

*“Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the wits of another.”*

Proverbs 27:17

## Sharpening One Another

In 2020, the world is frayed. COVID-19 influences every aspect of our public, private, and professional lives. Groups of people who have never faced structural challenges now find themselves constricted for the first time. Those who have found themselves jumping over hurdles to survive are beginning to see that those hurdles are getting taller each day. Many regions affected by COVID-19 lack essential resources such as medical supplies, hospital bed availability, and staple foods. Misinformation runs rampant, and a lack of following safety precautions threatens local stability and livelihoods, especially for those people who already face disadvantages in society.



SEAN AMATO

Egypt has seen some of the highest numbers of COVID-19 infections and deaths on the African continent. The government put into effect curfews, restrictions of movement, and shuttered restaurants, commercial shops, and public transportation. Face masks are mandatory in public spaces. But the most vulnerable Egyptians – those with the least, and the most to lose – are most affected by COVID-19. Housekeepers and small business owners are experiencing reduced business. Street vendors are unable to sell due to curfews and safety restrictions. Local drivers have seen their passengers (and income) dissipate. Government efforts have been made to supply these workers with cash assistance, but many lack access to the internet required to apply for such aid.

Emphasizing social cooperation and the necessity of a united front against the virus, the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS), a partner of Global Ministries, has put into effect a number of pandemic-related programs. The agency has carried out public information campaigns related to COVID-19 and lead sterilization initiatives in both rural and urban environments. Cleaning equipment, medical supplies, and food have found their way to local families as a result of CEOSS's outreach efforts. Additionally, the agency's other work continues in modified fashion.

Despite restrictions, CEOSS continues to provide services. We Americans have much to learn from our Egyptian cousins. In the face of the unknown, these Egyptians have stood up to support one another – to sharpen one another and hone their society into one with the wit to respond to such a pandemic.

*Sean Amato serves with the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS), Egypt. His appointment is made possible by your gifts to Disciples Mission Fund, Our Church's Wider Mission, and your special gifts.*



You make the difference...

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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