

# APRIL NEWSLETTER



## AlMing in Greece

A LOOK INTO: MONTH THREE

### Final Chapter



It is hard to believe that three months have passed since I first stepped onto the streets of Athens, it has become a defining chapter of my life. As I sit here writing my final update from the mission field, my heart is overflowing with a mix of bittersweet "goodbyes" and deep gratitude for every opportunity and relationship built

I came here to serve the church and people of Athens, but in so many ways, the people I know from the church, and the locals I got to know have served my soul, and completely filled my heart. I have seen God move in the incredible roar of a youth conference and in a heartfelt conversation over the quiet steam of a coffee cup. I am leaving, but I am not leaving the same person I was when I arrived.

## A Growing Friendship with Maria

My friendship with Maria has been one of the greatest anchors of my trip. Over this final month, we have formed a bond that I know will continue to grow even with the miles between us. We have continued to meet, sharing meals, stories and laughter. Seeing her hunger for God and her openness to the growth and change that God has for her life has been one of the greatest gifts of my time here. Please continue to cover her in prayer as she continues her journey with the Lord. Our friendship is a connection I intend to carry long after I am home.



## Taxi Driver to Tour Guide

In a full circle moment, I was able to connect again with Makis, the taxi driver I met during my move. I was able to hire him to be a guide, with a small group of people to go outside of Athens for two trips. The first to Arachova, and Delphi, and the second Acro and Ancient Corinth. As we walked through the ruins where the Apostle Paul once walked, we were able to continue our conversation about faith and history. Sharing the heart of my faith with someone like Makis, who has seen Corinth so many times over his life but can now look at it and hopefully connect with it in a Biblical sense. I think we were both able to learn some different histories from each other.





## **A Heart for the Displaced**

One of the absolute highlights of my final weeks was spending time with Sister Click. She is truly one of the sweetest women I have ever met, possessing the softest voice but the biggest heart for people. She has an incredible talent for knitting, and bee keeping but her real gift is her hospitality, and love for others.

I had the privilege of visiting her workplace—a non-profit called "Melissa" - The Beehive, which she co-founded to serve the immigrant Women's community in Athens

It is a lighthouse for those seeking a better life. They help immigrants navigate the legal system, get out of bad situations and provide classes to learn both Greek and English. But it doesn't stop there; they provide hot meals throughout the day and offer classes in art, knitting, cooking, and even beekeeping!

The assistant pastor at Pentecostal Of Athens also regularly goes there to teach Bible studies to the ladies there. Seeing how she uses her talents to help the vulnerable was a powerful lesson in what it means to truly welcome the stranger.

If I ever receive the opportunity to go back to Athens, I would absolutely love to get more involved at this Non-profit.

Possibly try and do a photo clinic/class with those that might be interested. I would encourage any future AIMer's to visit with sister Click, and see everything they have created!

## Closing Opportunities

As my time drew to a close, I was given the opportunity to speak one more time during a service. Standing before the congregation that has become an extended family, I was able to see the growth they have all had through the challenges over the last two years. I am so incredibly proud of the youth, and young adults for everything they do- leading worship, sound, media, and local events. It has been a blessing being able to get to know this group of people, and see the continued love for their city, and the people around them. I can't wait to see all of what God has planned for this absolutely chaotic, fast moving, incredible city that I have fallen in love with, I will also always keep a piece of my heart right in the center of Athens.



## Current Prayer Needs

**Sister Click at "Melissa":** For continued growth and strength for the staff and community; that Sis. Click is able to show the Love Of God to everyone she meets.

**Maria:** That her relationship with God would continue to grow and that she would feel His presence strongly.

**Makis:** That the seeds of our conversations in Corinth would take root in his heart. That he will visit The church in Athens.

**The Church in Athens (POA):** For favor with local authorities regarding their official registration and for the ongoing building updates and continued spiritual growth in the congregation

Thank you to each and every person that has supported me and prayed over my time here.

Your support has made every conversation and outreach opportunity possible.

With Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James R.", written over a light-colored background.