

Minute for Mission for PWNC churches – Health Ministry in Guatemala

Instructions

The following contains information relating to Health Ministry in Guatemala, an important part of our Presbytery Partnership and supported by Nickel a Meal funds. Please consider adapting these readings to your own congregations needs. You may know the names of individuals in your partner church who can be included. And you may be aware of certain situations in your partner community that could make the following more informative and relevant. Each reading that follows is intended to be read by a different member of your congregation as a “Minute for Mission” in worship or in any other appropriate setting.

Thank you for reflecting on these ideas together, for considering ways in which your congregation and partnership committee can more effectively support your partner church, and for your love, care, and involvement with our brothers and sisters in Guatemala.

Introduction

As you know, our church has been in partnership with _____ (name of partner church) in Guatemala since _____ (date of church partnership). As partners, we have shared experiences in a variety of ways. A health initiative has been an important part of our presbytery’s partnership work since 1996, and our sister church has had opportunities to benefit from this work. Health efforts have focused on prevention, health education, and specific projects that support basic health needs in Guatemala.

You’ll also hear about the Children’s Nutrition program, which was initiated in 2002. Our partner church – like all the others in its presbytery – is eligible to participate in this project as well.

As you listen, you will recognize ways in which we can all work together to improve the lives of our partners. We’ll look forward to working on these details later. Now, let’s hear these voices:

Reading #1

I represent the Guatemalan presbyteries’ joint health committee. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with Presbyterians in North Carolina as we try to improve the health of our communities.

To us, health is a very broad term. It includes not just physical health, but has mental, spiritual, and relational components. We talk about ways that NC doctors could help us, but we have resources here as well. We want to work together, and not just be dependent on our partners. And we want to be able to collaborate with people and groups in Guatemala who work in health.

So we train health promoters – 2 or more in each of our church communities. They learn about some of the common health problems we share, including parasites and diarrhea, malnutrition, asthma and other respiratory diseases, and injuries. They learn about preventive health as well, such as the importance of immunizations and hand-washing. And they learn how to understand the health needs in their communities and develop projects to meet those needs.

Our work these past 12 years has made a difference, but we have many dreams, and have not been able to do everything we’d like to accomplish.

Reading #2

I represent _____ (name of the Guatemalan pastor) and the session of our partner church. [Fill in some details about your partner congregation as you know them – size of the church or community, degree of needs, etc.] Our partnership is very valuable, and the health project could be of great benefit to us. But we don't always know what the promoters are learning, and we want to do a good job of passing on their knowledge to our community.

Reading #3

I represent _____ (names of the health promoters in your partner church). Young and old, women and men, well-trained and uneducated, we enjoy the chance to meet together with the other promoters in our presbytery, and to learn about health. And we have learned a great deal in these past few years. We'd like to put our knowledge to better use and improve the health of our church and community members. We have a dream of putting first aid kits and materials in each of our churches. More of our members should be growing gardens. A number of our children have asthma, and would be healthier if their families built and used the new stoves we've talked about. And diarrhea and parasites are very common – if everyone had clean water, and we built more of the composting latrines to use, we would be healthier. Some of our people are struggling so much they don't have time or interest in coming to meetings at church to learn about these things, and the up-front cost of some of these projects is difficult as well. And then some of our communities suffer annual flooding. It's hard to recover, and think about the future, when the immediate present is so difficult.

Reading #4

I represent the children of (name of partner church). We have a nutrition program in most of our churches, and enjoy eating together and studying stories from the Bible. And when we got home, we also enjoy some of the things our mothers have learned in the kitchen while we were meeting.

Thank you for participating in the Nickel-a-Meal program, which supports this program.

Reading #5

As members of _____ (your church's name), we've heard some of what's going on in the health work in Guatemala in our partner church and we've heard of some of the challenges. Please continue to support Nickel a Meal **AND** consider ways we can support the health and other ministries in our partner church, and bring them to the attention of our partnership committee.