MINUTE FOR MISSION

Alpharetta, Georgia

BUILDING GOD’S HOUSE:
A WORLD WITHOUT VIOLENCE

Do you remember the feelings you had on your first day of work or school? The butterflies in your stomach, the lump in your throat or the electricity of excitement buzzing through your chest? Or perhaps you’ve traveled somewhere foreign and found yourself unsure of where to go, what to look for or even whom to ask those questions? Those feelings can drive us to survive or paralyze us with fear. No matter where those feelings find us, there is something that can push those feelings aside: a friend. When someone befriends you in that situation, welcomes you to that place, provides a map or guide to survive, you are able to feel safe, comfortable and cared for.

The members of Alpharetta Presbyterian Church in Alpharetta, Georgia, have felt it is their ministry of peace to be those welcoming arms and warm smiles to refugees who have found themselves in Atlanta — a land of new language, new culture and new life.

To do this, the congregation joined with the Greater Atlanta Presbytery and several other congregations to support Memorial Drive Ministries (MDM). MDM grew out of Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church when their session realized their large facility could serve the growing immigrant population in the neighborhood around them. As it approaches its third year of ministry, MDM boasts a litany of successes that prove its impact on the lives of those it supports.

For the members of Alpharetta Presbyterian, the programs that supported immigrant mothers were the most inspiring. Several programs at MDM teach these parents skills, like sewing, gardening and baking, while providing after-school programming, English as a Second Language classes, summer camps and preschool child care for their children. In fact, the members of Alpharetta Presbyterian were so encouraged by the obvious impact these programs were having that the congregation opted to support MDM by donating their retained portion of the 2019 Peace & Global Witness Offering as well as becoming a collection site for sewing machines, sewing supplies and educational children’s books for MDM.

The opportunity for these young families to find a place where they are cared for, where they feel safe and where they feel at home is ultimately the goal of MDM. To further support these new neighbors, the Presbytery of Atlanta has facilitated the establishment of three new worshiping communities in the building MDM occupies. Six congregations, including the original membership of Memorial Drive Presbyterian, call MDM their Sunday home.

Through their commitment to the Peace & Global Witness Offering, Alpharetta Presbyterian is opening their arms to provide a peace-filled embrace to those who have been displaced and are searching for a new home. In our own community, we are being peacemakers by using our retained portion of this Offering to [DESCRIBE HOW YOUR CONGREGATION USES YOUR SHARE OF THE OFFERING].

Together, in our giving, we are building God’s household in places where compassion, peace and justice are not just heartfelt words, but lifesaving needs. Through our gifts, we are peacemakers. We are builders. And when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

 Let us pray ~

 Reconciling God,

 continue to build us as your Church.

 May we engage in ministries

 that share your joy and promise with all people

 and deepen our call

 to be reconciled to one another.

 **Amen.**