

News Letter

MART-JAN &
TALITHA

JOY
MICHA
AMY



Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth!
Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to
day. Declare his glory among the nations; his marvellous works
among all the peoples! (Psalm 96:1-3)

‘Luctor et Emergo’ - I struggle but I will prevail (survive)...

We're from 'Zeeland' - a province in the Netherlands. And this 'slogan' has been around for ages here. I am sitting on a couch in Zeeland thinking about this sentence. It has been way to long and we need to send you all a news-update. We have been 'under' a while, but we will appear again.

Here we are. Grab some snacks and a coffee and enjoy the read...

It is the 15th of March - we travel back about 8 months. It's a bit uncertain but our flight seems to be going as planned. We are visiting some friends in Phnom Penh. This has been the theme for these last weeks - saying good-bye. And that was difficult - but good as well. We have been able to see all the people we wanted to see. Sak - our househelper who did such a great job helping us these

first years. Our friends that we can countless dinners with always followed by some good time of worship together.

The Alongsiders team of course, the Shalom Valley team in Kep. Pon and Srey An (who delivered her babygirl - Hosanna - just 1 day after we left), and the list goes on. And when we finally left a group of friends came to say goodbye at the airport. #Thank-FULL!

It is all relational. We do miss Shalom Valley, our house, the street(food), nature, sure. But most of all we miss the people, friends that have become so dear to us.

Finally boarded I happen to be seated after another family. Husband, wife and a little girl Amy's age. While the plane is made ready for take-off I have a little talk with them. They tell me they have been on a tour in Asia - but than Corona came. They broke-off their trip and returned to Europe ASAP. In their eyes I see fear. Health is the main priority. They share with

me that their end destination is a small Scandinavian village - they plan to wait there 'till it's all over.

Our flight leaves and I see Phnom Penh disappear below me - emotions fill my mind and soul. And the little talk I just had. I realise that we leave in such a different state of mind. Our tickets have been booked way before Corona was around - we left as planned, still able to leave Asia and travel into Europe. No fear, but an end full of celebration - travelling into a new future. A future that is in God's hand.

The God Who led us all the way here in Cambodia travels with us. He will be with us in Europe and He will stay in Cambodia with our friends. What a mighty God we serve.

Whatever will happen en whatever we will face: His name is "I AM" and "I will be there".

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This News is sent out about 4 times a year in order to inform you well about the things that are happening in our lives and enables you to pray with us. Feel free to forward this letter to others.

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BACK ON DUTCH GROUND

It was the 16th of March when we arrived in the Netherlands. From 28 Celsius in Cambodia to about 4 in Brussels. Tired. But most of all super thankful. Weird as well - no hugs, no physical contact. Simply look each other in the eyes and that's it. Strange - it's the world we all live in now.

Next stop was Veerseweg in Middelburg, the place we lived in before we departed for Cambodia 6 years ago. It was good to be back there. A place that still felt familiar. Little detail were the nails that were still there - we used them to put the letters of Amy's name on when she was born. We left for Cambodia when Amy was only 3 months - now she is a little lady herself. What a difference 6 years make. Next: unpacking - we took about 300 kg of belongings with us on the plane - and going through some items we still had on an attic from 6 years ago. These are just a few things that come to our mind when we think back about these first weeks back in the Netherlands.

I believe it was the 16th of 17th when our president had his first 'corona-talk', a briefing basically resulting in a lockdown. Everything we had planned for basically changed. We thought of this month in Middelburg as a time of

visiting our home-church - but that only happened once, then things closed. It was precious though to meet the people that have prayed so much for us. The connection that we feel is strong en precious. And gathering as a church - something we missed when we lived in the rural of Cambodia.

SCHOOL, BUT DIFFERENT...

Schools had to close so we were back to home-school again. That was not the way we planned of course. Joy, Micha and Amy - we all - had been looking forward to finally be with their own classmates at the Regenboogschool.

The school helped uw a lot over these 6 years. Advice, tests, materials, and much, much more. What a precious gift is was. Now we had been hoping to finish well, celebrate together.

To be honest: this was not always easy. 'Cause there we were, back in the Netherlands. Looking forward to meet people, going to school, widening our

social circle. But nope, back to the 5 of us. Soon we picked up homeschool rhythms again and things went well. After 4 weeks in Zeeland we moved to 'our' house in Almere (a city close to Amsterdam). Friends helped us that morning and soon we were on our way. We didn't have much yet so things went smooth and quick: we started packing at 09:00 and finished at 09:45;-)

Once arrived in Almere we started making our house a home. Putting things in order - making it feel like home. It was special to step into our home - knowing that this would be the place we will be living in this next season in our life. Live - work - play. In awe we look at how God has been leading us all the way - this house is a precious gift from Him to us. It is His house and we are stewards wanting to use it for His glory and sharing it with others. Unpacking our things was emotional. All these little things people gave us just before we left - all items with a story attached. And then everything we carefully packed 6 years before and stored at the attic. But now all these thing have a special place in our house, home.

ALONGSIDERS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Alongsiders travelled with us to the Netherlands. In our last newsletter we wrote something about that already. Once in the Netherlands we continued - much to do.

To be more accurate - Alongsiders travelled before we did. Tom - who did his final thesis at Shalom Valley - went back home and started his group of Alongsiders in Rotterdam. He inspired 5 others and just 'rolled' with it. So cool to see how it developed. We have regular contact and hear about how they impact their younger brothers and sisters. Amazing.

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Example - lately we heard about the story of one of the Alongsiders who was working on being a blessing to others.

Together they thought of cleaning our the storage at the younger brothers place. It was a bit of a mess - understatement - but together they worked hard and made it something nice and tidy. End of story his mother came and was completely amazed "wow-this is so great" she replied. Simple action - but with a great result.

With this **challenge** we look at Jesus our Master and see how He blesses others. Next we look around who we can bless too. We bless through our words, actions or gifts. And during this challenge we learn about Jesus teaching on the topic - we read the Bible. Growth into His image.

Curious? Take a look at the **microCHALLENGES** or take a look at the **website**. You're more than welcome.

Besides the group in Rotterdam another group started in Almere. And we work together with Youth for Christ in a 'big-brother' project. Many conversations are going on with other networks. We see Alongsiders as a fantastic tool and try to get that tool into the hands of youth and other networks that can work with it. Alongsiders is no end in itself - it is a tool, a help. The ultimate goal is to put Jesus last words into practice "make disciples".

The question that's in my head is "do I make disciples?" "How do I make disciples?" "Who do I walk alongside too?" "What is his name?" "And is someone walking alongside me too?" I am completely convinced that Jesus command simply means that we should all have names in mind when it comes to the question "who do you disciple?" Full of intention - full of relation. Just like Jesus Himself did.

And that is the challenge I see. I see so much of individualism in myself, and I sometimes feel a hesitation to follow Jesus, His ways, His methods. How did Jesus make disciples? I feel weak but I desire to be learning from the Master Himself.

That is why we are so super thankful for the experience in Cambodia. It was such a life-shaping time. Truly amazing. Our prayer is that we will continue to learn here in The Netherlands and Europe and also be able to pass on what we have learned.

That we will be found followers of Jesus in His ways and methods. Are you in too? For who can you be an Alongsider? We again and again see the difference it makes.

Over the last 8 months much has been done:

- We have set up all for Alongsiders in The Netherlands. **Take a look** - even when you may not completely understand - it's nice;-)
- We have made many **challenges** in Dutch and have made microCHALLENGES in English too. **Take a look** and be inspired.
- We are super thankful for many contacts and are exploring how we can work together with different partners and ambassadors.

Often we talk about the Alongsiders family. Some months ago in Cambodia the 'younger brother' from one of the Alongsiders died. He drowned during the flood. Cambodia had a lot of flooding last year. Huge parts of the country were flooded, dozens drowned. Thousands have lost their homes and the damage is huge. Noeun, who could not swim, jumped into the water to save his friend (also an younger brother in the Alongsiders family), both were taken away by the water. His Alongsider - Kalin - started looking for him and found him. Too late though. He was dead already. Heart-breaking. We mourn with them. We have meet these people at Shalom Valley during camp. We worshipped together, we remember his face, we praised and prayed. Played the outdoor games together. And now he is not here anymore. Not here, cause he knew about Jesus love through his Alongsider. He is in heaven now. Soon after he passed away we heard the story of how Noeun gave his life for his friend. Following His Master Jesus who

he got to know through his Alongsider. It is all about Jesus and knowing him. And after knowing passing it on to someone else. This I why we labour hard within Alongsiders. We want people to meet Jesus.

We lost a brother. Someone within our family. We cried with them. Today we mourn. Tomorrow we raise to make a change - we mobilise, we equip to see more youth make disciples. That is true for Cambodia, Kenia, India and Europe as well.

In moments like these we experience family, we miss friends from Cambodia and we move on with a message of hope. And that Hope is as alive here as it is in Cambodia. It is Jesus. Praise God.

ALMERE OF ALL PLACES;-)

So now we live here. We live within the 'dikes', about 4 meters below sea-level. Almere has a population of about 210.000 people. What surprises us is the amount of green and nature in this city. All is very well set up. Micha and Amy have friends to play with. Within a 10 minute walk we have a place to walk and within 20 minutes bike-rede the kids arrive at school. Central in The Netherlands and 8 minutes walk from a mission-centre that we use as our office most of the time. This mission centre belongs to the church that we serve as well. Within the corona rules we try to meet people and build new relationships.

KIDS-PAGE

We asked the kids to write something down for you as well. You might be able to get the idea. 'Read' on and enjoy;-)



JOY

Hey! I have started secondary education and I am enjoying it. My level and direction is 'VWO' Technasium. I will explain in a moment what that means. I have had 6 months of schooling now and like it. It is a public - non-christian - school, but so far it has not been very difficult. Sometimes I find it a bit scary when I pray before a meal or so. Before the autumn break we had test-week, but all weren't good and for maths I even had a 9,7. I very much liked that because maths was the most difficult test for me.

The week before the autumn break we had 'activity' week. On Monday we started with a survival day in a park. Tuesday was dancing with professional dancers and on Wednesday we went to "the Kemphaan" - it is a place with high rope courses, zip-lines and more. Thursday and Friday were normal school days.

I liked all of that very much and also enjoyed the autumn break. I don't really have a friend yet, but the contact with my class-mates are good. My prayer however is that I will soon find a good friend (and this prayer point has been answered over the last period). My favourite subjects are maths, French, and something called "O&O". It stands for Research and Design. We receive a task from a real contractor - a problem - and a list of constraints, requirements that the solution has to align with. A complete project so to speak. Not we have a set of things we need to do as a group. Pre-research, choose a subject and work on that more. Etc. This subject is an extra because I have opted for the 'Technasium' part.

Dutch and gymnastics are not favourites to me. Gymnastics is a bit boring and Dutch is much about spelling. Not my favourite. I do have a lot of homework normally but I try to keep my weekends free - or at least not so much homework in the weekends. So far I can manage. Hopefully this gives you a bit of an idea of my school-work.

At home I am enjoying myself. It has become our 'own' little space and I enjoy that. I share a bedroom with my younger sister Amy, but that is okay since we clean it up together every now and then.

I do miss my friends in Cambodia. We can use an app of course but is is different.

My niece lives in Almere as well so we hang out every now and then. Sometimes it is a bit less because I have much homework. We can visit church here (at the time of writing there was no lock-down, now there is) and I like that very much. Cause at church we see people that we know. Also in church I help out with children's work / ministry because I like little ones and babies. Today I also helped out at the children's ministry - but sadly only very few children came.

Thursday afternoon is my weekly violin lesson. That is something I like very much. I enjoy playing and it is also very nice to play together with my violin teacher. She gives me very helpful tips and teaches me how to play better. A couple of weeks ago we had a little performance with two other students. It was so enjoyable because

in Cambodia I mostly played alone and now we can do it together.

Every Friday every other week we have 'Rock-Club' - a club from church where we do cool things. Games in the neighbourhood playing soccer, lasergames, and more. On Friday the other week we have 'girls-paradise' - special for girls, we cake cupcakes, etc. Whenever possible I go there and enjoy. It is from Church and we learn about Jesus and following Him more too. We also have youth-home-group evening every other week on Monday. We study a theme together like addiction, freedom from darkness, more like that. It is very good! Okay, so now you know a bit about me and how things are at school. Bye bye - see you later, 'till next time. Joy

MICHA

(See next page)

Vervolg op bladzijde 5 >>>

Amy.
School.



Mijn juf is heel lief.
Ik luister goed naar de juf.
De juf helpt me goed.
Het is wel jammer want sommigen
Kinderen luisteren niet goed.

Amy.
Cambodja.



Cambodja, daar ben ik opgegroeid.
Mijn beste vriendin is Marea.
Mijn beste vriend is Phearom.
Nu gaat het niet goed want er is een overstroming in Cambodja.
Mijn favoriete plek is Cambodja.

Amy.
Thuis.



Thuis is het leuk, gezellig en fijn.
Mama en papa zijn lief en leuk.
M'n zus en broer ook.
Amy



Buiten

Buiten is het leuk en fijn. Ik heb leuke vriendinnen en vrienden.

Amy
De kerk.
Ik heb club
De kerk is speciaal. Daar hoor je Gods woord.

Hoi iedereen, Hier Micha.

Ik zit op scouting en dat is erg leuk.

Zometeen ga ik jullie leren hoe je een mastworp moet maken, maar eerst even wat persoonlijke informatie. Het gaat goed met mij en ik vind het hier heel leuk. Ik heb een hele leuke buurjongen die Elano heet, en ik speel heel vaak met hem.

Ook woont hier in Almere wat familie dus dat is ook leuk. Nu ga ik jullie leren hoe je een mastworp moet maken. Een mastworp is een knoop die je kunt gebruiken aan het begin van een knoop, zoals bij een driepootsjording en bij een tweepootsjording

Hieronder zie je een plaatje van een mastworp, van mijn zakmes dat ik krijg en van de blouse van scouting.



Als jullie deze knoop thuis oefenen, en het lukt, dan kun je trots op jezelf zijn en kan je deze knoop nog veel vaker gebruiken voor als je een driepoot wil maken.



Last autumn we had a great break in Zeeland. Just a couple of days out. Forest walks, windy beaches and the fresh sea-air. We like Almere very much, but going back to Zeeland still feels a bit as coming home too.

This newsletter has become long already. Thank you for reading all along 'till here. We will keep you posted and sent you our new 'news' next time.

GIVE THANKS FOR:

1. For seasons in our life; in every season God teaches us and shapes us into His image more and more. We desire to 'mirror' Him more and more.

2. For new friendships that are being formed (and old friendships being renewed).
3. For the Alongsiders-family in Cambodia and all over the world.
4. For the many new contacts here in Almere and the warm welcome that we experience here.
5. For the Alongsiders in Rotterdam and Almere that are making a difference in their younger brother and sisters life.

PRAY FOR:

1. For our friends in Cambodia that are struggling with the flooding (the flooding itself is over now - but the effects not. Poverty, disease, etc.) and pray for the effects of Covid as well. It hits the country economically hard.

2. Pray for Noeun's family and for Kalin his alongsider.
3. For the transition that we as a family are still in. Adjusting to life here in Holland still takes place. Things are going well - but it takes time and a lot of energy.
4. For good friendships for the children. To enjoy playing of course, but especially for friends that will be cheering them up to follow Jesus in everyday life (and pray for our kids to do the same to them of course).

This newsletter has taken much too long. We blame it on the transition and the busyness around that, but the next letter will be sooner;-) Thank you for your help, prayers and support in any other way.

Luctor et emergo - I struggle but I will prevail.

Many blessings,

Mart-Jan & Talitha
Joy, Micha and Amy



Practical information

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If you want to do so, please use the Dutch bank details as stated below:

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