

Update on the Ministry in Albania

Earthquake Assistance

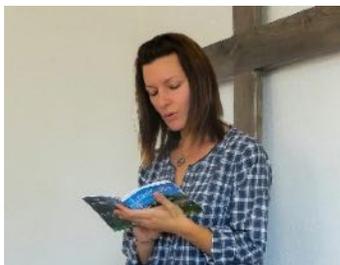
Many of you have asked if and how the Moravian churches in Albania were affected by the November 26, 2019 earthquake, the strongest to hit Albania in over 40 years, and the world's deadliest earthquake in 2019.

As of January 30, the situation is described as "still tough," by Vjollca Mazi, founder and leader of the Moravian churches in Albania. Thanks to a large grant from our Benevolence Fund and generous gifts from church members, the situation is less bleak than it might have been. With these funds, the Moravian Church in Albania has helped in Bathore (the poor area outside the capital of Tirana), Pogradec, Durres (the epicenter of the quake), and Lezha by sending food, winter clothes, tents, heating stoves, and blankets. Sixty families in Pogradec received food packages in January and in February. (This is in addition to the 45 families in Bathore to whom we provide monthly food supplements.)



This crisis also presented an opportunity for our church in Lezha to reach out to Roma families, 45 of which are being housed in a school gym, and to provide milk and diapers to a baby born in the shelter who has health problems. Vjollca Maji wrote recently, "We would like to thank you for everything you are doing for the work in Albania, and we want you to know that we are together in this, one body--thank you for always being there! Across the distance, may we always be bound by the Holy Spirit!"

Seminary Progress for Dena Grillo Fortuzi



Dena continues her studies through distance learning at Moravian Theological Seminary, taking three classes this Spring. She is on target to complete her studies at the end of Fall 2020. We continue to support Dena financially, along with the Unity Women's Desk and scholarship funds

from the seminary, knowing that her eventual ordination will bear much fruit for evangelization in Albania. We are honored to have shared in her journey.

Art for Albania



On February 5, you received an expression of thanks, “Gratitude from *Art for Albania*,” from the Planning Committee. The committee also reported that net proceeds from the event were over \$17,000! We—the Albanian Task Force—add our thanks to the 46 artists from HMC and the community who exhibited and sold work, to David Piner and the Planning Committee and to Ashley Sanders, curator of the show. These funds will be used for Dena’s continuing studies, to underwrite monthly food supplements for 45 families, and to sustain the classes through which women in Bathore are being lifted from their state of impoverishment and isolation to one where they find joy in community and learning.

Family to Family



Since 2016, Home Church families have supported 45 of the poorest families in Bathore with monthly food supplements through the Family to Family initiative. Because many families have come to rely on this support, the leaders in Albania feel it continues to be an important part of their ministry. The list of families receiving help is constantly being reevaluated and as some families become more self-sufficient, other families who meet the criteria for help are added. The number of families to be provided with food remains the same, 45. The cost of providing the food supplements for 45 families is approximately \$1,800 per month. Many of these families have started attending worship services and some have become baptized members.

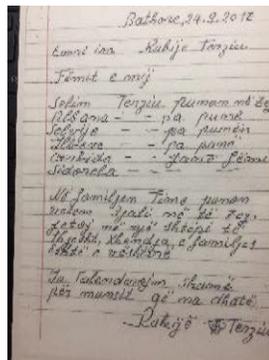
Many of the women in these families attend the education classes, cooking and sewing classes, and the social events being offered by the church. Currently, there are several Home Church families supporting this effort. The cost to feed one family for one month is approximately \$40.00.

If you would like to help support a family in Bathore with food, please make your check to Home Church, and in the memo line write Family to Family.

Bathore Project

In addition to feeding the poor, there are two other aspects to the Bathore Project.

Emancipation:(Helping victims of domestic violence in the form of living/learning skills with a perspective of being self-reliant.) Since 2016, courses in reading, writing, math, history, geography, and health have been offered to the women in Bathore. Course are taught by professional teachers and have been well-attended regularly by 20-25 women. Many in the group have learned to read and write and are now able to help their children with their homework. Most recently, a request was made for English to be taught. Haxhi, a teacher and one of the leaders in Bathore, is currently looking for an English



teacher for this coming year.

Practical skills such as cooking and sewing have also been well-received and have provided an opportunity for women to learn important skills as well as a time to socialize, form relationships and develop a sense of community. During the past year, 26 women and children from Bathore attended the Bible Camp in Pogradec in July. Another important and successful event was the trip to Kosova, as a combination of history lessons, evangelizing, and socializing. Many women



had never spent the night away from their families or been outside Bathore.

Evangelization: (Teaching the Gospel). The evangelization work has increased as Dena has been leading worship services every other week in Bathore. According to Vjollca, “the services led by Dena have really made a big difference in the mission work we are trying to do in that community. The Christmas service in Bathore was blessed and attended by more than 70 children, youth and adults. Through your (Home Church) support we were able to have a simple reception after the service and Christmas gifts for the children. We were happy and privileged to see the effect of the project, because we feel that this is a consequence of our common prayer and effort during these four years.” The joy of experiencing the love of God in a Christian community is one of the blessings the people in Bathore are experiencing through the ministry



of the Bathore project.

The costs for the course instructors, class materials, camps, trips, and evangelization meetings average \$6,700 per year or \$560.00 per month. In the past, we received funds for this project from the Benevolence Fund, the Hine Fund, and individual contributions from Home Church members and other local Moravian mission groups and individuals.

If you would like to help support the classes and evangelization efforts, please make your check to Home Church and in the memo line write Bathore Project.

A church engaged ...a community healed...a world transformed