

Jennifer in North Macedonia

October 6, 2022



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Singing together at the 87th provisional annual conference of the UMC in Serbia, North Macedonia and Albania



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“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

~ Psalm 133:1 (KJV)

Hine Ma Tov (Behold How Good) has long been one of my favorite Jewish hymns to sing. It celebrates the goodness and joy experienced by God’s children when they come together in unity and is an accurate description of the 87th session of the Provisional Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in Serbia, North Macedonia and Albania. From Wednesday, May 11th to Sunday, May 15th superintendents, delegates, and guests from each of the three districts came together in Pogradec, Albania along with Bishop Patrick Streiff from Switzerland and special guests from Bulgaria and Germany.

The verse for our conference was Ephesians 4:4 “There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call.” As we gathered as one body, we shared our triumphs and struggles, our hopes and disappointments, our joys and our frustrations. We sang together, enjoyed meals together, planned together and did a lot of praying for each other.

On Wednesday evening we worshipped together, shared in the Lord’s Supper and received encouraging words from the bishop about the vision for our annual conference. On Thursday we heard reports from the superintendents of each district and spent some time in small groups based on our areas of ministry or ministry interest (children, literature development, worship etc.). In the afternoon we went on a wonderful excursion to the village of Lin, about twelve miles north of Pogradec.

Bishop Streiff leading us in prayer, UMC Pogradec, Albania



Just above Lin village are the ruins of an ancient Paleo-Christian Basilica. It was a popular pilgrimage site for Byzantine Christians and is one of about ten basilicas built in Albania during the 5th and 6th centuries. Amazingly, it still has some of its lovely mosaics intact. A little further down the peninsula, we encountered an old war bunker that locals had outfitted with icons and candles in order to convert it into a chapel. It was a stark reminder of the regime changes and periods of war that have so many times swept over these lands and also a call to be thankful for the peace the area is currently enjoying.



On Friday we heard more reports and did more work in groups. The group work was challenging because everything had to be translated into English and then translated again into the other two languages (for example, from Serbian into English and then into Albanian and Macedonian). I tip my hat to the many translators and the technical support team that made this event of bringing three language groups into unity possible!

On Saturday we received more reports and also news from other annual conferences within the Central and Southern Europe Central Conference. Then we conducted the annual voting. Once all the business was finished, the majority of us were free to socialize and explore the town of Pogradec.

Sunday was the highlight of the conference for me as I got to witness the ordination of Mustafa Isufi, the first Albanian pastor to be ordained into the United Methodist Church. Recent church planting work in Albania started in 2008 and there

are now five churches, three pastors and 239 members! Albania became a district in 2019, but due to COVID-19, the three districts had not been able to come together in person until this May. It was such a joy and privilege to be part of the union of the three districts and the monumental moment of the first ordination of an Albanian pastor. You can witness it too by clicking on the photo below.

United In Him,

Jennifer Moore



Celebrating a Rebirth!

At the 2022 district conference, the re-establishment of the Commission for Work with Children and Youth in N. Macedonia was made official. The previous commission was disbanded in 2019 due to lack of leadership and members. After creating a new constitution and holding elections, the interim commission is happy the district has an official commission again with the following members (from left to right below): Jennifer, Ruta, Simona, Nevenka and Dejan.



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