**PROVISIONAL ITINERARY**

**Central America Travel Study Seminar**

***Central American Migrant Trails: Exploring the Journeys to and from the***

***United States and Why We Must Act***

**EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA AND HONDURAS**

February 17-28, 2020

*The following general itinerary and schedule is provided to give those interested an idea of the travel study seminar content.  All items are subject to change.*

**Monday, February 17 –** *Arrival in San Salvador, El Salvador*

We will be received by the staff of the PC(USA)’s Global Mission Partner in El Salvador, IRCES, the Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador. There will be multiple arrival times by participants, which may allow some an opportunity for afternoon sightseeing. In the evening we will spend some time getting to know one another and oriented to what all we can expect during our time together.

**Tuesday, February 18, Wednesday, February 19 and the morning of Thursday February 20 –**

During our time in El Salvador, we will get some high-level perspectives on immigration issues from Salvadoran and US government representatives as well as international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (OIM).

There will be opportunities to speak with other NGOs that are researching the push factors, such as gang violence, poverty and high levels of unemployment, to better understand what has created this untenable situation.

We will also spend time hearing poignant stories for migrants themselves. IRCES, with support from PDA, has opened a shelter for returned migrants (deportees) to help them land, get re-oriented to their country of birth and figure out where to go from here. We’ll spend some time there interacting with the guests and learning more about IRCES call to minister to this vulnerable community that has been created by flawed immigration policies.

**Afternoon of Thursday, February 20 –** *3:00-8:00 p.m.* *Travel by bus from San Salvador to Guatemala City*

We will settle into our hotel rooms and have a short debriefing on our time in El Salvador.

**Friday, February 21** – *Learning about the Guatemalan context*

Several speakers will introduce us to various aspects of migration issues in Guatemala, including internally displaced people, conditions that lead people to make the decision to migrate, the impact of mass deportations from the U.S. and Mexico back to Guatemala. Speakers will include Casa del Migrante (Scalabrinian order), an academic researcher on migration issues from the Rafael Landívar University, and a relatively new organization empowering repatriated migrants to find new ways to make a living and support their families.

**Saturday, February 22** – *More orientation in and near Guatemala City, Guatemala*

We will be received by the staff of one of the PC(USA)'s two global Mission Partners in

Guatemala: [CEDEPCA, the Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America](http://www.cedepca.org/en). We will receive an orientation to Guatemala and the Guatemala portion of the seminar, and to CEDEPCA's team and their work in "education that transforms."

**Sunday, February 23** – *Worship and sightseeing in Guatemala City*

We will worship with a Guatemalan Presbyterian congregation; If possible, we will visit a local mining resistance community and meet with local civic and faith leaders who have chosen to be "human rights defenders" – working in defense of both the natural environment and the rights of the people living in and dependent upon that environment for their sustenance. At least a tenth of Guatemala’s population has been displaced because of the negative impacts on agriculture, housing, employment sources caused by “extractive projects:” metallic mining, hydro-electric dams, and/or single-export-crop agriculture.

**Monday, February 24 *–*** *Travel Day from Guatemala to Honduras*

This day will be primarily a travel day by road from Guatemala City to the border of Honduras and then onto the lovely town of Copan Ruinas. We will settle into our hostel for a relaxing afternoon and some time to wonder the cobblestone streets.

**Tuesday, February 25—***Tourist day in Honduras*

Spend the morning touring Copan, the important Mayan archeological site on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

In the afternoon we will travel to the capital city of Honduras, Tegucigalpa. We’ll be staying at Villa Gracia, a retreat center owned and operated by the women of the Presbyterian Church of Honduras, purchased with money from a PW Birthday Offering Grant.

**Wednesday, February 26 and Thursday, February 27—** *Meetings with Honduran partners*

Honduras is the originated country of the migrant caravan and is where the highest percentage of migrants of all genders and ages are coming from. During our time here, we will meet with experts who will help us understand the socio-political context, historically and today that has so many people making the difficult decision to leave. We will also meet with our global mission partner, the Presbyterian Church of Honduras and have the opportunity to have intimate conversations with them, hearing stories of how migration impacts their daily lives.

**Friday, February 28—***Travel day*

Departures