

# **Holy Trinity Cuba Committee Guidelines for Travel to Cuba**

## **Why do we go to Cuba?**

The goal of each traveler to Cuba is to deepen the spiritual companionship between the members of Holy Trinity and those of San Juan Bautista. Each traveler should have in mind how s/he might further that goal.

## **What do we do in Cuba?**

Our license from the U.S. Treasury Department states that every traveler under our license “will engage in a full-time schedule of religious activities,” which it defines as “attending religious services and activities that contribute to the Cuban counterpart’s religious or institutional development such as: ministerial training, education, or licensing; religious school development; youth outreach; training in or conducting of marriage seminars; construction of places of worship or other facilities for full-time use by a Cuban counterpart; production and distribution of religious materials; assistance in holding religious services; religious preaching or teaching; and training or assistance in church administration.” In addition to these activities we eat a lot, walk a lot, pray a lot, and talk with a lot of people.

## **Who can go to Cuba?**

Any member of Holy Trinity who is a confirmed communicant in good standing for at least six months and who shares the above-mentioned goals can go to Cuba. Our license does not permit us to invite people who are not “affiliated in a formal significant way with [our] religious organization” to go to Cuba, and states that all travel “will be supervised by an official of [our] religious organization.” We expect that travelers to Cuba will be actively involved in the Cuba Committee activities during the year before their trip and the year after. Our license allows for up to four trips a year for any number of persons. We generally send at least one visitor a year, but hope to increase both the number of visits and of visitors. This year for the first time ever we will have a group of 6-8 people go to Florencia, and we are laying the groundwork for more encounters.

## **What should I do if I feel called to go to Cuba?**

Get involved in the Cuba Committee so that you have a real sense of what we do in the companion church program. We meet in Room 209 on the first Sunday of every month after the 10:30 service. For information on Committee activities, call Kathy Navajas at 377-8439, or e-mail her at [navajas@rll.ufl.edu](mailto:navajas@rll.ufl.edu).

Start studying Spanish. Almost no one in Florencia speaks English, and while basic needs can sometimes be communicated without language, getting our basic needs met is not our goal in going to Florencia. In order to help deepen the spiritual companionship between Holy Trinity and San Juan Bautista you should be able to speak at least some Spanish, travel with someone willing to translate, or be an excellent dramatic actor. Check with Kathy Navajas for the latest info.

Get a passport: (<http://travel.state.gov/>)

If you have a passport, make sure it is current. If you don’t have one, get one. If you are not a U.S. citizen, find out about possible visa requirements or travel restrictions from the U.S. for your nationality.

Make your desire to travel to Cuba known to the Cuba Committee.

Getting a visa for travel to Cuba takes 3-4 months, once you get permission to use our license. So, at least six months before you want to go, you should request and fill out an application in which you:

- explain your interest in going to Cuba
- indicate when you can go
- outline how you can help deepen the spiritual companionship between Holy Trinity and San Juan Bautista
- indicate your fluency level in Spanish a/o your ability to communicate with non-English speakers by other means.
- indicate whether or not you need help financing your trip

### **How much money will I need?**

Travel to Cuba in March of 2006 cost roughly \$1100 for a one-week trip: visa, travel to Miami, hotel, parking, airfare, lodging in Havana, transportation to Florencia, and compensation for food and lodging. The general assumption is that each traveler pays his or her own way. There may be some financial support available for those in need, depending on the funding the congregation has made available for the Outreach Committee to distribute. Before requesting such support, we ask that you prayerfully reflect on your economic situation. Funds for travel will be shared equally by all those who alert us to that need **by March 30th**, but will not cover the full cost of the trip. **All travel subsidies are allotted at the April meeting each year**, after we get our budget. The Cuba Committee plans to do some creative fund-raising to help facilitate visits both to and from Cuba, and expects that those who wish to go will actively participate in such activities, for themselves and for fellow travelers.

### **Who will plan the trip?**

Cuba Committee members who have been to Cuba will help you plan your trip. In each group of travelers someone will have to apply for a visa through the Episcopal Cathedral in Havana. Being a Spanish-speaker helps with this process. Another member of the group should make arrangements here with the travel agent for flights to either Camagüey (closer to Florencia) or Havana. Transportation to Florencia can be arranged with the help of Cuban clergy and cathedral staff. Both U.S. and Cuban policies regarding travel change frequently, and planning your trip will require great foresight, research, patience, perseverance, and the help of God.

### **How about health risks? <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/chdAlachua/>**

Cuba is a tropical country. At least four months before you plan to go to Cuba, contact the Alachua County Health Department (334-8849 / 224 SE 24th St. Gainesville) especially if you plan to go in the summer. Travel immunizations are given **by appointment only** Monday through Friday. Tell them where you're going and ask what vaccinations or precautions you should take. Certain vaccinations need to be taken in several doses over a period of time for maximum protection, so do this as soon as you begin to plan your trip.

## **Timeline for planning your trip**

### **One year before you want to go:**

- Let someone on the Cuba Committee know you want to go, especially if you want to request a travel subsidy.
- Start brushing up on Spanish or learning at least a few basic phrases
  - Take a Continuing Education class at SFCC: <http://admn.sfcc.edu/%7Ece/portal.htm>
  - Take a leisure course at UF: <https://www.union.ufl.edu/leisure/Secure/index.asp>
  - Use **Rosetta Stone** free and on-line from the **Alachua County Library**:  
<http://www.aclid.lib.fl.us/>
  - Talk to Kathy Navajas about classes at Holy Trinity: [navajas@rll.ufl.edu](mailto:navajas@rll.ufl.edu)

### **Six months before you want to go**

- Get involved in the Cuba Committee: We meet the first Sunday of every month at 12:15 in Room 209
- Get a passport a/o make sure your passport is current for when you want to travel
- Contact the Health Department: <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/chdAlachua/> about vaccinations
- Fill out an application to use the Holy Trinity license. Contact Kathy Navajas at [navajas@rll.ufl.edu](mailto:navajas@rll.ufl.edu)

### **Four months before you want to go**

- apply for your visa through the Cathedral in Havana: Contact Francisco at [episcopal@enet.cu](mailto:episcopal@enet.cu)
- contact Magaly Fernández, our travel agent, about your travel plans: [magiefern@aol.com](mailto:magiefern@aol.com)
- let the folks in Florencia know when you plan to visit. Get contact info from Cuba Committee.