



The Herald

Newsletter of the Scots International Church, Rotterdam

a congregation of the Church of
Scotland International Presbytery

Febr./March (Winter) 2019



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Letter from the Minister

Dear Friends,

A new year always brings with it new challenges, for the world is not static and even the Church is subject to change. And that's how it should be, for didn't Jesus come into the world to turn it upside down? Although he came as King, it was as a servant King; although he came as Messiah, he saw that role very differently to the expectations of the people.

Recently, we've celebrated Christmas, but now the challenge is to take Christmas into this new year: to bring the peace and justice, care and compassion that Jesus incarnated all those centuries ago into the world of 2019. And that's not always an easy task. The pressures of the world are real for all of us. Advertisers want us to spend, spend, spend (often on things that we don't need or are not beneficial to the environment). Politicians want us to conform to their vision of how society should be (often even more damaging to the environment - including us!) What the world needs in 2019 is what it has always needed: to be in harmony with God and his creation. And wasn't that what Jesus came to tell us, to teach us, to live out for us?

So, let's not leave Jesus as the babe in the manger. Let's be willing to promote his life and teaching in how we live our lives. Let's make that our principal challenge in 2019: to, even in small ways, incarnate Jesus in our lives. Then, gradually, we'll

increase God's Kingdom here on earth – just as we pray for each Sunday when we say the Lord's Prayer. Let's all help to be a part of the answer to that prayer. What a great start that would be to 2019!

In my last letter I wrote about how Brexit might affect Moira and I and I regret to say this continues to cause us grave concern regarding our ability to continue to minister here in Rotterdam. Our staying on here after Brexit is not itself a problem (the Dutch government has made provision for UK citizens to continue to live and work here); rather, our difficulty arises from our loss of EU citizenship requiring us to return to France before Brexit becomes effective. Sadly, the situation remains far from clear and thus what its effect will be on us remains uncertain. It would still appear possible that the UK will leave the EU on 29 March with no deal – in which case Moira and I will have to return to live in France by around mid-March; but equally there are signs that that deadline might be extended or even (though perhaps less likely, that a deal will be reached). I'll continue to keep you advised through the weekly bulletin as I'm all too conscious that this effects not just Moira and myself but the congregation of the SICR. Be assured that Moira and I are anxious to do all we can to minimise that effect.

I have no doubt that this year will be challenging for us all – as individuals, as a congregation, as part of the International Presbytery of the Church of Scotland. I've already written about our individual challenges, but I'd also like to say something about the bigger challenges facing the Church, both in the sense of our own community here in Rotterdam, but also more broadly within the Church of Scotland.

Possibly the greatest challenge facing us in 2019 as a congregation is to become economically viable. Last year our

operating deficit was in the order of €30,000 – a level of loss that we cannot sustain beyond next year (at best!). To address this, the Consistory is putting in place a Stewardship Campaign and this will be launched at the Congregational Annual General Meeting on 6th March – be sure to be there! Within the Church of Scotland, the greatest challenge in the coming 5 years (or less) will be the significant reduction in the number of ordained ministers – due, primarily, to the large number due to retire within that period. It is possible that the International Presbytery may have to operate with as few as 6-8 ministers to serve its 14 congregations (12 in Europe, plus Bermuda and Sri Lanka). Clearly that is not possible on the current model of each congregation having its own minister! It may eventually require that the Church ceases to exist in some of its present locations, and it will almost certainly require that some congregations will require to share a minister. All of this is in the earliest stages of consultation, but it's right that you should be aware of the challenges that lie ahead.

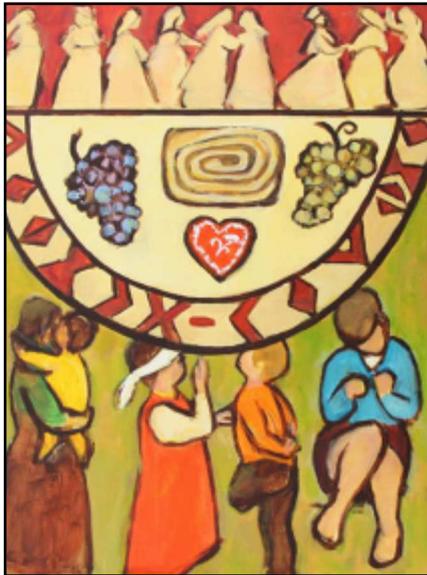
As with all challenges, we need to undergird all that we seek to do with prayer – as well as with positive action. So please keep these challenges in your prayers and I'm sure we will rise to meet whatever lies ahead and focus on sustaining and strengthening God's Kingdom.

Derek

World Day of Prayer Service 2019

At the core of the theme for WDP 2019, an invitation – Come. And to enable the response – Everything is ready. Come to praise, thank, and proclaim the kingdom of love.

The invitation is grounded in the parable that Jesus told about a great dinner which was attended by the ones called off the streets, as the ones invited excused themselves. The community formed around the table is not enough to fill the house – there is still room. Who are missing from the table in your community?



The artist, Rezka Arnuš, wanted to present two topics with her artwork pictured on the right. The country of Slovenia and the main biblical story of the worship service. At the top there are women dressed in national traditional costumes. The semi-circular ornament with Slovenian folk embroidery represents a plate or a table with their best-known national dish - *potica* - and grapes from various wine producing vineyards.

Partly under the table, one can see the children from the margins of the society. They heard the invitation to the feast. The red and white colours used reflect Slovenian folk embroidery. The green background colour emphasizes the green Slovenia, fields and forests. The warm colours of children express the joy of heartfelt invitation.

Our 2019 Service will be held in **St Mary's Anglican Church**, Pieter de Hoochweg, Rotterdam at **10.30am on Friday 1st March**. A number of ladies



from our congregation will be involved in leading the worship, along with ladies from St Mary's, and I hope all who are able to attend will come along – there will, of course, be refreshments after the service.

As mentioned, this year's service has been **prepared by Christian women from Slovenia** and **its theme is "Come – Everything is Ready!"** In recent years these services have been both thought-provoking and informative, as well as providing an opportunity to pray for the world and the particular country in which the service has been prepared.

Remember – this is no longer the "Women's" World Day of Prayer, it is for all who care for the world and, this year, particularly, for Slovenia. By way of background, Slovenia became independent in 1991 and is bounded by Italy on the West, Austria on the North, Hungary on the North-East, Croatia on the East and South, and has a small coastline on the Adriatic Sea. Its capital is Ljubljana, its population around 2 million, and its language Slovene (with some Hungarian and Italian). Come along on 1st March and find out more!

Forthcoming Services

February

- | | | |
|------------------|----------------|---|
| 3 rd | 10.30 | Sacrament of Holy Communion |
| 10 th | 10.30 | Worship for the 5 th Sunday after the Epiphany
- including the Sacrament of Baptism |
| 17 th | 10.30
19.30 | Worship for the 6 th Sunday after the Epiphany
Service for Wholeness & Healing |
| 24 th | 10.30 | Worship for the 7 th Sunday after the Epiphany -
Rev Irene Bom |

March

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------|--|
| Friday 1 st | 10.30 | World Day of Prayer Service in St Mary's Anglican Church |
|------------------------|-------|--|

- 3rd 10.30 The Transfiguration of the Lord –
 including the Sacrament of Holy Communion
 and followed by the Congregational Annual
 General Meeting
- 10th 10.30 Worship for the 1st Sunday in Lent Rev Joost
 Pot
- 17th 10.30 Worship for the 2nd Sunday in Lent
 19.30 Praise Service
- 24th 10.30 Worship for the 3rd Sunday in Lent
- 31st 10.30 Worship for the 4th Sunday in Lent

Youth Presbytery

Between Friday 15th and Sunday 17th February, we'll be hosting the 2019 Youth Presbytery for the International Presbytery. At present final numbers are unclear but we'd hope to have a number of young people (aged 18 – 26) from across the Presbytery and, visa permitting, that will include one from Sri Lanka.

The participants will take part in our worship on the Sunday morning, after which we'll have a Pot Luck Lunch, to which we invite members of the congregation to contribute. Please therefore contact either Mavis or Moira if you can provide something for this.

Congregational Annual General Meeting

This will be held after the Service on Sunday 3rd March and all members and adherents are encouraged to attend. Whilst the congregation no longer requires to approve the Congregational Accounts, the Treasurer will still report on these and it's important we should all be aware of the running costs of our con-

gregation. We all have a responsibility for its financial viability and sustainability.

But the meeting is not just about money, as reports will be given on other important aspects of the life of our congregation, a life that concerns each and every one of us. And now that we no longer have a Council to which people require to be elected, there's no need to stay away in order to avoid the possibility of your being nominated! So please be there.

Celebration 375 years Scots Church Rotterdam as published in Life and Work by Ruud Witte

THE Scots International Church in Rotterdam celebrated its 375th anniversary in September with a special service. The guests of honour were the Rt Rev Susan Brown, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Honourable Peter Wilson CMG, British Ambassador to the Netherlands, and the church's minister the Rev Derek Lawson, as Moderator of the International Presbytery.

Also present was the oldest surviving former minister, the Rev. John Russell and some members of the International Presbytery from both Brussels and Bochum.

Since the church is an international church, many people from many countries were wearing their colourful national costumes. So there was more than the obvious kilt!

After the service there was an international lunch. It saw the best of hot and cold food of so many countries'

Part of the celebrations was also the publication of "Looking Forward, Looking Back", a booklet with a summarized history of our church, a look into the Future and stories of present day members.

'375 Years of the Scots International Church' really was a celebration by the whole congregation. Members and adherents-young and old-got involved in the early preparations for the service, in guiding guests to their places in church, in creating flower arrangements, and in cleaning (both before and after!) Indeed, after the lunch, there was a short service of thanksgiving and praise which involved members of

our Youth Group and Young Adults Group.

One special picture was taken shortly before the service. The black and white photograph was taken when the present building was dedicated by the then Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland back in 1952, the Rt Rev. George Johnstone Jeffrey.

So, the opportunity was taken to have a 2018 remake. The people in that picture are:

(left to right) Ben van der Veen (who has in years past taken services in the Scots Kirk), the Rev Joost Pot (our retired Auxiliaiy Minister), the Rev Irene Bom (OLM, Rotterdam), Former minister the Rev John Russell, the Rev Derek Lawson and the Rt Rev Susan Brown.



1952 photo at the Scots International Church (left) and the 2018 remake (right).

The church was Founded in 1643 for the many Scottish merchants, sailors and soldiers who lived in Rotterdam, the First Scottish minister was the Rev Alexander Petrie, who travelled from Rhynd (near Perth) in Scotland to take up his position.

In 1722 the church was extended with a special almshouse for widows and orphans of fallen Scots soldiers.

The original building was completely destroyed in the 1940 bombing of Rotterdam, except for the safe; which means the church still has its complete archives, including minutes of the Kirk

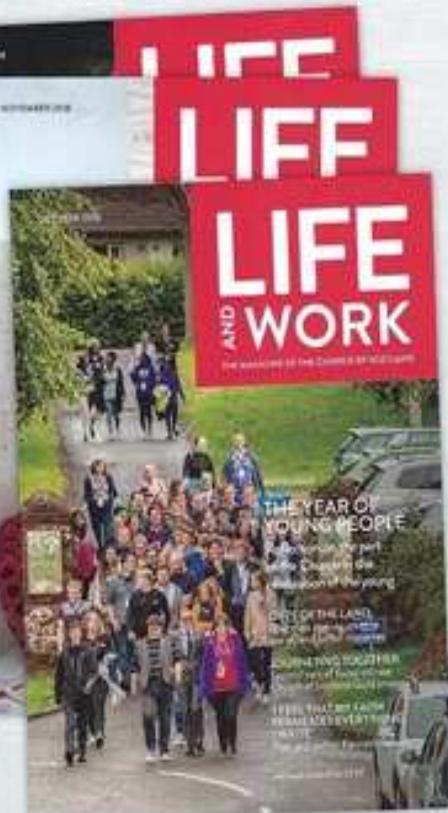
Session going right back to 1643. A copy of the first minutes is on display in the current building, which dates from 1952 and was designed by MCA Meischke.

The church was built for Scots but today the membership is about 30 percent British and 30 percent Dutch, with most of the remainder coming from Africa and Asia'.

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Herald Deadline

Items for the Easter (April-May) Issue of the Herald should be given to Bob Hensen or sent to the church office by **20-03-2019**.

We hope the next Herald will be available from **31-03-2019**

BIRTHDAYS

February 2019

Erna Booman
 Derek Lawson
 Elsie Chapman
 Cynthia Massicott
 Jennifer Fleming
 Ruud Witte
 Steve Russell
 Eva Grace van Put-Fernandez
 Catriona Ewing
 Carol Groot de - Crone
 Dieudonné Gwanmesia
 Frederick Purba
 Tjerk Vollema
 Lianne Buitendijk

Maart 2019

Licia Knoester
 Adje Acquaaah-Moes
 Nyomi Cairo
 Fayola Cairo
 Kwesi Akomeah
 Meijing Li
 Emma de Zanger
 Dorothy Kingsale
 Aletia Baiye
 Annemarie Fleming
 Maxine Fleming
 Jim Taylor
 Daniel de Jong
 Kwena Koka
 Martin Asare-Awuku
 Molly Foster - van Meeuwen

**Happy birthday and may the Lord
 bless you in the coming year!**



For subscription and how
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see Ruud Witte

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Derek Lawson

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Rizal Sebastian

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Olaf de Zanger.

Finance & Governance Working Group Convener:

Fred Booman.

Fellowship & Communication Working Group

Convener: *Bob Hensen.*

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