

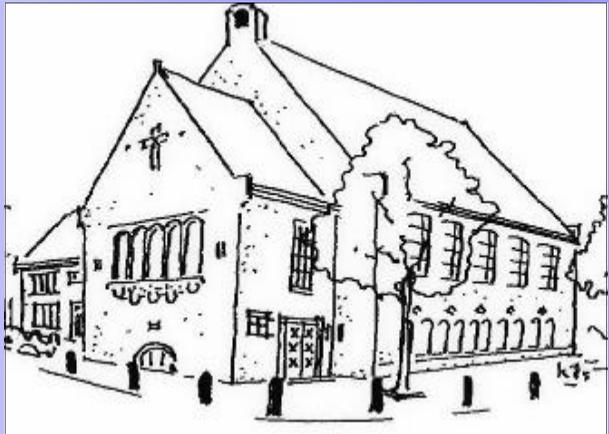


The Herald

Newsletter of the
Scots International Church
Rotterdam

a congregation of the Church of Scotland
International Presbytery

2019 October/November



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IN THIS EDITION:

Letter from the Minister	2
Pastoral care areas	5
Am I a member or an adherent?	6
From a friend in Bermuda	8
Forthcoming Services	9
300 years Crown Court Church, London	9
Herald deadline	15
Birthdays	15
Who's who in the church	16



Letter from the Minister

Dear Friends,

As I write this letter in mid-September I'm still wondering if it will be my last Pastoral Letter as your minister here in Rotterdam. Yes, the uncertainty of Brexit for Moira and I drags on ... and on ... and on! In order therefore to bring certainty to our lives and to the life of the congregation I have this week submitted to Bob Hensen as the Consistory Clerk a letter stating my intention to demit as your minister on 31st January 2020 or earlier in the event of a 'no-deal' Brexit. When I came as your minister back in July 2016, I said I'd stay for 4 years but, even yet, Moira and I could be forced to return to France (as that's where we want to retire to – again!) before the end of October if Boris Johnston insists on pushing through a 'no-deal' Brexit – against the wishes of Parliament and, indeed, the law!

If you've watched UK politics over recent months, I suspect you, like me, will despair of its integrity, with Brexit being used as a vehicle to make the rich richer and to hell with the poor! I know that ministers (of religion, not of government) are not supposed to enter the political arena but there are times when all Christians are required to stand up for honesty and decency and to speak truth to power – failing which we allow our society to descend towards xenophobic, populist, right wing extremism.

Tirade over!

Despite all the uncertainty of Brexit, I have continued to plan ahead in anticipation that I will continue as your minister at least until 31st

January next year. This will, I hope, be reflected in the information given in later pages about the new arrangements for pastoral care in the congregation and also in the service details through October and November. Even if I do have to leave you at the end of October, congregational life will go on and the International Presbytery will (probably at its meeting in October) appoint an Interim Moderator to guide you through the period of vacancy. The Consistory, mindful that such events could happen suddenly, has already appointed a small group to prepare a draft profile of the congregation as it makes sense to have this available for the Nominating Committee that will in due course be elected. I'm just sorry that I've had to decide to leave earlier than I'd planned and that I can't give you the 6-months' notice of my departure I'd always intended to give, as this would have got everything in place for you to proceed rapidly through the vacancy procedure laid down by the Church of Scotland.

Turning to more inspiring topics, I hope that everyone managed to find some time for relaxation, for family and friends, for yourself, over the summer period, but now I'd encourage you to make sure that, in your allocation of time over the coming winter months, you allow sufficient time for God and for your involvement in the life and worship of the congregation: the part of the world-wide Christian family to which we all belong. We all have a part to play in that life and worship – whether we're young or old, whether we're Scottish, Dutch, African, or from whichever of the many countries we draw members of our family from. Let me encourage you all to be actively involved and to involve your children and young people in the life of the congregation. If you think there are areas of congregational life that are lacking, let me know – at the same time giving me your suggestions as to how these might be filled and how you might help to do so. Each and every one of us has been blessed with talents but, so often, the church (and, in this instance, I probably mean the members of the Consistory) don't know what they are because most of us don't tend to broadcast them, so please don't hide your light under a bushel but rather be willing to let us know what you might be able to do for the rest of the church family.

Every church family needs to have a vision for its mission, its role in the wider society in which it is placed. This is certainly something that the International Presbytery will be looking at as it embarks on the difficult task of assessing how ministry can be maintained in its 14

congregations when there is an ever-decreasing number of ministers in the Church of Scotland. It will be looking at sustainability, both numerically and financially, but also at how congregations see their mission and, perhaps more importantly, how that mission is actually being put into practice in the congregation's situation.

Congregations cannot therefore take it for granted that their future is guaranteed in the form they currently operate. This merely reflects what has been the reality for congregations in Scotland for the last 15 years, but, most particularly, in the last couple of years and for the immediate future. This should not be seen as a source of despondency, but rather as a challenge: to create congregations that are relevant to the world of the 2020s, to the locations in which they are placed and to the pursuit of God's mission in the world.

By the time you read this we'll have completed a Season of Stewardship in our services through September. On the posters it said that stewardship is 'a way of life' and on the front of the weekly service sheet that it is 'a spiritual practice' and both these statements are true – if, of course, we make that choice. Make no mistake, it's an important choice! Christianity is not just about accepting in our minds the basic beliefs of the Christian faith, it's truly a way of life. It's no coincidence that the first followers of Jesus were known as 'the Way'. So, let us all in the coming weeks and months, regardless of what happens to Moira and I with Brexit, choose to follow in the way and use our time, our talents, our money and the whole of creation to God's glory and in the pursuit of God's mission in the world.

Just in case this is my last pastoral letter in *The Herald*, let me express my, and Moira's, thanks to you all for your friendship in our time with you and wish you God's blessing as you step forward on the next instalment of your journey of faith as the church family that is the Scots International Church Rotterdam. If we're not compelled to leave at the end of October, you will, however, hear from me again in the next edition at the end of November.

Derek

A reminder from one of the Reflections on 8th September about our use of time

Make time to think – it is the source of power.

Make time to play – it is the key to freedom and relaxation.

Make time to read – it is the gateway to knowledge.

Make time to worship – it washes the dust from your eyes.

Make time to help and enjoy friends – no other happiness matches this.

Make time to love – if you don't it will fade away.

Make time to laugh and pray – these are two things that lighten life's load.

Make time to be alone with God – he is the source of everything.

Pastoral Care Areas

The Pastoral Care Working Group has completed a revision of the Pastoral Care Areas within the congregation, each of which will be the responsibility of the Elder for that area. To help you know who your Elder is the Areas are as follows:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Postcodes</u>	<u>Elder</u>
Centre	3011-3022; 3061-62 (to be succeeded by Raneë Damanik)	Fred Booman
Inner North	3027 to 3039	Peace Acquaaah
Inner South	3081 to 3086	Mavis Fleming
Inner West	3026-3029; 3112-3123	Esther Abang
North	outwith Rotterdam	Ruud Witte
North East	2914, 3059-3069	Emmanuel Asare-Awuku
North West	3123 -3155	Rizal Sebastian
Outer East	2901-08, 2923-35,3065	Molly Foster
Outer North	3042-3052, 3123	Bob Hensen
South	outwith Rotterdam	Richmond Mensah
South East 1	3071-3073, 3081	Bridget Teisman
South East 2	3076-3079	Frieda Enow
South West	3161-3062, 3203-08	Ato Cromwell

Your Elder should be making contact with you soon to check we have your correct address and other details and to ask if you have any pastoral needs that we might try to meet. The provision of pastoral care does, of course, also require you to keep the Church Office advised if you move house or change you phone number or email address – we really don't want to lose contact with you!

In the course of the work of the Pastoral Care Working Group we identified a number of people whom we were surprised to see on the Roll of Adherents rather than the Roll of Members and we have now spoken with some of those we noted. However, if you're not sure if you're a member or an adherent, I'd ask you just to email me and I'll let you know by return.

Also, in the course of this exercise, the Working Group and then the Consistory thought it would be useful to outline how you become a "Member" as opposed to an "Adherent" of the congregation. So here's a (relatively) brief outline:

"Am I a Member or an Adherent?"

Members are defined in the Church of Scotland as those people in the congregation who have fulfilled one of the following three requirements:

Public Profession of Faith – sometimes referred to as Confirmation or Admission to the Lord's Supper. This is the normal process for those who have been baptised as infants in any denomination of the Christian Church and come, in due time, to make their own profession of faith. Ordinarily, it requires the person wanting to profess faith to attend classes with the Minister – not lengthy and not difficult! The prime concern is not to understand all that faith involves but rather to be willing to continue on the journey of faith and to see the Christian faith as a way of life.

Transfer from another Church – if someone is already a member of another Church they can transfer that membership to the SICR – usually by way of a Certificate of Transference (or similar document) from their former congregation.

The Consistory may simply resolve to admit someone to membership. This will happen, most commonly, when someone has been attending the Church for many years but has never formally 'become a member', or when someone comes from another church but is unable to provide any certification of this. However, there is considerable discretion vested in the Consistory as regards admission.

There are two main aspects to membership:

Firstly, and perhaps most obviously, a member is an active part of a spiritual community that worships together every Sunday and (in our case) celebrates the Sacrament of Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month. There is also the opportunity to participate in the life of the congregation – whether in Bible study or prayer groups, in social events, in reading the Bible in worship, being part of the welcome team, helping with hospitality, or providing flowers in the church or in some other way. It also entitles you to vote at the Annual Congregational Meeting (and any other Congregational Meeting) and in selecting a minister when there is a vacancy.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it is a declaration of faith and an acceptance that following the life and teaching of Jesus is central to your life and is not something to be kept in a box to be opened for an hour or two on a Sunday. As James writes in his Letter: “faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (James 2:17).

Adherents : This is not a common status in the Church of Scotland (and is not defined, except in regard to non-members being able to register as adherents in order to have a vote in a vacancy). However, many congregations in the International Presbytery have in their church family people who are members of a church in their place of origin (their ‘home’ congregation) and who intend to return there once their study or employment ends but who meantime wish to be connected with the congregation that is to be their temporary spiritual home, while retaining their ‘home’ church membership. Principally for that reason, we maintain a Roll of Adherents to enable us to know those in our church family who are not members but who worship regularly with us.

There are no specific requirements about becoming an Adherent and it is a matter for the Consistory to determine who is added to (or removed from) the roll. Inclusion on the Roll of Adherents helps the Consistory to be aware of everyone in the Church family and allows Elders to make contact with those in their Area.

Children : At Baptism children become part of the Church family but are not “members” of the congregation, as this requires them to

be mature enough to profess faith for themselves.

I have tried to keep this simple but, if you've any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Derek
on behalf of the Pastoral Care Working Group

Received from a friend in Bermuda!

All the people in the world are of the same age this year!
It's amazing: this year all the people in the world are all in the same age group, all equal to 2019.
This year is special. It happens only once every 1,000 years. This year your age + your year of birth, each individual is = 2019. For example, you are 55 years old and you were born in 1964, which adds up to 2019. Very strange, even the Chinese and foreign masters can not explain. Please calculate and see if the answer is 2019. It's a thousand-year wait! Good shot!
Go to the circle of friends, let everybody calculate it!

FORTHCOMING SERVICES**September**

29th 10.30 Stewardship of Creation and our Harvest
Thanksgiving

October

6th 10.30 The Sacrament of Holy Communion
13th 10.30 Morning Worship - led by Rev Joost Pot
20th 10.30 Morning Worship - including the dedication of
new Lectern Bible and the Sacrament of
Baptism
27th 10.30 Morning Worship - including the Sacrament
of Baptism

November

3rd 10.30 The Sacrament of Holy Communion
10th 10.30 Service of Remembrance
19.30 Annual Peace Service
17th 10.30 Morning Worship
24th 10.30 Morning Worship led by the Youth Group

**Three Hundred Years of Service at Crown Court Church,
Covent Garden, London (by Andrew Tait)**

In April 2018 Anneke Pot kindly supplied us with an article about the Scots International Church in Rotterdam for the church magazine at Crown Court Church of Scotland in London. As well as the Scots connection she noted that we were both celebrating special anniversaries – last year your 375th birthday and this year our activities to mark 300 years since our church opened in 1719. There are other connections too, as our Session Clerk, Peter Esslemont, worshipped at the Scots International Church and sang in the choir while he was working on Rotterdam at various times in the 1980s and 1990s. Many years before that Raymond Dyke, now our most senior elder, was your Sunday School Superintendant for a time. In return for Anneke's short history of the Scots Kirk in Rotterdam we promised to send you our

story for your magazine. So, here goes:

Tucked behind a theatre in the heart of London's Covent Garden lies Crown Court Church of Scotland, the oldest remaining Scots church in the city and one of only two left in London. According to our records the first service on our current site was held on 24 March 1719, so in 2019 we have been marking our Tercentenary with a series of events and activities to 'Celebrate and Renew 300 Years of Service in Covent Garden'.

Crown Court Church entrance - Russell Street, Covent Garden



As increasing numbers of Scots came to London in the early 17th century following the accession of James VI of Scotland as James I of England, Scottish congregations began to gather for worship. By 1711 one such congregation, which may have been part of the original group from what had been the Scottish embassy in Scotland Yard of the old Palace of Whitehall, was meeting in rooms in Covent Garden under the care of the Rev George Gordon and Rev Patrick Russell. Soon enough money was raised to build their own church on a site in Crown Court, off Russell Street, near the newly-opened Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Work started in 1718, the building was consecrated in 1719 and our 300 years of service in Covent Garden began.



Over the years, like many congregations, Crown Court's fortunes have waxed and waned. In the ministry of the famous preacher Rev Dr John Cumming (1832-1879) the congregation grew to over 900, but numbers fell thereafter and were further reduced in the 1880s when the new minister and many of the congregation move west to build a new church at St Columba's in Knightsbridge. However, others stayed true to the church in Covent Garden and Crown Court rose again. The original church, now much dilapidated, was replaced in 1909 by the building that stands to this day, paid for by the congregation and a public collection led by Lady Frances Balfour and the Campbells of Stracathro. By the 1950s, under the ministry of Rev Dr Joseph Moffett (1917-1962), numbers again reached 900 with a strong Sunday School and many church activities. It was Dr Moffett who likened ministry at Crown Court to 'preaching to a procession' as young Scots came to London, established careers and raised families, moved away and – sometimes – came back in later to the church of their early days in London. Today our present minister Rev Philip Majcher has been with us for nearly 12 years and the congregation comprises both long-standing members and new friends joining us every year for worship and fellowship

*Rev. Philip Majcher, Minister, Crown Court Church of Scotland,
Covent Garden, London*



Crown Court today is a gathered congregation, but we are proud to attract a wide range of people from many places. Our traditional core has always been people who have arrived – recently, or decades ago – from Scotland, or people of Scottish descent. Our membership also reflects the missionary outreach of the Church of Scotland, with people from the Presbyterian tradition of many countries. We also welcome visitors and short-term London residents from Scotland and around the world. Our aim is to provide worship, fellowship and sometimes a familiar flavour of home. Our worship tends to be traditional in style, and music plays an important part in it, with an active choir and a Sunday morning anthem. We hold morning and evening services on Sunday and a short lunchtime service on Thursdays, with a Sunday School, Guild and Rambling & Social Club all meeting regularly and a number of special events

throughout each year including a Burns Supper, Christmas Market and Christmas carol services and concerts. We support a range of charities including Borderline, the charity that helps homeless and insecurely housed Scots in London, and make collections at London railway and Tube stations during Christian Aid Week.



To mark our special anniversary in 2019 we set out to 'Celebrate and Renew 300 of Service in Covent Garden'. There have certainly been celebrations, among them a Ball and a garden party, with other events including a concert, a flower festival and a ceilidh still to come. Reflecting the importance of music in our worship we launched a competition for young composers to create us a Tercentenary Anthem based on words from Haggai Chapter 2, 'Be strong all you people of the land'. The winning entry, as judged by an expert panel and sung by our choir, was performed for the first time in public at a special service on Sunday 24 March 2019 - three hundred years to the day since the first service on the site. The Moderator of the General Assembly, Rt Rev Susan Brown, preached and also rededicated our newly-refurbished organ, which had been originally donated by Andrew Carnegie when the church was rebuilt in 1909. As well as the Moderator, the service was attended by VIPs, former minister of Crown Court

and many ministers with Crown Court connections, as well as many friends old and new making for a full church of nearly 300 people. How fitting at an event to mark 300 years.



However, we also wanted to leave a lasting legacy of our three-hundredth anniversary in the form of service to the community around us in Covent Garden. We are supporting a local organisation that provides accommodation for young homeless people engaged in employment, training or education with collections of basic household items for their 'emergency' store cupboard. We also launched a pilot project with three London-based charities working with the homeless in Westminster, using our church hall to enable them to run regular advice sessions for homeless women. Although we have had to suspend this for now as the charities involved are reorganising, we hope later in the year to be able to develop this pilot into something more enduring as part of our legacy to the future from our Tercentenary year.

You can find out more about Crown Court Church and our services and activities on our website: www.crowncourtchurch.org.uk, on Twitter [@crowncourtchrch](https://twitter.com/crowncourtchrch) and Facebook www.facebook.com/CrownCourtChurchLondonWc2. Better still, if you are ever in London come and visit us as we mark our special anniversary and continue our tradition of Scottish Presbyterian worship in Britain's capital – we'll be glad to see you.

Herald Deadline

Items for the next issue of the Herald (December 2019 and January 2020) should be given to Bob Hensen or sent to the church office by **13-11-2019**. We hope that issue will be available on **24-11-2019**.

October 2019

Marion Brits-Pot
Elaine de Zanger
Cara Howe-Taylor
Ann Schuursma
Natalia Brhel/Brhelova
Flora van der Zwaan
Robert van der Hulst
Mavis Fleming
Annemarie Smith
Johanna Essel
Patricia Ewing
Henny Vermeulen

November 2019

Bob Hensen
Gilberto Fleming
Betty Polley
Irene van Ginkel
Elizabeth Dorn-Lee
Ranee Damanik
Elizabeth Adzra
Denis Galloway
Meriam van der Velden
Ornella Jang

**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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Olaf de Zanger.

Finance & Governance Working Group Convener:

Fred Booman.

Fellowship & Communication Working Group

Convener: Bob Hensen.

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