40 people stayed behind after the service to participate in the Annual General Meeting of the ERC. Here are some of the highlights.*

Pastor Lance felt heartened by various groups just seem to happen. Apart from the Bible Study, several discussion groups started, live as well as in Whatsapp group. Mission and outreach are topics that were and will be discussed in Consistory and with the congregation: why are we put in this place and are we still here? What is our mission? A short brainstorm led to a number of thoughts e.g. a spiritual home in a diverse city, be an example of God's work. Important is that we live up to the sentence "Within these walls, let no one be a stranger". Not everyone feels as welcome as we would wish. Pastor Lance will ask people to introduce themselves to their neighbours in the pews. We are also looking into forming a welcome group, as an extension of the welcome desk.

Pastor Lance also talked about a plan that will be discussed in the General Assembly regarding the future of the church. The number of ministers is declining, which will have consequences for the congregations in the International Presbytery as well.

During the meeting we thanked our staff and all volunteers who provide stability in the long running initiatives as well as the new ones. We thanked Tom Flanagan, who after having co-ordinated our work in the Kloof every month, felt it was time to hand over. Also, a special thank you to Jens Sørensen who amongst other things does a tremendous job in keeping our website up to date.

Thorsten König, treasurer, led us through the finances. In short: we do have a surplus of around €10.000 (including the financial support of the Friends for the maintenance of the church), but our reserves need to be increased. The contribution we pay towards the Church of Scotland is, after a long discussion, settled to a €9.000 per annum, which is very reasonable. The accounts were audited by Sies Plokker and Eduard Starrenburg.

The annual report 2018 as well as the audited accounts can be found on our website: [www.ercadam.nl/anbi](http://www.ercadam.nl/anbi) or you can ask me in the church or via email ([scriba@ercadam.nl](mailto:scriba@ercadam.nl)).

*Heleen Koning*

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# Concerts in the church

Visit us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/ERCamsterdam/](http://www.facebook.com/ERCamsterdam/)

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



Many interesting concerts planned during the summer months, for instance on Saturday 15th of June at 20:15 hrs:

Coro Encanto, conductor: Felix van den Hombergh, Luiz Perillo percussion

Programme: *Canto Caribe*

Coro Encanto performs music from the Caribbean region: Cuba, Venezuela, Mexico, Trinidad, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

Songs about love, work on the plantation, nostalgia death and celebration.

Includes a mass by the Cuban composer Electo Silva, work songs from the plantations, a eulogy by the Spanish -Mexican composer Halffter, boleros from Cuba and merengues from the Dominican Republic.

# News from Mulanje Mission Hospital

After 10 years at MMH Dr Ruth Shakespeare has finally retired and handed the reins over to Dr Arie Glas. I say finally because she has delayed her retirement a few times over the past 2 years. There is a wonderful tribute in the latest MMH Newsletter, which you can read on their website, to her dedication to helping the people of Malawi and previously, South Africa, Zimbabwe and England.



Dr Ruth, as she was known, has led some major improvement projects at MMH, including the solar power installation, diagnostics laboratory, X-Ray machine and operating theatre. With plenty of energy she inspired many colleagues over the years and is known to be a good listener making time for visitors, patients, student nurses as well as making time for her hobbies which

include birdwatching and cheese-making.

Her experience in public health has helped the hospital to focus on preventative medicine and community work - malaria control, safe water and sanitation. The staff at MMH saw many improvements including in their own housing and Thandizani resource centre.

Together with her husband, Ken, she is taking a well-deserved rest and is cycling 1200km across France. We hope to see her when she is in Amsterdam on holiday and we especially look forward to building a relationship with Dr Arie Glas and his family. Follow this link to Mulanje Mission Hospital's own website [www.mmh.mw](http://www.mmh.mw)

## Friends of Mulanje Mission Hospital

Our commitment includes providing a monthly donation of € 1,000 to MMH. This money is used for medical supplies and urgent materials that are not funded by the government. To find out how to become a Friend of Mulanje Mission Hospital, please contact Ingrid Sorensen +31 207701341, evenings or email: [friendsofmmh@ercadam.nl](mailto:friendsofmmh@ercadam.nl) Online donations can be made to the English Reformed Church bank account on IBAN NL44 ABNA 0547623550. Kindly indicate your donation with "Mulanje Mission Hospital".

## Projects

In addition to our monthly support, we host an annual benefit concert in aid of the people of Mulanje. Each of these fundraising events has received generous support from the congregation of the English Reformed Church, the Dutch NGO Wilde Ganzen, Rotary Club Amsterdam International and many other friends of MMH, ensuring the continuous improvement of conditions at the hospital.

*Ingrid Sorensen*



## Coming soon: ERC annual summer picnic

**WHEN:** 7 JULY 2019 (AFTER THE CHURCH SERVICE, APPROXIMATELY 13:00 HRS)

**WHERE:** WERELDHUIS GARDEN, NIEUWE HERENGRACHT 18, AMSTERDAM

We hope you all can join us for some good food and drinks, and wonderful fellowship.

Can you help out with games, picnic blankets, logistics and other preparations? Email Thijs Glasz at [events@ercadam.NL](mailto:events@ercadam.NL) for more information, or contact Ingrid Sorensen on 020-7701341



June 9th

Pentecost Sunday

# Coffee Mornings



The coffee mornings take place on the first Tuesday of each month, a wonderful opportunity for fellowship with members of our congregation who carry the history of our church. Please join if you are interested, you are most welcome to come. You can contact Sies Plokker or Joke de Bruin for more information. We meet on June 4th and September 3rd.

## Coffee after the service

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

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## Yarnbomb -Christmas 2019 - a message of love and peace.

This Christmas season during the carol singing we will be yarnbombing the square on the Spui with knitted angels. The angels represent the eternal message of God's love for everyone. We will be offering the angels - free - to passers-by - a small act spreading a bit of love around.

In February we started knitting the angels in groups (Knitlns) twice a month in the church. At first knitters were a bit thin on the ground but we are now expanding. Around 20 people are knitting either at the Knitlns or at home and we have made 130 angels up to now. So there's only 270 to go.

We're a third of the way there - almost! The angels are looking fabulous - all different colours and although using the same pattern we still manage to produce different shapes! Wonder how that happens ;).

Apart from working towards the yarnbomb this is a really great way of spending time with those we know and getting to know those we didn't know. If you can't knit but can do a bit of handsewing we'd really love it if some folk would join in to sew up the angels or sew on eyes/decorations. If you'd like to join in - either knitting, sewing or just because you have ideas - please get in touch with



sallyannstone7@gmail.com or  
gillan.walker.ams@icloud.com ,  
06 4058 6654

# In Memoriam

Josephina Aldolphina Monkau

*José*

Amsterdam, 3 July 1936 - Volendam, 25 April 2019



Alida Johanna Charlotte Veelbehr

*Lotty*

Enschede, 21 September 1928 - Amsterdam, 7 Mei 2019



English Reformed  
Church Amsterdam

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

# NEWSLETTER



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

You can subscribe via the website: [www.ercadam.nl](http://www.ercadam.nl)

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Deadline for the next edition of the Record is August 22nd, 2019

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