

Puerto Rico BWC Annual Conference 2017 Partnership Report

We are One: Connected in Covenant within our conference and in living out our partnership with the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico. This ministry partnership started two years ago in October 2015. Therefore, it is our newest BWC global partner member in our vision of a global church community. Since then, The Methodist Church of Puerto Rico elected a new episcopal leader, Bishop Hector Ortiz. It is our goal to continue to strengthen our relationship with the church and explore new opportunities for bilateral exchange so that we are both blessed by it. As the island continues to struggle with financial problems, the local churches and communities are faced with limited resources. It is at times such as this that I believe God opens door of possibilities for mutual growth.

I am pleased to inform that several of our local churches have embraced the call to initiate relationships with local churches in Puerto Rico. These churches have pioneered the effort and started building bridges of connection.

Among them I would like to recognize:

- Calvary-Centennial Coop Parish, under the leadership of Ray McKinnon and in partnership with Middletown and Toms Creek, sent a group of 55 to the island of Vieques to work at the town Methodist church and a facility to house VIM groups;
- Fallston UMC, under the leadership of Rev. Karin Walker and a committed group of partners from the local congregation, is working with a congregation in the Southern part of the island called Patillas. They are in partnership with Iglesia Metodista Puerta del Cielo in Guardarraya to assist in the completion of a church building and a multipurpose facility that can also be used as a shelter during hurricane and tsunami emergencies;
- Mt. Carmel UMC led a group to the island of Culebra where they engage in community work around the local church.

In addition, a team of young adults from Puerto Rico will be supporting our BWC Latino Camp at West River in August with worship and music. They will be sharing the Word through music and song.

It is our plan to have a delegation visit the island in 2018 with our new bishop to explore additional concrete ways to strengthen the connection.

In Christ's Service,
Rev. Edgardo Rivera