



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

Natasha Kostanjevec has been married to Slavko Kostanjevec for 15 years. They have two children, Lana, 7 years old (girl) and Niko, 4 years old (boy).

She has been a helper in the Women's Ministries department since 2004. Now as they have a new Women's Ministries director (we introduce her on the last page) we would like to thank Natasha for all the great work and excellent service she has provided for the women in Slovenia. She will continue to work for the women in Slovenia and we are grateful that she is willing to use her talents for God's work.

The biggest challenge for her was when she

took over this task, the women's ministries was totally unknown in their conference – the biggest challenge was to overcome the prejudices.

Today WM are well founded and respected. Their special task is to invite women who do not know God yet, to make first steps toward Christianity. The biggest challenge today is comfort and individualism – each year it's harder to motivate women to do something for others. They like to participate in the programmes but it's always more difficult to find those who are willing to contribute something.

The biggest joy for her is the excitement of women who have this first experience of Christian community and the first contact with God.

Her favourite Bible text is from Psalm 34:5-7 "Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them."





Weekend for Women

I'll start with a challenge: in your mind (or with your fingers) count 10 women, who you know well, who are your friends, but they are not Adventists.

Did you have a problem with that?
Why do I ask you this?

We believe that Women's Ministries is a great way to do outreach, for making God known in the society. In the Slovenian Conference we organised Women's Ministries this way, that they are powerful in outreach. When we plan weekends for women, trips, groups or weekends for couples, tea parties, seminars..., we have one thing in mind: to create an environment where women are relaxed, without prejudice or reservations, and where they can meet God. These programmes are great opportunities to bring people to the path of getting to know God – they are kind of a springboard.

We encourage women to have friends also among non-Adventists. When we read the Gospel, we cannot ignore that Jesus did not just hang out with the "church" people of his time. Quite the contrary. We encourage women to be open to people around them - to be a part of their local community, to join a local club, choir, to go to the gym, to accept an invitation to a picnic, to invite someone to tea or juice ... but not to study the Bible with her ... just to hang out together. We encourage women to care about other people. Than making a list of 10 friends is no longer a problem. And inviting someone to a women's ministries programme is also not a problem.

Every year we organize a weekend for women. And we really enjoy these weekends – we study the Bible together, we sing and praise the Lord, we have workshops, we enjoy nature ... And by the way – this is an evangelistic event. Why? Because more and more women that are not from the church (currently around 40%) attend "The weekend for women" each year. And they are excited. They invite their friends next year. Our goal and desire is that in the future 50% of women attending this event would be non-Adventist.

In practice, this means that each one of us brings someone with her.



Women's Ministries News



Pictures from the Women's Weekend





Local Evangelistic Programmes for Women in Ptuj

All programmes in WM department are seeker's oriented. This idea is also used by our local churches.

For example in the church in Ptuj they have been organising a week dedicated to women every year since 2008 in the spring around March 8th (international women's day). They try to meet the needs of women in their neighbourhood. Although the programme is held in the local church, it is found that the neighbourhood is involved as much as possible – various voluntary associations, local singing groups, some significant individuals well known in local community... The whole programme is spiced with things women love: beautiful table decorations, candles, little surprises, little gifts, practical workshops, possibility to chat and to exchange opinions. The programmes' themes are oriented toward the needs of women in local community. Here are some examples:

2014: It all starts with a good seed

Ptuj is a small town and almost everybody lives in houses with gardens – and the gardening time is right now – so this year the title of our meetings was »It all starts with a good seed«. The first two evenings we spoke about the right seeds, about gardening, we organised seeds and seedlings exchange... And then we moved to the seeds in the Bible – the story about the farmer »A farmer went out to scatter seed in a field.«

2015: Fearless

Due to general developments in society (refugee crisis , economic crisis , food crisis ...) the fear dragged into people. More and more people are faced with depression and anxiety so meetings were devoted to overcoming the fear, the idea was based on a Max Lucado book "Fearless", that compares fear with Goliath.

“You know him very well – your giant Goliath. You know his heavy steps, the sound of his voice that won't let you sleep at night and won't let you feel peace in the daylight... He attacks you with bills you can't pay, with people you can't satisfy, the habits you can't break, errors you can't forget, diseases you can't overcome, goals you can't achieve, the future you can't face...

Even if your Goliath, your fear, is big you can beat him. Even if you aren't the bravest, strongest, most persistent, the smartest... you can face him. Even if circumstances are not good you can send him away. You can be FEARLESS.”



2016: Be the Change

Slovenia was in the middle of refugee crisis and therefore a wave of intolerance, non-acceptance, xenophobia and non-solidarity was present, especially in the more remote, rural areas. Therefore the spring women's meeting was addressed to "Be the Change". We wanted to make them aware that it is crucial to live every day of our life in the best possible way and that we bring positive changes in our lives and into the lives of people around us. We hosted some people who make changes (a female pastor, director of Slovenian ADRA, director of the Shelter for women, creator of a voluntary web page).

In the beginning it was intended to be a one-time event but it has grown into a traditional week for women which has been running for almost 10 years. We persist in these activities due to the enthusiasm of our visitors, friends, women from the neighbourhood, all those who are already asking for it weeks before the week for women activities.

Two years ago a bible study group was established on the basis of these women activities. The group grows in number and in Spirit.

Local Evangelistic Programmes for Women in Kriško

In the local church of small city Krsko there is a small group of women who are very connected, active and organized. Everything they do is in the context of missionary activities. They are open and accepting, so a lot of non-Adventist women are attending their meetings. They organize cooking workshops, tea parties and creative workshops. Everything they do is made in a way that spirit, soul and body of women are touched. They include healthy food, message from the Bible, aerobics and time to socialize in nice, relaxing atmosphere.

Here are some examples of the themes:

- Value of time
- You are Worthy
- Help your blood pressure
- Healthy vegetarian diet
- Hospitality
- Experience the harmony of coexistence with nature (for families with children)

At the meetings, women are often very creative – they prepare table decorations and gifts for big events such as conference weekends for couples or for women.



Marriage Enrichment Weekend 2015

In June 2015 married couples spent a very interesting weekend at Milstattersee in Austria. With the special surrounding (the lake, forest, beautiful view) those days were really special. The lectures were very interesting. We all loved pastor Gabor Mihalec's workshops with lot of laughs and even more practical tips and knowledge. We learned about the difference between husband and wife in marriage, about the ways how to make our spouse happy and how to improve our marriage.

The 10 topics, we spoke about were:

- The Goal of Marriage: 1+1=1
- Communication: The Art of Listening
- Conflict Resolution: Stumbling Blocks or Stepping Stones
- Finances: Gross Dreams and Net Incomes
- Sexuality: Emotion in Motion
- Parenting: The Making of Mom and Dad
- Leisure Activities: Switching off Routine
- Relations: Taming your In-Laws
- Roles and Relationships: Housekeeping in Style
- Spirituality: Moving Mountains

Despite the bad weather forecast, we had good and sunny weather, so we spent a lot of time outdoors. The meals were served on a huge terrace above the lake, place settings were gorgeous, all the healthy food was delicious and everything has spoiled our eyes and taste buds.

The meeting was from Thursday till Sunday. On Friday we all made a marvelous sightseeing trip to the Malta waterfalls. We enjoyed the beautiful scenery of God's creation. We also enjoyed swimming, walking, singing, canoeing, special outdoor gym exercises, praying together... Our kids had a special programme so we could devote time to our spouses.

We said goodbye with a good impression, above all, we were happy that this spiritual weekend for spouses again enriched our marriages.





Meet the new WM director from the Adriatic Union

Marina Zeko has been married for 8 years and her husband is Marko. They have a 2 year-old son Andrija. She is recently appointed to women's ministries so there are many challenges to begin with, but most of all to motivate women in the church to find their purpose and work together. She has a great compassion for women and their issues, with God's help she desires to create a constructive environment for uplifting and empowering women's ministries in the churches.

Her favourite Bible verse is in Romans 8:1

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"

