

Dear Church,

*My name is Sarah-Jane and I'm thrilled to be joining you as your new curate! Leuven is a wonderful place. I loved studying for my Theology degree here in 2018-19, and I've always enjoyed the services I have attended at this church. M&M's is a very warm and welcoming community. It is a special place. There is a lot of spiritual depth and so much to offer the international community and the wider city. And I'm really looking forward to working with Catriona and learning from all that she has to teach me!*

*Rutger and I have been in Belgium for 14 years, first in Brussels and more recently in Tervuren. We spent many happy years at St Paul's Church with our boys, who are now 10 and 11. We moved to Belgium for my work with the North East England Office in Brussels and later I joined the EU institutions, working in the Commission's department for Justice. I served in the negotiation teams for what happens to your personal data when it's sent to the US, India, or Japan. Then I moved to equality legislation, enforcing EU law against countries who were segregating Roma children in special schools, and developing new EU-wide rights to family-related leave and flexible working. I felt it was where God had placed me. Justice is a gospel imperative, it is very close to the heart of God. We see this in the teaching and ministry of Jesus, especially in his affirmation of those who have been marginalised and oppressed.*

*Over time, I accepted a call to ordained ministry, and I began training with St Mellitus College in London on their MA in Christian Leadership. Despite the pandemic, it has still been a great experience. I'm coming to the end of the course now, and trying to finish my thesis, which is on the spirituality and mission of Egide van Broeckhoven SJ. He was a "prêtre-ouvrier" in the factories of Brussels in the 1960's. I find him an inspirational figure. He had an amazing relationship with Jesus, he just wanted to love others with the love of Christ and invite them into the mystery that is friendship with God. It's my prayer that the ministry God has for me, and all of us at M&M's, would also be fuelled and shaped by Christ's love.*

*My first service at M&M's will be on 4 July, which is great as things look set to open up more in July and also in September. So I am hoping for opportunities to get to know you all! I love walking, sitting on terraces in the sunshine, food, and music. I am really looking forward to hearing your stories, and to sharing*

*life together as all of us are always discovering more about this adventure that is following Jesus.*

*Every blessing!*

*Sarah-Jane*

