

IN TOUCH

Newsletter of All Lutheran Church of Brussels

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A Retrospection

Dear members and friends of our ALCB,

It has been a long time since you have received a newsletter from us. This was due to a variety of reasons, time, finances...

Nevertheless, a lot has happened in this time. The last newsletter dated from the beginning of the summer holidays in 2021, still in the middle of the pandemic, although an end was already foreseeable then.

In the last year and a half, we had to say goodbye to dear people because they moved away, whilst some others have joined us and are now part of our ALCB family. All Covid rules for church and worship have been terminated. The German Emmaus Church has been extensively renovated - last summer we were therefore unable to use the church for several weeks and were guests in the Roman Catholic churches of Tervuren. (Many thanks to Pastor Jan Herinckx and his congregations!) In the meantime, the works in the Emmaus Church have progressed further and we can even stay together again for a cup of coffee after the services and no longer have to freeze.

Also, despite the pandemic, we were able to celebrate our traditional picnics in the garden of the parsonage, sometimes with few, sometimes with surprisingly many dear people. These were always good and important moments for the congregation. In addition, we were fortunately able to move our service time back to the old time of 16:30 last year.

Of course, in the meantime there is war in Europe again - and has been for almost a year now. Even though we are not directly affected we feel it indirectly. We were able to transfer a small donation to our sister church in Ukraine to Pastor Oleg Schewtschenko in Odessa and arrange another, larger one from the USA. We ourselves have people from both Russia and Ukraine in our congregation and know that we are connected to sister churches in both countries. Therefore it hurts especially. We hope that the war will end quickly and that it will be time again for peace and reconciliation for the benefit of all.



Services are planned for the following Sundays until the summer holidays (normally every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month - subject to change) To be sure that we are having services (and where) it is useful to be on the Pastor's mailing list. If you are not yet on the list, you are welcome to sign up by emailing pastor@alcb.be



Pastor Johannes

Services in February: 12th and 26th Services in April: 9th and 23rd
Services in March: 12th and 26th Services in May: 14th and 28th

The financial situation continues to be tight and we need every euro if we are to continue to worship every Sunday. Although we have already more than halved our budget, we currently need just under €600 per month to finance two services, pay the pastor a small honorarium and a subsidy for his travel costs which have not covered the actual costs for a long time: €0.25/km. And then we have not given a single euro to charity yet.

As far as your own financial situation allows, please always remember to donate and contribute to our parish, preferably monthly to the parish bank account:

*IBAN: BE71 9530 6054 7769
Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk*



The sad low point in 2022 was the unfortunate, terrible death of our church member Hakim in April 2022. Many active and former members and friends of our church were and still are affected by the events. We were able to raise money and use it to instruct a lawyer to accompany the investigation of the circumstances by the public prosecutor's office on behalf of the family. Unfortunately, there has been no result so far. According to the lawyer, however, the case has not yet been closed.

The biggest change came from our financial situation, which came to a head last summer. Our reserves were almost exhausted and we had to decide with a heavy heart to reduce our church services to two per month in order to save the money for church rent and organ and to halve the pastor's honorarium again. All other expenses had to be limited to the bare essentials. Unfortunately, we did not receive any response or support from our international partners, despite requests. This would only have been acute aid anyway and not sustainable. Our current situation does not seem to allow for more solid financing by our own members. Thanks to some special donations, especially from former members, we have consolidated the financial situation, even though we cannot yet afford more.

So now, as in the past before Pastor Matthias was sent as a missionary in 2007, we are happily celebrating worship every two weeks and concentrating on the essentials. At least, according to our partners in Belgium, there is a well-founded hope that perhaps in the not too distant future we will receive recognition as a church congregation by the Belgian state. In the meantime we have moved up the "waiting list". Of course this is not a guarantee because inflation and the automatic wage adjustment ("indexation") in Belgium make the situation more difficult. This is because the Federal Ministry of Justice, which would be responsible for payment, only has a fixed budget which is now naturally exhausted much more quickly. If recognition was to happen after all, a full-time position would be financed by the Belgian federal state. Then we would be able to invest more of our own financial resources in church rent and new projects. At the same time, however, there would be enormous administrative tasks for our congregation, especially the staffing of a five-member church board (without pastor!).

But all this is still in the future. Certainly until the summer holidays we will play it by ears and take small steps. That means, above all, continuing to hold fortnightly services, certainly another long summer break and no attempts at further projects.

In friendly solidarity, together with wishes of blessing for the still new year 2023, greetings to you,

Yours Pastor Johannes



Need to talk? The Pastor is here for you to listen! Contact him and he is happy to talk via phone or face to face, maybe with a cup of coffee or a walk in the park. – He is also happy to help in practical ways as much as he can.

Pastor Oleg Schewtschenko

Diakonia

The word “diakonia” means service. In every edition, this section of the newsletter presents a charitable organization. Those who are able are invited to donate to the suggested organization. At the same time it also introduces these organizations to the people in our community who might want to make use of their services. Giving help and accepting help are two sides of the same coin.

Doucheflux

DoucheFLUX provides essential services in its fully operational day center, temporary accommodation for women and couples, and a wide range of activities which give self-confidence and dignity to homeless people. One of the things DoucheFLUX is most known for, is to give homeless people the opportunity to take a shower. But they do much more, as you can see on their website: <https://doucheflux.be/?lang=en>

You can make a financial donation: <https://doucheflux.be/participer-soutenir/dons/?lang=en>

But you can also donate items by dropping them off at DoucheFLUX during opening hours (84 Rue des Vétérinaires | 1070 Brussels). More information on what items are needed can be found here: <https://doucheflux.be/participer-soutenir/dons/?lang=en>.

A donation as from €40 is tax-deductible under Belgian law.



Liesbet is our newly appointed „Charity Representative“. If you have any questions regarding this matter, feel free to speak to her.



DOUCHE
FLUX



Appel aux dons - Oproep tot donaties - Call for donations

Vêtements - Kleding - Clothes



T-shirts



Pantalons
Broeken
Trousers



Baskets
Sneakers



Caleçons/Chaussettes (neufs)
Ondergoed/Sokken (nieuw)
Underwear/Socks (new)

Produits d'hygiène - Hygiënische producten - Hygiene products



Shampooing
Shampoo



Gel douche
Douchegel
Shower gel



Cotons-tige
Wattenstaafjes
Cotton buds

DoucheFLUX

Rue des Vétérinaires
84 Veeartstenstraat
1070 Anderlecht
02 319 58 27

Mardi-Vendredi
Dinsdag-Vrijdag
Tuesday-Friday
10.00-16.00

Samedi / Zaterdag
Saturday
10.30-16.00



Confirmation Class

Last spring we started "confirmation classes" with our primary school children Alex and Jakob. Because of their age we decided to do a two-part course. First they should get a child-friendly, short approach to the topics of faith and then, as they get older, a second, more in-depth one. So far they have successfully learned about the

church building, creation (1st article of the Creed) and the 10 Commandments as a good order of life and they presented their knowledge to the congregation.

After a good start it was decided to take a break and give them some time to grow.

Late last autumn, Pastor Johannes started an intensive catechism course with our new theology student Kay. On a weekly basis the central aspects of faith and Lutheran theology are being discussed by using Martin Luther's Small Catechism.

Instead of an Annual General Meeting... (AGM)

Due to the current situation and because we are not (yet) legally obliged to do so, the church council together with President Gijsbertus van Hattem has decided not to hold an AGM for now. You can read more about our financial situation above.

Statistically, the congregation grew slightly in 2022. This is a pleasing development and we hope that it will continue, even if at the same time the proportion of those who hardly or no longer attend the services has increased. The average attendance at the services was almost the same as the previous year, despite or even though we celebrated a third fewer services. In the first half of the year attendance was quite stable over Zoom. By the end of 2022 it had dropped significantly. One reason may have been the numerous technical difficulties caused by the renovation and the lack of technical facilities in the alternative churches. However, if the lack of participation continues over the next few weeks, this would be cause for the church council to discuss whether we should discontinue this service, as the amount of work behind it is not small. Please let us know your feelings and wishes concerning this matter!

The church council continues to consist at present only of Mark, the pastor and, for major decisions, President Gijsbertus van Hattem. We are postponing a by-election of additional presbyters until an eventual decision and restructuring following a possible recognition of our congregation. However, Liesbet has agreed to act as "Commissioner for Diakonia". Many thanks for this! Please feel free to contact her with any questions regarding social commitment.

Last but not least, our member Frédéric is about to complete his „First Theological Exam“. God willing and if all goes well, he will move with his wife Gudbjörk to our sister church in France in the spring and begin his one-year vicarage (Pastor in training) in the congregation of Schillersdorf in Alsace. We wish him God's blessings for all the tasks ahead and this next step in his life! Goodbye and always welcome!

From the Church Records

The Lord over life and death was pleased to call our brothers in Christ to His kingdom.

Hakim Rajabi

* 29 June 1991 ~ 26 August 2018 + 6 April 2022

Erland Herfindahl

* 7 March 1980 + 6 August 2022

The almighty and merciful God may show them what they have believed.

Jesus Christ says: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."

(John 11, 26)



Church is much more than Sunday Service!

Among other things, the pastor regularly visits our senior Betty in the nursing home. There we regularly celebrate short devotions and also Holy Communion. Most recently, our Church Elder Mark was also able to be there. Despite the shortness of time, we had a blessed get-together.