

Right: Three of the Presbyterian women pastors who participated in a Women's Ministry retreat — Sonia, Alma Lily and Aracely — create the "steps" they need to take to resolve problems they have identified during the retreat. Far right: US pastors were Mary Jane, top photo with Aracely and Filomena, and Janet, bottom photo, with Sonia.



Women pastors find encouragement

"The hardest time for me was my divorce. I did not want this, but I lived through it," one of the women pastors in Guatemala said. "People in my church came to me and pleaded, 'Don't quit.'" She smiled and added that she stayed, but they then wanted to make all decisions for her, since there was no man in her life.

The women's struggles were many—less pay, (one did not receive any salary), difficulties accepting women's leadership, efforts to control, complaints about their dress, and pastoral demands that left little time for self-care. Many walked a fine line with their Session. One had an opportunity to be away for further study, but explained, "If I insist on my rights (vacation time), then I'll be called a troublemaker, so I probably won't go."

These women pastors, the first to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church in Guatemala (IENPG), were participants in a retreat led by the Women's Ministry of CEDEPCA and made possible by a grant from the Synod of Mid Atlantic. Six women have now been ordained as Presbyterian pastors, but they are scattered across Guatemala in different presbyteries and regions. The grant brought them together, along with two

women pastors from Virginia-- Mary Jane Winter and Janet Chisolm.

In a quiet setting of tropical flowers and secluded bungalows, the retreat provided time away and time together. The women engaged in Bible study, reflection, personal sharing, and exercises of relaxation and creativity.

The women pastors in Guatemala found encouragement and support, new relationships with each other, and new friends from the United States, one of whom noted how the retreat connected them with "these amazing sisters, whom we quickly came to love and admire. We were inspired by their courage and commitment to serve as pastors in spite of numerous challenges."

This retreat was possible thanks to CEDEPCA General Coordinator Judith Castaneda for the initial idea, to the US grant writers who provided funding, to co-mission worker at IENPG Sandi Thompson-Royer for valuable insights, and to Betty Carrera and Delia Leal from CEDEPCA Women's Ministry, who provided inspired leadership and essential coordination.

Did you know?

In 2018, CEDEPCA had 2,652 women and 450 men attend Women's Ministry workshops and classes.

Read more about how Women's Ministry has helped Avigail, whose story is inside.

Find out how you can make a difference. Look for the box of information with Avigail's story on page 3.

For immediate news on Women's Ministry and other CEDEPCA programs, visit and "like" us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/CedepcaUsa

See you this summer in Guatemala!

Since January of this year, CEDEPCA has worked with 11 Intercultural Encounter groups on their trips to Guatemala. Another 13 groups are coming this summer.

From January to May, CEDEPCA facilitated IE trips for five church groups, four college groups — including two national fraternity service groups— and the “Network of Storytellers.”

Here's who's coming next:

Date	Group	From
April 29-May 5	Presbytery of Baltimore	Maryland
May 20-25	UKirk at Virginia Tech	Virginia
May 25-June 1	Queens Alumni	North Carolina
June 4-11	Kirkwood United Church of Christ	Missouri
June 10-17	Central Presbyterian Church	Georgia
June 13-29	Prebyterian Church of Canada	Canada
June 19-26	Nacoochee Presbyterian Church	Georgia
June 29-July 10	St. Andrews United Church of Canada	Canada
July 3-7	Wayne Presbyterian Church	Pennsylvania
July 18	Living Word Nazarine Church	Texas
August 11-18	Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, Casa Materna Ana Sayre Board	Georgia
October 28-November 3	Peaks Presbytery	Virginia

By the numbers: CEDEPCA 2018 annual report

A message from Judith Castañeda, General Coordinator for CEDEPCA:

“During 2018 we had to face two humanitarian crises in Central America. The first one was on June 3, with the eruption of the “Fuego” Volcano in Guatemala, and the second was the caravans of migrants from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala moving to the United States.

“CEDEPCA responded to these humanitarian crises through the Disaster Ministry— facilitating psychological support, hygiene kits and food to persons of the affected communities. All the actions of CEDEPCA were made possible by the generous and thoughtful donations of 177 individuals, 37 churches, 12 partnerships, and 4 other organizations, representing 22 states and 4 countries. Thank you for your support!”

In 2018:

- **18,218** people received humanitarian aid and participated in courses, workshops, and seminars.
- **14,235** people received humanitarian aid through assessments, pastoral and social action, psychosocial support, food bags, and water filters.
- **3,983** people participated in different courses, workshops, and seminars in CEDEPCA's programs.

Add a bit more to your donations!

If you shop online through Amazon, you can send CEDEPCA USA a few pennies with each qualifying purchase. Like a Least Coin offering, these pennies can add up. Smile Amazon just sent us a check for \$169.13 for the first quarter of 2019. If you haven't selected us as your charity to support, follow the directions below!

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

- 1 Go to smile.amazon.com
- 2 Login in
- 3 Pick CEDEPCA (USA)



Profile from our e-newsletter: Avigail

'If the doors close, there are still windows!'

Avigail shares with us her story about how Women's Ministry classes changed her life. She is a young mother who grew up in a fundamentalist church as a pastor's daughter. In Guatemala, this means that to a certain degree, she grew up without autonomy and without a strong sense of self-identity.

"When I first came to CEDEPCA, I arrived with a lot of baggage and frustrations because I didn't fit the stereotypes imposed on women: quiet, submissive and hard-working. Once in my church they had even prayed for me because I had some 'defect.' But I felt restless inside because I knew that I could do more than cook and clean.

"At the Women's Ministry I found a place where I could be myself.

"In the course *Healthy Relationships*, I have acquired tools to improve my communication with others. I've learned how to say how I feel without hurting others. I've learned how to manage my anger. And I've improved my self-esteem because I've learned that seeing the beauty in myself is good – and now I do it fairly frequently.

"In the course *Being a Woman is Marvelous*, I discovered that if I accept all the forms of violence as the natural way, this acceptance causes irreparable damage in me. I've learned that self-denial is not always best. An



excess of self-denial can be harmful not only for myself but also for those around me.

"I have become a facilitator for *The Tamar Project*. *The Tamar Project* works with adolescent women to help them understand that all the types of violence that women suffer are not natural or inevitable, and the project works to put an end to sexual violence. This work has helped me to identify the types of violence that I myself have suffered, and it also has helped me to see my strengths as a leader. It has helped me recognize that being a woman does not make me less capable.

"In my church, acceptance of my leadership has been difficult. I taught women their rights, and now the men have no longer given me the right to teach. They tried to silence me. But now I have many tools to use, and it

This issue, we're trying something new in our printed newsletter. We are including an article from the electronic newsletter, because we think many of our readers pick one format or the other and may be missing some great stories about how CEDEPCA is transforming lives in Guatemala. We'd like your feedback. Did you already read Avigail's story in the e-newsletter and prefer totally different articles in the printed newsletter? Or was her story new to you and you'd like to see more more of these personal profiles? Email us at info@cedepca.us, or write to us at : CEDEPCA USA, P.O. Box 920243, Norcross, GA 30010

doesn't matter how many doors the men shut on me. There are still windows! In 2019 I have become a leader of Sunday School, something which a woman had never done in my church. Now I am one of three women in leadership.

"Little by little I have been earning respect of men and women. It has been a challenge to raise my voice and fight for an equal share of privileges. I know that it will not be easy, but neither will it be impossible. Now, thanks to the Women's Ministry, I am empowered. I no longer fear my abilities, but rather I use them to their potential, and I use them in service of the children and of my sisters and brothers in my community."

You can help Women's Ministry!

- A month's tuition for a student in the Women's Ministry program of courses and workshops is \$50.
- A class workbook for a single class is \$5.
- A one-year supply of workbooks for a student is \$60.

You can use a credit card to donate online through the CEDEPCA USA website, www.cedepca.us. If you prefer to write a check, a mailing envelope is included in this newsletter. You can also mail a check at any time to CEDEPCA USA, P.O. Box 920243, Norcross, GA 30010.



CEDEPCA USA Board welcomes three new members at meeting

Three new members were voted on for a three-year term during the annual meeting of the CEDEPCA USA Board, at the Calvin Center near Atlanta, GA. They are the Chad Mattingly (Kingwood, TX), Damaris Wise (Arlington, TX), and Mary Jane Winter (Richmond, VA).



The 2019 CEDEPCA USA Board includes President Elizabeth Milford (Woodstock, GA), Vice President Kathy Gorman-Coombs (Scotia, NY), Treasurer Marcia Towers (Lancaster, PA), Secretary Stephen Earl (Port Townsend, WA), Ex-Oficio member Judith Castañeda (Guatemala City), Damaris Wise (Arlington, TX), Laura Criehtfield (Towson, MD), Cheryl Rowan (Fredericksburg, TX), Lisbeth Siler (Elmhurst, IL), Chad Mattingly (Kingwood, TX), Gwendolyn Wagner (Vancouver, WA), Mary Jane Winter (Richmond, VA). CEDEPCA USA includes two liaisons: PC(USA) Liaison Kathy Carpenter (Blacksburg, VA), and Casa Materna Liaison Barbara Gifford (Decatur, GA). CEDEPCA USA's one staff member is Judy Moore (Norcross, GA). Former board members serving now as Volunteer Ambassadors are Erik Mjorud (Lawrenceville, GA), and Sunny Stautz (Gresham, OR).

Following are excerpts from their responses to the question, *"Why do you feel called to serve as a member of the CEDEPCA USA Board?"*

Chad Mattingly:

"[A] group from our church traveled to Guatemala to visit CEDEPCA and its partner ministries in [June] 2018. I often refer to this mission trip as the most powerful of my life ... We encountered an organization in CEDEPCA that is laser-focused on addressing the key needs preventing transformation and healing in Guatemala. I walked away from that trip a believer in the mission of CEDEPCA and without hesitation feel called to serve on the Board."

Damaris Wise:

"When I started dating Andrew, I remember looking at his Facebook profile and seeing pictures [of CEDEPCA] from Guatemala, so I asked him about it." Because of his involvement with CEDEPCA, "we started planning to have our first mission trip together, which turned out to be our honeymoon. I was touched by the work that CEDEPCA does with the communities that we visited: empowering girls, providing water filters, connecting with families who face difficulties but still show joy... I felt so blessed to be part of such a great experience. Now, I have the chance to ... contribute to this organization that I

carry in my heart, and I consider it an honor."

Mary Jane Winter:

"Ever since my first visit to Guatemala in 1986, I have been passionate about CEDEPCA. I led solidarity groups, travel-study seminars for Union Presbyterian Seminary, and partnership visits from my own congregation ... My love for CEDEPCA and commitment to its ministry has only grown stronger over the years. It is an honor to serve on its board, to connect more deeply, and to be able to give back with the energy, experience, and devotion that I have."

CEDEPCA? CEDEPCA USA? What's the difference?

CEDEPCA, the Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America, began in Guatemala over 30 years ago. It is an educational non-profit that works to transform lives by offering education, accompaniment and safe reflection spaces to women and men of diverse Christian traditions and communities. Headquartered in Guatemala, CEDEPCA also offers some programs in Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

CEDEPCA USA was created in 2009 as a US 501(c) (3) partner organization that supports CEDEPCA with fundraising and outreach throughout the United States. This newsletter is produced by CEDEPCA USA as part of that effort. See our website for more detail: www.cedepca.us

At the annual meeting, the CEDEPCA USA board also recognized the service of Board members rotating off this year: Bob Beach (Galveston, TX), and Sunny Stautz (Gresham, OR).

Traveling from Guatemala to represent CEDEPCA at the annual meeting were General Coordinator Judith Castañeda, Intercultural Encounters Coordinator Nancy Carrera, and Board of Directors President Flor de Maria Cox.