

Transformational Journey in Cuba in 2012

A transformational journey is a physical journey of faith, transforming travelers through challenging encounters with other communities.

All Saints Church announces its second Transformational Journey in Cuba in May 2012. This Caribbean island nation has been the subject of much political and social discussion, controversy, and misunderstanding, especially since its socialist revolution several decades ago. Travel and trade between the US and Cuba have been severely limited according to US policy, but there are opportunities to visit this island nation and be transformed as a result.

Cuba has an ethnically and religiously diverse population, with religious freedom written into the new National Constitution of Cuba. Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and local spiritual customs (such as Santería) continue as part of the daily lives of many Cubans. The Episcopal Diocese of Cuba has 22 priests, 9 parishes, 28 churches and 43 missions. The bishop is assisted by two newly-elected suffragan bishops—one of whom is a woman. A Transformational Journey to Cuba from All Saints is being designed in the context of a religious encounter with the faith—and faithful—of Cuba. We will meet with local church members of all vocations—from bishops to lay workers—to celebrate worship together, share ideas on church growth and nurturing, as well as to understand how our shared Episcopal traditions and not only survive but flourish under in vastly different economic and political situations. We will have the opportunity share the dynamism and spirit that animates All Saints Church, but also be able to how that same spirit is at work in Cuba.

While the details are not fully worked out, we anticipate that the Journey will last approximately ten days in Cuba (with a travel day on each side), and will start with time in Havana, to visit the Diocese, the Cathedral, and perhaps government officials at various levels concerned with religious affairs. We will be able to understand more of the long and changing history and culture of Cuba, from its pre-colonial era, through waves of immigration, to the Castro revolutionary movement of the 1950's with its Soviet connection, to its current status as an independent



socialist state. Through familiarity with this complex history, we will be better able to engage the personal and religious lives of Cubans today. We will have an opportunity to visit the interdenominational Matanzas Seminary, founded in 1946 by the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopal Churches. The only ecumenical seminary in Cuba, it has educated hundreds of students from dozens of denominations. By meeting with both students and faculty from the seminary, we will exchange ideas on the harmony—and tension—between authentic Christian life and the political and social environment in which it exists in Cuba

We also anticipate a two-day visit to a the province of Pinar del Rio, to experience rural life and the incredible beauty of the Cuban countryside, which will provide a perfect setting for reflecting on what we have experienced in Cuba.



As a result of this Journey, we expect to gain a greater mutual understanding of how our shared Christian faith interacts with our own unique cultural and political situations. We will be able to deepen our faith by seeing more clearly what is central to our faith, and what has been conditioned or “traditioned” into it by local circumstances. This Journey offers the opportunity for a mutual deepening of faith and the role it can play in our lives. We will also see first-hand the effects and implications of US foreign policy towards Cuba over the past fifty years.



Trip Planning Process

All Saints members traveling to Cuba will do so under “General Religious License” issued by the US Department of the Treasury, so our journey there is completely legal under US law. (The Cuban government welcomes travelers from the US regardless of their license status.) We encourage you to register your interest with us, so that we can begin the application and review process. Once again we plan to limit this Journey to 15 participants, but if there is sufficient interest, we can arrange additional journeys in the future. When we have identified the Journey group, there will be three mandatory orientation/community-building sessions at All Saints prior to the trip: One focused on cross-cultural relations, another on Cuban history, culture, and society, and a third to address specific logistics and planning details. After the trip we will plan and conduct, an Adult Education event on a Sunday at All Saints, as well as have a debriefing dinner with the Rector to share our experience with him. Participation in these pre- and post-Journey events is an essential part of the Journey. We are consulting with various providers of legal travel arrangements to Cuba, and we expect the cost to be on the order of \$3200, including airfare. Dates are still tentative, but for planning purposes we are looking at May 18-28, which allows two Sundays at the Episcopal cathedral in Havana. .

Legal Notice

The United States Government has an embargo on spending money and making contributions to organizations in Cuba. Travel is only permitted under the terms of general and specific licenses for various purposes (visit the Treasury Department website at www.treas.gov/ofac for more information.) The All Saints Journey will be conducted under the terms of a general religious license, which stipulates that we engage in a “full-time program of religious activities in Cuba.” under the auspices of All Saints. While part of this is experiencing the culture and history of Cuba, our Journey is one of sharing faith with our Cuban sisters and brothers. Additionally, the license requires that all participants be “affiliated in a formal and significant way with your religious organization.” The term “affiliated” means “individuals that are employees or members of your religious organization.” Individuals from other parishes may participate in this Journey with a sponsoring letter from their home parish.



Your Next Step

For further information on this journey, or the Transformational Journeys ministry in general, please contact Juliana Serrano in the Office of Creative Connections (626.583.2731) or visit our website-in-progress, www.transformationaljourneys.org.

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All Saints Church Draft Itinerary for Cuba 2012
May 18-28, 2012

Friday May 18 Travel from Los Angeles to Havana

Morning flight from Los Angeles to Cancun; dinner at Cancun airport; late evening departure to Havana

Saturday May 19 Havana: Orientation to the city

Early AM Arrive Havana, transfer to Hotel Plaza
AM Breakfast at the hotel
AM Orientation Meeting
AM Introduction to Havana, perhaps walking tour of Old Havana or area near Capitol
Noon Lunch at El Templete
PM Visit to Museum of the Revolution
PM Dinner on own
PM Group meeting and reflection

Sunday May 20 Havana: First connection with host church

AM Breakfast at the hotel
AM Attend church at Catedral de la Santisima Trinidad (Episcopal Cathedral) (Vedado area)
Noon Lunch near the church (La Torre Restaurant , perhaps with some church people?)
PM Tour in Old Havana, including Catholic Cathedral
PM Dinner at _____
8:00 pm Cannon ceremony at Morro Cabaña Fortress
PM Group meeting and reflection

Monday April 21 Havana: Orientation to Life in Havana; emphasis on social welfare and religious issues

AM Breakfast at the hotel
9:30 AM Visit to Polyclinic, or some health-related facility
Noon Lunch and welcome by ICAP (Cuban Institute for Friendship among Peoples).
Lunch at Casa de la Amistad.
PM Visit with representatives of Cuban Department for Religious Affairs, and/or a member of the National Assembly who is also a minister or priest.
PM Dinner on your own
PM Meeting with local block organizations (Committees for the Defense of the Revolution)
PM Group meeting and reflection

Tuesday May 22 Religion in Cuba: Past and Present

AM Breakfast at the hotel
AM Visit with Council of Churches and/or Episcopal Diocese of Cuba
Lunch Lunch at _____
PM Visit/orientation to Afro-Cuban religion and culture
PM Dinner at _____

Wednesday May 23 Visit to Matanzas Seminary

AM Breakfast at the hotel
AM Drive to Matanzas
AM Possible visit to elementary school and/or ICAP house, time permitting
Noon Lunch with seminarians and faculty at Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas
PM Discussion/sharing/possible worship service with faculty and/or seminarians
PM Return to Havana (perhaps have dinner in Matanzas, and return to Havana after dinner?)
PM Dinner at _____
PM Group meeting and reflection

Thursday May 24 Travel from Havana to Pinar del Rio area

AM Breakfast at the hotel
AM visit to Las Terrazas ecological community
Noon Lunch at Las Terrazas vegetarian restaurant or Casa del Campesino
PM Continue to Viñales co check in Hotel Jazmines or Ermita
PM Dinner at hotel, on your own
PM Group meeting and reflection

Friday May 25 Visiting in Pinar del Rio area

AM Breakfast at the hotel
AM Visit with church in Viñales/Pinar del Rio area
Noon Lunch at restaurant in Viñales_____? Perhaps host local church people
PM Sightseeing and/or reflection as a group
PM Dinner at hotel

Saturday May 26 Return to Havana

AM Breakfast at the hotel
Noon Lunch at Santo Angelo
PM Visit to handicrafts market/and or, Fine Arts Museum
PM Dinner on own____
PM Group meeting and reflection

Sunday May 27 (Pentecost Sunday) Havana: Visit with host church and final sightseeing

AM Breakfast at the hotel
AM Attend church at Catedral de la Santisima Trinidad (Episcopal Cathedral) (Vedado area)
Noon Lunch Casona del 17
PM Free for individual research or sightseeing
PM Farewell dinner at El Patio or El Aljibe
PM Group meeting and reflection

Monday May 28 Depart Havana and return to Los Angeles

AM Breakfast at the hotel
AM Transfer to airport; check in for flight to Cancun
AM Arrive Cancun
Early PM Depart Cancun for Los Angeles