

## NEWS FROM THE POLISH UNION

Halina Jankowska, Children's Ministries Director

### Mum and Dad please play with me

From the Baltic Sea to the beautiful mountains of Tatra, from East to West there are different programmes organised for children. Programmes start from the beginning of the New Year and many children are engaged in different programmes in the local churches. Every year the teachers have new ideas about working with children. In the church we have quite a big group of women who studied pedagogy in our College WSTH and they are involved in the ministry to children.

I would like to present an innovative programme in Cieszyn Church which is called "Mum and Dad please play with me". They started this special health programme almost one and a half years ago and it is for children aged 3 to 10. It is about health issues prepared and presented in a very professional way, so it is just not possible for the children to be bored.



There are different activities like games, watching a presentation, preparation of meals, art workshops together with parents who come with the children. We give parents religious and health brochures and literature. Every time the programme is concentrating on one of our health principals. The children learn about the importance of the sun, air, exercises, healthy meals, water and rest. Every time there are 10-15 children participating and our dear sisters put every effort into making this programme very interesting.



**Camp Zatonie**

Another event is Children's Camp in beautiful Zatonie. About 100 children participated in this camp. Twice a day, morning and evening, when the parents had their own lectures, children attended special programmes for them. A group of young women were involved in singing and praying with the children, telling Bible stories, playing games and art activities. The children presented special programmes every Sabbath worship. During worship not only the children had great enthusiasm but parents and all participants as well. I believe that many parents were present in this camp because of their children.



## MESSY CHURCH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 3-6 May 2019

A group of 5 TED Messy Church enthusiasts came together with about 250 people from all over the world to have a meeting about Messy Church. It was encouraging, uplifting and had my mind running in all directions. We met people from Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and many European countries. Our church is doing an excellent job in getting the message of Messy Church out there. We have Messy Churches in places that the official Messy Church founders have not been to yet.

One of the most surprising things about this weekend was the many opportunities Messy Church offers that we might not have thought about. Vintage Messy. This movement takes Messy Church values and good practice to older people. It was started by a group of people who called themselves Christians Together Against Loneliness. I went to the workshop and discovered that this is something else we as a church could be doing.

Another idea was Messy Café. Once a month, families are invited to join each other for a 2-hour café experience. Suffice to say this is another area we as a church could explore. So much more than just Messy Church. This takes things to the discipleship level and that is where you want to go. Not just be stuck doing endless programmes. We even had a presentation from a group who are doing Messy prison and a group who are doing Messy Camps for families.

Of course, it wouldn't be Messy Church without some fun, glitter and glue. We got lots of great ideas from others from all around Europe and also made things to go with programmes which were offered. The main talk on Sunday was about Discipleship because that is eventually what we all want. People engaged and willing to follow Jesus. Here are some of the reactions from the SDA participants.



### Edson Schorea (The Netherlands)

I had wonderful days at the conference of the worldwide meeting of messy church. At the conference I heard a lot of beautiful songs which we had movement to. There were wonderful stories from a storyteller. The main theme was discipleship.

I received new energy to continue with messy church.

I learned a lot from the various workshops. A key point that has stayed with me is creativity. Other advice I have learned are: People must feel safe. People must have the feeling to belong and be able to connect and it must be fun.

The best advice was messy cafe. I heard a from a lady who came to faith through messy cafe and messy church and afterwards got baptized. Now she is committed to a team for messy cafe and messy church. I was enormously blessed and I am now full of ideas to continue.

### Judy Plaatjes – British Union

After 10 years of running a Messy church, I found that attending this conference was very refreshing. To be able to meet many likeminded Christians who are passionate about sharing Jesus was inspiring and uplifting. I enjoyed the very informative workshops, poignant plenary sessions and the opportunity to hear from other delegates about their experiences. I have returned from the weekend revived to continue the valuable work of being church to those who may never otherwise come into a church building.



### Fürj György (Hungary) George for us

I was impressed by the many open minded and cooperative people at this conference. The atmosphere was catchy. What I've learnt: That messy church isn't a programme. It is a church. Here the people connect as brothers and sisters. I've learnt some new ways of crafting. Workshops was inspiring and made me think to renew our Messy Church worship.

Some of them: How do we involve our guests to the work of helping and comforting others! They can do a lot of things such as send a card with a kind consoling sentence to somebody who is suffering. We need to give them confidence. It's useful to encourage our team and guests.

For example, display their craft works or notice what they did. Very important to listen the problems of the adults and children as well. If we knew their life story, we can support them and pray for them.



**Matej Luksic (Croatia)**

It was a real privilege to be a part of this Messy Church Conference here in Hoddesdon, UK. More than two hundred people, from all around the Globe, came together with so many creative ideas to share their experiences, and to create a vision for growing further the Messy Church; a project which started in 2004. with Lucy Moore, Jane Leadbetter and their friends. They have started it from simple reason because they wanted to have their children and young families in their church fellowship back again. Immediately, they have shared the project with other Christian friends who loved the idea and who were free to adapt it as they wish to their circumstances.

Although from many different denominations, people were just happy to be together at this Conference, eat together, make new friends and share their creative ways for reaching families for Christ in their communities. So our team from Seventh-day Adventist Church was also there! Through many workshops, we have been exposed to great ideas on how to bring Gospel to our children.

How marbles and hose tell the story of Jakob's ladders with angels? What does the plastic bottle with pipes have in common with prayer? This and other great stuff you could probably learn here and nowhere else in the world! Of course, we had also opportunity to share our perspective and creative ways of reaching our young ones for Jesus!

The real refreshment was also music sessions through which we have been learning how to use simple children's songs with a lot of action. But workshops, storytelling, prayer room, discussions, reflections, many shared stories... all that encouraged us to put more fresh effort and energy in our Messy Churches we already have across TED in UK, Hungary, Netherlands, Slovenia, Croatia... and with God's help to plant some more!

This work with children and young families should draw our special attention, especially in this last days of our history as we wait for Jesus to return. Messy Church and our other good projects are not successful merely because they are bringing people to church. Through these projects we have to go deeper, thinking about how to produce the true followers and disciples of Jesus Christ; either young or adults. So may the Lord help us to do so, and to give us ideas about new creative ways for reaching His people for Him.

