

The Episcopal Diocese of Georgia
Companion Diocese Commission Annual Report
September 21, 2016

During 2016, four mission teams from the Diocese of Georgia worked alongside Episcopal congregations in four separate locations in our Companion Diocese of the Dominican Republic. This relationship between our two dioceses extends back to our first mission trip to the Dominican Republic in 2001, and remains a vibrant part of our diocesan ministries, both home and abroad.

The Southeastern Convocation sponsored a team of nine missionaries who worked in El Carretón from January 18-26, 2016. This trip marked the fifth consecutive year the team has worked in this community. Projects included checking on the installation of a water system to provide water for the plumbing in the school, repair work in the Episcopal school building, light construction in the community, and classes for the school children about different cultures and their customs. Team members included Ava Bokker, Ann Franklin, Dr. Lela Lewis, Patsy Lloyd, Jacob Nickodem, Mary Jo Nickodem, Jim McGovern, the Rev. Dee Shaffer, and Rena Simpson.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church (Savannah) sponsored a team of sixteen missionaries who conducted an optical clinic in the city of San Pedro de Macorís from January 30 – February 6, 2016. This trip marked the third consecutive year that the team has worked in this community. The team saw 721 patients and performed 418 complete dilated eye exams. They dispensed 418 pairs of reading glasses, 222 prescription glasses and many pairs of sunglasses. When the team returned home, the team's optician made many pairs of glasses that were shipped to the clinic to distribute to patients. They also referred 64 patients for sight saving or vision restoring surgical and medical care. Team members included Dr. Hank Croci, Suzanne Croci, Jurgen Dinger, Ximena Dinger, Dave Howell, Kate Freeman, Dr. Sally Freeman, Judy Kenney, Suella McCrimmon, John Moore, Dr. Alan Peaslee, the Rev. David Rose, Dave Sweeterman, Judy Sweeterman, Haydee Toedtman, and Jim Toedtman.

St. Anne's Episcopal Church (Tifton) sponsored a team of five missionaries who worked in Las Carreras from April 1-9, 2016, continuing construction work on the church building for the congregation of Espíritu Santo in that village. This was the fifth consecutive year that the team has worked in this community. The team plastered and painted the interior of the church building during their trip. Although the building has not yet been completed, worship services are now being held inside the structure. Team members included Stacey Beckham, Lindsey Duncan, the Rev. Lonnie Lacy, Rich McDonald, and Troy Spicer.

Christ Episcopal Church (Valdosta) sponsored a team of eight missionaries who worked in the Dominican Episcopal camp and conference center in El Pedregal from May 9-16, 2016. This is the twelfth consecutive year that the team has worked in

this community in a relationship that began with the first trip in 2001. The team installed sixteen ceiling fans in an Episcopal school and in one of the large meeting rooms at the conference center, taught environmental classes to middle-school students, repainted a large swing set, repainted and refurbished a volleyball court, made bookcases, held a rabies vaccination clinic for 50 dogs and cats, and sponsored a “splash party” for 150 children from the nearby village. Team members included Julius Ariail, Julia Ariail, the Rev. Deacon Leeann Culbreath, Phyllis Hiers, Dr. Meg Hiers, Dr. Bill Querin, Fred Richter, and Paul Stevenson.

Each of the four mission teams was featured in *From the Field* twice, once during the week of their arrival and then again during the week of their return. These articles included photographs of each team and summaries of the work accomplished.

Julia and Julius Ariail (Christ Church, Valdosta) continue to serve as co-chairs of the Companion Diocese Commission. As Bishop Benhase's representatives on the board of the Dominican Development Group (DDG), a coordinating agency for the dioceses with companion relationships with the Diocese of the Dominican Republic, they attended the board meetings of the DDG in Santo Domingo (February 15) and plan to attend the next meeting in Tampa, FL (October 17). At the DDG meeting in February, Julia was elected to serve as secretary of the organization. They also participated in the ordination and consecration of the Rt. Rev. Moisés Quezada Mota as Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of the Dominican Republic on February 13 and were members of the mission team sponsored by Christ Church (Valdosta) from May 9-16. They attended the annual conference of the Global Episcopal Mission Network in Puerto Rico from May 17-21. Julius made one additional trip to the Dominican Republic in August to participate in the 25th anniversary celebration of the episcopate of the Rt. Rev. Julio C. Holguín, Bishop of the Diocese of the Dominican Republic, and continues his work to assist with the development of the website and social media of the Dominican diocese.

Our diocesan budget allocated \$10,000 to support the work of the Dominican Development Group, which coordinates the work of the approximately fifty mission teams that come from the United States each year to work alongside Episcopal congregations in the Dominican Republic, supports the development of the facilities and the programs of the Diocese of the Dominican Republic, and raises funds for the endowment of the Diocese. The proceeds from this endowment will eventually lead to the Diocese's financial independence, the first in Province IX to attain this status.

For more information on the work of the Companion Diocese Commission, check our webpage here: http://georgia.anglican.org/?page_id=19.