

Cuba Partnership Team Minutes

November 14, 2023

Meeting held by Zoom

Attendees: Gary Adams, Janira Colon, Keiko Delille, Carol Ivey, Ken Lasseter, Harland Merriam, Fran Morrissey, Martha Newhart, Delly Postigo, Eric Saegebarth, Randy Simpson, Pat Zinn

Opened at 11:09 a.m. by Ken Lasseter with prayer and devotion from *Su Voz*

Motion to record meeting - **M/S/P**

Motion to approve minutes of last meeting - **M/S/P**

Finance Report (presented by Pat Zinn)

Motion to move remaining money in the budget (\$1850.00) to Transportation account - **M/S/P**

Fund Raising for 2024 Transportation and Lay Leadership

We need another appeal before year end. Randy will write it up and ask that the flyers be included in the presbytery packet. Pat will ask Nancy what has come in by the end of this week. Pat will speak at December Presbytery Meeting and mention Business Meeting.

Report on CPN Gathering (presented by Randy)

Ken Lasseter was elected as a member of the CPN Steering Committee. Cubans attending included Moderator of Synod, General Secretary of Synod, Reile from El Centro, plus 3 more. Steering Committee will be producing a report, and we will send it out to our distribution lists.

Panel discussion was held on the situation in Cuba, which continues to be desperate. They are losing their best and brightest to U.S. Birthrate is down to 1.1, the lowest in all of Latin America. Dora commented that for the first time in her life, she has seen people begging on the streets of Havana; they have not had to deal with that before. There was much discussion about becoming self-sustaining - they can't fully realize this, but are trying to take steps towards it. They said 95% of IPRC money comes from foreign sources.

Another panel discussion was held on advocacy. One panelist advocates for trade in agricultural products. There are legal means of agricultural trade. Cuba currently gets about 15% of their food from U.S. currently.

A breakout session was held for El Centro, with the major focus on increasing communication among Cuban leadership and all our churches. Ken said the Cubans reported that water from Living Waters systems is better than the bottled water they can purchase in the stores. He spoke with Myers Park and they are interested in installing a system (at Remedios). Randy reported that 4 churches in El Centro have been approved by Living Waters for a system; the average

installation cost for a system is \$10K. Spartanburg, SC will sponsor Santa Clara. Myers Park might lead with Remedios. First Pres. NYC is exploring the possibility of helping Taguasco.

Presbytery and Church to Church Relationships

Ken reported that Wekiva has sent 2 shipments of food to Remedios via Supermarket23

Randy reported that Adriana, pastor at Sancti Spiritus, is leaving for Matanzas. She was also the moderator of Taguasco, and the very knowledgeable treasurer of El Centro. Now there are no pastors in Sancti Spiritus province - only lay leaders with moderators who cannot visit very often.

Pat reported that Meneses and Iguará both recently welcomed new members; in addition, 3 children (school-age) and 1 adult were baptized at Meneses. Bright ray of hope for those small churches.

Report to Presbytery, Dec. 5, 2023

Randy will write, Pat will speak; report will include some news from Business Meeting, remind people of the trip, and of the fundraising drive.

Plans for 2024 Partnership Trip March 11, 2024

Pat reported that airfare for a Monday departure is about twice that for a Tuesday departure.

Motion to move trip dates from March 11-19 to March 12-20, pending confirmation from Marielys - **M/S/P**. (Pat contacted Marielys after the meeting and she immediately replied that the new dates are fine.)

Ken has received 7 applications so far. Two are from North Lake; we hope to reinvigorate that partnership with Caibarién. Randy anticipates at least 4 from GraceWay. El Redentor will have 2, maybe 4. Reminder that we need applications ASAP (Dec. 15 deadline) - to allow time for visas, finalize hotel arrangements, and airline tickets. Delly has a friend in Puerto Rico (Presbyterian Church) who would like to join us for the trip; she will meet us in Miami.

Next Meeting

...to be held after the March trip, probably in April. In the meantime, everyone is asked to keep communications open.

Closed in prayer by Randy Simpson at 12:30 p.m.