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# Lifeline

**MAGAZINE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN HAARLEM**

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The English-speaking church community in Haarlem is part of the Anglican-Diocese of Europe and seeks to serve all English speaking people in the wider Haarlem area.

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*Lifeline* contains the official Haarlem chaplaincy news and various articles. However, the views expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Chaplaincy or the Editor. Recent issues of *Lifeline* can be found on <http://www.anglican-church-haarlem.nl/category/all/lifelines>

## **Chaplaincy letter**

*from Revd Canon Nigel Abbott*

When Philip asked me if I would write a Christmas message for Lifeline my thoughts went immediately to the Christmas that Elizabeth and I spent with you in Haarlem in 2010. Such happy memories of a much quieter and perhaps deeper way of celebrating the Saviour's birth than I had been used to as a parish priest in England for over 50 years. At home, by the time that the last service had finished on Christmas Day, I would collapse in a heap into an armchair and sink into a comatose exhaustion! Not so that time in Haarlem. Quietly, Elizabeth and I celebrated that Christmas when we were with you in a way we had not experienced before. And the wonderful thing for us was that we were able to remind ourselves that at the heart of Christmas there is *mystery*.

O magnum mysterium. None other than the great mystery of the Incarnation. The fact that Almighty God in his great love and mercy revealed Himself to the world in the person of his Only Son Jesus, the Christ. How can we do other than drop to our knees in responsive love and humble adoration? "We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty" we say every time we celebrate the Eucharist. "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ the only Son of God. *For us and for our salvation* he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, *and was made man*".

It is so difficult for us, in the middle of the modern Christmas with all its material distractions, to remember that at the heart of this great festival there lies the *Magnum Mysterium*, "God in man made manifest". We can get ourselves so bound up in that hurly-burly of the modern festival that the *mystery* of Christ's birth can be passed over - it can even be ignored.

Some Christians literally drop to their knees at the point where we recite the Words of the Nicene Creed in the Liturgy: "Who for us men and for our salvation was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary *and became man*". For those of us who cannot get to our knees these days through human frailty, we give instead a deep bow. I know it has become sadly a matter of churchmanship whether we genuflect or not at the Incarnatus. It is thought to be High Church if you kneel or bow. But why? If we believe that the *mystery* of Christ's Incarnation is something that demands our deepest reverence, then all of us (whether high church or low) should drop to our knees - at least in thought - in deep devotion; and especially at Christmas.

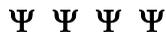
Our faith is steeped in *mystery*. How else could that be when we contemplate Almighty God? *Mystery is interpreted as that which awaits our full understanding only when God Himself, in His own good time and loving purpose, reveals it to us.* For the Christian, we are content to wait in silent contemplation the full revelation of the truth.

In the meantime - and especially at the Feast of Christ's Nativity - we can interpret that Magnum Mysterium along with John Betjeman when he wrote his well-known poem "Christmas":

*"No love that in a family dwells,  
No carolling in frosty air,  
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells  
can with this single Truth compare -  
That God was man in Palestine  
And lives today in Bread and Wine".*

A very happy Christmas and every blessing in 2019.  
With our love and best wishes,

*Nigel and Elizabeth*



## ***Music Matters***

As usual the last quarter of the year is rather hectic preparing for Harvest, Advent and Christmas. This year even more so as our choir, together with other members from the European Cathedral Singers, joined the singers of RSCM France at the Centenary Commemoration Service of the end of the First World War in the Notre Dame in Paris on 11 November. It certainly was a memorable week-end joining with the other singers to practice all the service music, including a specially composed anthem for the centenary. On Sunday 11 November at 11 am all the bells of the churches in Paris rang out which was incredibly moving. The service in the Notre Dame was also an occasion to remember. The church was packed and the choir was filled with about 65 singers from RSCM France and RSCM North-West Europe. The conducting was shared between the three of us: the chairman of RSCM France, the Director of the American Cathedral and myself. The music was certainly both moving and stirring, and it was the first time I had sung the Marseillaise! The combined choir even got a compliment from a French General for singing it so well! The Last Post was played on a bugle that was used to sound the end of the war on 11 November 1918! After the service I had the privilege of holding that historic instrument, a special moment of tangible history!

It was also special to be in Paris at this time and sing in the Centenary Service, as my grandfather's youngest brother Alfred Stafford was killed in France on 31 October, just eleven days before the Armistice.

After the very hectic Advent and Christmas period we are now in 2019! A New Year has begun! Each year seems to become shorter as the pace of the world around us increases! Fortunately the period between Advent and Christmas includes many moments for us to reflect on the importance of the Christmas story and the birth of our Saviour.

After months of preparation by the choir, we began Advent with our Advent Carol Service presided over by Fr. Robert, our annual Carol Concert, the Christmas Bring and Buy and Advent Tea and the carol singing at Middachten Castle. Instead of singing on the Grand Staircase we were in the Great Hall next to the Christmas tree! As usual all the rooms of the castle were beautifully decorated. On Christmas Eve we celebrated the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in our Christmas Choral Eucharist with Fr Jake DeJonge at 6pm and at 8pm we sang our Carol Service with Fr Robert Frede. The church was packed with a congregation that sang the well-known carols with great gusto, and also following the lead of the choir tempo wise! Our own committed church choir, together with the Anglican Singers, were on top form and sang the solo items very well indeed!

As always the combination of the Word and Music is a powerful way to bring the Christmas message across to both our church community and the large Dutch congregation present. The format of the Nine Lessons and Carols, devised a century ago, is still proving its worth and gaining popularity across this country. This year we had Jas Hutchinson-Bazely playing for all our Advent and Christmas services, including the carol concert. A big thank you to him as James Pollard was unable to play for us this year owing to a hectic schedule of having to play for three musicals! Thank you for your support at these services and other musical events, and of course a big thankyou to the choir for their unstinting commitment! A special thank you to Daniel and James Kearney for joining the choir for the Christmas period!

On 6 January our choir will take part in Bishop Dick Schoon's New Year's Vespers which follows our own Choral Eucharist. After this service we will definitely put the angels and shepherds back into the music library until the end of August.

After the Christmas break the choir will begin preparing for Passiontide and Easter, Easter Sunday on the 21 April, preceded by Good Friday on 19 March. On Palm Sunday we will be joining our Old Catholic Friends for the joint service. The choir will be singing its usual services on those holy days, but more news about those services and the music in the next issue of Lifeline.

Advance notice: the European Cathedral Singers will be singing in Ripon Cathedral from 22 – 29 July.

A very happy, healthy and musical 2019 to you all!

*Martin van Bleek,*  
*Organist and choirmaster*



## ***Andrew Rees – in Ghana, married on 2 November***

The wedding went well, but it was a marathon day! In Ghana the engagement occurs on the same day as, or very close to, the wedding. We held it at the tribal king's house – I am between Phil and her mother:



The second photo shows us leaving the registry having made our vows.



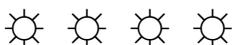
I had a red ribbon thing pinned to my shirt but that managed to fall off just as we made the vows, adding some humour to the occasion. By the end of the reception at 11 pm we were exhausted.

We are living in a house we have bought around 20 mins west of Accra. It is unfurnished as yet, but we are only back from honeymoon a week.

Today I saw the school. The doors and frames have been put in place for the rooms of the headmaster's residence and school office. There is much to do but we still plan to move in second week of January.

A big hello to everyone. I expect the choir is gearing up for Advent. Remembering you all in prayer,

*Andrew*



***Take courage, God is not only with us, he is in us.***

John 14:26

When a spinal injury left Marty paralyzed, he decided to go back to school to study for his MBA. But he couldn't do this on his own – his mother, Judy, helped make his goal a reality. She sat with him through every lecture and study group, jotting notes and handling technology issues. And she assisted him onto the platform when he received his diploma. What would have been unattainable on his own became possible with the consistent, practical help Marty received.

Jesus knew His followers would need such support after He left the earth. When He told them about His upcoming absence, He said they would gain a new kind of connection with God through the Holy Spirit. This Spirit would be a moment-by-moment helper - a teacher and guide who would not only live *with* them but also be *in* them (John 14:17, 26).

The Spirit would provide Jesus' disciples with internal help from God, which would enable them to endure what they couldn't handle on their own as they went out to share the good news. In moments of struggle, the Spirit would remind them of everything Jesus said to them (v. 26): "Let not your hearts be troubled" . . . "Love one another" . . . "I am the resurrection and the life".

If we are facing something that exceeds our own strength and ability we can depend on God's Spirit for help.

*(with thanks to Theo Trutter)*

## *Ms. Miscellaneous - in Paris*

On the brink of a new year I was asked to dedicate this month's Ms. Miscellaneous to the choir's contribution to the celebration in the Notre Dame in Paris of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the armistice of the Great War.

In November 2017 our choirmaster asked us whether we had any plans for 11 November 2018, which was then over a year away. Because, so he continued, we were asked to come and sing in the Notre Dame in Paris for the 100<sup>th</sup> armistice. But if we had other plans, he would understand and would answer the RSCM that we would be unable to attend....

Needless to say, if there were any plans in our diaries they were cancelled immediately: being ASKED to sing in the NOTRE DAME!!!! An honour and a great adventure! And so a rather long year of waiting for the music and the day to arrive began. Hotels were picked, Thalyses reserved, countless e-mails exchanged between John Crothers and Martin and - as the date drew closer - between Martin and us.

And then - finally - the Weekend arrived. On Saturday we were expected for rehearsal in the American Cathedral in Paris, just off the Champs Elysées, next to Hermés, Luis Vuitton and other nice little shops. All together we were about 60 singers, of which about 15 from The Netherlands. A choir that size did not fit in the choir pews, so I ended up sharing a fortunately rather ample clergy's seat with a fellow soprano.

We rehearsed for 3½ hours, which was just as well since outside it was raining Parisian cats and dogs. And in the end we managed a Te Deum so floatingly unified that the conductor remained speechless and told us to do just that the next day. Also the other pieces came together very nicely, after which it was time for drinks and a well deserved dinner.

The morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, I had to confess I was nervous the instant I woke up. Such a great day, a great moment, a great memorial lay ahead. We had been told to be strictly on time because of the very tight security; rumour had it that a Royal

would possibly attend the service.... So, I made sure to be 15 min early, and so had many fellow singers, filled with expectation....

The event that followed was unforgettable; the magnificent building with its rich history so tightly woven with France's history, the colourful guests with uniforms of all divisions of the armed forces one can think of, the piper, the banners, the Last Post played on a bugle used to declare the armistice 100 years ago, the sermon, the speeches, the poems; a true memorial honouring the brave and fallen, reminding us to be very careful with our direly fought peace and to never take it for granted.

But it also showed me the very significance of the saying in Dutch 'met de Franse slag'; the English dictionary translated it as 'with a lick and a promise' meaning that everything was just a tiny bit disorganised... The 'very tight' security turned out not to be so tight after all, since tourists were allowed in during the service, bags were not checked (although the small suitcase of the sister of one of the choir members was taken a way to be put outside in the rain when she had left it alone just a few minutes - with other choir spouses and friends watching it...), the lovely introductory music just before the service was lost in the chatter of the guests being ushered to their seats, the seating of the choir was seemingly at random, and at the end of the service the clergy did not seem to know when and where to process out ...

Looking back and writing down these memories they bring a smile to my face and I realise that this nice example of French organisation skills has just added to the great experience that being part of the 100<sup>th</sup> armistice memorial was.

Perhaps a tad more of laissez faire and a bit less of muttering about things that don't turn out quite the way they are planned or expected is a good resolution for 2019, trusting that God will help us through the rough patches if we let Him, and will celebrate the good times together with us.

I wish you all a peaceful, happy and healthy 2019!

Veronique Ruiz

*Bird Psalm,*  
*by U. A. Fanthorpe*

The Swallow said,  
He comes like me,  
Longed-for, unexpectedly.

The superficial eye  
Will pass Him by,  
Said the Wren.

The best singer ever heard  
No one will take much notice,  
Said the Blackbird.

The Owl said,  
He is who, who is He  
Who enters the heart as soft  
As my soundless wings, as me.

*(thanks to Christine Bradshaw)*



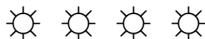
### ***Christmas Bring and Buy***

On Sunday 9 December we held our annual Advent tea and Bring & Buy. Thank you for all your contributions, both to the tea and to the B&B. Thanks also for the team selling the raffle tickets!

Sadly this year Joyce Gans was not able to donate the Christmas cake in memory of her mother Kathleen as she was ill and unable to come to church. We made up a small Christmas hamper instead.

This year we managed to raise **€ 528.15!** The proceeds will be divided between the choir fund and the general church fund. The Bring & Buy Raffle made **€ 119.50** for the Flower fund.

Thank you all so much for your generosity!



### ***Boxing Day Drinks***

Once again we held our Boxing Day Drinks at the home of Mary & Leendert Brunt. It was a great opportunity to look back at the Christmas services and other events, and to look ahead to the coming year.

To coin a Dutch phrase: *het was heel gezellig!*

A big thank you to Mary and Leendert for their hospitality!

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

*Should you require further information about a service or event  
please contact the Secretary*

**2019**

- |                          |              |   |
|--------------------------|--------------|---|
| <b>Sunday 6 January</b>  | <b>14.30</b> | <b>Choral Eucharist</b> (choir)<br>Rev. Robert Frede  |
|                          | <b>16.00</b> | <b>Old Catholic Vespers</b><br>with Bishop Dirk Jan Schoon<br><i>Our choir will also participate</i><br><i>New year's reception after the service.</i><br><i>All most welcome</i> |
| Tuesday 8 January        | 11.30        | Coffee and lunch at the Molenplas<br>restaurant Schalkwijk  |
| Wednesday 9 January      | 19.30        | Prayers for Healing and Compline  |
| <b>Sunday 13 January</b> | <b>14.30</b> | <b>Sung Eucharist with hymns</b><br>Rev. Canon Jake Dejonge   |
| <b>Sunday 20 January</b> | <b>11.00</b> | <b>Ecumenical Service for Unity</b> in<br>St. Bavo R.C.Cathedral, Leidsevaart,<br>Haarlem with all member churches of<br>the Haarlem Council of Churches<br><i>All welcome</i>    |
|                          | <b>14.30</b> | <b>Evening Prayer and Eucharist</b> (choir)<br>Rev. Dr. Mattijs Ploeger   |
| <b>Sunday 27 January</b> | <b>14.30</b> | <b>Eucharist (said)</b> Rev. Robert Frede   |
| <b>Sunday 3 February</b> | <b>14.30</b> | <b>Choral Eucharist</b> (choir)<br>Rev. Robert Frede  |

- Sunday 10 February 14.30 Sung Eucharist with hymns**  
Rev. Canon Jake Dejonge
- Tuesday 12 February 11.30 Coffee and lunch at the Cineworld restaurant, Beverwijk
- Wednesday 13 February 19.30 Prayers for Healing and Compline
- Sunday 17 February 14.30 Morning Prayer and Eucharist (choir)**  
Rev. Robert Frede
- Sunday 24 February 14.30 Eucharist (said)**  
Rev. Dr. Mattijs Ploeger
- Sunday 3 March 14.30 Choral Eucharist (with choir)**  
Rev. Canon Jake Dejonge



