

# Cuba Chronicles

2022 SPECIAL SPRING EDITION IGLESIA EPISCOPAL REFORMADA

## Partnerships with Canadian & American Parishes & Dioceses



The Rt. Rev. Charles Dorrington (right) with his wife Claudia.

### The Rev. Canon Barclay Mayo

This newsletter will highlight some of the great mission work being done in both the US and Canada on behalf of the REC Cuban Church. What follows is just a small sample of the many individuals and churches who have worked tirelessly to help plant this young & vibrant Diocese. I would be remiss if I didn't begin with the two wonderful Missionaries who answered a call to come and help, **The Rt. Rev. Charles & Claudia Dorrington**. Claudia writes... "Our first connection with Cuba was within eight weeks of Charles being raised out of a wheelchair in 2003. A man named Alejandro who lived in Moa

had grown up going to reformed Episcopal services with his grandfather. An REC priest from Florida held services for the workers in the Canadian nickel mine. Alejandro told Charles that he was a pastor of a congregation of around 20 people. During Charles' second visit, he realized that this man was not who he represented himself to be. However, Charles was able to speak with the people that he had met the first time & nine of them begged to use the REC prayer books to evangelize their neighbourhoods. They invited us to come back and see what progress they would have made in 6 months...and the rest, they say, is history!"

## Enrique Melchor...

Enrique writes, “Last week I was visiting Canon John Boonzaaijer and Bishop Walter Banek. We talked about my calling and my role within REC. One of those roles will be to schedule weekly meetings with the other Hispanic ministers who are raising up Spanish speaking congregations within the REC and Hispanic REC pastors who are fundraising for this ministry. In March I will be travelling with Canon Boonzaaijer. We will be visiting other REC churches to continue promoting the work of the Diocese of CUBA. We are also planning to extend the Cranmer House Seminary work from Moa to Havana, for which we will be in contact with Archdeacon Alexei and Deacon Eric. We have not yet made a decision on where our family will ultimately settle. I am currently attending three Bible study groups, one in San Diego, California, a second in Miami and the third in the Canary Islands. My process of obtaining residency in the USA will begin on March 30, once I have the residency and I will be able to visit Cuba and work more closely with the diocese there.”



## The Reverend Canon John Boonzaaijer, President of the REC Board of Foreign Missions

The Reformed Episcopal Board for Foreign Missions has recently called The Rev. Enrique Melchor (former rector of El Olivo, Havana) as a Missionary for Cuba and Hispanic Missions. Fr. Enrique will be eligible to apply for permanent residency in March 2022. He is currently forming a cadre of Hispanic church planters Stateside and is helping to coordinate prayer and support contacts within Cuba. Canon Barclay has also partnered with the REC mission effort—called

“Circles of Three” —by linking numerous Cuban partner clergy and parishes with supporting friends in two separate REC US dioceses. The REC parishes are very excited about these new relationships and thank ANiC for enriching these “friendship circles” with a number of new relationships. Lastly, the REC “Women of the Church” adopt a project each year and intend to raise \$7,500 in 2022 to assist with bringing Mrs. Melchor and their two children to the United States.

## Greetings from The Reverend Rob Stringer, Rector of Grace Anglican, Calgary (ANiC)

For many years Grace has been in partnership with Reyes de Reyes church in Pinar del Rio, under the leadership of the Reverend Yudel Perez Valdez. Yudel has recently begun the process for immigrating with his family to the USA. So...there are changes in store for us at Grace Calgary as well. At Grace, we believe it is vitally important to support the work of gospel ministry through the raising up of local leadership. We have supported the Cuba Mission through prayer and the provision of funds. We have prayed every Sunday for Yudel, his

parish, and the bishop. Many members of our parish also include the Cuba Mission in their daily prayers. We have sent funds annually to support Yudel & his ministry. All the money raised comes directly from the generosity of our members who set aside funds for the Mission. During the pandemic, with overall giving reduced, I had anticipated that we would have less to send to Cuba, but this was not the case. Over the last two years we have exceeded the amount requested. It is a great encouragement to me, and hopefully to you, to know that the



Lord always provides for us, and He always surprises us. We are looking forward to a new partnership & we hope to improve communication with that pastor & his family so that we may provide even deeper encouragement and prayer support.

## St. Matthew's Gander (ANiC) and Rev. Rolando Garcia, Moa

After a time of prayer, the Congregation of St. Matthew's, Gander began to search out a mission partnership with Cuba. With guidance from Rev. Canon Barclay Mayo, we were connected with Rev. Deacon Rolando Roman Garcia, who is Pastor of a preaching station in the city of Moa, Cuba. The Diocesan headquarters and seminary are located in Moa, which is over 900 kilometres

away from Havana, the capital of Cuba. St. Matthew's undertook to sponsor Rev. Rolando's stipend which was \$100 per month. We are hoping to continue this support, and God willing, to be able to provide other supports as opportunity allows and need calls.



It is our desire to have more than a mere one-way financial relationship. We are hoping to develop a heartfelt prayerful relationship with our brothers and sisters with Rev. Rolando and his church family. Communications are a little difficult due to a couple of factors. Language is one, but the Spanish/English divide is easily bridged using Google translate. The other is the internet connection, which in Cuba is rather spotty. Nevertheless, we have exchanged several emails since our initial connection, and we are looking forward to many more in the coming year. Rolando and family are remembered daily in our prayers, and during our Sunday church prayers. It is a blessing to know that they are praying for us, too.



## Carol Williams, Missions Committee Chair St. Matthew's Anglican Church, (ANiC)

Saint Matthew's ANiC in Abbotsford British Columbia has been partnering with the Iglesia Episcopal Reformada de Cuba Seminary and Cuban church with prayer and financial support since 2013. We also provide monthly support to Reverend Claudio and Neli Costafreda of the parish Pan de Vida in Havana. Carol Williams visited with the Cuban church in May 2015 and upon returning home gave a report to the Saint Matthew's Parish Council and the Outreach Group

regarding the excellent ministry at the seminary and in the church. We would like to send a representative to visit the Cuban Church and seminary sometime in the future when the current Canadian and Cuban travel restrictions are removed.

Under the direction of the Saint Matthew's Parish Council the seven-member Outreach Group makes recommendations for the Outreach yearly budget. We endeavour to keep the Saint Matthew's congregation informed regarding our partnership



with Bishop Willian and the Cuban church by circulating the Cuba Chronicles Newsletter and providing ministry updates in our weekly Parish News emails as they are available.

Saint Matthew's aims to disciple all age ranges through our adult education, youth group, Sunday school and nursery. Our focus on giving parishioners a solid theological foundation fit well with our partnership with the Cuban Seminary. It has been our joy to partner with the Cuban church, building relationships and sharing in equipping disciples of Jesus Christ.





## Linda Palmer & the Congregation of St. George's (REC) Hamilton, Ontario

St. George's was one of the earliest churches to partner with the Cuba Mission. One of their parishioners, Linda Palmer has been faithfully making and selling jam each year and donating all the proceeds to the Cuba Mission in support of the farm in Moa. In 2021 Linda was able to raise and donate \$675 to the mission.



## Church of Our Lord, Victoria BC — The Rev. Rob Szo

Rob writes: "We are very glad to be able to give support to our brothers and sisters in Cuba. We pray for them, and we give financial support for Archdeacon Alexei's stipend. He has a lot of responsibility for his own parish, and for other clergy in his area and he serves faithfully. Bishop Charles and Claudia Dorrington are members of COOL. They give us regular updates on the work. The witness of the Cuban believers is a sign of the power of the Gospel and the strength the Holy Spirit brings to his people. We're very humbled and grateful that we can support the church in this way."

### The Rev. Canon Barclay Mayo

So, what does this all mean for our US & Canadian partners and future affiliates? How can we help, when we cannot travel or get finances and much needed material into their hands?

- We can certainly pray with expectation that God will find a way. We have seen the Lord work in many miraculous ways during this pandemic, and I believe that he will continue to do so. Please pray fervently for Bishop Willian and for his wife Reina, who is in rapidly declining health.
- We can begin to make ready the funds that God has provided to relieve this suffering and have them available for when God opens the door, and we can once again be with these faithful brothers and sisters.

We are working on some methods for ensuring the Diocese is resourced for the coming year and are encouraged with some small successes!

- We have seminarians doing ministry who need partner churches, as well as a new ministry in Guantanamo and one Missionary Lay Reader who need sponsoring. Please pray, asking God if he would like you individually or as a parish to be involved. Salaries are as follows: Priest—\$120USD/mo. Deacon—\$80USD/mo. Diaconess Asst, Missionary Lay Reader—\$50USD/mo. Lay Reader/ Seminarians— \$30USD/mo. These will need to be increased this year.
- Please pass this newsletter on to as many churches and people as you can. Ask them to pray and consider helping.

## How You Can Give to the Cuba Mission

Canadian donations should now be sent to:

The Central and Eastern REC Diocese of Canada,  
157 Haddon Avenue North,  
Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4A7  
[nelsonbuffett@gmail.com](mailto:nelsonbuffett@gmail.com) 905-527-1549

or in the USA

c/o REC Board of Foreign Missions  
23501 Cinco Ranch Blvd, Ste H120 #642,  
Katy, TX 77494  
[www.recbfm.org](http://www.recbfm.org)

### For more info about the Cuba Mission please contact:

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Mrs. Claudia Dorrington, Corresponding Secretary, REC-ANiC Society  
[revchas@shaw.ca](mailto:revchas@shaw.ca) | 250-652-8850

The Rt. Rev. Trevor Walters, ANiC Assisting Bishop, [walters34@shaw.ca](mailto:walters34@shaw.ca)  
The Rt. Rev. Walter Banek, REC USA, [wrbank@mac.com](mailto:wrbank@mac.com)

To explore how you can become more involved, please contact:

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