

Philippines 2009 Spring Pilgrimage

March 20-April 1, 2009

During the spring of 2009, the UUPCC will sponsor a group pilgrimage to experience the remarkable people and culture of the Philippines. There are over 2,500 Unitarian Universalists worshipping in 28 different congregations in the Philippines today, mostly on the large tropical island of Negros. We will have an opportunity to visit several of these UU groups and learn how their UU beliefs, courage and determination are guiding the lives they live in communities which are mostly characterized by extreme poverty. Their dreams and the determination of the UU Church of the Philippines to realize them and grow as a faith are truly inspirational. During this trip you will be warmly welcomed and offered a feast for your mind and your heart. Among the experiences you will have are these:

- A visit to the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines headquarters in the university town of Dumaguete where you will learn of their programs, ministry and aspirations.
- An evening with the impressive Peacekeeper's Circle in Manila, an interfaith group.
- A tour of historical sights in Manila followed by a cultural show highlighting island dances and amazing local dishes.
- Visits to several UU congregations in Manila and on Negros Island. These congregations include Nagbinlod which is the place where the founder of the UUCP was living when he was killed and many years later the first Community Capacity Building Assessment was undertaken. Aquino, home of the UU preschool, and Banaybanay, a progressive mountain village, may also be on your itinerary.
- A visit to the spectacular island of Seguijor, which is full of amazing tropical sights, splendid beaches and fascinating historical sites.



Our trip will begin in Manila on March 20th. Here you will be introduced to each other and receive an orientation to our trip and the Filipino culture. You will visit a fledgling UU church in Metro Manila and an active UU discussion group. Then you will fly over many of the more than 7,000 islands of the Philippines to reach Dumaguete on Negros Island and begin your Negros adventure. After your introduction to the UUCP, a tour of Silliman University and other aspects of this fascinating seaside town, you will be able to choose either a northbound or southbound tour of the UU congregations of Negros. After several days of visits to village congregations, you'll return to Dumaguete to worship with the UUCP, then take a ferry to visit Seguijor Island to enjoy the beaches, waterfall and rainforest. Once you have said your farewells in

Dumaguete, you'll fly back to Manila for a visit to the Peacekeeper's Circle. The following day you will return home from Manila.

We believe this trip will help you get to know and appreciate the amazing Unitarian Universalists of the Philippines. Your understanding of the UU faith and your way of living out your UU values will be expanded. We invite you into this world of discovery and know that it will create whole new avenues of meaning and possibility for you. This tour is the second tour which has been coordinated by the UUPCC in coordination with the UUCP. UUPCC Outreach Coordinator, Lee Boeke Burke, and UUCP President, Nihal Attanayake, will be your tour guides. Once you have signed on to this trip, we will be in contact regularly to help you prepare for the trip and to insure that your needs will be met and your questions answered. Our first trip was an outstanding success and we expect the same this year.

Base Trip Tentative Itinerary: (hotels & itinerary details subject to availability and conditions at time of booking):

- March 20- Friday. Your arrival in Manila. You will be met at the airport and transported to the City Garden Hotel. Free time to explore or rest up from your journey. Overnight at the City Garden.
- March 21- Saturday. After a magnificent buffet breakfast at the hotel, we will all gather for a group welcome and orientation. Later on we will meet with the UU discussion group from Quezon City, then visit a restaurant which has an outstanding cultural show. Overnight at the City Garden Hotel.
- March 22- Sunday. In the morning we will worship with the UU congregation of Bicutan in Metro Manila. This emerging congregation has made great strides in the first few years of its existence and is full of vitality. After lunch, we'll fly to Dumaguete on Negros Island and be welcomed warmly at the UU Church of the Philippines. Overnight at the Check-Inn.
- March 23- Monday. The UUCP will present its programs and vision to us in the morning. Then in the afternoon we'll tour Silliman University. During the evening there will be free time to explore this charming, historical seaside town. Overnight at the Check-Inn.
- March 24- Tuesday. This morning you will leave on your choice of either northbound or southbound tours of congregations on Negros Island. Due to the large size of Negros Island, the remoteness of some of the congregations and occasionally rough roads leading to slower travel, we have arranged for two different tours. All travel will be in air-conditioned vans driven by excellent drivers. Depending on the wishes of the travelers, we will either split up into two groups, or combine for a more intense, faster paced tour of selected congregations from each area. If you are traveling North, your first visit will be to Aquino, a church which lies in the shadow of a volcano and is home to the only UU school in the Philippines. The Aquino community is very friendly and located in a rice growing region. Overnight will be in a hotel in San Carlos City.
- March 24- Tuesday. Southbound travelers will visit Nagbinlod, the home of Toribio Quimada, the founder of the UU faith in the Philippines. He was assassinated in 1989 when he insisted on serving his congregations in an area which was suspected of harboring communists. This joyful and committed UU was a martyr for our faith. This area also has a UU mango plantation and is near to a UU sugarcane farm. The first Community Capacity Building project of the UUPCC was piloted here and has proven to be very successful. Overnight in Bayawan City.
- March 25-Wednesday. Northbound travelers will visit Nataban, the original home of Toribio Quimada when he moved to Negros Island with his family. This congregation also supports a biomass farm. The region is beautiful and mountainous. Cabiguhan, the partner of San Mateo, is also on the agenda. This January, members of the San Mateo congregation will be visiting their partner for the first time to dedicate the church building they helped them construct. Overnight in Bacolod City.
- March 25-Wednesday. Southbound travelers will visit the UU Church of Caican, which is located very near the ocean. This friendly congregation is full of relatives of Toribio Quimada and is the partner of Honolulu. Overnight in Bayawan City.
- March 26- Thursday. Northbound travelers will visit Malingin, the partner of San Diego. Located in a rice growing region, this village has great dreams and an emphasis on education. Overnight in Bacolod City.

- March 26- Thursday. Southbound travelers will visit Banaybanay, a village church which is very progressive. Their minister, Henry Legaje, is a recent past president of the UUCP and very dedicated to helping his church move forward and hopefully find a partner. Overnight in Bayawan City.
- March 27 – Friday. Northbound travelers will visit the friendly village of Doldol. This place has great harmony between the various religious groups and is very welcoming to all. Overnight in Bacolod City.
- March 27- Friday. Southbound. Calapayan, the partner church of Monte Vista, is in a remote area so we will have a hearty hike in. This congregation is very concerned with the education of its children.
- March 28- Saturday. The Northbound travelers will visit Mabinay, a UU congregation which is located in a rice growing region. The congregants are quite friendly. Following this visit, there will be a long, beautiful drive back to Dumaguete. Overnight at the Check-Inn.
- March 28- Saturday. Southbound travelers will visit the UUs of Culipapa, a fishing village. The Culipapa church is high on a hillside with an amazing view over the ocean. Later the group will return to Dumaguete. Overnight at the Check-Inn.

Should we decide on the combined trip, the churches visited will be in Nagbinlod, Caican, Banaybanay, Culipapa, Calapayan, Malingin, Doldol, Cabighan, Nataban and Aquino.

- March 29-Sunday. Morning worship at the UUCP. Later we will take a ferry to Siguijor Island. Overnight at a resort there.
- March 30- Monday. After we spend the first part of the day exploring this beautiful island, we will return to Dumaguete on a ferry, then have a farewell ceremony at the UUCP. Overnight at the Check-Inn.
- March 31- Tuesday. Early in the morning we will fly back to Manila. The day is free for sightseeing or resting. The final evening will include a visit to the Peacekeeper's Circle. Overnight at the City Garden Hotel.
- April 1 – Wednesday. Return home from Manila.

12 days/12 nights Base Itinerary– (Manila arrival- land/sea and in-country air package offered by UUPCC Pilgrimage Service \$1650 (double occupancy) + \$150/person non-refundable registration fee*. (add \$550 for single supplement) Children 12 and under sharing accommodations with 2 adults are ½ price and not subject to the registration fee. We advise against very young children on this tour which includes a great amount of scheduled travel time.

Land package includes transportation, accommodations, meals, drivers, guide(s), interpreter(s), and entrance fees to programmed tourist sites. The package does NOT include airfare or other transportation to/from Manila, gratuities, alcoholic beverages, personal expenses incurred during free programs, and airport transfers before/after specified trip dates or different from main party.

*UUPCC registration fee pays for your membership in the UUPCC, the cost of processing your application & mailing your travel packet, and an impact fee paid to the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines.