



New quinquennium new beginnings

We are starting a new series in which each newsletter we will focus on one of our unions. We have asked all of you to participate and in this issue we are presenting the **Netherlands Union Conference**. We hope this will help you with new ideas and motivate you. We look forward to each issue.



Madelon Comvalius has been married to Machlon for 19 years. They have two wonderful kids, Jordan is 13 years old and Jaylisa is 12.

Before she started working for the church she worked as a manager at a bank for quite a while. Five years ago she started working for the church as Children's, Women's and Family ministries director.

Together with her personal assistant Heidi, they are also responsible for Teens Ministries. It is a challenge to juggle with all departments, but they manage to keep all balls in the air. It is also a challenge to have enough time left to be a good mother and spouse.

The biggest joy for her is working with amazing colleagues and volunteers! The freedom to express their creativity and to use this to nurture and empower women. It is very special to see that women really need and appreciate the empowerment and the nurturing.

Her favourite Bible text is from Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

Women's Ministries News



Women's Day

Five years ago, the idea was born to organize a women's programme on the international women's day of the Seventh-day Adventist church. This time we wanted to mix things up. We didn't want to gather all women in one place, but spread them over five to seven different locations.

For each location, we found a woman with a great talent for organization. Together with Madelon and Heidi, these women form a women's council. Together we come up with a programme that connects to our theme. Included in the programme is lovely music, a special journey of prayer, nice workshops and elements of surprise. And of course.... delicious food!



The exact same programme at seven different locations! You will maintain an intimate setting, but still feel connected with everyone else at the other locations.

Our first women's day in 2012 was a big success! About 370 enthusiastic visitors came. After this big success, we decided to offer this concept annually. In the meantime, Dutch-speaking Belgium has joined us. The past few years we have around 450 to 500 women on the women's day. They love to bring their friends from outside the church, which is a beautiful thing. About 15 percent of the participants are non Adventists.



These are the themes we have held in the past years:

- Me time? Yes you can!
- Women got talent!
- Live, laugh, love
- Dream, dare, do



Women's Ministries News



Training

Once every few years, we organize a day of inspiration or an inspiration weekend for local women's ministry leaders. We inspire the local WM leaders with ideas for creative bible studies, how to make programmes, how to partake in outreach in a fun way, etc. We don't only provide ideas, but also materials.



Women's Weekend

When you say: 'women's weekend' in our churches in the Netherlands, there will be many enthusiastic reactions!

Our national women's weekends are a big success! Every weekend is based on a theme. There are approximately 40 to 60 women present each weekend.



Women's Ministries News



International Women's Conference

On Wednesday, 24 September 2014 we flew out to Slovenia together with fourteen women. Our destination: the international women's conference 'Come to the Spring'. The first hours were exciting and a bit awkward, because many didn't know each other well. But after a short while, there was a great atmosphere.

The European head office organized this international women's day for the first time. They worked together with all the Union WM leaders. The conference started on Wednesday 24 September and ended on Sunday 28 September. Around two hundred women from all corners of Europe travelled to a beautiful hotel in Rogaska, Slovenia.



The conference was a huge experiment. There were many inspiring speakers and a varied range of workshops. Madelon and Heidi gave a singing workshop in which they formed a choir. This choir sang two beautiful songs on Sabbath. There was also a very lively market on Saturday evening. As you can see on the picture, the women from the Netherlands were clearly recognisable.



A highlight of the conference was our trip to Maribor. In the middle of Maribor's market square, the women of the conference set up a health-expo. The residents of Maribor gladly made use of it and appreciated the gesture. Our fourteen Dutch participants have enjoyed their trip and can't wait for the next international conference.