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# Lifeline

## MAGAZINE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN HAARLEM

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## ***Chaplaincy Letter***

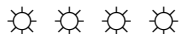
November and December are the months in which the church focuses on the expectation of Christ's second coming, the longing for God's Kingdom, the hope for God's future. The so-called end of the liturgical year (in *Common Worship* the liturgy has its own texts from All Saints onwards) and the so-called beginning of the liturgical year (the Advent season) are actually one continuous period of expectation, longing and hope.

But what are we longing for? Some would emphasise the second coming of Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead. Others would prefer to speak about the breakthrough of God's kingdom, where justice and peace will reign. Others again will be somewhat reluctant to describe what is going to happen, but keep their hope alive for a future which is in God's hands and not in the hands of human or natural catastrophes.

These can be interpreted as quite different views of what we as Christians actually hope for, as it comes to God's future with this world and with ourselves. But what is common to these views is that they all, in their different ways, contribute to a sense of 'urgency'. The only thing they do *not* leave room for, is complacency. Christians (I would say) cannot be disinterested in, or easily satisfied with, the present situation. The present situation of humanity far and near, the present situation of politics and economics far and near, but also the present situation of our own heart and our own life. There is always room for hope, there is always an opportunity to grow towards the likeness of Christ, there is always a possibility 'to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth' (Eucharistic Prayer E).

I pray that this year's season of Kingdom and Advent will again awaken in us this sense of urgency. Let us try and find ways in which we, in our own personal situations, can prepare the ways of the Lord. In the assurance that it is not about us, but about him, who lives, comes and reigns.

*Mattijs Ploeger*  
*Old Catholic parish priest Haarlem*



## ***Interregnum***

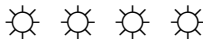
Our interregnum is now nearing the two year mark, but as I mentioned in the last edition of *Lifeline* hopefully the end of our chaplain-less period is now in sight! Around 20 November various Diocesan committees will decide whether we can proceed with our candidate. One of the issues is the decision whether to let our candidate change from non-stipendiary ministry to stipendiary ministry. If the decision is favourable we will be able to proceed with negotiations. There are other aspects that also need to be discussed,

but we feel we can come to an agreement on those matters. This appointment requires some 'out of the box' thinking, but we feel this appointment is both exciting and good for Haarlem!

On 5 October I bumped into Jeanne French (Associate Diocesan secretary) in Victoria Street, London. She reiterated that the Diocese is finding it increasingly difficult to fill part time posts, and in fact the advertisement for another chaplaincy had also come to nothing. A small comfort, but at least we are not the only chaplaincy in this situation.

Do please remember the Haarlem vacancy in your prayers. We will keep you informed.

*Martin van Bleek, warden*



### ***The Search for a new Pastor in Bible Times***

Imagine a parish in Bible times.

The Council has been looking for a suitable new pastor.

The following is their confidential report on the candidates:

**Adam:** Good man, but has problems with his wife.

**Noah:** Former pastorate of 120 years with no converts. Prone to unrealistic building projects.

**Joseph:** A big thinker, but a braggart. Interprets dreams. Has a prison record.

**Moses:** Modest and meek, but poor communicator; even stutters at times. Sometimes blows his stack and acts rashly in business meetings.

**David:** The most promising candidate of all, until we discovered the affair he had with a neighbour's wife.

**Solomon:** Great preacher, but serious woman problems.

**Elijah:** Prone to depression; collapses under pressure.

**Jonah:** Told us he was swallowed by a huge fish. He said the fish later spat him out on the shore near here. We hung up.

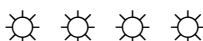
**Amos:** Backward and unpolished. With some seminary training, he might have promise; but he has a problem with wealthy people.

**John:** Says he's a Baptist, but doesn't dress like one. Sleeps outdoors, has a weird diet, and provokes denominational leaders.

**Paul:** Powerful CEO type and fascinating preacher. But he's short on tact, unforgiving with young ministers, harsh, and has been known to preach all night.

**Timothy:** Too young.

**Judas:** His references are solid. A steady plodder. Conservative. Good connections. Knows how to handle money. We're inviting him to preach this Sunday with great hopes that he will accept our offer!



## **Music Matters**

The clocks have changed back and in 4 weeks' time we will be celebrating the beginning of Advent with our annual Advent Carol service. This will take place on Sunday 27 November at 7.30 pm. Do come along to this service of lessons, hymns and special carols. The sequence of the readings is designed to help us prepare for the advent of our Lord at Christmas.

As ever the Advent period leading up to Christmas is a busy time for the choir. We have been practising Christmas music since September! We even have a new carol book. David Willcocks edited the first Carols for Choirs 50 years ago. Since then there have been 3 additions. Carols for Choirs 5 marks this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and incorporates many new compositions and new versions of older carols. We will be singing quite a few from this new book.

On Saturday 10 December we will sing our annual Carol Concert in our church. The proceeds go towards the upkeep of the organ. Do join us for this festive concert and hear some old favourites and new carols.

After the service on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> is our annual Bring & Buy during Advent Tea.

On Saturday 17 December we will be singing Carols at Middachten Castle. There will be three sessions, the first beginning around 1 pm. The Castle and the courtyard will be specially decorated and there will be many stalls with Christmas fair. In the evening we will sing the annual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols in Arnhem, this year in the Lutheran Church, Spoorstraat, at 7 pm.

On Wednesday evening 21 December we will sing a Service of Nine Lessons and Carols in the Dorpskerk in Rheden, probably at 8 pm.

Christmas Eve in Haarlem will follow its traditional format: Choral Eucharist at 6 pm and our Service of Nine Lessons and Carols at 8 pm. It would be wonderful to see many of you at the Christmas Eucharist preceding the Carol Service. The Eucharist at Christmas marks one of the important moments in our church life and is the proper beginning of the festive season. After the Eucharist the Carol Service is a great way to celebrate the birth of Christ, with the singing of our traditional carols and listening to the lessons leading us through the Christmas story. Do join us for both services if you can. And let us know if you have difficulty getting to church on that evening or would like to receive communion at home because you are unable to get to church.

On Boxing Day we are all invited to drinks at Mary & Leendert Brunt's home in Heemstede. Please let Mary know whether you will be coming or not. It is an opportunity to relax and meet and chat after the hecticcy of Christmas Day!

There will be no service on 1 January. Our first service in the New Year will be on 8 January. This is a Choral Eucharist and will be followed by the Old Catholic *Bishop of Haarlem's New Year's Vespers*. Our choir will also be singing at that service.

Looking forward to seeing you at the events and services, and wishing you in advance a blessed Christmas and a good beginning to 2012!

*Martin A. van Bleek,*  
*Organist & choirmaster*

## In Memoriam

### Barbara de Vries - Bennison

(29 December 1922 – 11 October 2011)

Barbara was for the congregation at Haarlem what could be seen as an exemplary Christian, devout, loving, caring, honest, and, even despite bitter tragedies in her life, never complaining. Originally attending Christ Church Amsterdam, she, with her husband Karel, joined the congregation in Haarlem in the early 80's, and became a loved, enthusiastic and treasured member of the congregation.

The words of Barbara's daughter-in-law, Leonie, could not better reflect what everyone felt for her:

*"Her whole life she loved and cherished, took care of others, she did her utmost to please and serve, never expecting anything in return. Her slogan was 'my needs are small'.*

*Mum, being with you was such a joy. I have fond memories of bird watching, solving crossword puzzles, and all year round we could find you working in your garden, taking care of plants and flowers, battling weeds. Despite 65 years living in The Netherlands you loved being in England, the countryside, the coast, the harbour, eating fish and chips. Richard and I will take your ashes to England, for the wind to carry them into the fields, over the hills, to rest on English soil. I greatly admired your belief and courage, despite all the trauma you went through. Rest in peace, heal and feel the love surrounding you now. Till we meet again, beloved Mum."*

Rev. Mattijs Ploeger:

*As so often is the case, behind the friendly and generous attitude of a person lies a whole world of life experiences. In Barbara's case, a whole world of love and faith, but also a whole world of grief and pain. Having to let go a husband and three children is the indescribable experience she had to live with. But she didn't let that determine her entire life. She always remained the lady she wanted to be and she tried to invest as much as she could in helping others. Perhaps she sometimes even thought too low of herself ('my needs are small'). Nothing in her life ever separated Barbara from the love of God and the love of neighbours. But believing, trusting in God, is not a recipe for health or wealth. "For your sake, O God", says St Paul, "we are being killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered". But the love of God, the love of Jesus Christ for us, is such a sustaining power, such a sustaining basis, that it can conquer all disappointment, all fear, all pain. "Neither death nor life, not things present nor things to come, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord". Persons like Barbara are signs of how faith can work. Of how sustaining God's love can work out in a person's life. The most convincing proclamation of the faith is not a sermon, but a life.*



## ***The Archdeaconry Synod 2011***

This year Rian van Bochove and I were the representatives for the Haarlem chaplaincy at the Archdeaconry Synod. This took place on 6-8 October at a new venue called La Foresta European Centre near Leuven. The first glimpse of the centre on approaching was of a huge monastic building which was built 1947-1950 for Franciscan monks. Since 1994 it has been used as a training centre. Three photos of the venue can be seen on the church website: [www.anglican-church-haarlem/photo-album](http://www.anglican-church-haarlem/photo-album)

During the opening Eucharist on Thursday evening Bishop Geoffrey was assisted by the new Area Deans: Andrew Wagstaff for Belgium and Mark Collinson for The Netherlands.

Later that evening, during the first session, there were different chaplaincy reports.

- The recent visit in September to the Luweero project in Uganda by five members from different chaplaincies to support and encourage the work of the Healthy Vine.
- The first summer conference of New Wine Europe, in Belgium, attended by 360 participants; this will be followed by a New Wine Day on 19 November.
- Revd. Sam van Leer is working to establish an Anglican presence in Groningen.
- The work of The International Church Society (ICS) in the Synod chaplaincies.

On Friday morning, Bishop Graham Cray spoke about the Mission Shaped Church and how “to learn to be church in our current context by entering other people’s worlds, identifying with them and sharing God’s transforming power to change lives and life-styles”. The Mission Working Party, set up at last year’s Synod, has gathered a team of translators to translate key texts from Common Worship into Dutch so that dual language liturgy is available when appropriate for weddings, baptisms and funerals.

The Anglican Communion Covenant was presented by the Venerable Patrick Curran, Archdeacon of the East in the Diocese of Europe and chaplain to Christ Church, Vienna. The motion was accepted that the Archdeaconry Synod approve the draft adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant, which is a document to establish world-wide Anglican identity and unity.

At the Business Meeting on Saturday morning it was decided that due to the healthy budget, chaplaincy contributions to the common fund will remain the same, grants for clergy training can be increased and funds are available for clergy to seek individual advice concerning pensions. For the funding of four Free-standing Archdeacons in the future, there needs to be a change in constitution and legislation by 2013. At the AGM of the Anglican Netherlands Area Council (ANAC) it was reported that the Anglican churches have received charitable status ANBI and are represented on the Raad van Kerken and CIO (Interkerkelijk Contact in Overheidszaken).

At the close of the Synod there was a standing ovation and thanks for the Venerable John de Wit, Archdeacon of North West Europe, who will be retiring in May 2012.

The programme at the Synod was action-packed from 7.30 in the morning till late in the evening with meetings, discussions and different forms of worship in the chapel. However, during our free hour on Friday afternoon, Rian and I took the opportunity to enjoy a stroll in the sunshine through the historic city centre of Leuven which was 6 km away and well-worth a visit.

Greetings, *Diana Dammer*

## ***Meditation on Psalm 51:17***

*Jaap Theunisz*

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” The question I will try to answer here is how a loving God can be pleased with a broken spirit. Then I will present a possible way for us to meditate using these words.

The Psalm in which this verse occurs, is really a prayer for forgiveness. The author, whether it was David or not, realizes that forgiveness cannot be obtained by external means only.

Verse 15 has the famous words “O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise”. So it is worship and obedience that God is after. But only as the result of a spiritual transformation, as it says in verses 10 and 11:

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.”

And in order for something new to grow, something old must first be broken.

This already partly answers the question how God can be pleased with a broken spirit.

But in a previous article I have shown that words like ‘spirit’, ‘heart’ and ‘soul’ are not always clearly defined in the Bible. Verse 10, by an instrument called poetic repetition, also shows that ‘spirit’ and ‘heart’ are used interchangeably. I think that what the Psalmist means is that the ego must be broken and that our spirit (life energy) must be renewed and strengthened.

The next question is how (the pain of) a breaking ego can be regarded as a sacrifice.

Normally we give as a sacrifice something that is valuable. In this case we offer something that is raw and relatively worthless in order to have it transformed into something valuable. Or is there a different way in which we can interpret this sacrifice as something truly valuable? I think there is.

What we are offering to God (as well as to ourselves) is a letting go.

Being attached to the ego and to all those things the ego wants, is worthless, but letting go of these attachments, requires dedication and is therefore a true sacrifice.

It is also an act of faith, because we have to believe and trust that forgiveness and cleansing will follow. It is more difficult to present our pain, failures and ego to God than to sacrifice an animal. It comes closer to who we are. Some of our pain and brokenness we may not even wish to leave behind us, because we have come to identify ourselves by these things. Some authors even speak of a “pain body” that we are trying to keep alive, because it seems to grant us a number of benefits like more individuality and attention. This is probably not true for all pain and suffering, for not all of it can be said to be self-inflicted. But it is true that we have difficulties with change, even if this change is for the better. This can be observed e.g. when hostages become attached to their captors. And so it is no mean thing to break free from the prison of various forms and degrees of self-deception.

What we can do, in addition to praying in the name of Jesus, confessing, accepting His grace and studying His word (not necessarily in that order), is to meditate, for instance on the words of this Psalm. When you have some quiet time, imagine and visualize that you are entering a holy temple. You are holding something in your hands, and it may look grey or black or red. This substance represents your pain and brokenness, frustration and anger. Now imagine there is some kind of fire burning in the middle of the temple. Slowly and hesitantly you approach this fire. You notice that the flames are white but not as hot as to keep you away. They do not consume you, but they do slowly dissolve this substance that you brought with you. Take time to feel the relief. Now although the fire did not consume you, you notice it does have an effect on your body. Body and spirit are one and both are cleansed. Then you fall on your knees and thank God for what the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, has done. Ask the Spirit to stay with you ever after. Be silent for a while so as to give Him the opportunity to speak to you. There may be a personal message. If so, remember it and afterwards determine if it is in accordance with the Word of God. Leave your inner temple reverently, knowing you can always return to seek His presence, guidance and further purification.

This exercise may not be for everybody. Also it is not intended to replace any sacrament or communal worship. But if it has helped you, you could help others with a similar inclination by suggesting this exercise to them. Never impose it and don't waste it on people who show signs of being disrespectful. God bless you.



## ***Christmas Bring & Buy***

On Sunday 11 December we will hold our annual Bring & Buy for Christmas during our Advent Tea. There will be Christmas cards, mince pies, jams on sale and of course books and the White Elephant stall. However, we do depend on your contributions as well! So please go through your bookcases, attics and cupboards to see whether there are useful items that can be sold at the Bring & Buy. Homemade jams, marmalades, lemon curd will be very welcome indeed! Why not bring a friend along too?

The proceeds of the B&B will be split between the special projects fund (e.g. communion linen & vestments) and the choir fund (e.g. music).

It is already possible to bring your contributions to church - please see either Annelies Dix or Martin van Bleek.



## ***Ecumenical discussion group, Haarlem***

The local Council of Churches has for many years organised ecumenical discussion group where people from the various Christian traditions can meet and talk. Commencing on 16 November we shall be discussing the topics covered in ds. Bernard Lutikhuis' book: 'Ten values in which to believe'.

More information from ds. Rinze Marten Witteveen, tel: 5329545, email: [witteveen@bavo.nl](mailto:witteveen@bavo.nl)  
(note: discussions will be held in Dutch)

## ***Enigmas around the birth of Christ***

*(from S.J.Andrews' Life of Christ*

For all who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, His birth into the world must be the greatest event of human history. Yet the fact remains that the exact date of this greatest of all events is known to none. All that seems known for certain is that the accepted date - that of the year One of the Christian era - is wrong, and that the correct date was a few years earlier, possibly around 5 years. And if the exact year is not known, it is not surprising that the month and day are also in doubt. The balance of probabilities seems to favour December, and the 25<sup>th</sup>, this day being adopted by the Eastern Church, presumably on some good ground, at the beginning of the fourth century, after having previously kept the 6th January.

Immediately after His birth, however, there are two events which stand out – on the eighth day after His birth, He was circumcised (*Luke 2.21*) and on the fortieth He was presented. The first of these would have taken place at home, wherever the Holy family were then lodging. But the latter could only take place in the Temple at Jerusalem. On this occasion the presence of the Christ Child was publically recognised and heralded, by Simeon and Anna.

Here the question arises as to the arrival of the Wise Men.

For her ceremonial sin-offering, Mary offered two turtle-doves instead of a lamb, this being a provision the Law made for those who were too poor to afford the more expensive offering of the lamb. This fact of poverty has a relation to the coming of the Wise Men (*Matt. 2.1-12*), the date of which is uncertain. If the Wise Men had come and found the Child and presented their gifts, which included gold, before the Presentation, then Joseph and Mary would have been no longer poor, and would have been able to afford the prescribed lamb. The popular idea concerning the wise men is, that they arrived in Jerusalem about the time of the Lord's birth and found Him still in the stable lodging. But apart from the question of poverty this seems also not possible, for, as soon as the wise men had departed without returning to Herod (as that monarch had directed), the Child's life was immediately in danger. It seems difficult to believe that, after the edict had gone forth for the slaying of all the children under two, Joseph and Mary would have gone openly to Jerusalem carrying a Child well within the presented age. If on the other hand the wise men arrived after the Presentation, then that difficulty is also avoided.

Another question arises as the two genealogies presented, in Matthew (1.1-17) and Luke (3.23-38), for Mary's husband Joseph. Matthew traces the lineage down from Abraham to Joseph, and Luke traces it up from Joseph to Adam. But the question is why should there be two and why do they not agree; and why, since Christ was not the Son of Joseph, should his lineage be given at all? The answer to the last is that Matthew, writing mainly for Jews, was anxious to show that Jesus as the adopted Son of Joseph was, by Jewish law and practice, a rightful heir to the throne of David. But this does not account for Luke's, nor for the discrepancy between them. A simple explanation of this difficulty is to regard Luke's list as having nothing whatever to do with Joseph, but as Mary's lineage. This would make Jesus not merely the Son of David 'by adoption', but also by physical descent. And to many minds this will seem not merely a possibility but a necessity as being the only way in which the promise made to David could be fulfilled that "of the fruit of his loins God would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" (*Acts 2.30*). In fact, women's names did not ordinarily come into Jewish genealogies, descent through the father alone being traced.

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

*During this interregnum period the type of service may be changed  
– please check the weekly service sheet  
or contact our secretary Rob Uittenbosch (020-6457103) to be sure.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Sunday 6 November</b><br><i>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday before Advent</i> | <b>14.30 Choral Eucharist</b><br><i>Retiring collection for Mission</i>  |
| Tuesday 8 November   | 10.00 Coffee morning at the home of<br>Mrs Mary Brunt M. Vaumontlaan 20<br>2101 ED Heemstede 023 5295045<br><br>19.30 Meeting for the healing group<br>Compline and Laying on of hands |
| <b>Sunday 13 November</b><br><i>Remembrance Sunday</i>                 | <b>14.30 Remembrance Service<br/>followed by Holy Communion</b>  |
| <b>Sunday 20 November</b><br><i>Christ the King</i>                    | <b>14.30 Morning Prayer and Holy<br/>Eucharist</b>   |
| <b>Sunday 27 November</b><br><i>Advent Sunday</i>                      | <b>19.30 Advent Carol Service</b><br><i>a service of readings, hymns, carols and<br/>prayers</i>   |
| <b>Sunday 4 December</b><br><i>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent</i>     | <b>14.30 Choral Eucharist</b><br><i>Retiring collection for Mission</i>  |
| Saturday 10 December   | 20.15 Christmas Carol Concert in<br>church, sung by our Church Choir &<br>The Anglican Singers   |
| <b>Sunday 11 December</b><br><i>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent</i>    | <b>14.30 Sung Eucharist, with hymns</b><br><i>Advent Tea and Bring &amp; Buy</i>   |
| Saturday 17 December   | 13.00 Carols at Castle Middachten<br><b>19.00 Carol Service in Arnhem,</b><br>Lutherse Kerk, Spoorwegstraat 8<br><i>(both sung by our Church Choir &amp;<br/>The Anglican Singers)</i> |

**Sunday 18 December** 13.30-16.30 Choir practice in church.  
*4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent*

**14.30 House service** (to be confirmed)

Wednesday 21 December 20.00 Carol Service in Hervormde Dorpskerk in Rheden, sung by our Church Choir & The Anglican Singers

**Saturday 24 December** **18.00 Choral Eucharist Christmas Eve**  
*Christmas Eve*

**20.00 Service of Nine Lessons and Carols**

Monday 26 December 12.00-14.00 Boxing Day Drinks at the home of Mary & Leendert Brunt

**Sunday 1 January** **14.30 NO SERVICE**  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas*

**Sunday 8 January** **14.30 Choral Eucharist**  
*Epiphany*

**16.00 Old Catholic Vespers**  
*with Bishop Dick Schoon*  
*Our choir will also participate*

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