

A Moment in Macedonia

Home from itineration

I am home again in Strumica after a little more than three months spent visiting my covenant churches and other interested churches in the same areas. I felt very welcome wherever I went. My sincere thanks to all the churches that hosted me and all the individuals who received me in their homes. It is an honor and privilege - not to mention fun - for me to talk about Macedonia and my work here. I enjoy sharing my photos as well.



With renewed enthusiasm, I will be visiting my covenant churches in Central Texas, South Indiana, West Virginia and Virginia later this year.

To learn how to become a covenant church, see this web address:

<http://new.gbgm-umc.org/Advance/missionaries/covenant/>

Individuals can also support missionaries through covenant relationships.

God bless you!

New I-M-T partner

Despite hot spring temperatures, pastor Kate Herring from Illinois walked between all five of our United Methodist Churches here in the Strumica valley, a trek of more than 30 kms. Kate had gathered pledges in support of a new In-Mission-Together partnership between our UMC in the village of Monospitovo and her home district of La Moine River. Kate visited Monospitovo in 2007 and taught English classes there.

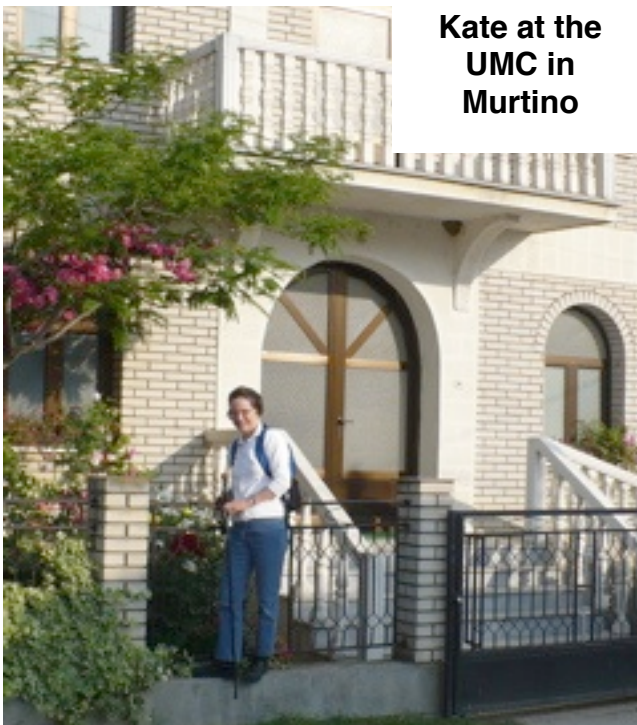


Kate fords a stream as Kristjan, a youth from the Monospitovo congregation, stands ready to give a hand.

In addition to the walkathon, Kate spent a day helping with our Meals on Wheels program, packing food and washing dishes; she was a guest teacher at Saturday morning English classes and she preached on Sunday morning in Monospitovo. She would have preached at the Sunday evening service as well, but just as we were singing the second hymn, "Blessed Assurance," an earthquake struck and everyone ran out of the seriously quaking church. Later we reentered and saw that a large crack had developed in one wall of the church and bits of plaster had fallen.

According to news accounts in the previous two days, more than 300 tremors had struck. Many people were sleeping outside as a precaution. The largest was 5.4 on the Richter scale.

We are grateful to Kate and La Moine River District for their support. For more information about In-Mission-Together partnerships, see <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/connections/partnerships/inmissiontogether/>



**Kate at the
UMC in
Murtino**

Clarifying...

Some of you had questions about the Advance numbers assigned to Macedonia.

To direct your gift to **my salary support**, please use the Advance special number 13107Z.

To direct your gift to **resources and supplies for my work with children, youth and women**, please use the Advance special number 14047A.

To direct your gift to **our Meals on Wheels program**, please use the Advance special number 00220A - and be sure to specify that your gift is for Meals on Wheels.

Of course, there are several ways to give:

Through the offering at your local church. Make your check payable to your local church. Write the name of the ministry and the Advance code number on the check. Drop your gift in any United Methodist church offering plate.

By phone. Credit card gifts can be accepted by phone. The telephone number is (in USA) 888-252-6174.

By Mail. Make your check payable to ADVANCE GCFA. Write the name of the ministry and the Advance code number on the check. Send your check to:

Advance GCFA
P.O. Box 9068, GPO
New York, NY
10087 - 9068



Thank you!

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Some thoughts

Every so often a Macedonian, will ask, "Why are you here? Don't you know, we have been Christians for 2000 years?!" Today's Macedonians are very proud of the fact that Lydia, about whom we can read in Acts 16: 10 - 15, the first European Christian, was a Macedonian. (Cleopatra was a Macedonian, too, but I think the Macedonians are prouder of Lydia.)

That is a very good question... what am I doing in Macedonia? When I was commissioned a missionary in December 1999, I was given my missionary's cross. We were told the cross is in the shape of an anchor because we "take the Gospel across the water." But as some Macedonians like to remind me, taking the Gospel to Macedonia is not a new idea; the Apostle Paul took Christianity to Macedonian nearly 2000 years ago.

So what do I do as a missionary in Macedonia today? I don't stand on the street corner and hand out religious tracks. I don't smuggle Bibles across borders. Since Communism has ended in eastern Europe, that activity is no longer necessary. I do work with the pastors and lay leaders of the local church. There are 13 United Methodist congregations in Macedonia, a country slightly larger than the state of Vermont. We are not a new church; our roots go back more than 130 years, to missionaries who came in the late 1800s and stayed until about 1922. In fact, because of our long history, the United Methodist Church is the only Protestant church recognized in the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia.

I work with children, youth and women. I teach English, write Sunday school lessons and teach Sunday school. I write dramas and work with the children to present them for Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, Thanksgiving and

other occasions. I organize Vacation Bible School and help with our camp for children with special needs and youth camp. I coordinate the visits of Volunteers in Mission and individual volunteers and I help with our humanitarian outreach projects such as Meals on Wheels.

It is exciting to live and work in a country mentioned in the Bible, a country we know from the travels of Paul himself. When groups of volunteers come from the United States to work in Macedonia, after they have spent a week helping with our Meals on Wheels program or teaching English classes for children or participating in our Vacation Bible School, often they want to visit the other part of Macedonia, Paul's Macedonia, and I take them to Philippi in Aegean Macedonia, the part of Macedonia that now belongs to Greece. Sitting amid the ruins of the 4th Century basilica in Philippi, we read from Paul's letter to the Philippians or from the Book of Acts about Paul's imprisonment in that city. A few kilometers away, at the place on the river, believed to be the actual spot where Lydia was baptized, we read from the Book of Acts about that baptism. It is a thrilling experience to hear these words in the places where these events actually happened.

Carol and teaching assistant Kristina with gift books from UMW in Steamboat Springs, CO

