

# 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)

## Almost holidays...

Are you also counting down? As I write this, for us it is only 7 days left, and then we will be off: holiday! When we look back at what happened over the past period, we enter that holiday tired, but very grateful. Grab a cup of coffee, read on and be encouraged.

The past few months were marked by many new developments: the online training, a real Alongsiders app(!), a week of recording videos so that we can easily bring content closer to young people. Together with others, a lot of work has been done. And then you would forget that of course, that is not what it is all about...

All these things are just tools - instruments that we can use. The real point is to help young people to be disciples of the Lord Jesus and in turn to make disciples of Him. That is the great

commission, those were Jesus' last words, and that is what we want to put into practice. Later in this newsletter we will share more testimonies, but let me introduce you to Amy (not 'our' Amy, but Alongsiders Amy).

Amy became an Alongsider through a project that we did together with Alpha Youth. Great, because in that way about 35 Alongsiders joined.

Amy and her younger sister work together. They use the Alongsiders app and have started with the challenges. Or to be more specific, they started with the challenge "Secret Bless". Shortly after starting it, we were asked, "Why do you bless anyway?" "Where does Jesus call us to do that?"

We shared about how Jesus blessed children, broke bread and fed thousands, touched untouchables - all acts of blessing and blessing. Amy understood. Shortly after, we contacted her to hear her

story. Amy shared that every Monday morning when she goes to school, she watches the videos in the app, prays and discusses with her 'younger sister' how they can bless people in Jesus name that day. Classmates, teachers, friends, people at home. Wonderful, isn't it?

The tools help the Alongsiders, and that is how they are meant to be. Because what we want and desire is that young people - like Amy - in obedience to Jesus reach out to others. That they pass on what they have found in the Lord Jesus. By reaching out to others, we ourselves grow.

It was Jesus who said: "It is enough for a disciple to become like the Master" - and that is exactly what we want. To grow together in the image of the Master, so that when others look at us they will see more and more of Him. "He must become greater, I less."

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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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## FAMILY

We are doing well. After more than a year in Almere, we feel more and more at home.

Joy had a good first year at secondary school. Despite working at home a lot of fun things could be done and she learned and discovered a lot about how things work in the Netherlands. At school she especially likes the Technasium-projects. Working on real problems in the city and coming up with solutions together with a team. She also really enjoys playing the violin and has joined an orchestra.

Micha had a tough start this year in a dynamic class, but it is nice to see how they, as a group, with the necessary bumps, can finish the year positively. Next week we are going to see his end-of-year musical together. How nice to be able to witness it live! Micha likes to be outside with others - playing football is one of his favourite activities. Micha will also be going to secondary school after the summer holidays.

Amy is a friendly girl who likes to hang out with others. She enjoys, learns and discovers. The past few months she has not been entirely fit. A bad cold probably did something to her balance organ. This made her very dizzy all the time. Fortunately, it seems to be going better now. We pray that she will be well again soon and that the holiday will do her good so she can make a fresh start in group 5.

The two of us are doing well too. It is wonderful to serve together with Alongsiders and in the church. Every Monday, when the kids are at school, we really have some time together. Walking together, cycling, sailing, ... and enjoying nature, a good book, music, rest - reflection and time with the Lord. It is a bit like our 'Sabbath' on - yes, Monday ;-)

## WORK

Alongsiders keeps moving. There are now more than 60 Alongsiders in the Netherlands, and we have good contacts with Russia and Albania, among others. We are very curious as to how the Lord will lead this further. Take another look at the Alongsiders website.

On the next page we would like to share some stories with you, courtesy of our intern Joanne. Short testimonies of how God is at work.

Besides Alongsiders, we also support a lot in the church here in Almere. Among other things, we are involved as core group leaders with a beautiful group of about 30-35 people in our neighbourhood. We travel together, study God's word, pray together, take care of each other and share a part of our lives through it. Where during a Sunday service the group is quite big, this is the small group where we can really get to know each other better.

Last Saturday we had a BBQ together. Good food, meeting new people, singing together, sharing from God's

word, praying and playing a game together. Isn't that how the church is meant to be? As a family, one in Christ?

Maybe you've seen it already, maybe you haven't, but at the end of 2020 the book "The Diamond of Discipleship" came out. A free e-book that I (Mart-Jan) have written around discipleship and how you can shape that in the church / community.

Last week the book was also published in English. It was a lot of work, but we are grateful that it is now available to even more people. Our prayer is that the church may be strengthened through it.

We have also created a website to accompany the book, with all kinds of videos, tools and articles - all to help. Please take a look.

## GIVE THANKS FOR:

- How we may get used again in the Netherlands.
- for friendships.
- for the wonderful tools that we were allowed to create: the Alongsiders app, the online training, the (micro-)challenges and all the videos that were needed for that.
- for the opportunities to serve / share about discipleship.
- For the 'Diamond of Discipleship' and how it may bless people.

## PRAY FOR:

- that we as a family will be closely connected to the Lord Jesus and from that basis may be an example and witness to the Lord Jesus.
- For the new Alongsiders. Pray for their growth towards the Lord Jesus and also towards each other. Pray that all these Alongsiders may be a rich blessing in their environment.
- That we may have a blessed holiday season. We notice that we need it and hope to be able to start working again after the holidays.
- When we start working again, the VBC (Vacation Bible Club) starts here. A wonderful spectacle in which we can tell hundreds of children about the Lord Jesus! Please pray with us that the gospel will sound rich that week.

Until the next time!

Warm greetings from us in Almere,

Mart-Jan & Talitha, Joy, Micha and Amy



## TESTIMONIALS:



**CLASS MEMBERSHIP** - Read the story of Alongsider Amy and her 'younger sister'!

Amy was looking for Christians of her age with whom she could talk about her faith. She didn't find any in her surroundings, but through the BEAM church services she ended up at a Youth Alpha evening. She liked it so much that she took the course and found exactly what she was looking for.

When the end of the Youth Alpha course was in sight, Amy heard about Alongsiders for the first time. If she wanted to grow in sharing her faith with others, there was an option to join

Alongsiders. Amy became interested, signed up and started looking for a younger sister.

There was no one in her neighbourhood that she could think of. But when she mentioned Alongsiders to her classmate Demy at school, she noticed that he thought it was quite interesting. She suddenly had an idea and asked Demy: 'Would you like to be my younger sister?'

Since then Amy and Demy meet every Monday morning to do something together. Because Demy is not a Christian, Amy decided to do one of the Alongsiders Challenges with her. They are now doing the challenge "Secret Bless", in which they secretly make others in the class happy with a sweet word written on a note and many other things. In this way Amy can show Demy that the Christian faith is not about following 'a man with strict rules'.



(Do you feel inspired by this story? Become a Alongsider yourself! Sign up now on the website)

(The photo used is not of Amy and Demy).

**BIBLE** - Meet Alongsider Rianne and her 'younger sister'!

Rianne and Maris know each other through the Sports Community Overstag in Lewenborg, Groningen. Every summer holiday they hold a sports week. During that week Maris

## Practical information

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### Financial support:

Alongsiders does not pay us a salary.

We're very grateful for those who want to support us financially.

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

Foundation: Nehemia (ANBI)  
Please note: Project church-work  
Cambodia

IBAN: NL66 SNSB 0931 7011 39  
BIC: SNSBNL2A

Recently Demy asked why it is so important for Christians to bless other people, to make them happy. Amy had not thought about that before, because to her it is so normal. You just know things and it is just like that, but now I am really going to think about it! Together with Demy she also learns new (or old) things about her faith. What is more beautiful than learning in this way?

came along with a friend to play football. At one point, Maris had to step aside; her ankle hurt. Rianne went over to chat with her and finally she was allowed to pray for her and her ankle. During that prayer, Maris' ankle became completely pain-free! That is where a special bond started between these two girls. Maris kept coming back to the weekly sports events of Overstag. Rianne was regularly allowed to pray for her. When Rianne participated in the prayer 40-day of Next Move last spring she prayed for Maris. This gave her an increasing desire to introduce Maris to Jesus.

At one point she simply asked her: 'Do you want to read the Bible together?' Since then, Rianne visits Maris at home every week to explore the Bible together. Because of this Rianne notices that a sisterly bond really develops between them. She even feels like a sixth family member in Maris' family. I am a bit of a family pastor," she jokes.

How cool that giving time and space can be such a blessing!

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