

“I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

Matthew 25:35

Welcoming the Stranger and Loving the Neighbor

The world is experiencing the highest level of human migration in history. Refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, and migrants are moving throughout the world in larger numbers than ever before – many due to forced migration and others due to choice.

The Bible is filled with stories of humans on the move. Sometimes Biblical characters migrate to flee persecution, danger, or enslavement; other times it is to find a better life, or food in the midst of famine; yet other times it is to follow a calling. The Bible is about the uprooted people of God, seeking safety and sanctuary, often depending on local communities and families to follow the God-given directive to welcome the stranger and love the neighbor.

Today’s Evangelical Church in Greece (ECG) congregation in Katerini was originally a Greek community in what is now Turkey. As the Ottoman Empire crumbled and persecution and genocide broke out against minorities, the Greek community fled. They ended up in Aleppo, Syria and were hosted by Arabs and Kurds before being resettled in Katerini, Greece. The community was given land where they built a church and neighborhood, and the community still lives there today.

Many in the congregation feel that the church’s ministry to refugees today is one way for them to repay the hospitality that was shown to their ancestors in their time of need. The Katerini congregation’s refugee ministry has grown into a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) called Perichoresis. In two years of operation, Perichoresis has served more than 2,000 individuals in need of refuge in Katerini. My work with Perichoresis was focused on the long-term integration project, working with families to help them build their lives in Katerini.

I saw firsthand what blessings can grow when individuals and communities of faith boldly follow their calling. This faith community invites others to join them as they make the world a more welcoming and compassionate place.

Kearstin Bailey serves as a Global Mission Intern with the Evangelical Church in Greece, working with Perichoresis NGO in Katerini, Greece. Her appointment is made possible by your gifts to Disciples Mission Fund, Our Church’s Wider Mission, WOC, OGHs, and your special gifts.



KEARSTIN
BAILEY

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The prayers and help you provide through your local congregations make possible the work and witness of GLOBAL MINISTRIES, which is supported by Disciples Mission Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM) of the United Church of Christ.

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