

## **Mutual Mission Report**

Spring Stated Meeting – Presbytery of St. Augustine

*Diane Watkins & Bob Bell, Co-Chairs*

Our St. Augustine Mutual Mission exploratory/discernment team spent 7 days in Cuba in February. The team included Rev. Wain Wesberry, Diane and Mike Watkins, Bobbi Newland (all from First Fernandina), Bob Bell (First Perry), Pat Crews (Middleburg), Martha Shaffer (Hodges Boulevard), and Terry Blaes (Dunnellon). Rev. Nigel Pusey represented our JEMM partners.

During our time in Cuba, the team visited the three Presbyteries which make up the IPRC—or Reformed Presbyterian Church in Cuba. These are the Central Presbytery, the Matanzas Presbytery, and the Havana Presbytery. Within each Presbytery we were able to visit approx. 5 congregations (less than half), and talked with the pastors and church members, learning what the congregations are doing, and how we might best be able to partner with them. We also visited their camp (located in the Central Presbytery), and seminary (located in the Matanzas Presbytery). At each location, we were welcomed warmly with hugs and kisses, as well as refreshments. At the seminary, we were able to meet with PC(USA) mission co-workers David Cortes-Fuentes and Josey Saez Acevedo.

The team feels very strongly that we should continue the process of discerning if this is the right time for a relationship to be formed with our Cuban brothers and sisters, and how that relationship may look. The Cuban church is very direct that they want our friendship much more than our financial resources. Developing a partnership will take time. We recommend the following as ‘next steps’. SAMM will send at least 2 people to the Cuba Partners Network Gathering this fall in Leesburg, FL. Additionally, we suggest planning a second trip to Cuba, to visit with all of the churches in the Matanzas Presbytery, in 2019. Spending time in a single presbytery will allow the team to go deeper into relationship building, and the group unanimously felt drawn to this presbytery.

We currently have 4 youth registered for our Jamaican youth exchange trip in July—but we desperately need at least one adult leader for the trip. This an expenses paid trip for 12 days—July 13-23.

If you have any questions, please visit our Mutual Mission table at the May Presbytery meeting or contact us through the website. We would be happy to visit your congregations and share more of the stories and pictures from Cuba.