

SCOTS INTERNATIONAL CHURCH ROTTERDAM

Congregational Report March 2019

International Youth Presbytery



In February the Scots International Church Rotterdam hosted the International Youth Presbytery. Young people from Sri-Lanka, Bochum, Paris, Budapest, Rome and of course our Rotterdam congregation came together.

They and our minister, Rev. Derek Lawson talked about You and faith (*When*

there's a discussion about faith do you stand up and be counted?; Does faith figure in your life on social media?; How can we communicate our faith without preaching?),

You and the world (*What do you see as the greatest challenges facing the world?; How does the Christian faith relate to these challenges?; What can we do to make to world we inhabit more like the kingdom of God?*),

Faith and culture (*How does the variety of cultures in most countries impact upon society?; What separates and what unites us in a Christian context?*) and

The church and the future (*Is the church fit for God's mission in the 21st century?; What are the church's greatest problems and its greatest resources?*).

The International Youth Presbytery got coverage on the Life and Work Facebook page, so young people and others in congregations in Scotland and beyond got an impression of the weekend.



Remember the celebrations on 375 years Scots kirk in Rotterdam? Read all about it (again) on this page in the December issue of Life and Work

375 Years of Scots International Church in Rotterdam

Ruud F Witte reports on the anniversary celebration of the Scots Kirk in Rotterdam.

THE Scots International Church in Rotterdam celebrated its 375th anniversary in September with a special service.

The guests of honour were the Rt Rev Susan Brown, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Honourable Peter Wilson CMG, British Ambassador to the Netherlands, and the church's minister the Rev Derek Lawson, as Moderator of the International Presbytery.

Also present was the oldest surviving former minister, the Rev John Russell, and some members of the International Presbytery from both Brussels and Bochum.

Since the church is an international church, many people from many countries were wearing their colourful national costumes. So there was more than the obvious kilt!

After the service there was an international lunch. It saw the best of hot and cold food of so many countries.

Part of the celebrations was also the publication of *Looking Forward, Looking Back*, a booklet with a summarised history of our church, a look into the future and stories of present day members.

'375 Years of the Scots International Church' really was a celebration by the whole congregation. Members and adherents – young and old – got involved in the early preparations for the

service, in guiding guests to their places in church, in creating flower arrangements, and in cleaning (both before and after!) Indeed, after the lunch, there was a short service of thanksgiving and praise which involved members of our Youth Group and Young Adults Group.

One special picture was taken shortly before the service. The black and white photograph was taken when the present building was dedicated by the then Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland back in 1952, the Rt Rev George Johnstone Jeffrey.

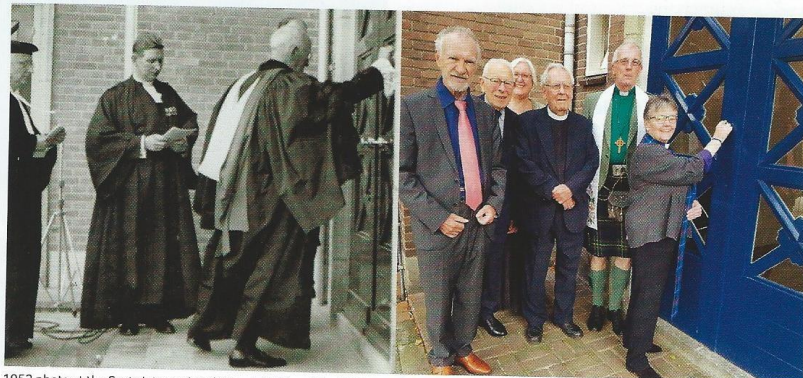
So, the opportunity was taken to have a 2018 remake. The people in that picture are (left to right) Ben van der Veen (who has in years past taken services in the Scots Kirk), the Rev Joost Pot (our retired Auxiliary Minister), the Rev Irene Bom (OLM, Rotterdam), former minister the Rev John Russell, the Rev Derek Lawson and the Rt Rev Susan Brown.

The church was founded in 1643 for the many Scottish merchants, sailors and soldiers who lived in Rotterdam. The first Scottish minister was the Rev Alexander Petrie, who travelled from Rhynd (near Perth) in Scotland to take up his position.

In 1722 the church was extended with a special almshouse for widows and orphans of fallen Scots soldiers.

The original building was completely destroyed in the 1940 bombing of Rotterdam, except for the safe; which means the church still has its complete archives, including minutes of the Kirk Session going right back to 1643. A copy of the first minutes is on display in the current building, which dates from 1952 and was designed by MCA Meischke.

The church was built for Scots but today the membership is about 30 percent British and 30 percent Dutch, with most of the remainder coming from Africa and Asia. ■



1952 photo at the Scots International Church (left) and the 2018 remake (right).