

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands

Psalm 100:1

On Friday, May 3rd, Nick Bergin, Raphael Bundage, Diane and Larry English, Jaylon and Judy Fincannon, Stuart Gordon, Susan and Bill Kirby, Libby Marley, Keith Moore, and Pam and Mike Shampain traveled to Cuba to celebrate the tenth anniversary of our relationship with our Cuban brothers and sisters. The seed of this relationship was planted in 2003, when Dr. Todd Jones and the Rev. Rob Weingartner made an exploratory trip to visit with the Presbyterian Church in Cuba. This trip resulted in First Presbyterian Church's partnership with the Dora E. Valentin Church in Varadero, Cuba. From the beginning, David and Lucille Cole were the team leaders; as of this trip, sixty-six FPC members have traveled to Cuba at least once. When repeat visits are added, the total approaches one hundred participants.



This year's principle goal was to share the Gospel through music, led by members of our choirs. Those members sang at the Sunday worship service at our sister church in Varadero, with hymns in both English and Spanish. The Rev. Stuart Gordon read his sermon in Spanish and was thanked with applause from the Dora E. Valentin congregation. Songs also were shared at a senior-citizen center, a special-needs school, and with several childrens' choirs. The choir participated in a workshop at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas, where they sang with and for the seminary's choir. They met and sang with the Presbyterian Women and while in Havana they participated and sang in a musical workshop with the choir from First Presbyterian Church of Havana.



The trip's music was highlighted by a final evening at the Anglican Cathedral in Havana, sponsored by the Council of Cuban Churches. The event was organized by Joel Ortega Dopico, who is the Pastor of the Dora E. Valentin Church and currently serves as President of the Cuban Council. The evening included performances by adult and children's choirs from Havana as well as an interpretive dance presentation. The voices from the FPC choir sang hymns in English and Spanish. In addition, Libby Marley and Bill Kirby offered solos. The final song of the evening, offered for the congregation of over 300 people, brought together all the choirs to sing *We Are Marching in the Light of God*, in Zulu, Spanish, and English.



*Just as each one has received a gift,
use it to serve one another
as good stewards of varied grace of God.*

1 Peter 4:10

Thanks be to God,
Pam and Mike Shampain