



The Record

March 2024

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**The English Reformed Church
Begijnhof 48, 1012 WV Amsterdam**

www.erc.amsterdam

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**May the Lord guide our steps and strengthen our hearts,
and grant us refreshment of body and mind.**

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Letter from the Interim Moderator



Sometimes life's events coincide creatively. Simultaneity that surprises - and inspires. Such is the case right now, I am delighted to report, in this congregation. Right now, we are entering the Season of Easter, when we rejoice in Resurrection, open ourselves to truly surprising turns of events, seek to live New Life in Christ. And we are also fast approaching the arrival of a new minister to the ERC. New life, renewal, the thrill of the unknown and the unexpected. Surprises in store. Moving forward together in Christ.

The dates for what will happen next have all still to be set: when the Nominee will preach and the congregational vote be held; when the new minister will take up post. All of these are still open questions. But as things stand, it looks likely that the Nominee will preach and the vote be held some time near Pentecost. The Feast of the Holy Spirit - some say it was the birth hour of the Church. For Pentecost is the time when all the gathered believers suddenly - to their own and others' surprise - find their voice and speak out together, each in their own way, about the great things God has done. Read Acts, Chapter 2, to find out more. Read our own community to find out even more.

This is what the new minister will be looking for: an active, committed, enthusiastic, caring, sharing community. A church within whose walls no-one should be a stranger. A church with a long tradition and an adventuresome future, a sense of history and a passion for justice. ...We probably all have our ideas of what kind of minister we are hoping for, but let's not forget that the new minister will be coming with his or her own expectations regarding the congregation he/she will be pastoring to. The next phase of life for the ERC will be one of minister and members growing together to form a whole, committed to Christian worship and witness in this place. Moving forward together in the Spirit.

This end phase of any vacancy is the most thrilling phase of all for us Interim Moderators, not because it means our work is ending, but because we know a new phase of adventure, discovery, exploration, change is beginning. We have the privilege of witnessing how a community we have been involved in caring for, and that has drawn close to our heart, embarks on the next leg of its journey.

Yes, I know you are desperate to learn when exactly all this will happen. When will the new minister be in place? And I would love to tell you if I could. But there is certainly good reason to expect the new occupant of the manse to move in during the summer. And I will then take my

leave of you, saddened at bidding farewell to friends I have made, but with deep satisfaction as I witness you looking and moving forward in faith:

*Look forward in faith, God gives us life each day.
Go onward with Christ, his Spirit guides our way.
Now God lets us live within the sphere of grace.
Trust ever in him, he rules o'er earth and space. (Hymn 237)*

Revd. James (Jimmy) Brown, Interim Moderator

Letter from the Locum



So, I'm on the phone gently saying, "It's OK, you can make it...you can do it. There is a light at the end of the tunnel and you'll get there, you will..." And after the call my wife asked, "Someone going through a hard time?" "Yea - they've given up chocolate for Lent - I had to reassure them they'll survive..."

And Easter is nearly here, when we will once again celebrate Jesus' death and rising again with the assurance of new starts, new life and resurrection that it brings us. Here in the ERC we are surely at the point of a new start as we look forward to the arrival of the next minister.

At its most basic, Easter invites us to believe that death is not the end - and I really do want to believe that I'll see my granny again. But Easter also teaches us wonderful truths - that self-sacrifice brings new life; love really does triumph over evil, peace over violence, and the like. The fact that we still celebrate the first Easter after 2,000 years suggests that there's truth and power in these ideas.

Because of this amazing story of Jesus laying down his life for others, suffering unimaginable cruelty, still forgiving his torturers and executioners and conquering death I'm happy to believe this is what God is all about - new life and new starts. For those of us who have known divorce, or bereavement, or unemployment; for those of us who know what it is to be broke or broken, rejected or ripped off; new life, new starts - hope - is a very real thing.

And my money is on love beating hate, light beating darkness. Easter promises that we can survive, we can come back to life - and yes, there will be chocolate, lots of chocolate, after Lent!

Revd. Alan Sorenson

Church Life

Night of The Refugee on June 15-16



This year a group will again be walking 40/20/10 km through the night, raising money to support refugees all over the world. If you'd like to join our group and help refugees please get in touch with Gillian on gillian.walker.ams@icloud.com

Here are some links if you'd like to know more:

<https://www.nachtvande vluchteling.nl/>

<https://www.nachtvande vluchteling.nl/project/haarlem-amsterdam>

And if you don't feel like walking you could volunteer to help set up and/or support those with blisters and bags under their eyes.

<https://www.nachtvande vluchteling.nl/updates/7601-vrijwilligers-gezocht-en-handige-toolkits>

All are welcome to join in!

OTHER NOTICES

Prayer matters

There may be people who feel especially **in need of prayer**, either for themselves or for someone else. If you would like prayer or have a particular prayer request, please contact Peggy Krol (peggy.krol@planet.nl) and she and the prayer team will pray accordingly.

A word about finance...

Please note that besides the weekly collection in church, there is a way of giving to the church on the website, <https://www.erc.amsterdam>.

The church is fully dependent on your gifts and donations.

Crèche for infants and toddlers

The crèche is up and running once again and is available for infants and toddlers (0-4 years old) every Sunday worship service. Care is provided by Nancy Sekyere and her team members. The crèche is located in a room on the left side of the building. If you need directions, please ask one of the elders on duty.

DATES FOR YOUR AGENDA

24 March: Palm Sunday 10:30

25 March: Unveiling of the Locatelli bust in the Begijnhof, 17:00 in the church

25 March: Women's Fellowship

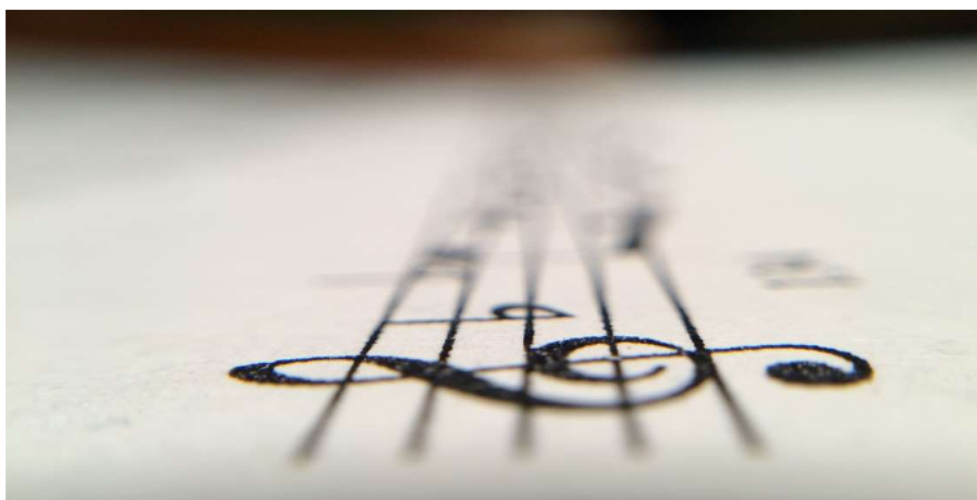
28 March: Maundy Thursday service 20:00

29 March: Good Friday 19:30 - devotional music by the choir followed by the service at 20:00

31 March: Easter Sunday service 10:30

Please contact your elder if you have a question, comment or concern or send an email to info@erc.amsterdam

Unveiling ceremony of the Locatelli bust



It is with great pleasure that we invite you to the solemn unveiling of a bust in honour of the renowned composer Pietro Locatelli. The sculpture will be unveiled on the 25th of March at 17:00 at the English Church on the Begijnhof in Amsterdam.

PIETRO ANTONIO LOCATELLI
Bergamo 1695 - Amsterdam 1764

Italian Baroque composer and violin virtuoso, lived in Amsterdam from 1729 until his death and was buried here in the English Reformed Church.

This monument was made to his memory by Fabio Pravisani and made possible with the help of Won Yip.

The programme for the evening is as follows: Location: English Church on the Begijnhof, Amsterdam (Please use the entrance at the Gedempte Begijnsloot)
Date and Time: 25 March, 17:00 (Please arrive on time).

Programme

- Reception: You will be warmly welcomed into the church, where you'll have the opportunity to gather and enjoy a charming atmosphere.
- Welcome address by Mr. Jaap Maas, giving a short introduction about Pietro Locatelli in relation to the English Church.
- Musical Interlude: A selection of musical pieces by Pietro Locatelli will be performed, allowing you to experience the beauty of his compositions.
- Biography: Professor Albert Clement will present a short captivating biography of the composer, highlighting the context and significance of Locatelli's legacy.
- Unveiling: The highlight of the evening will be the official unveiling of the statue, performed by the renowned musician and conductor, Ton Koopman.

After the ceremony, we invite you to an informal reception with refreshments and snacks. We look forward to welcoming you to this special occasion and opportunity to share the beauty of music and culture together. It is advisable to make use of public transportation or, if coming by car, make use the parking-lot under the Rokin.



News from Mulanje Mission Hospital

This coming July, we will celebrate that the ERC has been supporting Mulanje Mission Hospital for 25 years. This is really something special because in general, donors tend to have a short-term vision. Thanks to the stable and reliable relationship, the management team of Mulanje Mission Hospital has been able to plan ahead and make impressive improvements to the delivery of health care in a vast catchment area.

Mulanje Mission Hospital has won the first prize for the best NCD (Non-Communicable Diseases) clinic in Southern Malawi, for the second year in a row.

We are discussing possibilities for giving this Silver Jubilee a special place. If you have suggestions, please let me know as soon as possible.

In line with the forthcoming celebrations, we will be able to welcome two clinical officers and two nurses in our service on the 7th of July. They have been given a grant to participate in a Summer School at the University Medical Centre Utrecht from the 8th to the 26th of July. They will arrive on the 29th of June, and we are looking for volunteers to accommodate the visiting students from the 29th of June until the 8th of July. If you can help, please let me know.

Bram Sizoo

Food Run



The Food Run, which is in its 9th year, needs a few volunteers. If you own a car and can spare an hour on one Sunday a month right after church to drive the food from pick-up point to the charity, Jeanette Noelhuis (<http://www.noelhuis.nl>), or if you can spare 2 hours on a Thursday morning once a month, you will encounter lots of smiling faces.

Please contact Joe Alibasah, joehennes@yahoo.com

Flower Fund Appeal



Many of you might remember that pre-pandemic, there was a system in place for congregants to contribute towards a flower fund. People could sign up to pay for the flower arrangement at the front of the church for a particular Sunday.

This practice was supported enthusiastically and worked really well but sadly fell into disuse during the repeated Covid lockdowns and months of restricted church services.

But now that things have returned to normal and the pews are filling up again, it's necessary to reinstate this practice if we want to ensure that we can continue to afford and enjoy a pretty floral arrangement every week. It's also a great way for everyone to be involved in contributing towards the weekly services and to participate in building a sense of community.

The Flower Fund Appeal was duly relaunched a few weeks ago with a list of all the remaining Sundays for 2024. I'm delighted to report that the initial response has been absolutely wonderful - the list is filling up and the Flower Fund is once again up and running!

The list, together with information about how to donate, can be found on the Notice Board where you can sign up and where you may, if you wish, also indicate whether you have a special reason for your chosen date (for example an anniversary or birthday or commemoration).

There's still space on the list so you can still get involved. And of course it's also possible to make a donation to the Fund without signing up if you prefer.

Donations can be made to the general church account specifying **Flower Fund:**
English Reformed Church NL44 ABNA 0547 6235 50

Judi Haynes-Smart

Consistory report - March 2024 issue of the Record

Locums

Dr. Lauran Bethel led our community through the Christmas period. The traditional services took place on the 15th, 17th, 24th and 25th of December and were very well attended. Lauran led the service for the last time on 11 February and Alan Sorensen returned to be our locum for the second time. He will be leading us through the Easter period.

We are very grateful to our locums and Sunday preachers for sharing their faith with us and showing us how richly varied the approaches to ministry can be.

Church matters

The crèche has been tidied and is up and running again.

Heleen's Consistory tasks have been taken over by Christina, Nick, John Harmen and Ross, and the pastoral regions are currently under review.

Andreas will be attending the 2024 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on behalf of the ERC.

Junior Church (age range: 12-16) is thriving. Classes are being held regularly every other week and there is a strong core of youth attending regularly.



Message from the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee recently concluded an extensive second round of interviews with a shortlist of minister candidates. It now begins the process of determining which of those candidates it will present to the congregation as the sole nominee. This is certainly an exciting time, but one that also requires wisdom in seeking to discern God's will for our congregation.

The journey thus far has been a long one and has required much time and dedication on the part of Nominating Committee members. Since its constitution on June 4, 2023, the Nominating Committee has met as a whole thirteen times, to which can be added also the two rounds of interviews and the various sub-committee meetings required to prepare for the interviews.

The Nominating Committee began by reflecting on the past, present and future of the congregation. It envisioned ideal traits of a future minister who might meet the congregation where it is and guide it going forward. It created and publicised a job advertisement. Further work entailed planning details of the interview process and formulating interview questions that might spur productive conversations with candidates. After the close of the application period on September 30, 2023, the Committee reviewed the encouraging number of applications. It then conducted a first round of interviews with a longlist of selected candidates, followed by a second round of interviews with a shortlist of candidates.

Please keep the Nominating Committee in your prayers. As you do so, perhaps you can give voice to the words from Ephesians with which the Nominating Committee has been closing its meetings:

*Glory to God
whose power, working in us,
can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.
Glory to God
from generation to generation
in the Church, and in Christ Jesus
for ever and ever.
Amen.*

(Ephesians 3:20-21)



Study, Services, Fellowship

Coffee Mornings

The coffee mornings take place on the first Tuesday of each month. This is 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. The next coffee mornings will be held on the following Tuesdays:

2nd April
7th May
4th June

Bible Study

Bible Study meets on the first and third Wednesday of the month at 19:30 at the Manse, 9 Jan Willem Brouwersstraat, 1071 LH. All are welcome. You can also join via Zoom. Details are publicised in the weekly newsletter.

Taizé Service

Our joint Taizé service with the Roman Catholic Begijnhof Chapel is held on the third Thursday of the month. This is a wonderful opportunity to share in ecumenical worship with our closest neighbours and to welcome visitors. If you haven't given this a try, do come along. Services start at 19:30.

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.

Women's Fellowship

For those who have not yet been able to attend, we start by having a potluck dinner together followed by a time of fellowship. If you would like to join us but are not on the invitation list, please contact Peggy Krol and you will be added to the list. All women of all ages are most welcome.

De Kloof

Giles is always looking for people to help out on the second Saturday of the month. A group of four prepare a meal for visitors to the homeless shelter, De Kloof. A great outreach among evangelicals who run into trouble for questioning the existence of hell... should provoke some interesting discussion!

20-30's Group

Enjoy fellowship with young people in our church. The group meets regularly for study, lunch (every first Sunday of the month) and social events. Please contact Elisabeth (elisabeth.ijmker@erc.amsterdam) if you are interested.

Annual General Meeting

Sunday 14 April, after the service, the Annual General Meeting of our congregation will be held. Agenda, the annual report and the accounts of 2023 will be available in due course.



Finance Report

Finance Report

January - February 2024, Amounts in €

<u>Income</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>Change</u>
Donations	13.251,51	9.915,32	3.336,19
Collections	4.647,26	3.290,00	1.357,26
Church hire	3.774,68	3.574,68	200,00
Church hall	4.201,00	3.250,72	950,28
Concerts	1.440,86	1.341,00	99,86
Flowers	650,00	0,00	650,00
	27.965,31	21.371,72	6.593,59

We have quite a good start this year. Our total income has increased by € 6.594 compared to February last year. This increase is mainly from our giving (donations and collections). The Flower fund also has so far had a spontaneous and splendid reaction. Many thanks to all who instantly responded to the appeal and hopefully others will follow.

For the first time after 3 years of decline, donations have increased by 34% compared to last year. All other sources of income have increased. This development is really positive as we move closer to calling our new minister.

Our expenses on the other hand have increased slightly compared to February last year, mainly due to recruitment costs. Legacies have covered our deficits the last few years that we have not had any cost of a minister. However, we should not rely on having legacies each year. So I hope and pray that this positive start will reverse that trend so that we meet our expenditures each year from our giving.

As we head towards calling our new minister, our income should be getting to pre-covid levels. I therefore urge all members to do more to support and sustain the mission and worship of our beautiful congregation.

Donations can be made to:
English Reformed Church
ABN AMRO Bank. IBAN: NL44 ABNA 0547 6235 50

Charles Vanderpuye, Treasurer

Membership notices

In Memoriam

Herman Roden, a regular visitor of the ERC

Births

Nina Schroeder-van 't Schip welcomed a baby girl, Emma



The June 2024 edition of The Record will be put together by Margaret Davis. Please send your contribution before June 5 to: margaret.davis@erc.amsterdam

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**English Reformed
Church Amsterdam**
A congregation of the Church of Scotland and
the Protestant Church of The Netherlands (PKN)