

Cuba Partnership Trip

Our next Cuba Partnership trip to Cuba will be March 12 through 20, 2024! We will fly into Santa Clara and visit Presbyterian churches in El Centro Presbytery, in the provinces of Villa Clara and Sancti Spiritus.

If your church already has a partnership or relationship with a Cuban church, you'll be able to strengthen that relationship and encourage your friends and "Cuban family" during a very difficult time for them. It's a great opportunity to expand your church's engagement by bringing more people from your congregation. You will spend 6 days at the church, worship with them on Sunday, renew friendships, join in their community ministries, and provide much needed supplies for the church and the community. Your donations are a strong witness of the love of Christ - especially for those outside the faith community.

If you are new to our Cuban partnership, this is a great way to learn what the Presbytery Partnership is all about, and to meet fellow Christians who practice their faith under very different conditions than in the U.S. We will match you with 2 churches who don't have a partnership with a Central Florida church, and you will spend 3 days at each church, getting to know the people through worship, fellowship, and shared mission. Our primary mission is to build connections between our churches and theirs, to show them that we care about them, that they are not forgotten, and that we want to support them and their community outreach. *There is no obligation or requirement to form a formal partnership with a Cuban church* (although we hope you will consider it).

The Cubans are very friendly and will greet you as family. You will stay in clean rooms at the church, enjoy tasty, well prepared meals, participate in the life of the church, and visit people in their homes. Conditions are clean and safe. An interpreter will be provided if the pastor of your host church does not speak English.

The estimated cost of the trip is \$1400 per person, which includes a religious visa, airfare, an overnight in Miami on the way down, and food, travel, and lodging in Cuba. The Lange Scholarship Fund has provided grants between \$300 and \$400 per person for past trips, and we will apply for support for this trip as well. Your

church's Mission Committee may have funding available, or you can apply for a hands-on mission grant from the Presbytery's Mission Development Committee.

We will hold two orientation sessions (probably by Zoom) to provide details on what to expect, what to pack, and what to bring to support the churches you visit. Please plan to attend both meetings, even if this is not your first trip to Cuba, because conditions and laws can, and do, change.

Important: Your passport expiration date must be *after* September 20, 2024. If you do not have a passport, or it needs renewal, start the process *immediately*, because right now the U.S. government is taking over 2 months to process them. A valid passport number is required to obtain a religious visa from the Cuban government; those applications must be submitted 75 days in advance of the trip.

Application forms are available on the Presbytery web site, or you can contact Ken Lasseter at lasseterken@gmail.com. Applications must be received by December 15 to allow sufficient time to obtain the required religious visas.

For more information, you can contact Pat Zinn: pezinn@cfl.rr.com, Randy Simpson: randysimpson111@gmail.com, or Ken Lasseter, lasseterken@gmail.com.

