



ALCB

In Touch

ALL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BRUSSELS

March 2020
www.alcb.be
Series 13, No. 2



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

the season of Lent has started last week with „Ash Wednesday“. 40 days (plus the Sundays) when we remember the Passion, the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. – Herewith, we enter the core message of our Christian faith. Suffering, dying, the cross? Why does our faith have to be so morbid? Should religion not be something to be happy with, a way to love myself and one another, to improve my life? That sounds very different. And this is the opinion of so many people today who can't deal with the Christian faith. – How is it with you? – But if we think this way, we haven't understood the message of the Gospel (yet) and we have a strange view on our reality.

Almost nobody can live a life free of sorrows. If I am honest with myself, if I go through my days with an open view of the people around me, and of myself (my wishes, my thoughts, my decisions, my actions) I must realise that a „happy-clappy“ spirituality wouldn't match my and the world's reality most of the time. Yes, of course, most of us live a comparably good life. We can be thankful to God that we usually have more than we need. Therefore, praise and worship has also its place. But all these good aspects can't hide the fact the imperfection of our character, life, and destiny – always threatened by death. – And therefore, our faith is a realistic faith; a faith in a God who doesn't make unrealistic promises or demand unaccomplishable requirements of us. And it is not a faith which says to us: you must always be happy, beautiful, rich, or strong or whatever to come to heaven. Especially the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ shows us that we have a faith in a God who sees our real lives and therefore has compassion on us. He came into our destiny to share it, to meet us in our depths without the call to meet him in his height and glory which we couldn't manage, but to take us by his power with him into his arms of consolation. God doesn't promise a perfect life on earth when we believe in him. He promises a redemption out of this life. This is a difference and must be understood! This could and should change our lives now into a (more and more) better one, but this is „just“ the side effect, not the main intention and isn't guaranteed. In the time of Lent our lives meet our faith. It is good to listen to this message, to be found in it, and to be consoled by it. Not just for a few short moments like on a holiday but for the rest of my life to life everlasting. – I wish you all a blessed and intense



Following Services

Lent season to understand and feel this Gospel of Life,

+ Yours Pastor Johannes



Date	Sunday	Time and Place	Topic and Passage for the sermon
08.03.	Reminiscere	15:00 in Woluwe	God remembers us: Romans 5, 1-11
15.03.	Oculi	15:30(!) in Woluwe	Ready to follow Jesus: Luke 9, 57-62
22.03.	Laetare	15:00 in Woluwe	Freedom is coming: Isaiah 66, 10-14
29.03.	Judica	15:00 in Woluwe	Consequences of faith: Hebrews 13, 12-14

Please pray for...

...our congregation to stay steadfast in the Christian, Lutheran faith and confession and that new people join us in the coming months of transition.

...the healing of the world of war, violence, oppression, and diseases like Corona.

...the people in Syria, Iran, and the region of the Middle East, especially our Christian Brothers and Sisters to overcome all evil and to build peaceful and free societies.



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Review Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2020 and Poll

On 9 February we met for our AGM of this year. We elected Wendy and Mark as **new elders of our Church Board**. We installed them the following Sunday during the service by prayer and blessing for their new duty. From now on they are responsible together with the pastor for the affairs of the congregation. Anyone is invited to talk to them or the pastor if you have issues, ideas, wishes, or suggestions regarding our congregation and church.

Financial Update Additionally, we listened to a financial update by President Rev Gijsbertus van Hattem from Antwerp. As you can see below, we lost approximately half of our

Balance 2019	Saldo 01.01.19	In	Out	Saldo 31.12.19	Saldo 2019
Total €	12391,06	14176,53	21601,39	4966,20	-7424,86

savings. Main reasons where the subsidisation of the refugees and other charitable work (financial help for people in special, difficult situations with needs). For 2020 we don't expect much more of these expenses, but if we don't raise more money or if we don't get the recognition by the Belgian State as an official church congregation (combined with financial substitution) we may be bankrupt by the end of this year. We will try to save money wherever we can but don't want to skip any services. Please consider always to donate for your church. Every Euro is welcome and needed! Our regular expenses are: rent for the church building(s), fee for the organ player, allowance for the pastor, expendable materials, travel expenses.

Evaluation of the Poll In spring 2019 we launched a poll among the "core" of the congregation about their view on the congregation in general, the services, sermons, music etc. Generally, we could say that the status quo is fine. The services of approximately 70 minutes with Holy Communion normally each Sunday, a mixed liturgy (mainly traditional with contemporary elements) and hymns (old hymns with 1-2 contemporary songs per Sunday) meet the approval of the majority of our members. Individual cups should also be offered as an alternative to the chalice during Holy Communion. The congregation is also mainly a place to go for Lutherans who find us on internet. Therefore, it was important to relaunch our website and to keep it neat and up to date. Half of the interviewees would be interested in a group meeting, for example to speak about (the passage of) the sermon or different topics of faith. The problem is to find a time and place for it. We will probably try to organise a meeting after the service as this seems most convenient for most people. The greatest wish for change is to have another service time, either in the morning (which would be difficult for our organist Raymond) or again in the later afternoon. The pastor will contact the German church again to ask for a later time. Nevertheless, the German Protestant Building is until now the best possibility to meet which we don't want to give up.

Brussels Budget 2020

Budget	18000,00	Year	Month
Offering		10000,00	833,33
Donations		8000,00	666,67
Total		18000,00	1500,00

Rent Church	3500,00	291,67
Organist	1950,00	162,50
Pastor	9600,00	800,00
Km	600,00	50,00
Other	2350,00	195,83
Total	18000,00	1500,00
Deficit / Superavit	0,00	0,00

ALCB. We had 45 services with an average attendance of 22 people (almost 1000 attendances in total over the whole year) and the attendance of Holy Communion increased after a few years again to almost 700. We had three Baptisms and celebrated Confirmation in November, nice celebrations with many guests and beautiful locations (Grimbergen Abbey, Sint-Katharina church in Duisburg...). In total we list momentarily 50 members (37 confirmed and 13 children), a few less than the years before but we reviewed the membership list and deleted people who moved away a while ago or didn't get in contact for more than a year. Another nice moment of 2019 was the recognition of the refugees for asylum in Belgium. Meanwhile, all have a place to live and a perspective for studying, starting a formation, and/or working. Thanks to all who helped with this challenge! Also, the Iranians are allowed to stay because they found a job here in Belgium. Thank God for all provision and guidance! Unfortunately, we had to say good-bye to the Shoo family in December. For 2020 we face (again) a time of change. As mentioned above we may get into some financial trouble but we could also receive our official recognition which would be great. We'd like to start eventually a new group next to our weekly service. Some faithful members are going to leave us. During the last weeks we welcomed several new people. Now we hope that they and others will find the way (back) to our Lutheran congregation to find an "anchor place abroad" for faith and life.

New logo After a while of reflecting the AGM decided to take the pastor's draft as a new logo for ALCB. It shows the sign of Martin Luther, the so-called "Luther's Rose" as a symbol for the Lutheran faith and church next to the Atomium as a sign for Brussels. You can find the new official logo on top of the first page of this newsletter.



Our church members with birthday in March:

- ☞ 3.3. Jakob
- ☞ 5.3. Betty
- ☞ 11.3. Pastor Gijsbertus
- ☞ 15.3. Esther
- ☞ 22.3. Hadrian
- ☞ 25.3. Anna and Grace

