



Striving for Self-Sufficiency

World Mission Ministry Explores Roots of Refugee Crisis in Guatemala

What causes people from Central America to emigrate to the United States? What resources might help them not only survive, but thrive, in their home country?

These are a few of the questions that prompted 14 members of Presbytery of the James and Presbytery of the Peaks (which covers Virginia from the western border of POJ to the town of Pulaski) to visit Guatemala in fall 2019 to explore the U.S. refugee crisis from the Guatemalan perspective.

During their seven-day visit, trip participants learned about the country's history, causes of migration, and organizations working to enable Guatemalans to succeed at home.

PC(USA) mission partner Protestant Center for Pastoral Education in Central America, or CEDEPCA, facilitated the intercultural encounter.

A country rich in history, Guatemala is plagued with violence, poverty, and corruption that drive citizens to seek refuge and jobs elsewhere, often the United States.

Training leaders, empowering women, and responding to natural disasters are ways groups like CEDEPCA improve the abilities of Guatemalans to thrive at home. To demonstrate the positive impact of local efforts, CEDEPCA took the group into communities to see

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Guatemala: Who, What, Where

Guatemala is nestled between Mexico to the north and Honduras and El Salvador to the south.

With 17 million people, it is the most populous country in Central America. For comparison, 8.5 million people live in Virginia, which has a similar land area (42,775 square miles to Guatemala's 42,042).

Income inequality, malnourishment, political insecurity, and lack of infrastructure contribute to the country's economic distress.

Indigenous people in Guatemala (counts estimate between 40 and 60 percent of the population) are the most affected by these issues, historically facing economic and social exclusion.¹ More than 20 percent of the indigenous population live in extreme poverty, compared to seven percent of the non-indigenous population.²

¹ Indigenous Latin American in the Twenty-First Century, World Bank Group, 2015. ² International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs.

STATED MEETING: February 15, 2020

Presbytery Enjoys Generous Fellowship at Westminster

The 104th Stated Meeting of Presbytery of the James (POJ) took place on February 15, 2020 at Westminster Church in Charlottesville.

The members and staff of Westminster extended warm and generous hospitality. We enjoyed a delicious lunch of Brunswick stew for which a free-will offering benefitting The Haven day shelter in Charlottesville was encouraged.

2019 Moderator Diane Prevary (Tuckahoe) called the meeting to order and welcomed first-time commissioners and visitors. Elizabeth Snader, campus minister at the University of Mary Washington, and Macy Justice, a member of the Board of Directors of Campus Christian Community, were welcomed. Upon request of Colleen Earp, POJ's associate for youth ministry, two members of the Youth Council, Joey Williams (Southminster) and Paige Lake (Fairfield), were granted privilege of the floor so that they might freely speak to an overture coming before the presbytery.

Some of the highlights of the meeting included:

Rev. Ken Henry, pastor of Westminster, welcomed us.

Rev. Karen Witt (Providence, Gum Spring), moderator of the Committee on Ministry's (COM) examinations committee, welcomed new members to the presbytery:

- Rev. Tom Launius, member-at-large, from Grace Presbytery
- Rev. Richard Goodman, pastor, Blackstone, from Presbytery of New Hope

Rev. Gordon Lindsey and Ruling Elder Fran Hooper, of COM's Administration and Pastoral Care Committee, recognized ministers celebrating quinquennial anniversaries of their ordination from the 25th to the 70th.

Revs. Ken Henry and Lynne Clements of Westminster Church led morning prayer. Rev. Sarah Dennis (Tuckahoe) led the presbytery in a study of "Faith Formation" utilizing the Enneagram.

Diane Prevary led the service of installation of presbytery's



Rev. Diane Prevary, 2019 moderator
Leigh Anne Ring, 2020 moderator

moderator and vice moderator for 2020: Ruling Elder and Certified Christian Educator Leigh Anne Ring (Salisbury) and Rev. Patrick Dennis (Tuckahoe) respectively. The newly-installed moderator extended thanks to Past-Moderator Diane Prevary and presented her with a medallion recognizing her unselfish service to POJ.

A motion to consider concurring with an overture from National Capital Presbytery was added to the docket and the docket approved. Moderator Leigh Anne Ring appointed a bills and overtures committee to bring a recommendation to the floor regarding the overture. Members were Rev. Jeremy Cannada (Amelia), Rev. Patrick Dennis, Ruling Elder Lamar Lockhart (Chester), Ruling Elder Kenna Payne (Westminster, Richmond), and Rev. Diane Prevary.

The business of the day included the following matters:

- Heard a report from Rev. Fred Holbrook, stated clerk, that one investigating committee had completed its work without any charges being filed and a second investigating committee had been formed and is investigating a request for vindication for rumor and gossip spread within a church.
- Lamar Lockhart, moderator of the Self-Development of People ministry, presented a grant in the amount of \$7,000 to RVA League for Safer Streets. Representatives Paul Taylor, Weldon Bunn, and

Robert Morris received the check and expressed thanks to the presbytery.

- Kenna Payne, moderator of the Communication and Coordination Team, presented the 2020 budget which was approved.
- Ruling Elder Jen Rowe (The Presbyterian Church, Fredericksburg) reported as moderator of the Strategic Planning Team. Members of the team assembled a three-layer cake symbolizing the team's three questions about the presbytery's future: "Why?" (layer one), "How?" (layer two) and "What?" (layer three). During lunch, commissioners and guests were invited to enjoy a slice of the cake!
- Approved supporting Voices of Jubilee New Worshiping Community at the Bon Air Juvenile Corrections Center with an annual commitment of \$25,000 per year for five years (2020-2024). Lauren Cogswell Ramseur and Ashley Diaz Mejias will serve as co-pastors of the Voices of Jubilee, one of the 1001 New Worshiping Communities in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Dismissed Churches Fund will be the source of the \$125,000 total commitment.
- Heard a report from Camp Hanover's Executive Director Doug Walters and Board President Jennifer Gwyn (River Road). Their hard hats and reflective vests were visible symbols of the facility improvements that the POJ's financial support, through the Camp's incorporation, has facilitated.
- Granted honorably retired status to Rev. Mark Sprowl effective December 31, 2019; Rev. Janet Humphreys effective May 31, 2020; and Rev. Janet Winslow effective May 31, 2020.
- Granted member-at-large status to Rev. John Grotz, and Rev. Michelle Freeman Owens.
- Concurred with OVT-002 from Presbytery of Beaver-Butler including severance as one of the established minimum compensation standards in the Book of Order G-3.0303c.
- Commissioned Patricia "Trish" Bracken Carter, a ruling elder at First Church Richmond, for particular pastoral service as chaplain at Cedarfield Senior Living Retirement Community in Richmond.
- Pending congregational approval, granted to Rev. Tom Coye the status of pastor emeritus of St. Andrews Church, Kilmarnock.
- Approved a number of nominees to POJ leadership from Rev. Denise Hall, moderator of the Committee on Nominations.
- Approved the sermon and examination of Ashley Diaz Mejias to be ordained to serve as co-pastor of Voices of Jubilee.
- Approved the sermon and examination of Matthew Messenger to be ordained and installed as pastor of Mechanicsville Church.
- Approved concurring with OVT-031 which reads: The Presbytery of National Capital overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve the addition of inclusive gender options when gender information is collected by any entity in the PC(USA). This includes but is not limited to: session annual statistical reports, registration forms for any PC(USA) body or gathering, personal information forms (PIFs), ministry information forms (MIFs), and other statistical measures.

The meeting was adjourned and prayer offered by Leigh Anne Ring.

In Christ's Service,

Fred A. Holbrook
Interim General Presbyter
and Stated Clerk

UPCOMING PRESBYTERY MEETINGS

June 16, 2020 Salisbury (Midlothian)
October 17, 2020 Orange (Orange)

DISASTER RELIEF MINISTRY

Faith in Action on Ocracoke Island

In October 2019 and January 2020, volunteers from Presbytery of the James churches spent a week helping Ocracoke Island residents recover after Hurricane Dorian devastated the community in September.

The 9.6 square-mile island is one of the most remote in the Outer Banks of North Carolina. There are no roads connecting it to other bodies of land. Three ferries provide access, with each crossing taking an hour or two one-way, depending on the route. Fewer than 1,000 people live on the island year-round, but the population swells in summer months.

The storm washed out roads, destroyed property, and caused many residents to relocate. Mission trip participant Laura Pearson, a member at Southminster Church, reported that more than half of the community's 700 houses were flooded in the storm.

Despite the challenges and devastation, Laura, who served as the team's cook, found beauty and inspiration throughout the week. On the ferry ride to the island, the brilliant sunset made her think of Exodus 14:13: "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today."

"I knew that God would use our skills, provide for us, and lead us in all His work," she shared.

Cleaning out a rental house owned by an elderly man was one of the POJ team's projects. The waterlogged personal belongings of the former occupants, who fled to the mainland, filled a dozen trailers. The team added the trash to the mountain of other debris at a staging area that would be cleared over time by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The 12-member team also repaired floor joists that had rotted away, removed damaged floor and drywall, and installed replacement

floors. In addition, they spent a full day building an 80-foot ramp for a woman who used a wheelchair and had relocated to another house on the island.

Besides construction work, members of the crew prepared meals for about 25 volunteers. They cleaned and organized the fellowship hall, kitchen, and food donations at the Ocracoke United Methodist Church, which was central command for POJ's volunteers.

Clean and functional spaces like those at the church were hot commodities on the island. POJ's crew shared the kitchen space with another group using it to prepare meals for the island's school. Social workers set up a mobile office in the fellowship hall to process residents applying for aid.

Reflecting on the trip overall, Laura remarked that the chaos a disaster relief group faces could cause most people to run for cover. Instead, participants are "rewarded beyond measure" by seeing faith in action.

"When you go a mission trip," she reflected, "God uses the best part of your skills for improving His Kingdom."



Read about past trips, see more photos, and learn about upcoming mission opportunities through Disaster Relief Ministry by visiting presbyteryofthejames.com/disaster-relief.



(SECOND ROW) Wade Palmore (Genito), Don Williams (Maysville, Presbytery of the Peaks), Stan Parcell (New Hanover), Dick Mahlmann (retired POJ pastor), and Jeff Longwill (Chester). (FIRST ROW) Gigi Foster, Tom Foster, trip leader Brown Pearson (Southminster), and Laura Pearson (Southminster).

(TOP) Don Williams and Barry Rae (Aberdour) install floor joists. (BOTTOM) Jeff and Betty Williams (Salisbury) remove water-damaged drywall in a kitchen.

CAMP HANOVER

Reach Forward in Faith: Capital Campaign Update

Your next visit to Camp Hanover should include a trip to the lake, one of the most beautiful spots on the whole property, where you'll find an iconic dock shaped like a Celtic Cross. And now, it will be easier for you to make that trip, regardless of your physical ability.

This month, two improvements to Camp Hanover were completed.

Hadder Way is a paved access road, made possible thanks to a Lead Gift from Louisa Church.

Pearson's Trail is a wheel chair-friendly path connecting Wise Lodge to the Outdoor Chapel and lake. The meandering 1,244-foot stone path was made possible by a Lead Gift from Brown and Laura Pearson, members of Southminster Church.

Now that Hadder Way and Pearson's Trail are complete, volunteers are being recruited for the next two projects. Work will soon begin on constructing a footbridge between the Outdoor Chapel and the lake and building a boardwalk along the water's edge between the wheelchair-friendly path and the access road.



Interested in volunteering? Contact Doug Walters at (804) 779-2811 or email doug@camphanover.org.

Youth Build New Churches at Confirmation Retreat

Youth and chaperones from four congregations gathered at Camp Hanover February 5 through 7 for a confirmation retreat.

Led by the Rev. Jeremy Cannada, pastor of Amelia Church, confirmands spent time in large group keynotes, small discussion groups, and in play and worship. Cannada's message focused on helping youth

remember they are not just the future of the church, they are the NOW of the church. Once confirmed, they have as much voice as any other member of the church. He encouraged them to use their voices, and talents, back at their home churches.

A highlight of the weekend was an activity where small groups worked together to create a church. They designed the physical

space, developed a mission statement, and shared the ministries important to them.

It is clear today's youth have a heart for service as many aspects of their churches involved helping others. One particularly creative idea was a "tiny church" that could be moved around to different places in the community as needed.

2020 Events

HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT

March 21-22 Overnight retreat for high school youth and their adult leaders.

Spring Retreat Day

March 24 Fellowship, worship, and lively discussion on the topic God in our World, God in our Lives.

MIDDLE SCHOOL RETREAT

April 25-26 Overnight retreat for middle school youth and their adult leaders.

CAMP FUN DAY

April 26 Get a taste summer camp! Tours, hay rides, games, canoeing, fishing, door prizes, and more! Free event.

Family Camp

May 15-17 You're never too old or too young for camp! Family Camp is a summer camp experience for everyone!

HOME COMING

Sept. 4-7 Alumni of all ages are invited to rekindle old friendships, relive favorite memories, and introduce new generations to this place apart.

CAMP HANOVER



Help Wanted

Do you love kids, have a passion for sharing your faith, and feel energized spending time in God's creation? If so, Camp Hanover may have a job for you! Each summer a collection of amazing people come together to form an intentional Christian community here at Camp Hanover.

Together, the Camp Hanover summer staff endeavor to provide life-changing experiences for campers by showing them radical Christian hospitality. Staff also believe each child deserves to be loved as the child of God they are.

Working at Camp Hanover has been called "The Hardest Job You'll Ever Love!" We are looking to hire the very best people for resident and day camp programs and food service.

Available Positions

- Unit directors (21+)
- Camp counselors (18+, and preferably one year out of high school)
- Aquatics coordinator (21+, current lifeguard certification)
- Challenge course coordinator (21+ preferred)
- Arts & crafts coordinator (18+)
- Program support (17+)
- Lifeguard (17+, current Lifeguard certification)
- Kitchen assistants (17+)

If you think you have what it takes to be a part of the crew at Camp Hanover, apply today at camphanover.org/work-at-camp.

Find out more at camphanover.org.

Women's Retreat

Oct. 9-10 Overnight retreat for women. A powerful, dynamic experience building a closer relationship with Christ.

PEACEMAKING RETREAT

Oct. 9-11 Overnight retreat for middle and high school youth and their adult leaders.

Bluegrass & Gospel Festival

Oct. 18 Music festival from 2-6 p.m. with proceeds benefitting the Camp Hanover Annual Fund.

You Are Loved

Oct. 23-25 Overnight retreat to unapologetically affirm and celebrate middle and high school youth who identify as LGBTQIA+.

Hanover Christmas

Dec. 11 & 12 A magical night of music and drama celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. Free event. All ages & abilities. Overnight lodging and holiday brunch available.

Winter Camp

Dec. 28-30 Experience Camp Hanover during a different season. A winter getaway for current 5th to 12th graders.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS

A Dynamic New Sanctuary

Like many churches, the congregation of Westminster Church in Richmond has evolved over the years. Of two services available each Sunday, the progressive worship held in the fellowship hall was attracting more people than the traditional one in the sanctuary.

While the rest of the building was used throughout the week, the 8,000 square-foot sanctuary was quiet except for one hour each Sunday.

Pastor Joel Morgan and congregation leaders began discussing ways to modify the sanctuary to better accommodate their worship needs and provide flexibility for other purposes.

“It seemed like poor stewardship—to have been given the gift of this space, the largest in the facility, but to barely use it,” explained Morgan.

In 2016, the session enlisted an architect to envision a new life for the sanctuary. Drawing from the popularity of the informal, relaxed service, the architect recommended a design, which included a significant change to the sanctuary’s seating.

With a plan approved, the session hired consultant Horizons Stewardship to guide a three-year capital campaign to fund the project’s \$800,000 cost.

Renovation began in September 2018 and concluded in early January 2019. The most obvious change is the absence of pews. Instead, cozy tables and chairs are sprinkled around the room.

At the sanctuary entrance, a series of panels gently divide the worship space from a gathering area, where guests can choose refreshments before finding a seat. At the opposite end, an expanded platform behind the communion table creates more space for singers and instruments.



Rev. Joel Morgan



Worshippers invite others to join them at the tables, contributing to the welcoming environment at Westminster. The white decorative panels visible in the rear separate the refreshment area from worship.

The physical modifications to the building have led to positive changes in the way the congregation worships.

“The new sanctuary has brought us back together into one worship,” shared Morgan.

During construction, the two services were combined in the fellowship hall out of necessity. After the congregation moved back into the sanctuary, worship continued as a single service.

The casual seating and new audio-visual components appeal to worshippers desiring a progressive feel, while more traditional members appreciate the choir and organ at every service. In addition, people are mingling and mixing more.

Nearly everything in the transformed space is moveable, giving it flexibility to be set up and used in a variety of ways.

Beyond enhancing the congregation’s use of the facility, Morgan hopes the dynamic new sanctuary can be a benefit to the community, such as for concerts and events.

“We’re eager to share this beautiful instrument of God with others.”



(ABOVE) The renovation created space at the front of the sanctuary for a dais where the band performs. (RIGHT) It also gives the youngest worshippers plenty of space to gather for children’s time.



View more photos from the Westminster’s first worship service in the transformed sanctuary at youtube.com/watch?v=M7nG-6AjHm4. Learn about its capital campaign process in this article by Joel Morgan: nextchurch.net/choosing-capital-campaign.

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Guatemala

programs in action.

Rev. Mary Jane Winter, who is active at Second Church in Richmond and serves on the board of directors of CEDEPCA USA, coordinated the trip.

“It is exciting to see how God is at work in CEDEPCA,” she said. “Their ministry is changing lives, including ours, and showing us a way for a better world.”

In Guatemala City, the capital, participants visited Casa Del Migrante (“migrant house”). The organization aids people who have been deported to Guatemala as well as individuals coming through Guatemala from other countries. By providing housing, food, spiritual support, and medical care, the center helps individuals with immediate needs as well as longer-term solutions.



The group enjoyed dinner one night at Café Red, a restaurant and cultural center that provides jobs for young people as well as those who return to Guatemala. The restaurant uses local and organically-grown ingredients to further support the economy. Willie Barreno (standing), co-founder of the cafe, serves a dish created by one of his students to Becky Soper, Mary Jane Winter, and Wendy Steeves.

The group also visited organizations that help Guatemalans develop skills and resources to stay in their country.

They met indigenous Mayan women in rural Guatemala who run a cooperative textile business, Corazon de Mujer (“Heart of Woman”). The founders created the organization in the 1980s following a civil war, the violence of which disproportionately affected the Mayan peoples. Members support themselves and send their children to school by selling colorful textiles, which they weave in their homes.

Another association for Mayan women, La Fraternidad de Presbiteriales Mayas, provides business start-up loans. The tour visited makers of baked goods, chocolate, and tamales who had benefitted from these loans.

Opportunities to experience cultural events unique to Guatemala were included in the itinerary. The Virginia group enjoyed attending the All Saints’ Day Kite Festival, where Guatemalans fly colorful handmade kites, some more than 40 feet wide, over cemeteries to remember deceased loved ones and ancestors.

After a week of witnessing the challenges Guatemalans face and their efforts to improve their lives and communities, the team



Janet Chisholm (Presbytery of the Peaks) and Becky Soper play with children in an after-school program at Jesus es el Camino Pentecostal Church. Programs like this play a role in curbing migration rates by emphasizing education and offering children alternatives to gangs and drugs.

returned home inspired and hopeful.

“Everywhere we went, we observed the people of Guatemala working hard to make a living for themselves in their country,” participant Becky Soper (Blue Ridge) shared, “but circumstances beyond their control are still forcing some to migrate for survival.”

“There is so much more that we can learn,” she continued, “and many ways that we can help them succeed.”

Presbytery of the James’s World Mission Ministry connects our churches with brothers and sisters in need in places like Guatemala, Ghana, and Haiti. To become involved or invite the ministry to your church, visit presbyteryofthejames.com/world-mission or contact ministry moderator Mary Jane Winter at mjwinter@comcast.net.

Be a Pillar of the Church

Jesus taught us the great commandments: Love God. Love your Neighbor.

These are the pillars of our faith. As we live into these commandments, we become Pillars of the Church, the Body of Christ.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency invites you to join “Pillars of the Church,” an initiative that provides sustaining gifts to a ministry of your choice. You can participate with as little as \$10 per month.

Joyfully engage in God’s mission for the transformation of the world. Engage in a ministry that you feel called to support. Join with your commitment at presbyterianmission.org/pillars.



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office@presbyteryofthejames.org

A Dwelling Place Throughout All Generations (Psalm 90:1)

In 2019, South Plains Church commemorated 200 years of continuous worship. Growing from a congregation of six people in October 1819, South Plains has been a worshipful home to faithful, prayerful Christians.

Throughout the year, the congregation celebrated its anniversary in a variety of ways. Each service included hymns that existed prior to 1819, connecting worshippers of today with lyrics and music that would have been known to the founding congregants.

A series of talks provided insights into the journey of the long-standing congregation. One focused on church architecture while another compared historical events at the church's founding and in 50-year increments to the present.

In addition, the 200th anniversary committee commissioned an ornament of the historic sanctuary (built in the 1830s) and updated the church's written history, which was distributed to members and friends.

The highlight of the yearlong celebration was a gala dinner and worship service on the weekend of October 19 and 20. Pastors who had served the church in the past and general presbyter Fred Holbrook joined interim pastor Jewell-Ann Parton in the worship service.

Two hundred years of worship is an amazing milestone in any congregation. At South Plains, it provided a unique opportunity for members to come together to deepen and widen their perspective on their faith community and to celebrate their congregation, their neighbors, and the preceding saints.

(TOP RIGHT) The prayer quilt ministry worked with children of the church to create a wall hanging commemorating the 200th anniversary. (MIDDLE) Other activities at the church, such as cooking Brunswick stew over an open fire, also bring together members of different generations. (BOTTOM) Members Betsy Douglas, Lyn Johnson, Pat Valentine, and Heide Schumann participated in the church's annual alternative gift fair in November.



South Plains Church is located in Keswick, Virginia, about six miles east of Charlottesville.