



**INFORMATION PACKET**  
**COSTA RICA MISSION TRIP**  
May 27 - June 3, 2023



## CONTACT INFORMATION:

### Registration and money questions-

Kerrie Cheshire: [kerrie.cheshire@asburybham.org](mailto:kerrie.cheshire@asburybham.org)

### Team Leader- Robert Mercer:

[robert.mercer@asburybham.org](mailto:robert.mercer@asburybham.org)

### Mission Coordinator- Brooke Jackson

[brooke.jackson@asburybham.org](mailto:brooke.jackson@asburybham.org)

### Costa Rica Mission Projects

#### Missionary- Wil Bailey

CRMP's Email: [jwilb4@gmail.com](mailto:jwilb4@gmail.com)

## COST OF THE TRIP

The cost of the trip is **\$1,200** which includes airfare, housing, transportation, and most meals. See the section on money for additional information. Final payments are due before we depart, please contact Kerrie Cheshire for payment information at [kerrie.cheshire@asburybham.org](mailto:kerrie.cheshire@asburybham.org).

The cost of the mission trip runs a little over \$2,000 per person. Due to the generosity of Asbury's Mission In Action team, we are able to reduce the cost significantly.

## **2023 SCHEDULE**

### **Saturday- May 27**

Call Time: **4:30 a.m. Birmingham Airport, traveling with American Airlines.**

6:17 a.m. (BHM) AA3423

12:05 p.m. (MIA) AA597

1:00 p.m. Land in San Jose Costa Rica

Lunch in San Jose, Head to CRMP, Dinner at CRMP Mission Center.



### **Sunday, May 28**

Church ~ Sightseeing/Shopping

### **Monday-Thursday- Typical Work Day**

Morning: Breakfast, Work Site/Mission Ministry Center

Afternoon: Lunch, Work Site/Mission Ministry Center

Evening: Clean Up, Dinner, Devotion, Hang Out Time

### **Friday**

Free Day- TBA

Spend the Night in San Jose

7:05 a.m. (SJO) AA1204

3:30 p.m. (MIA) AA3498

Touch Down in Birmingham at 4:30 p.m.

### **Saturday, June 3**

5:00 a.m. Arrive at Airport

## ITEMS TO BRING

### For Travel

- Passport
- Old school wired headphones for watching movies

### General Supplies

- Bible and Journal
- Bottle/canteen for water (relatively large & sealable) – Clean water will be provided at CRMP
- Personal snacks
  - Zip Lock bags for opened snacks.
- Spending money (See **Money** information below)
  - \$40 to turn in for travel meals
  - Offering for church (\$5)
  - A Visa type card is very helpful
- Towels and washcloths
- Beach towel for the free day
- Bedding for twin beds
- Pillow
- Insect repellent
- Sunburn remedies, sunscreen (very important)
- Deodorant (please!)
- Toothbrush, paste & floss
- Razor & shaving cream
- Towelette packets (baby wipes)
- Soap & shampoo
- Comb & brush
- Personal Medications
  - Emergency Medications i.e. EpiPens, inhalers, etc.
- Clothing recommendations: (See **Dress Code** information below)
  - Work clothes – light cotton best in hot weather. Hat, Sunglasses, Shorts (modest) and loose-fitting shirts/blouses, Walking shoes/closed toe work shoes, Work gloves
  - Church clothes; Sun dress, Collared shirt/long pants
  - Cover up to go to the shower, Shower slippers, Swimsuit (modest)
  - Servant's heart



## **BEFORE YOU LEAVE**

Contact your cell carrier and set up international phone service. Call your bank and arrange for international use of credit/debit cards

## **PASSPORT**

A passport is required for participants going on the trip. It takes 6-9 weeks to get a passport processed.

## **MONEY**

Personal gifts can be bought, but remember you have to carry them home. An offering will be taken at church on Sunday and possibly Tuesday.

You will also have opportunities to buy local snacks multiple times during the week. You will be responsible for any food purchased in airports. We recommend you bring around \$200 for spending money.

Most places take American currency but a debit, credit or prepaid card may be very helpful. We suggest you bring cash in smaller bills. Venders will give you change in Costa Rican currency (colones).

You will need to bring \$40 cash at check in for two travel meals in Costa Rica.

## **DRESS CODE**

We need you to help us stay above reproach in all areas of dress. What may not be a problem in the USA can be an identification problem in Costa Rican culture. Please help us rise above personal preferences to overcome any perception problems that can occur in a cross-culture ministry. Please dress modestly at all times. Sunday attire for church is below knee length dresses or skirts for girls and ladies and slacks (no jeans) for gentlemen. In addition, gentlemen should wear a nice, collared shirt on Sunday with dress shoes. (No sandals or tennis shoes.)

## **LUGGAGE & PACKING**

You will be allowed one checked bag (max **50 lbs.**) and one carry-on to fit into the overhead compartment. The team will be taking several pieces of ministry equipment and supplies that team members will be checking as a second piece of luggage. Each person must be able to carry his or her own personal luggage. Put your name, address, and phone number on all baggage before you arrive. We will also provide colored luggage tags on the day before we leave. Every suitcase should be secured.

## **INSURANCE**

Travel insurance is provided for each team member.

## **HOUSING**

The group will be housed at the CRMP ministry center. The CRMP ministry center has cabins with bunk beds. If we are staying closer to the work site, then we will most likely be staying in a church. We are responsible for the proper care of the rooms and restrooms. There is limited to no closet space so be prepared to keep clothes in suitcases.

## **LANGUAGE**

Spanish is the predominant language for the majority of the people.

## **MEALS**

We will be eating both Costa Rica food as well as more familiar items. If you have a dietary need, please let us know.

## **TIME**

Costa Rica observes Central Standard Time but they do not recognize daylight savings time. When we are there, they will be one hour behind us.

## **TEAM GUIDELINES**

- Be on time.
- Enjoy the culture and the people. Be open to all God wants to do in your life.
- Do not make promises that you cannot or will not keep. (i.e. "I will write you.")
- Do not give out money or gifts.
- If you are uncertain about the food, please take a small portion, and then have more if you desire. DO NOT complain about the food. If you have a diet problem, please see the team leader.
- Be cautious about exchanging names or personal information with anyone other than CRMP staff.
- Remember to follow instructions.
- Always be cautious and polite. Show your gratitude to all the staff and student leaders.
- Be involved; stay involved in all activities and ministry.
- This is an alcohol-free trip.



### **Costa Rica Mission Projects (CRMP)**

This mission organization is led by United Methodist missionary Wil Bailey. Wil and his wife Yolanda believe that when Jesus washed the feet of His disciples he taught us, in dramatic fashion, that if we claim to be His followers, we must be servants to one another.

CRMP is a support ministry for the Evangelical Methodist Church of Costa Rica. Since 2003 CRMPS has been coordinating building projects and Vacation Bible School activities primarily in southern Costa Rica. In 2016, CRMP completed the construction of their Missions and Ministry Center where they also have a day care center for no/low income families, and a home for students from rural southern Costa Rica who want to come to San Isidro to pursue higher education but don't have the financial means to pay for housing.

### **CONSTRUCTION**

One of their goals is to make sure that the churches in Costa Rica have the infrastructure *they* need to develop the ministries that *they* have been called to in *their* communities. CRMP does not tell the congregations how to “be” or “do” church. They **don't** need help identifying the needs around them. They see them on a daily basis. Most of the churches they work with are Methodist “community” churches. The majority of their members live within walking distance. What they **do** need from time to time are partners to walk alongside them.

The volunteer teams that come to Costa Rica to work with CRMP are **NOT** hired labor for the week. The physical work that we do is one of the many fruits of our being ‘church’ together. They expect teams to be as mindful of building relationships with the people around them, as they are of building whatever “structure” we may be working on at the time.

## RELATIONSHIPS

Through the body and blood of Jesus Christ (holy communion) we are bound to Him. Costa Rica Mission Projects believes that that “connectedness” also binds each of us, through Jesus, to one another. That’s what makes us a Universal Church. That means that even though you may be seeing most of the people you encounter there for the very first time, they are not “strangers” to you... they’re family. We may speak different languages, be from different countries and have different stories, but when we worship, pray, fellowship, serve and witness **together**, we realize that we are one church, one family bound to one another by the one Christ who abides in each one of us (John 6:56). This is precisely why it’s not better to just “send the money”. The Universal church is not a church if the members of its body are not experiencing those things together. It is vital to the health of this body for the different body parts to know one another.

## WHO’S SERVING WHO?!?!

This ministry is **NOT** about North Americans coming to Costa Rica to fix the problems of the Costa Ricans. Our hope is that through committing to real relationships with one another, to being church together, that everyone’s needs will be met.

Some people just love mixing concrete... on the ground... with a shovel. That’s just fine! But we believe that what keeps people coming back to Costa Rica year after year is experiencing church in a new way. Time spent with their new and old friends worshiping and praying and fellowshiping and witnessing and yes, mixing concrete! Once we experience physically that connectedness that has already existed between us on a spiritual level and a sacramental level, the word “church” means something different.



**COSTA RICA MISSION PROJECTS**

## **THE COUNTRY**

Costa Ricans are incredibly patient people (except when driving!) This benefits us in a couple of different ways. On the one hand it means that they give us the time we need to complete the different projects we've committed to, without ever asking "what's taking so long?" It also means that they are willing to take the time to get to know YOU, regardless of language and cultural barriers... through gestures, "Spanglish", or whatever it takes, however long it takes, they consider it time well spent.

Costa Ricans are consistently at the top of the "happiest people on earth" lists (whoever makes those up...) Everywhere you go in Costa Rica you will be greeted by polite smiling people who will often speak at least some level of English (and will be happy to try it out on you!) Making the effort to learn a few Spanish words and phrases before your trip goes a long way. We encourage you to learn some Spanish words and be prepared to smile and greet those you pass on the street as well as those you serve with. "Buenas" is a safe and easy greeting but learn more Spanish – you won't regret one minute spent preparing for your interaction with Costa Ricans.

Costa Ricans will almost always greet people with at least a handshake and often with a hug and a kiss on the right cheek. They are quick to pick up on body language cues and will not force physical contact upon others.

Costa Ricans are proud of the stability and level of development in their little country of 4.5 million people (half of whom live in the San Jose/central valley area.) They've had no military since 1946, which means that the levels of education and health care are higher there than in the surrounding Central American countries. Costa Ricans consider the multitude of tropical birds to be their "air force," turtles, sloths and monkeys their "army," and migrating whales and dolphins their "navy."

Average income for a family in Costa Rica is around \$12,000 annually. Due to massive agrarian reforms in the 1970s, Costa Rica is the only country in Central America with a land-owning middle class (although it is shrinking.) Around 75% of Costa Rica's economy is tied to tourism, however there is a clear disparity between industrial/urban areas, tourist destinations... and the rest of the country. Highways between large cities and the coastal areas may be great, while in rural areas there are still miles and miles of bumpy dirt roads which are, at times, impassable during the rainy season.

## **CLIMATE**

Because Costa Rica is located between 8 and 12 degrees north of the Equator, the climate is tropical year-round. However, the country has many microclimates depending on elevation, rainfall, topography, and the geography of each region.

Costa Rica's seasons are defined by how much rain falls during a particular period. The year can be split into two periods, the dry season known to the residents as summer, and the rainy season known as winter. The "summer," or dry season, goes from December to April. The "winter," or rainy season, goes from May to November, which almost coincides with the Atlantic hurricane season. During this time, it rains constantly in some regions.

On both sides of Costa Rica, the beaches and lowlands have high temperatures in the high 70's to low 90's (25 to 32 degrees C) and low temperatures in the 70's to low 80's F (22 to 28 degrees C.)

## **CURRENCY**

The currency is colones. 1 dollar = about 663 colones. Currency conversion apps are very helpful.