



Newsletter February 2026

Dear brothers, sisters, and friends,

The new year is already two months old. As a family, we are gradually preparing for the furlough that lies ahead of us.

But before we tell you a little more about that, in this letter we would like to take you to Madagascar — to the villages, the people, and the stories that define our work and life here. Thank you for sharing in our lives, praying with us, and standing with us in the struggle.

Suddenly to the Netherlands

In the previous newsletter we said that the work on Madagascar is actually never predictable. Sometimes it feels as if we are mainly waiting, and sometimes everything seems to happen at once.

When you suddenly find yourself in such a busy period, other matters also seem to happen unexpectedly. A few days before Christmas we received the message that Jurgen's father had been urgently admitted to a care home. A day later another message arrived:

"Father will probably die; how long it will take? It could be a matter of days, but also of weeks."

Although the message came suddenly, it was not unexpected. Jurgen's father had been deteriorating for quite some time. Dementia was doing its destructive work.

On 29 February I (Jurgen), together with Abbey, flew to the Netherlands. Father had not yet died, so hopefully we would still see him for a short time. During the transfer in Ethiopia we received the message that he had passed away. That was a shock to take in.

Fortunately, I had always been able to say everything to my father that truly mattered. We had no unspoken matters. Every time we saw each other or spoke on the phone I would tell him how much I loved him. A good habit that we often forget, but in situations like this it becomes clear why it is so important.

A blessing in disguise

Although the reason for coming to the Netherlands is less pleasant, we were still able to enjoy our time. During the first week we stayed at Katja's father's place, which was very cosy. After the funeral we went to the province Drenthe and stayed at Vanya's house for another two weeks. Abbey slept at Vanya's house and I was able to stay in the guest room at Katja's mother's home.

And while the whole of the Netherlands was dealing with various weather alerts, we were mostly able to enjoy the snow and being together. Because public transport in Drenthe and Groningen had largely come to a standstill, Vanya had to continue her studies from home. That meant we could see each other a lot and go for a pleasant walk in the snowy forest or countryside in the afternoons.

Back in the village again

At the time of writing we are, of course, back on Madagascar. After a few weeks away it is very good to be with Katja and the other children again.

The visit to the Netherlands meant that we had to postpone some plans for a while. Initially we had wanted to make another trip to the village in December to host a group of Malagasy evangelists once again. Fortunately, on Madagascar it is not a major problem to change programmes. A new time and arrangement were quickly made.

On Monday, 9 February, I travelled to our village with Dani and Simeon. Our first task was to clean the house again. Spider webs, rat droppings, dead insects, and dust ... a lot of dust. Each time it is a matter of checking whether everything still works. Fortunately, the electrical wiring from the solar panels was still in order, but the water pipe from the tank to the toilet had broken. Well, it keeps you out of trouble, as they say.



Extremely busy

Everything repaired and cleaned, so on 12 February we were able to receive the group of evangelists. We could only pick them up later in the day because several slopes were still too muddy and slippery earlier that morning. The sun had shone enough to make the road passable again around 13:00.

It was a joyful reunion with familiar faces and new ones. Ten people in total — eight men and two ladies. All from different tribes and regions of Madagascar: Vezo, Tsimihetsy, Antaimoro, Mahafaly, Masikoro. What a richness to see people from all corners of Madagascar coming together, united in the Gospel. Each comes with their own dialect, which means our translation work is much needed in order to understand and speak the Antanala language. Thankfully they are enthusiastically helped by local Christians from Maroamboka. The local people know the villages, they know the culture, and people trust them.

It is wonderful to hear from our villagers that the guests are more than welcome. In passing it is mentioned that it can sometimes be difficult to understand them and to make themselves understood in return.

That doesn't take away from the fun! The people in our area greatly appreciate that these 'foreigners' have come to explain the Gospel to them. People hang on their every word. Still, it remains a strange experience that I, the white man from a faraway country, sometimes still have to function as a dictionary:

"Father of Vanya!? What does this word mean and how do you pronounce it? And how should we actually greet the people?"

It is hugely encouraging to see that the work is not just being done by us—now it is mostly being done by them themselves. That is exactly what we have been praying for for years.

Then... the journey back, and the Lord was with us!

Then Dani, Simeon and I still had to return to the capital. It's a 540-kilometre journey, and if we were to drive it in one go it would take 18 hours. So we always do it in two parts. We wanted to be there for the weekend so we could celebrate Dani's 15th birthday (21 February).

On the second day of travelling, a strange smell entered the car. At first, we thought it was the fires that had been lit along the roadside. But oh no! Soon we came to an abrupt stop ... The car had overheated and the temperature gauge had not shown it. Bonnet open and check. Sure enough, the coolant hose had completely burst. We were still over 11 hours' drive from the capital.

After thinking for a moment, I first called Katja to let her know that we would not be home anytime soon. Then I called Peter van Buuren in Tana. His mechanics always service the car. They knew a good mechanic near us. Those mechanics came to us and after the car had cooled, the radiator was filled with water and we slowly drove back to a town we had just passed through.

The diagnosis was quick, the solution less so. Due to the extreme heat, the cylinder head had warped and needed to be resurfaced. With a new head gasket, everything should have been fine again. Unfortunately, it was not so simple. The cylinder head was still leaking and there was nothing they could do about it.

A jerrycan of water was placed on the roof. From the jerrycan, a garden hose led into the radiator, allowing us to continuously supply the car with coolant. The idea was good, but the weather was uncooperative. It was scorching hot and the car overheated again after just 10 minutes.

What to do now? Dani suggested asking the Lord for cold weather. Hardly had he prayed when the clear sky completely closed over with heavy rain clouds. It began to rain like you rarely see. It kept raining, and every time we saw clear skies further along the route, they would cloud over just as we arrived. This cooled the day so quickly that we only needed to swap the jerrycan for a full one every 35 minutes. You can imagine how deeply impressed we were by God's intervention! He is good and trustworthy!

The weather app screenshots and more photos can be viewed on our website:

<https://www.jurgenkatja.nl/nieuws-februari-2026/>



After 16 hours and 30 swaps of the jerrycans, we arrived home on Sunday morning at 03:30. We drove straight through day and night. What an adventure!

And Dani's birthday? After a few hours of solid sleep, we still managed to celebrate it with a delicious homemade apple pie.

In the Garage

The car is now at Peter's garage. The mechanics got started immediately and took the opportunity to inspect the entire engine block. Now it's just a matter of finding a cylinder head. New ones are available, but a new Nissan Patrol cylinder head is unaffordable. Fortunately, there are good second-hand cylinder heads available, which only need to be properly resurfaced. Even so, these second-hand ones quickly cost around 600 Euros. We still have some buffer in our car fund, but it's not sufficient. Perhaps you could consider in prayer whether you might give a little extra?

On this page you can read how to contribute for the car:

<https://www.jurgenkatja.nl/geven/>

Leave to the Netherlands

As mentioned, we are also preparing for our leave to the Netherlands. Issa hopes to take his final exams, and Abbey will also take exams for a few subjects. Thanks to Katja, they will be well prepared.

Besides teaching, Katja is busy with this year's school programme and new school materials—what can be taken back to the Netherlands and which materials will be brought back to Madagascar.

The tickets are now booked, and we hope to land back on our own soil on 8 April. We can stay again at the home of Johan and Miranda van Bijsterveld in Oudewater. Through Stichting Hand, we will also be able to borrow a car, so we'll be mobile. We are grateful that this could be arranged so smoothly and quickly.

We have also already made the first appointments regarding presentations and preaching. On this page you can see where we are invited:

<https://www.jurgenkatja.nl/agenda/>

Finally

Looking back at everything we are allowed to undertake here, one thing becomes very clear: God is faithful. In everything!

We can make plans, but it is the Lord who leads the work. And we are grateful that we can do it together with you—with your prayers, your involvement, support, and encouragement. Let us continue to trust in Him together. For God is good—always. And always—God is good.

Thank you very much.

Katja
and the Hofmann children

&



Jurgen & Katja

Serving God on Madagascar



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www.jurgenekatja.nl/en/

Support us!

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Please go to our website for more details about how you can support us.

Things to pray for:

We are thankful because:

- 1) we we serve a great and mighty God;
- 2) the local Christians in and around Maroamboka are enthusiastically helping with evangelism;
- 3) we will soon have our furlough;
- 4) Issa and Abbey's exam preparations are going very well.

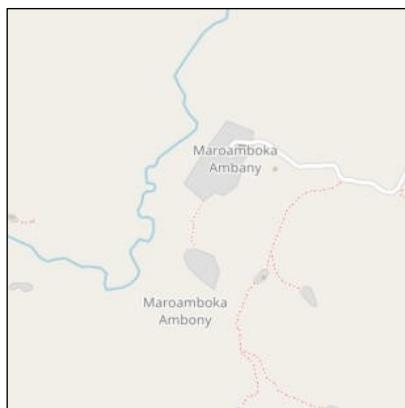
Pray that/for:

- 5) our financial standing will return to normal;
- 6) the translation work and its distribution;
- 7) the translation of the book of Genesis;
- 8) the additional costs for the car will be covered;
- 9) Katja, as she still has much to plan for the furlough;
- 10) that Katja will find the necessary rest in between teaching.

Where do we serve?

Location Openstreet Maps:
Maroamboka, Madagaskar-[21.595
06/47.87529](https://www.openstreetmap.org/?lat=-21.595&lon=06/47.87529)

Location Google Maps:
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Disclaimer

Thank you so much for your interest in our ministry to the Antanala people on Madagascar. We greatly appreciate the love and support of the wonderful people that God has put around us. This ministry is much larger than our family, and we cannot do it alone.

You have either signed up to receive this newsletter or you have been an important part of our lives and we thought you would like to know about our journey. If at any point you no longer want to receive this newsletter, please unsubscribe:

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