



# Airport Chaplaincy

## Annual Report 2022

**Schiphol**

*The pleasure of welcoming friends from afar knows no bounds.*

有朋自遠方來, 不亦樂乎

May 2023

# Foreword



**For many years now, the chaplains of the Airport Chaplaincy have published an annual report on their activities. The report provides an insight into the invaluable work that they do at the airport, work that goes on 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, much of it behind the scenes! This report on the year 2022 is no exception from this tradition.**

The year 2022 was the third year of the global COVID-19 pandemic. That meant it was another unusual year as we continued adapting to the restrictions in place to limit the spread of the virus. But even though passenger numbers continued to fall far short of pre-pandemic levels, the need for pastoral and spiritual care was actually much higher. You can read much more about that in this report. Schiphol was often in the headlines in 2022 due to long queues of departing passengers, delayed flights and suitcases that got left behind. But what was not reported in the newspapers was the fact that some passengers had to spend days at the airport, and sometimes even weeks. This report is all about those passengers.

We would like to express our gratitude to colleagues from companies and institutions who work at the airport and who helped us to care for those passengers who needed our support. Support and cooperation in resolving difficult situations cannot always be taken for granted, but it always brings great satisfaction to those concerned. Our particular appreciation goes to Royal Schiphol Group and its employees. We would never be able to do our work at the airport without their help. Karianne van der Weijden and Hans van den Berge from the Corporate Affairs division deserve a particular mention. Without their help, it would not have been possible to produce this annual report in this way. For our part, we are honoured by the confidence that the management of Royal Schiphol Group places in us every year to continue doing this valuable work. In addition, we would like to express our gratitude to all the organisations that support us, either directly or through one of our foundations, as we carry out this work.



Schiphol

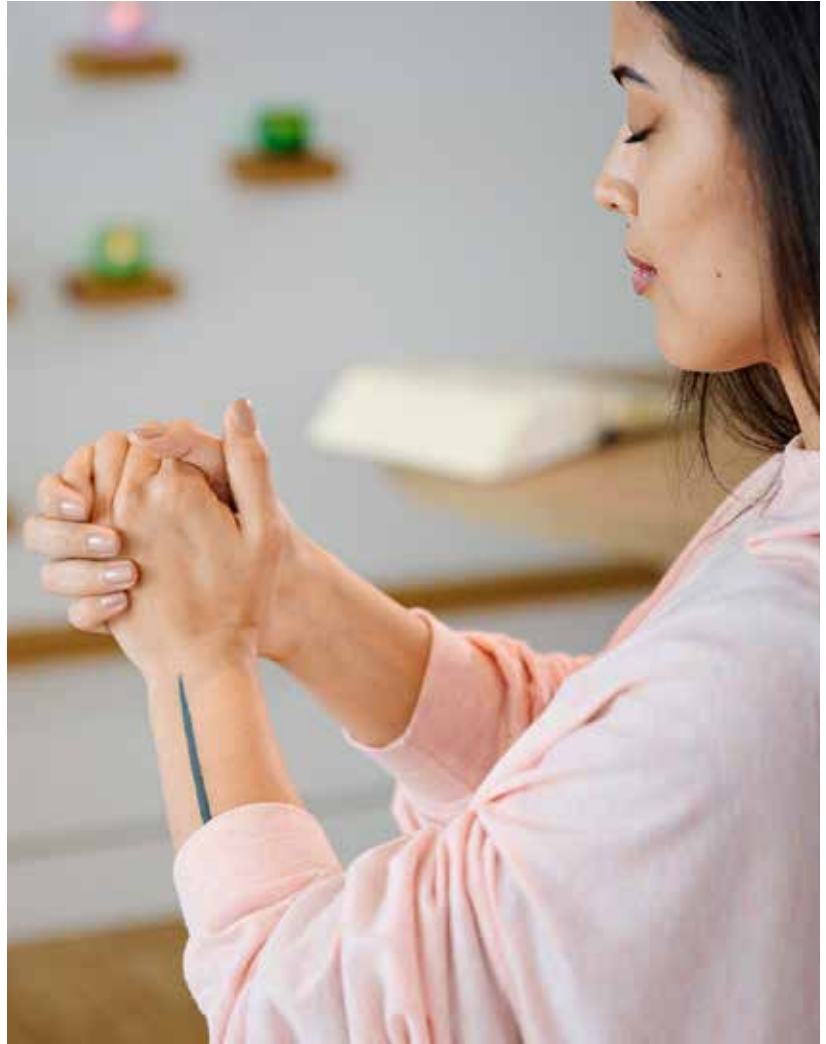
Can I help you? 

In particular, we would like to mention the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Old Catholic Church, the Remonstrant Church, the Dutch Mennonite Conference, the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, as well as various foundations and local churches. The Airport Chaplaincy could not function without their generosity and moral support.

Looking back over the past year, 2022, we have been deeply impressed by the commitment and dedication of our team of chaplains, Marieke, Joop, Gerard and Mark, and that of our volunteers, old and new. Your willingness to invest your time and energy in the Airport Chaplaincy has had a profound impact on the lives of the people you have met. We are enormously grateful for your effort and commitment, and for your capacity to bring hope, warmth and support to others.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this report, on behalf of the board,

Flip Poort, chair of the Schiphol Airport Chaplaincy Support Foundation



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# Introduction

**The Airport Chaplaincy at Schiphol provides pastoral care and spiritual support to passengers and airport staff. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a major impact on air traffic and on the airport, the chaplaincy continued to face many challenges in 2022. Passenger numbers remained well below pre-pandemic passenger numbers, but the need for pastoral contact increased. The chaplaincy regularly had to adapt to the changing situation and changes in the restrictions in place, such as wearing face masks, social distancing and limiting the number of visitors to the Meditation Centre. Nevertheless, the chaplaincy remained open, accessible and available for all those in need of a listening ear, an encouraging word or a moment of reflection.**

In 2022, the chaplaincy reached many passengers and employees in-person, but also by means of its website and presentations. Based on its Christian identity, the Airport Chaplaincy engaged in a range of activities to provide support and refuge for those with pastoral and spiritual questions:

- offering a listening ear and an encouraging word to people who are coping with stress, anxiety, sadness, loneliness or other problems;
- caring for passengers and loved ones in the event of a bereavement in the family or other challenging circumstances;
- conducting Sunday church services in the Meditation Centre in Lounge 2, where people of all faiths are welcome;
- responding to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the civil aviation sector and its impact on passengers and employees;

- maintaining contacts and cooperation with all kinds of organisations at the airport, including security, the airlines, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, medical services and the mortuary;
  - promoting mutual understanding and respect between people of different backgrounds and beliefs.
- No distinction was made on the grounds of religious beliefs or other beliefs when caring for passengers and employees.

The Airport Chaplaincy has responded to various challenges and opportunities, including:

- providing assistance and support to groups of passengers affected by flight disruptions, cancellations and access restrictions, especially with respect to China;
- recruiting and training new volunteers, who have contributed to the chaplaincy with their enthusiasm and diversity, but who have also required guidance and support;
- continuing to develop its website, which provides information about the work of the Airport Chaplaincy, increasing its visibility and enhancing its accessibility;
- maintaining national contacts and participating in international networks of (airport) chaplains, in order to exchange experiences and knowledge and to support one another.

The Airport Chaplaincy looks back on a challenging but significant year, during which the team worked to make a difference for people at the airport. The chaplains are grateful to all those involved for their support, cooperation and confidence in offering pastoral and spiritual care to anybody at Schiphol who needs it.





## 2022 begins with a lockdown

At the beginning of 2022, the Netherlands was in the middle of a lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of people hospitalised with the virus was reaching its peak. There was also a rise in a new variant of the virus – the omicron variant. In the UK and South Africa, this variant was proving to be more infectious than previous variants.

This meant that travelling by air involved considerable planning and precautions. It was important for passengers to know in advance what the latest situation was and which rules would apply in the country they were planning to travel to. Depending on their destination and country of departure, various entry restrictions might apply: in many cases proof of a negative PCR test was required, a health declaration had to be completed, a vaccination certificate had to be shown, or there was a mandatory period of quarantine.

Schiphol is one of the busiest airports in the world, with millions of passengers passing through it every year. The airport is a hub, meaning that many passengers transfer to another aircraft upon arriving, in order to continue their journey to their final destination. These include Chinese passengers, who travel via Schiphol for business trips or family visits. Given the strict pandemic rules in place for travellers arriving in China by the Chinese authorities, the Airport Chaplaincy had to respond to many requests from Chinese transfer passengers in 2022.



## Stranded passengers due to entry restrictions

**Due to the strict admission policy of the Chinese government, a number of passengers became stranded on airside at Schiphol and had to wait several days before they could take an onward flight. During that period, these transfer passengers bound for China had to undergo coronavirus tests at the Novamedik test centre on airside in the Schiphol terminal building. At the peak of the pandemic, the test requirements for passengers wishing to enter China became ever stricter, leaving ever more passengers stranded at Schiphol. This meant that 2022 was a very unusual year in terms of the cases handled by the Airport Chaplaincy. More than one-third of the over 470 cases handled in 2022 related to passengers travelling to China who were stranded at the airport.**

Passengers who tested positive for COVID-19 had to spend several days in isolation in the Mercure hotel on airside to prevent them from moving freely among other passengers. The chaplains acted as case managers, maintaining contact with those passengers and receiving updates from the GGD health service. When a passenger was no longer infectious, for instance, the GGD would call the Airport Chaplaincy to report that the passenger could be released from isolation and one of the chaplains would meet with the passenger to discuss their onward journey.

In some cases, passengers tested negative but were still unable to fly to China because, for example, they had been in close contact with an infected passenger. In addition, there were regular cases of passengers testing negative for the virus by European standards but being considered positive under the stricter Chinese standards. And some

passengers were stranded because their flights were cancelled or only a limited number of seats were available at high fares.

Some of the passengers who tested negative had to get tested multiple times in order to continue their journey to China. If a passenger who had tested negative did not have a valid visa to return to their country of origin, and was unable to enter the Netherlands because he or she did not have a European passport or visa to enter the Netherlands, then that passenger was left stranded at Schiphol. Fortunately, over the course of 2022 and in partnership with the government, Schiphol came up with a procedure that allowed these stranded passengers to obtain an emergency visa, enabling them to leave the airport on humanitarian grounds and stay in the Netherlands for a maximum of 15 days. However, passengers who were unable to pay for accommodation in the Netherlands had to remain airside.

The chaplains made regular tours of the terminal to provide assistance to these passengers. It quickly became clear that some of these passengers were having to spend several weeks airside without basic facilities. They were often at gates with minimal facilities.

In consultation with the Airport Chaplaincy, a temporary humanitarian solution was sought and Schiphol set up basic facilities such as camp beds with blankets. The chaplains were given vouchers to hand out to these stranded passengers, so that they could buy food and take a shower.

The Airport Chaplaincy also kept an eye on which stranded passengers required extra attention. Vulnerable passengers, such as women and children travelling alone, were sometimes offered a room in the Mercure hotel on airside, for example.

Together, the Airport Chaplaincy and Schiphol staff made sure that passengers were as comfortable as possible until their situation could be resolved. Camp beds were provided at the gate, where people could charge their telephones or computers, access Wi-Fi and keep in touch with family, friends and work, and so that they were as comfortable as possible given the circumstances.

Some passengers were well-prepared and had packed some essentials in their hand luggage, such as food, water, toiletries, medicines, clean clothes, a blanket, ear plugs and a rice cooker or kettle. But there were also many passengers who had all their belongings in their hold baggage and therefore had no clean clothes or access to their computer, for example. In urgent cases, such as passengers whose medication was in their hold baggage, the Airport Chaplaincy submitted a request for the release of the relevant suitcase. Working with KLM, Dutch Customs and Schiphol Airport Operations, the chaplain was then able to collect the luggage and take it airside through the relevant passenger security check point.

This was a time-consuming process which had to be discontinued over the course of the year due to the mounting workload of baggage handlers and queues of passengers at security check points.

Many stranded passengers spent their days watching movies or listening to music, playing games of table football, chatting with other passengers or working on their computers. But inevitably, boredom would often set in after a few days.

Conversations with stranded passengers made it abundantly clear that being stranded at an airport for a long period of time is a stressful and frustrating experience. Particularly if it is not clear when people will be able to continue their journey. The Airport Chaplaincy therefore helped passengers to cope with this challenging situation and to make the best of it. The chaplains helped to contact the relevant airlines and informed passengers about online resources. They also helped them to explore possible alternatives for continuing their journey. However, these alternatives usually involved additional cost or were impractical, due to the passenger's destination and circumstances.





## A harrowing situation – a family en route to China

**Mr Hui Zheng,<sup>1</sup> a friendly and highly educated Chinese man, had been stranded at the airport for several weeks. The chaplains saw him almost daily. So it was only natural to want to wish Hui a healthy and prosperous New Year on 1 January, and to express the hope that he would soon be able to continue his journey to China.**

Six weeks earlier, during a tour of the terminal, one of the chaplains had seen a toddler playing on the floor with his older sister. They had been there for several days. After speaking to the children's mother, it turned out that she had been stranded at the airport for several days, along with her husband and grandmother. The family had had to leave Eastern Europe because their visas had expired. Unfortunately, they got stranded at Schiphol on their way back home to China.

Hui, the father, had had a positive PCR test and so the family had not been able to continue their journey. As the days passed, it became clear that they were in a difficult and complicated situation. Hui did not want to risk his family being infected too, so he stayed away from them and voluntarily went into isolation in a quiet place in the terminal. So amongst all the hubbub of Schiphol, he was spending his days all on his own.

The Airport Chaplaincy team took Hui and his family – the youngest of whom was only three years old – under its wing. At the request of the chaplains and in consultation with the director of the terminal, Security and the Floor Manager Passengers, Hui's family was provided with accommodation in the Mercure hotel on airside.

The chaplains also purchased food for them and discussed possible options for leaving the airport with the family's mother. Fortunately, the mother, grandmother and two children were able to continue their journey to China after ten days, after meeting the Chinese entry requirements (including a negative PCR test). Hui, meanwhile, had to stay behind because his PCR test result was still slightly positive.

The Chinese entry rules were strict and much more rigid than the rules in Europe. The negative test result had to meet very strict criteria. Following a negative test result, Hui still had to wait an extra two weeks before he could leave for China. In the meantime, he was sleeping on benches in the terminal and the chaplains continued to keep in touch with him. They were able to communicate with him using Google Translate (because Hui only spoke Mandarin), and they purchased some essentials for him. Hui was very grateful for the support he received.

At the beginning of January 2022, one month after his family had left Schiphol, Hui was still airside and there was no prospect of him being able to leave any time soon. His wife had sent him a package with some personal belongings via the Airport Chaplaincy. During his stay at Schiphol, he regularly had to wave farewell to other stranded passengers who were able to fly to China after a few weeks, or to return to the country where they had been working because their visas were still valid. But Hui was always forced to stay behind because he always had a slightly positive test result.

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<sup>1)</sup> For privacy reasons, the name is fictitious

The situation dragged on for weeks, and the Airport Chaplaincy provided Hui with practical and emotional support. He continued to test slightly positive, which prevented him from leaving for China, and returning to Eastern Europe was not an option because he no longer had a valid visa.

Early March was a tense time for Hui. He had a negative test result and his hopes started to grow that he would continue to test negative.

The tension continued right up until the last moment. But on the day of his flight, Hui learned that he would not be able to leave after all. It was a huge disappointment. But that made the relief and joy even more intense when, the next day, he was finally allowed to leave. After spending nearly four months at the airport, Hui was finally able to return home and be with his family again.



## Partnership between the airport chaplaincy and Schiphol

**Due to the constant flow of Chinese passengers stranded at Schiphol, a special partnership was established between the Airport Chaplaincy and the Airport Operations and Schiphol Commercial divisions. The wellbeing of passengers stranded for prolonged periods was a matter of concern to everyone, and plans to provide crisis relief for these passengers were discussed. Certain individuals needed support because they were unable to continue their journey for a very long time, were suffering from stress and financial problems, or felt unsafe.**

Hua Yang, a Mandarin-speaking case manager, was appointed by management at Schiphol in August to be a point of contact for the stranded Chinese passengers. This took some of the strain off the chaplains, enabling them to focus more on other activities.

In the interviews below, Schiphol staff members who normally do not spend much time in the terminal building talk about why they felt they had to help these stranded Chinese passengers. They also talk about their experiences of the support provided for the Chinese passengers and the partnership with the Airport Chaplaincy.

### Cat Hai Chiem



‘If I can help others, I’m always happy to do it,’ says marketing specialist Cat Hai Chiem. ‘In that sense, compassion is my intrinsic motivation.’ Cat Hai began working at Schiphol during the pandemic. He is responsible for the airport’s commercial marketing policy for Chinese passengers travelling via Schiphol. ‘The

Chinese love shopping and they’re an important group of passengers at Schiphol. Commercially, our ambition is to continue growing that business.’

It quickly became apparent that travel to and from China was coming to a standstill. As more and more Chinese passengers found themselves stranded at Schiphol, Cat Hai got in touch with Airport Operations and the Airport Chaplaincy. ‘I and my colleagues Jing, Jeanine, Robin and the chaplains all felt that we had to do something. Reaching out to stranded passengers is not part of my normal work. So I didn’t really know what to expect when I started, but I did think that I’d be able to give advice because I have a Chinese background and maybe I could act as an intermediary between the two cultures.’

‘There was clearly a language barrier, so my language skills were really useful. I can speak both Mandarin and Cantonese.’ Communicating with the stranded passengers was very challenging for the chaplains, who speak no Chinese at all. The language barrier was particularly difficult because of the many dialects that are spoken in China.

‘In addition to my regular work for the Schiphol Commercial division, I came to visit the stranded passengers regularly. We talked to people with the chaplains, for example, to find out about their circumstances, and we tried to help out wherever we could. It turned out that many passengers had no idea what was going on or where they stood. They’d been abandoned.

The situation they were in was taking its toll, and often we could see and hear that as they told us their emotional stories.’

For example, Cat Hai and the chaplains spoke to one middle-aged Chinese lady who had been in Central America, where she had been working in a hotel. She spoke no Mandarin, which made it difficult for her to communicate with other passengers at the emergency reception location. Fortunately, Cat Hai was able to translate from Cantonese into Dutch. 'We found out that she was having trouble using the internet and so she hadn't been able to look up any information. She also said that she had no money to pay for the expensive COVID tests. She felt completely alone and didn't know what to do.'

'Chinese people communicate in an indirect way,' says Cat Hai. 'They don't come running after you for help.' However, at one point this lady got down on her knees – a clear cry for help. Her helplessness and vulnerability made a deep impression on Cat Hai and the chaplain. 'We arranged some food for her and, at the request of the chaplain, she was allowed to stay in the Mercure hotel.' Cat Hai kept in touch with her using WeChat. She was able to continue her journey to China after a few weeks. 'She still contacts me when there are festivities. She's very grateful for what we did to help her.'

### Jing Zhang

Jing Zhang is originally from Wuhan, but has lived in the Netherlands for quite some time. Since November 2020 she has been working at Schiphol and is the Marketing Communication Specialist for China. Jing speaks Mandarin and was asked to help support the stranded Chinese passengers. She also helped to translate documents.



'They all thought that the Chinese authorities were helping them, but

actually it was us. At one point I created a document explaining that,' says Jing.

She also designed vouchers worth €15 for the chaplains to hand out, so that the passengers could take a shower and purchase food.

At first she found it hard to believe that something like this could ever happen. 'I thought it was a joke,' says Jing. 'Even my friends couldn't believe it when I described the situation, because nobody was talking about it on social media. When I met the stranded passengers, I realised that I had to help them survive. My day job is all about making sure that the company earns more money and looking at the business from a commercial perspective. Helping these Chinese people was something completely different.'

'We met most of the passengers with the chaplains in G1 and E21. Most Chinese people don't really understand what a chaplain is. They just see someone coming to help them and they couldn't believe they were getting free food. Sometimes they hesitated before touching it. They couldn't believe that somebody was helping them out and expected nothing in return. It seems that Europeans are more generous when people are in need. They will help out, simply out of good will. In today's increasingly commercialised Chinese society, people think that there is a price for everything. Some middle-aged or older Chinese people even started hoarding food, probably because they had lived through the Great Chinese Famine and the Cultural Revolution between the late 1950s and the 1970s, when food was very scarce.'

'Some of the passengers were very poor and had been working abroad to earn money. In order to get back to China, they'd had to borrow money at high interest rates



because airfares had skyrocketed. That meant they were saddled with a huge debt.'

'One man who couldn't read or write sent me a voice message in a local dialect that I had difficulty understanding. At first he didn't dare talk to me. He'd been working in South America and was on his way home. His mother had died in a house fire. As the eldest son, he had to return to bury his mother. However, it seems that he hadn't been paid for the work he'd been doing in South America. I felt very sorry for him. His story made me sad and angry.'

'We all have a responsibility to make other people's lives better. I hope that there are no more pandemics, and that it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.'

### Jeanine Aarts-Draijer

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Jeanine became responsible for organising and supervising the health screenings at Schiphol. She did this in addition to her regular work as a developer of passenger processes and taking part in projects.



Jeanine was initially unaware of the plight of the stranded passengers until she was asked to have one of the gates cleaned up. She was sent photographs of the mess and was shocked to see that there were children's toys in the photos. Her first thought was: 'What on earth

is going on here?'

'Then I contacted one of the chaplains of the Airport Chaplaincy to ask what was happening. It turned out

that there were over a hundred stranded passengers at the airport. First we worked on raising awareness within Schiphol about the inhumane conditions that these stranded passengers were in. I spoke to Security and later involved the

Chinese Commercials division of Schiphol.'

'I began working on the problem from the process side, while Schiphol management took care of the finances. It was the inhumane situation those people were in that motivated me – not something that we in the Netherlands would ever find acceptable if it happened to us. The question was: should we still be facilitating flights to China?'

'What made the situation so complicated was that there was no clear policy from the authorities or the airlines. It was sometimes hard to find a human response. So the team took a hands-on approach, helping those directly caught up in the situation who needed immediate support. It was clear that some people lacked even the basics.'

Jeanine ordered food and toiletries from a supermarket every week. The Airport Chaplaincy was there to provide spiritual support to these people, who were in a very difficult situation. A laundry service was also set up, and the G1 pier was equipped to accommodate people stranded longer-term. Later, a cook was hired to provide meals (René van Empelen). That was a great experience for these Chinese travellers, as they were not used to eating European food. The good food helped them stay healthy and kept their spirits up, too.

'Of all the twenty years that I've been worked at Schiphol, this was the most intense period. One of the chaplains mentioned that one passenger was on his way to China for urgent medical reasons. He turned out to have cancer, but wasn't allowed into China because he was classified as close contact. This gentleman was already in a very distressing situation, and the uncertainty about when he could continue his journey made his stay at Schiphol even more difficult, emotionally.

It was also hard to deal with the fact that there were children on airside. Or that people were blackmailing each other – the lack of solidarity, because there was sometimes a pecking order within the groups of stranded passengers.'

'I had sleepless nights about what we experienced at Schiphol. Some of it was really harrowing. Every country had its own entry rules. I was constantly looking up the latest rules. That took its toll. It made me sad, but I was happy that I was able to do something to help the people affected. It was great to work with the Airport Chaplaincy.'

Looking after stranded passengers was never part of her job description. 'I could have looked the other way but I didn't, out of empathy and humanity. That's not how we should treat people.'



# Compassion

*'Clothe yourselves with compassion.'*<sup>2)</sup>

**The COVID-19 pandemic was a global crisis that had an enormous impact on passengers and employees at Schiphol. It was a time of compassion and solidarity between people of different backgrounds, beliefs and cultures. Because the pandemic was a reminder of how interconnected and interdependent we are, as part of a global community. However, it also exposed an element of callous bureaucracy, which some passengers experienced during their journey. It also revealed the need for more cooperation, care and empathy to address that bureaucracy. The Charter of Compassion reminds us that we all have a moral responsibility to help those in difficult situations and look at people's personal circumstances, especially those who are particularly vulnerable.**

## **Charter for Compassion**

*'Instead of maintaining ourselves in a state of deliberate heartlessness in order to keep suffering at bay, we should open our hearts to the grief of others as though it were our own.'*<sup>3)</sup>

The Charter for Compassion stresses the importance of treating each other with compassion and respect. It aims to be a source of inspiration for dealing with people in difficult circumstances, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Charter for Compassion is a global initiative that reminds us of the value of compassion in all aspects of human life. Compassion means understanding what other people are feeling and being willing to do something to alleviate another person's suffering. Karen Armstrong, a British author who writes about world religions, played a role in writing the charter when it was drafted by a group of people from different traditions, cultures and religions in 2009.

The charter outlines the steps we can all take to live more compassionately, such as learning about other cultures and religions, and responding to others with kindness and respect.

Since then, the Charter has been signed by millions of people around the world and has inspired projects and activities that promote compassion in communities, education, business, healthcare and elsewhere. The Charter is based on the principle that compassion is at the heart of all cultures and religions, and that we should treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves. 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you' is a well-known maxim and rule of thumb. It is part of many cultures and religions, and is considered a universal value shared by many philosophers and ethicists. It also encourages moral and ethical behaviour, as it encourages everybody to have empathy and compassion towards their fellow human beings.

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<sup>2)</sup> Colossians 3:12 (New Revised Standard Version Anglicised)

<sup>3)</sup> Armstrong, Karen, *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life, The Fourth Step: Empathy*

But compassion is about more than experiencing empathy and sympathy: it can also motivate people to actively help those around them when they need support. At Schiphol, that means the chaplains and the volunteers who assist them, but also everybody else who works at the airport. Compassion drives us to help alleviate the suffering of people we encounter (by chance), to maintain our respect for human dignity, and to pursue equity and justice.

The Charter for Compassion can therefore be seen as one of the sources of inspiration for our daily work, regardless of our profession or role. It can help us to make ethical and compassionate decisions, communicate with our fellow human beings with care and respect, and work together for the common good of humanity.





## Cases – Figures and graphs

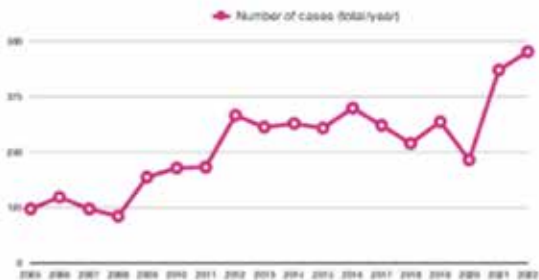
Caring for passengers, family, friends and/or relatives who are travelling has always been a central part of the work of the chaplains. As well as helping to care for stranded Chinese passengers unexpectedly in 2022, we were also called for help – as usual – by the Schiphol Control Centre, Floor Management (which manages passenger flows), the Mobile Passenger Assistants, Axxicom (which transports passengers with a disability to and from the aircraft), the airlines, medical services, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, the emergency centres and embassies. We also had direct contact with people who had reached out for support (in some cases, on behalf of other people). The chaplains would also regularly walk through the terminal buildings and take immediate action if they saw that somebody needed help because their journey was not going as expected.

In such situations, the chaplains made the time to assist passengers and relatives and to listen to their story – whether they were travelling because of a bereavement or some other difficult event. The chaplains were able to help those affected by reuniting them with their loved ones at the gate or at the office of the Airport Chaplaincy. In some cases, the chaplains were able to shorten long waiting times by helping passengers to bypass the queues or having luggage brought to their office. In crisis situations, such as situations involving people with behavioural issues or the psychologically vulnerable, there were three chaplains available over three shifts, providing 24-hour coverage.

The civil aviation sector was hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a major impact on international travel due to the restrictions on movement between countries, lockdowns and quarantine measures designed to contain the spread of the virus. The number of flights and passengers fell sharply in 2020 and 2021, and that had major consequences for revenues, profits and employment in the sector. By mid-2022, however, a recovery was underway. The development of vaccines against the virus and the gradual easing of travel restrictions were helping the aviation and international travel sector to return to normal.

After a steep fall in 2020 and 2021, as shown in the chart, we are now heading back towards 2019 figures. The first graph shows the dramatic fall in passenger numbers caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Now that the pandemic is behind us, passenger numbers are expected to return to normal, with a steadier line on the graph as a result.





The second graph shows the rapid increase in the number of cases handled by the chaplaincy. In 2022 there were 476 cases. The graph clearly shows a rising trend. This rise is the inverse of the trend in passenger numbers. Workload is therefore increased. Over 150 cases were handled (some of which were very time-consuming), involving isolated passengers and Chinese passengers who were left stranded in the terminal building.



A large number of cases in 2022 were related to passengers who had to stay longer at the airport due to COVID-19. Nevertheless, the number of hours spent on each case remained fairly stable, as shown in graph three. The average number of hours per case remained stable at around 4.5 hours. That number is similar to that of previous years.





Keep boarding pass ready  
 boarding pass gereedhouden

← Gates ABCD 55-82  
 a boarding pass  
 a keep boarding pass ready

↑ Departures 3 | 4  
 Gates D1-57 | E

Vertrek  
Departures 2



# Press, public relations and annual conference

## PR and presentaties

In 2022, the number of requests for presentations about the work of the Airport Chaplaincy began to rise again, with a sharp increase towards the end of the year. In addition to presentations outside the airport, these included working visits at Schiphol, which are part of the chaplains' regular work.

In the summer, an article about the Meditation Centre was published in the journal *Laetare*, which discussed the liturgical aspects of the Meditation Centre.

A film about the work of the Airport Chaplaincy, which had originally been completed in July 2020 but was under embargo due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was also released in 2022. Everybody can now watch the film on Schiphol Airport's YouTube channel, along with all kinds of other informative videos about the work that goes on at the airport (Het luchthavenpastoraat op Schiphol - YouTube). This has led to some very heart-warming comments, such as:



*'These people do marvellous, valuable work. In all the years that I have been working at Schiphol, I never knew about these people and the work they do at the airport. It's so wonderful to see.'*

*'Wow! This is wonderful. Thank you!'*

*'This is so marvellous to see.'*

*'Never knew about this, what a wonderful job helping and comforting people from all over the world. You're the life blood of Schiphol Airport.'*

Amsterdam Airport Schiphol has released a free teaching package, *Kijk op Schiphol*, especially for Dutch primary schoolchildren in groups 6, 7 and 8. These digital lessons give children the chance to visit the world of Schiphol. The lessons also include the Meditation Centre, described as 'A place where the Bible, the Quran, the Tanakh and many other books are all side by side in the same bookcase. Isn't that something?' The children are given the creative task of designing a pictogram for this very special place.

The Airport Chaplaincy also contributed to Brandeis University's *Chaplaincy Innovation Lab*, an online workshop with students and teachers from the US, with chaplains from London Gatwick and Schiphol airports.

# IACAC

The *International Association of Civil Aviation Chaplains* (IACAC) is a global network of chaplains and providers of pastoral care working at airports around the world. The conference is open to IACAC members who are interested in working as airport chaplains. Mark Hafkenscheid attended the 55th Conference of the IACAC in London (near Heathrow Airport) on behalf of the Airport Chaplaincy, from 19 - 23 September 2022.

The theme of the conference was *Learning From Adversity - Equipped for a Post-Covid Industry*.

The conference explored how chaplains have responded to the needs and concerns of passengers and airport staff affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference participants shared the lessons learned from this challenging period and how these lessons can be applied to the post-pandemic era.

The presentations on the future of aviation and how to learn from change reflected on how chaplains used innovative technology to stay connected with passengers, volunteers and airport staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example. The conference programme included lectures, workshops, panel discussions, networking opportunities and cultural visits.



# Meditation Centre

**Travelling can be an exhausting and stressful experience, and the same can be said of working at the airport. The Meditation Centre at Schiphol Airport is a place where passengers and staff can find peace. It is a space for reflection, prayer, inspiration or the practice of yoga. The doors of the Meditation Centre are open to anybody who needs a moment of silence and inner peace, away from the noise and bustle of the terminal.**

The Meditation Centre is very popular and the volunteers who staff it regularly receive positive feedback from passengers. This appreciation is also evident from the guestbook:

*"Lovely prayer room. Thank you."*

*"Thank you for this space. Did my yoga here."*

*"The best thing about this airport is the Meditation Centre."*

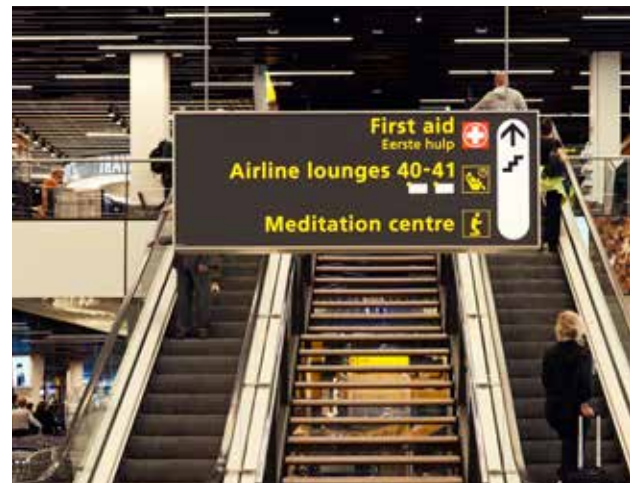
*"Thank you for providing this place for all religions."*

*"What a nice place! Well done Schiphol!"*

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Meditation Centre remained open day and night. There was also a volunteer present between 10.00 and 14.00. Restrictions were required, however. For example, social distancing of 1.5 metres was mandatory, a maximum of eight people were permitted into the centre, a face mask had to be worn when using a prayer mat, no yoga was allowed and no audible prayers or singing was permitted.

Many volunteers from the Airport Chaplaincy continued to work as hosts at the Meditation Centre during the pandemic.

At the start of the year, attendance by volunteers was still reduced by 50%, with a volunteer coming to the airport for a only one shift between 10.00 and 14.00. This was done deliberately because, following a quiet period in 2019 and 2020 due to the pandemic, the airport was getting busier again and there were more passenger wishing to visit the Meditation Centre. As passenger numbers increased further, there was a further scaling up in August, returning to the old pattern of two volunteer shifts on weekdays, from 9.00 to 13.00 and from 12.30 to 16.30.



# Volunteers

## Gatherings

**Due to pandemic restrictions, it was not possible to organise a New Year's celebration for the volunteers. The chaplains therefore communicated their best wishes for 2022 to the volunteers at an online celebration. The lifting of the pandemic restrictions later in the year meant that volunteer meetings and study mornings could take place as normal once again.**

The annual study day for volunteers and board members was held at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in Amsterdam. The morning began with a tour of the synagogue given by Rabbi Menno ten Brink. The morning continued with a workshop on interfaith listening led by Barnet Kansil and Karima Bajjoui. There were discussion groups and plenary sessions on how to be receptive to other people's stories, values and norms without judging them or downplaying their experiences. The aim was to listen to the other person and understand his or her perspective – an important skill when interacting with such a diverse range of people at the airport. After lunch, which was provided by the synagogue, the workshop continued during the afternoon and concluded with a drinks reception.

In December 2022, it was possible to conclude the year with a festive Christmas breakfast and volunteer meeting in the meeting room at the Pelgrimskerk in Badhoevedorp.

## Relief supplies for Ukrainian refugees

At the start of March, a large group of Ukrainian passengers was flying home following a holiday in South America. They were accommodated by the consulate under the supervision of the Airport Chaplaincy. Many supplies had been collected for the refugee crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and these supplies were transported to Ukraine on the same aircraft. The large shipment of supplies (including baby nappies, bottles of water, food) was taken temporarily to the office of the Airport Chaplaincy.

After asking the volunteers to come in and help, the supplies were sorted and packed. A great deal of work was done in the office within the space of a few days. The supplies were then transported by trailer to a collection point in Hoofddorp.

## A year of arrivals and departures

There were many changes in our group of volunteers in 2022. Over the course of the year, a number of volunteers (some of whom had been involved in the Airport Chaplaincy for a long time) indicated that they wished to stop their volunteer work. The Airport Chaplaincy said farewell to Dethmer Boels (who also took care of the financial administration), Anita Plasmeijer, Petra Ringenaldus-Burgerhout, Bernhard Scholten and Maghalie Treffers-Haas. The Airport Chaplaincy is grateful for the time and energy that they devoted to the work of the Airport Chaplaincy and the Meditation Centre.

Fortunately, several people expressed an interest in volunteering for the Airport Chaplaincy through the website. Interviews were held with these candidate volunteers, they came to help out at the Meditation Centre for three morning or afternoon shifts, background checks were carried out and the prospective volunteers took their exam for a Schiphol Pass. Then, finally, the Airport Chaplaincy was pleased to welcome ten new volunteers: Gideon Alderden, Nick Borgerdijn, Fons Litjens, Hero Rahimi, Joan de Roos, Marianne van Selow, Kini Smit, Ria Tol, Ronell Veldhuis and Retty de Vries. They are a welcome addition to our team of volunteers now that the COVID-19 pandemic is over.



# Personnel

## Volunteers in 2022

Gideon van Alderden (from September onwards)  
Marian van Amsterdam  
Anneke de Blicck  
Nick Borgerdijn (from April onwards)  
Janny Brevoord  
Dethmer Boels (until March)  
Ton Brinkman  
Penny Engel  
Edith Helsloot  
Jan Hemink  
Ton de Kleijn  
Dirk Knaap  
Fons Litjens (from September forward)  
Margaretha Loupatty  
Gerrit Medema  
Nadia Miroux

Toos de Nie  
Anita Plasmeijer (until September)  
Harry Poublon  
Hero Rahimi (from December onwards)  
Joan de Roos (from August onwards)  
Petra Ringenaldus-Burgerhout (until May)  
Bernhard Scholten (until January)  
Marianne van Selow (from July onwards)  
Kini Smit (from May onwards)  
Stieneke van Stam  
Ria Tol (from March onwards)  
Maghalie Treffers-Haas (until December)  
Ronell Veldhuis (from July onwards)  
Retty de Vries (from December onwards)  
Pim Zoutendijk

### **Chaplains**

The Rev. Joop Albers, Church of England and Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands  
The Rev. Chaplain Mark Hafkenscheid, Church of England  
The Rev. Marieke Meiring-Snijder, Protestant Church in the Netherlands  
Father Gerard Timmermans, SMA, Roman Catholic Church

### **Board members of SOLS (Schiphol Airport Chaplaincy Support Foundation)**

Flip Poort, chair  
Jan Blankert, first secretary (until December)  
Ton Overgaag, second secretary  
Lano Jansen, first treasurer  
Han Warning, second treasurer  
Eric de Boer  
Jos Traudes  
Anne-Marie Huijink (until April)  
Erik Wolters (from May onwards)

### **Board members of the OCAAM Foundation (Old-Catholic and Anglican Airport Ministry)**

Eric de Boer, chair  
Alex Blok, secretary  
Iwan Tensen, treasurer (until February)  
Erik Wolters, treasurer (from March onwards)  
Annemarie Huijink  
Herman Toorman (from March onwards)

### **Board members of SPLS (Schiphol Protestant Airport Chaplaincy Foundation)**

Flip Poort, chair  
Jan Blankert, secretary (until December)  
Han Warning (treasurer)  
Tineke van Alphen-Jager, representative of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands  
Gloria-Jeanne de Meijer, representative of the Remonstrant Church  
Arida van Oudenallen, representative of the Dutch Mennonite Conference  
Frans de Vries

### **Members of RKLHP (Roman Catholic Airport Chaplaincy Foundation)**

Jos Traudes, chair  
Ton Overgaag, secretary  
Lano Jansen, treasurer  
Mieke Blankers-Kasbergen  
Father Ambro Bakker SMA, advisory member on behalf of the Diocese of Haarlem-Amsterdam (until December)



# Financial statements for 2022

## Explanatory notes for SOLS (Schiphol Airport Chaplaincy Support Foundation)

### 1. Introduction

In this section, the SOLS (Schiphol Airport Chaplaincy Support Foundation) reports on its finances for the past year. This report consists of the SOLS's balance sheet (transactions), revenues and expenditure, as well as the accompanying explanatory notes. These financial statements were adopted during the SOLS board meeting on 9 May 2023. A cash audit will be carried out at a later time by two experts to be appointed by the board. They will report on their findings to the board in writing.

Following recommendations included in the cash audit report for the year 2021, the board of the SOLS has drawn up an action list. The aim is to implement the points included on that list before the end of 2023.

The current agreement with Schiphol Group has a duration of four years and expires on 31-12-2024. The agreement includes the option of two one-year extensions. A long-term contract is of vital importance to the foundation, as it ensures the continuity of our activities at the airport.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to have an obvious impact on air travel at Schiphol Airport in the first months of 2022. Particularly in the first half of the year, there were many cases involving stranded passengers, and these demanded the full commitment of the chaplains and volunteers. Schiphol Group's appreciation of the effort made is evident from the fact that it did not apply the reduction in its annual contribution, as it had done in the previous two years of the pandemic.



## 2. Our financial statements

Below are our financial statements plus balance sheet and operating account for 2020 and 2021 (in euros, with figures rounded to the nearest whole number):

### Balance as of 31 December

<i>Debit/Assets</i>			<i>Credit/Liabilities</i>		
<i>Year</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2022</i>
Chaplaincy bank funds	2,289	7,234	General reserve	12,870	17,085
Chaplaincy cash	395	150	Equalisation provision for OCAAM/RKLHP/SPLS	3,578	3,578
SOLS bank funds	34,040	27,305	Reserve for volunteer policy	0	10,000
			Transitoria	20,276	4,026
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36,724</b>	<b>34,689</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36,724</b>	<b>34,689</b>

## OPERATING ACCOUNT as of 31 December

Revenues in €

Description	Account in 2021	Account in 2022	Budget for 2022
Contributions from Schiphol	167,300	226,187	210,345
-personnel expenses from previous year	17,300	5,842	
-personnel expenses from current year	132,776	175,095	175,095
-tangible costs	15,724	41,750	31,750
-parking costs for volunteers	1,500	3,500	3,500
Collections and donations for the Meditation Centre	5,940	8,989	10,000
Interest and other revenues	2	7	
Allocation to general reserve	13,872		
Withdrawal for equalisation provision for OCAAM/RKLHP/SPLS	56,602		
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>243,716</b>	<b>235,183</b>	<b>220,345</b>

## Expenditure in €

Description	Account in 2021	Account in 2022	Budget for 2022
Deduction of staffing costs for OCAAM/RKLHP/SPLS	206,678	180,937	175,095
SOLS tangible costs:	32,813	37,391	39,650
-volunteer costs	3,168	11,938	10,500
-chaplaincy operating costs	4,413	6,505	7,100
-representation and publicity	1,482	1,426	3,500
-Meditation Centre	1,079	1,744	2,800
-organisation and administration	3,541	2,789	3,550
-cost of guidance	19,130	12,989	12,200
-SOLS administrative costs	585	374	1,500
-Parking costs for volunteers	3,634	2,013	600
Various (including interest paid)	6	253	3,500
Allocation of reserve for volunteer policy		10,000	
Positive balance and allocation to general reserve		4,215	
<b>Totale uitgaven</b>	<b>243,716</b>	<b>235,183</b>	<b>220,345</b>

### 3. General notes

#### 3.1 1.1 SOLS and the three participating foundations (OCAAM/RKLHP/SPLS)

The Schiphol Airport Chaplaincy Support Foundation (SOLS) supports the three constituent foundations, the Old-Catholic and Anglican Airport Ministry Foundation (OCAAM), the Roman Catholic Airport Chaplaincy Foundation (RKLHP) and the Schiphol Protestant Airport Chaplaincy (SPLS), in the course of their duties on behalf of the Airport Chaplaincy. The three chaplains have an employment relationship with one of the participating foundations. Staffing costs are therefore paid by these three foundations. They receive a substantial part of these costs from SOLS. The three foundations supplement this contribution with other funds and donations from ecclesiastical bodies, other funds and donations. The financial accounts of these three foundations can be found on the PBO pages of their respective websites.

### 4. Notes on balance

#### 4.1 General reserve

It was decided to allocate the positive balance from 2022 to the general reserve.

General reserve 1-1-2022	12,870
Allocation of positive balance from 2022	4,215
<b>General reserve 31-12-2022</b>	<b>17,085</b>

#### 4.2 **Equalisation provision for OCAAM/RKLHP/SPLS**

In 2018, the board of the SOLS decided to create an equalisation provision for OCAAM/RKLHP/SPLS. In the event that one of the constituent foundations were to record a negative operating result (e.g. due to an unexpected fall in revenue or sharp increase in wage costs), the foundation in question could submit a request to the SOLS for a contribution from this provision.

#### 4.3 **Reserve for volunteer policy**

In 2022, the SOLS received €10,000 more than budgeted for in tangible costs from the Schiphol Group. The board of the SOLS decided to reserve this amount for future training and activities for the approximately 25 volunteers. Many new volunteers have joined within the past two years and it is important to equip them and the existing volunteers adequately for their important work at Schiphol Airport.

#### 4.4 **Transitorium**

These are amounts that need to be allocated to a period other than the reporting period. In this case, a payment that was received in error in 2022, which was refunded in 2023.

## 5. Notes on the operating account

### 5.1 Income

For 2022, we received €180,937 from the Schiphol Group as a contribution to personnel costs (budgeted at €175,095). Of this, €5,842 was a supplementary payment for personnel costs for 2021. As explained previously under 3.1, this amount was paid to the three foundations in full.

In accordance with the long-term budget in 2022, we also received a contribution for tangible costs (€31,750) and parking costs (€3,150). Partly due to the efforts made by our chaplains and volunteers, we received an additional contribution of €10,000 from the Schiphol Group in 2022 for tangible costs. As explained under 4.3, the board decided to place this amount in a new reserve earmarked for volunteer policy.

In addition, in 2022 we received an amount of almost €9,000 in collections and donations (2021 €5,940, and €10,000 budgeted).

### 5.2 Expenditure

1. Transfer of staffing costs of OCAAM/RKLHP/SPLS: See 5.1
2. Tangible costs, administrative costs and parking costs:

Tangible costs for SOLS 2022 and parking costs					
	Budgeted	Actual	Difference		
Volunteer costs	10,500	11,939	-1,439	more	
Chaplaincy operating costs	7,100	6,505	595	less	
Representation and publicity	3,500	1,426	2,074	less	
Meditation Centre	2,800	1,744	1,056	less	
Organisation and administration including new laptop	3,550	2,789	761	less	
Cost of guidance	12,200	12,989	-789	more	
SOLS administrative costs	1,500	374	1,126	less	
Exceptional costs		245	-245	more	
Various (only interest paid)	600	8	592	less	
<b>Total tangible costs</b>	<b>41,750</b>	<b>38,019</b>	<b>3,731</b>	less	
Parking costs for volunteers	3,500	2,013	1,487	less	
<b>Total</b>				less	
	<b>45,250</b>	<b>40,032</b>	<b>5,218</b>	spent	

In 2022, €38,019 was spent on direct tangible costs relating to our work at the airport and on administrative costs. The items 'Volunteers' and 'Guidance' in particular were higher than budgeted. After two years with limited volunteer commitment during the pandemic, we were again able to make grateful use of the volunteers' services in 2022. The number of cases requiring pastoral support and/or guidance was higher than in 2021. Less was spent on the items 'Representation and publicity' and 'Meditation Centre' than budgeted. This was thanks to the selfless efforts of volunteers and Schiphol Group. 'Administrative costs' refers to the premiums payable for administrative liability insurance.

We received €3,500 in parking costs from Schiphol, as budgeted, and claimed €2,013. The main reason for this is that volunteers make more use of public transport (these travel expenses are included in tangible costs under the item 'volunteer costs').

It was decided to allocate the positive balance from 2022 to the general reserve.

April 2023

Han Warning and Lano Jansen, treasurers



