



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 **Hungarian Union Conference**. We hope this will help you with new ideas and motivate you. We look forward to each issue.

Zsóka Bodnár has been married to János Bodnár and has been a pastor's wife for 31 years. Their two children, Emese and Benjamin are university students.

Zsoka studied at the Adventist Theological College and got a degree there. She works as a Religious Education teacher. With her husband they do missionary work in one of the cities where there is no organized Adventist church. She is also a member of the ADRA board in Hungary.



Her favourite Bible text is from Philippians 4:6-7. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."



Women's Ministries in Hungary

At the very beginning

Hungary is a small country in Central Europe. Back in the old days Adventists were already present in the country when its territory was bigger.

On the 8th of March 1898 Anna Szabó Miklós became an Adventist church member. She was the first Adventist in Hungary and she was a woman.

This is how they remember her "With God's blessings she is progressing by regularly holding Bible studies and there are interested souls."

Minutes of the Conference held in October 1919, says "In those churches where the deaconesses are serving regularly a progress is noticeable in the life of the congregation."

Already in the 1930s women ran a "Soup Kitchen" for the needy. They obtained money for running it by preparing home-made pasta, which was sold and the income was used for this ministry.

During the difficult war years when the majority of the pastors needed to fulfil military services some devoted women bible workers, helped to maintain church life. Hungarian women were always eager to work for the Lord.

The present

Today there are 5300 members in the Hungarian Adventist Church from which 3180 are women. This is 60% of the total membership.

During the last few years Women's Ministry developed dynamically in Hungary but there are still many gaps to fill.

One of the strengths of the work in our country is that Women's Ministry has a very good and enthusiastic working group on the Union level made up of devoted women for the Lord. This way there is always a team working behind the scenes at any event organized at the Union level in the country. We not only have events organized on Union level, but events also organized at local churches by the local sisters. The goal and task of the working group is to help and motivate all the sisters on a national and local level to serve for the Lord and each other.





Women's Ministries in Hungary

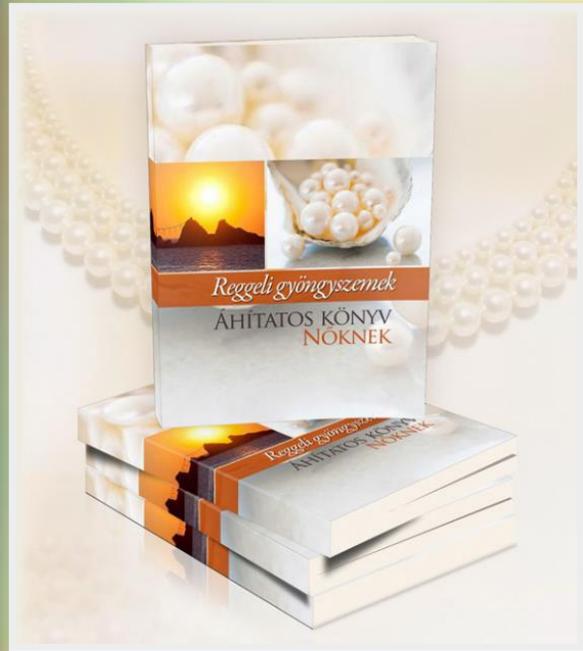
Some of the events organized by the working group on Union level in the last period...

Women's International Day of Prayer – each year we translate the material making it available to every church in Hungary. Usually we have a central location in the country where ladies can join the Day of Prayer from several churches, but at the same time we encourage more and more local churches to join and organize this special day in their own church.

Prayer Breakfast (picture 1)

– God's plan for you – It was the very first Women's Conference organized on a country level. More than 200 women came from about 41 churches. The ladies were encouraged to bring their non-Adventist friends as well, so several guests attended the event. We had a real blessed time together having Heather- Dawn Small from the General Conference and Clair Sanches-Schutte from the Trans-European Division as main speakers. On Friday and Saturday we concentrated on the plan God has for our spiritual wellness. Sunday was the day for physical wellness with special topics like how to loose weight without starving, how to prevent breast cancer and we had special gymnastics for those who live a sedentary life. This weekend was a real starting point for many of our ladies. They got inspired, went home and started WM's work on local level. (Group picture below)

Morning Pearls devotional book for women written by Hungarian sisters. (picture 2)



Women's Ministries News



Homes of Hope and Healing – The material is available in Hungarian language on CDs and is also downloadable from the Union's website. It is a great tool for women small groups.

Mother-Daughter Day

This was a special occasion for mothers and their daughters when they could spend the Sabbath together and strengthen their relationship with each other and their Saviour. The morning service was planned and dedicated specially for them but shared with the whole congregation. In the afternoon we had a special mother-daughter fun and interactive programme just for them in a separate place. The teenage girls felt appreciated and loved by the congregation and also had a chance to deepen their relationship with their mother and the Heavenly Father. At the end of the day all the girls received a special card which they could hang in their room. The card had a special text and a place where they could stick their own photo with the title "Remember whose daughter you are!" This served as starting point for the future and a reminder of the fact that their Heavenly Father loves them enormously and whatever life brings they should never forget about that. (Picture 1)



Leadership Certificate Training in Hungary

The Leadership Certificate training is a real blessing with Clair Sanches-Schutte. She has already finished the 3rd level of the training this year in Hungary. We all can see how successful these trainings are since women from all over the country are attending and starting with the first training the attendance is increasing in number from year to year. The sisters are going home with new perspectives and are able to start or continue their local work with more knowledge and motivation. These occasions are excellent for building new relationships and sharing experiences with each other. (Picture 2)



Workshops for women

During the annual Mission Conference organized by the Hungarian Union we have the possibility to hold workshops for women. For these workshops the Women's Ministries working group members are planning special presentations and activities for women which are interactive, motivating for the mission work and also fun. The theme of this year's conference is: My place in the family. (Picture 3)





Helping women in their every-day spiritual life:

Week starter message

We have started a Facebook page "Adventist Women for Women" to reach more ladies in our areas. Next to other information every Sunday we post a picture with a special week starter message for women. These week starter messages are sent out in e-mails as well.

Below you can read a few thoughts from one of the sisters who is doing this ministry:

"I could say that it was a coincidence that I became a member of the WM's working group, but I do not believe in coincidences. Doing any little task that is needed in this ministry is a real joy. I can say for sure that in the last few years I received so many blessings and contentment through this ministry.

During one of our working group meetings we decided to prepare and send a week starter message so those ladies who receive it on Monday morning could start the week more joyfully. Although I was really enthusiastic about this idea it was still a real challenge for me to learn how to edit these pictures with messages. I had to learn, but this became a blessing for me. I started to read my Bible with a different eye and highlighted all the texts that I could use for the special message cards in the future. In many occasions only by looking at a picture the matching Bible verse immediately comes to my mind and I just need to put them together. It is a really creative task with challenges since before sending out the pictures I am always wondering who will read it? What life situation they are facing? Are they happy to start the week or they face grief or fight for their children? Are they young or old? I like to think of everyone, but none is sent out without prayer because I know that not my personal message is needed, but the guidance and comfort of the heavenly Father. Doing this ministry is still a challenge, but I am not alone doing this. Some of us from the working group are taking turns periodically in sending the messages.

I like to think that God is turning my little efforts into blessings for others and the message and encouragement from the Bible reaches many with this ministry.

It really warms my heart to be an instrument in God's hands, a week instrument but still usable for the Lord!"

-Edit Bihariné Lehelvári – WM's working group member





Secret sisters

"It was the first Sabbath in March, when the Women's Ministries Department was holding the International Day of Prayer. The afternoon programme was more creative where at one of the activities we had to pull one name from the basket and be the secret sister for that person.

I only knew the lady I picked from sight, but this was not an obstacle!

The caretaker of the building was my "accomplices" who gave my gifts to this lady on Sabbath. It was really fun! Every Sabbath I have sent a text from the Scripture and a little something next to a few kind words, which I think was very important. That "little something" was also part of the surprise so one can be happy as a child when receiving it. This was a marzipan filled chocolate heart, a bookmark or a Christian magazine for ladies.

My helper was always reporting to me that when she handed my package the sister was burning with curiosity to find out from who she receives these little gifts, but my helper did not tell her. I was really happy each time that my surprise was successful once again. The Bible says that it is better to give than to receive and this is a great truth! But what is more important in addition to the fun was to pray for this lady. I did not know at that moment what challenges she had in her life, but I left it in God's hands to guide, protect and bless her. I felt that this is a special ministry for someone I do not know closely, but I can support her with my prayers!

As I am trying to make others happy with small kind acts I realize how many faces and tools Women's Ministry has that we can use to express our appreciation, attention and love to each other.

I feel thankful when I think of the Leadership Certification Trainings where I learned even more methods how to use the message of the Bible in such a way that the disheartened would be lifted up, encouraged and filled with guidance. Without exceptions we all need help in the good days just as in those ones filled with struggles. I thank God that I can be part of this ministry!"

There is another ministry that I am consciously trying to find time for lately and doing with great pleasure to meet with such friends whom I did not see for a long time and do not live close to me, so there is no possibility to talk to them regularly. Whenever I offered a possible meeting date I always received a positive answer, that they are happy to meet me. After work we sit and eat a cookie or drink a tea together and from the regular "how are you" we go to the deep "what is going on with you now" conversations. These were not ordinary chats, but we have been sharing our experiences, problems combined with a light walk. I am sure that there is need for this kind of attention, to listen to one another.

I have learned some things that shocked me. One of the ladies struggled with deep depression what no one suspected or noticed in church, but while she was at home all alone she faced great depths. There was a person who with her larger family shivered at home throughout the winter since they did not have money for firewood, but no one asked them if they were in need of anything. Another woman was facing all the struggles of loneliness since her husband had to be far away from home because of his work.

We need to support and lift up each other because in many occasions behind the Sabbath smile there are more life struggles than we would think. Sometimes maybe a small talk and some real kindness and attention is enough for a person to step out from her daily routine and "breathe again". So many women, so many needs!

Let's spend some time together, listen to each other, appreciate, lift up and pray for each other! These moments will bring so many blessings! Each and every lady I met told me that we should meet again, talk and pray together because it is so good to get disrupted from the everyday stress. Yes! There is need to continue!"

-Edit Bihariné Lehelvári – WM's working group member



Women's Ministries in local churches:

Esther Club in Kecskemét

Jánosné Gál one of the ladies in Kecskemét church started Esther Club for women in her town. She had this initiative after she went home enthusiastically from the Women's Conference hold in 2015. The ladies are meeting regularly in her home for Bible study and fellowship.

Nagykanizsa Women's Bible study and Prayer Group

„In January, this year, one of our sisters retired. She was afraid of being alone, since she had no husband and her children are grown-up. It has been for a while that we have been longing for a closer relationship as women. However, it was hard to find the right time that seemed to be suitable for all of us. So Susan took the initiative and everyone was happy to join. Since then we have had meetings on Mondays. First we decided to meet at least once a month, later on we wanted to have the meetings more frequently. So now we meet almost every week. We spend at least 2 hours together with prayer, bible study and sharing testimonies. We have been so blessed that we don't want to stop it, but go on with enthusiasm. The men in the church are also trying to organise their group of prayer, because they want to have the same fellowship.”

-Márta Mayor – local pastor's wife

Women's Ministry in Gyula church

„Starting women's ministry in my local church was not easy. The help of the Holy Spirit was needed, who helped us and we could see the results. After a time when I asked someone to take part in the ministry the answer was not filled with excuses but the person was looking for the possibility to see in which form she can help the most. I believe that the desire was awakened in many persons to share their values with others.

Every Wednesday we are searching “The way for happiness” with our guests. After the Bible study we have time for physical exercises, than we are having a healthy meal together. Each time we are having a different healthy dish. During this time we can enjoy each other's company and have a fellowship together and opportunity for deep conversations.

This year's International Day of Prayer was special in our church since we asked the youth to play out in drama the first story from the material and several persons have been asked to read the different quotations from the sermon. This way with the involvement of the members the whole service was more alive.”

-Gyöngyi Kisgyörgy – WM's coordinator in Gyula

Special online prayer group

One of the sisters in Szolnok church was longing to serve the Lord. She found out that her spiritual gift is prayer so she decided to organize a special prayer group. This prayer group is an online group, where even non-Adventist have joined. This sister is using an e-mail address as a tool to receive prayer requests. In many cases she does not even know the persons who are asking for prayer but she says that God always knows them personally and that is more than enough. She is gathering the requests and every Wednesday she is sending the request to the group. They cannot pray in the same time at the same place because of their different life activities but there is a time interval (18:00-22:00) when every group member can pray for the requests and the persons who asked them. God was answering many of their prayers and they have wonderful experiences.



The Hope Point Centre has flourished in Debrecen

„Some time ago a gardener got some bulbs from a neighbour and planted them in his garden. After a few years the bulbs multiplied and took more and more space in the garden. First the daffodils occupied only a handful of territory, but as the time passed the gardener had more and more bulbs which in a few years turned into a flower plantation. Everybody admired his daffodils but he was never bragging, but thanking God for the blessing of his beautiful flowers.

One day the gardener decided to offer all his gorgeous flowers that God has multiplied for him as a gift. He went to a shop and talked to two ladies who worked there asking them to help him pass on what he received from God.

So it happened. Hundreds of bouquets were offered to visitors, friends and passers by, who received the task to pass on the cheerful bright yellow-coloured bouquets of flowers. The streets where the shop was situated got filled with people radiating with joy, people who received happiness ready to pass on happiness with their bouquets of flowers. God rewards you! – people said leaving the store.

A man who passed by expressed his deep feelings toward his girlfriend with this bouquet. A husband after a morning quarrel tried to make up with a bouquet for his misguided words. A lady going to work by the bus gave one flower to strangers and the travellers hearts were warmed up. Two other bouquets she offered to her workmates. A young man greeted his tired wife coming home from a nightshift with a bouquet of daffodils, and another bouquet he distributed flower by flower at his workplace. A young lady saw a sad little girl while waiting for the bus and offered her own bouquet to the little one. To ladies who did not know each other made friendship thanks to these flowers and since then they talk each time they met. A teacher took a bouquet and placed it in the staff room of the school. A professor greeted his students with a bunch of flowers.

The city centre had bloomed and our store “flourished” because “it is better to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35

Since then the gardener's daffodils withered, the bright yellow petals fell, but those who participated on "The daffodils days" kept in their hearts the joy and experience of giving and receiving. Many of them returned to the store what they named “The Hope Store” to say thanks for the bouquets.

The Hope Point Community Office is run by the Tisza Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the local church from Debrecen with the help of volunteers.

In this office spiritual aid is available, the books of the Advent Publishing House and the audio materials of the Hope Media Centre are purchasable. They can receive personal counselling, IT consultation and also marriage counselling. The co-workers of the office are doing an emphasized mission work for the ladies living in this town.”

-Annamária Szöllősyné Nagy

Hope Point Office manager and WM's working group member

