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**Minute for Mission**

**Building Connections to Welcome the Stranger**

Wandering the streets of Athens with two small children in tow, Fatima had nowhere to turn.

Left homeless following a massive fire that closed the Moria Refugee Camp in Greece, the native Afghani was arrested and imprisoned after unknowingly becoming involved with drug dealers.

Devastated and alone in a Greek prison — her two little ones sent off to a shelter for unaccompanied children ­— Fatima may as well have been invisible, until her case was referred to [Lesvos Solidarity](https://www.lesvossolidarity.org/en/), a migrant justice organization. They collaborated with human rights lawyers to secure her release from prison, provide her with housing close to her children and help her find employment. She now supports other women who are in a vulnerable position like she was.

“Injustice must not become invisible,” said Efi Latsoudi, one of the founders of Lesvos Solidarity, a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) partner. “If refugees are seen as a threat coming to invade your country, people don’t see their human face. People are afraid; and ultimately, we fear the stranger.”

Lesvos Solidarity embodies the goals of the [Peace & Global Witness Offering](https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/peace-global-witness/), which encourage the church to cast off anxiety, fear, discord and division and welcome the stranger as we are called to do in Matthew 25.

“Lesvos Solidarity is a living example of how we can show love to the stranger and promote dignity among those who flee war and poverty,” said Luciano Kovacs, area coordinator, Middle East and Europe for the PC(USA). “Helping those who leave war-infested areas is a peacemaking act.”

The annual Offering is traditionally received on World Communion Sunday, October 2. It is a shared offering with 50% supporting peacemaking and global witness work around the world, 25% retained by congregations like ours for local peace and reconciliation work, and 25% to mid councils for peacemaking ministries on the regional level.

Here at…we… (TALK ABOUT HOW YOUR CONGREGATION/MID-COUNCIL USES THE FUNDS YOU RETAIN FOR PEACEMAKING IN YOUR COMMUNITY)

For Lesvos Solidarity’s founder, Efi Latsoudi, it all comes back to witnessing.

“The most important thing for me is not to close the eyes,” she said. “As hard, uncomfortable and painful as it sounds, we need to be aware of what is happening in this world, and to stand in solidarity in any way that we can. We also need to create connection, because what is happening in the U.S. and in other places is all connected. Sometimes when all we feel is the distance and how small we are, it’s hard to feel the connection. But when we become aware, we see that we are not so small and that there are miracles happening everywhere.”

Peace begins with each of us. Through the Peace & Global Witness Offering, we connect to confront systems of injustice and promote reconciliation in places around the world — and right here at home.

Please give what you can. For when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

***Let us pray~***

*God of the traveler, God of the journey, please protect our siblings who have been displaced from their homes in search of shelter and safety. May we be instruments of your peace as we welcome others as we would welcome Jesus.* **Amen***.*