

retreat's theme was, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Matt. 5:4), with a focus on bringing our challenges, pain, and loss to God who offers grace and comfort. Through a practice called "Grief Walking," we all participated in active listening and shared personal challenges, griefs, and hopes. The retreat helped everyone enter the church's anniversary weekend with renewed hope and lighter hearts.

Strengthening the church

The former Türkiye missionaries and some of the visiting leaders met with many of the current and former disciples in Istanbul, Bursa, Yalova throughout the week to encourage and strengthen them. There was a shared sense of renewal, of turning a new page, and a feeling of being heard and seen. There were also teen Bible studies, and soon after the celebration weekend, two of the teens from Türkiye attended teen camp in Beirut for an amazing time of spiritual connection with other teens in the Middle East.

Anniversary service

We had a full house with 60 in attendance as we worshipped with Turkish and English songs, led by David Golland, worship leader of the Vancouver Church of Christ. We had a father-son communion sharing from Nurhan İneç (one of the original members of Istanbul Church planting) and

his son Bruno İneç (first baby born in the Istanbul Church), who leads the campus ministry in Paris along with his wife, Margaux. We then had some powerful preaching and sharing led by Behzad & Candice Fathi, the original church leaders of Istanbul, with a lesson titled, "God is Not Finished with You!" They called on the disciples to dream again and to continue to build a church that brings glory to God.

And we even had a wedding! To top off the week, two disciples in the church, Delio and Osvalda, originally from Angola, got married at our church facility! It was so wonderful to celebrate, dance and enjoy witnessing these two amazing souls join together in holy matrimony. Kiril Kirilov officiated the wedding.

How can you help?

We would love for you to join us in standing with the Istanbul Church of Christ in prayer, encouragement, and support as God continues to write the next chapter. Please pray for the Istanbul Church of Christ and all the disciples in Türkiye. If this story inspires you and you would like to partner in what God is doing there, please consider contributing to the mission through our Istanbul Church of Christ GoFundMe page. Your generosity can help encourage the church, support future ministry efforts, and help more people in Türkiye become disciples.

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September 30, 2026 • Dave and Robin Weidner, Founders, Pure and Simple Ministry

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September 28, 2026 • Dr. Funmi Aina – Lagos, Nigeria

The Women of Valor retreat, held August 28–30, 2026, brought together 80 sisters and their guests. The three-day event was not simply another church activity; it was an opportunity to experience meaningful fellowship and draw closer to Christ. It was a beautiful...



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Istanbul Church Celebrates 30th Anniversary

UPCOMING EVENTS

Minister's Wellness Webinar

October 15, 2026
Online

Conferencia de Las Americas

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Oct 15-18, 2026

Pure and Simple

Durham, NC, USA
November 6-8, 2026

Western US Elders Retreat

April 8-11, 2027
Dallas-Fort Worth, TX, USA

Climb Mt. Kilimanjaro with DT Travel

July 19-26, 2027
Tanzania, Africa

ICMC

July 29-August 1, 2027
Denver, CO, USA

New England & Canada Cruise

September 7-17, 2027
Boston, MA, USA

October 7, 2026 • Barish Golland – Istanbul, Türkiye

This summer, the Istanbul Church of Christ celebrated its 30th anniversary. The church was planted in 1996 by a small but faithful group of disciples from across our fellowship of churches, led by Behzad Fathi. The celebration was a historic event, bringing disciples from far and wide with the local



church, guests, friends, and family, to celebrate, pray, dream and plan for the future of the church in Türkiye. We met for a three-day spiritual retreat, had a group dinner and boat cruise on the Bosphorus, and celebrated with over 60 disciples, family and friends at the anniversary Sunday worship service. The end result was deep connections, encouragement, and a renewed hope, and vision for the future of the churches in Türkiye.

To prepare our hearts, a support team made up of former Türkiye missionaries and regional leaders joined the church in quiet times and Sunday services for six months leading up to the anniversary celebration. This effort was a great example of collaboration between Middle East Mission Society and European Mission Society in helping a country that sits at the crossroad of Europe and Asia, between Christian and Muslim worlds. The support team met throughout the celebration week and came away with greater unity, a clearer path forward, and some exciting new avenues to explore in helping the church grow and thrive in the coming years. A special thanks goes out to Moufid and Jesse Tohme and George Kazazian and Rita Gharib for their tireless efforts and encouragement.

Spiritual retreat

Led by Barish and Ana Golland, we gathered at a monastery retreat center on Büyükdada for three days of teaching, sharing, and encouragement. The

continued on back



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