

Santa Cruz



Iglesia Episcopal Santa Cruz

Updated August 14, 2015

Church History:

In 1922 the Moravians in Santa Fe had to leave the area due to lack of funds. They turned over their church, *Santa Cruz* or *Holy Cross*, and a school building that had been built two years prior to the Episcopal Church. As early as the 1880's and through the early 20th century, there was an influx of people from the British Caribbean islands immigrating to the country seeking jobs in the sugar industry. The town of Santa Fe, as with many cities in the eastern section of the country, arose from the growth of the sugar industry. Along with the sugar mill came a community of English-speaking Antilleans who were Anglican by tradition. Part of the Moravians' decision to leave the church and school in the hands of the Episcopal Church was because many of their students were a

part of this Antillean community. The town of Santa Fe is only roughly 3.5 miles away from one of the largest cities in the country, San Pedro de Macorís. In 1920 the second



Iglesia Episcopal Santa Cruz

American missionary for the Episcopal Church, the Reverend Archibald Beer, came to the Dominican Republic and was stationed in San Pedro de Macorís, where the first Episcopal Church in the country was built, *San Esteban* or *St. Stephen's*. He most likely held services in *Santa Cruz* until the community received their first rector, the Reverend Thomas O. Basden.



Iglesia Episcopal Santa Cruz

In 2012 the Tampa Deanery (Diocese of Southwest Florida) started building the new church that is in use today. The project was started because the old Moravian-built church was on the verge of falling down. The over 90-year-old building had two-inch cracks running all the way down the walls and the building was deemed unsafe. The project was completed in parts over three summers, with this summer (2015) being the last with the completion of the second floor. Not only do they now have a safer church, but also a much larger and more suitable space for their congregation of over 150 members.



Colegio Episcopal Santa Cruz

School:

The school was founded by the Moravian church in 1920 and turned over to the Episcopal Church in 1922. Financially, the sugar mill in the town aided the school as they paid the teachers' wages up until 1999. The school was functional but not well organized until Priest, and later Bishop, Télesforo Isaac came as director in 1960. There was

another reorganization of the school in 1970 with Father Marino Batista as director.

Today the school continues to do well and holds a high reputation amongst the community. It is comprised of elementary, middle, and high school sections, and the current enrollment is 253 students.

Church Today:

Community:

While Santa Fe used to be separated from San Pedro de Macorís by agricultural fields, due to urban sprawl Santa Fe has slowly melded into the greater San Pedro de Macorís area. Since the mill closed in the mid-1990s, there has been a high unemployment rate in Santa Fe. Most have to go to the industrial zone of San Pedro de Macorís, some 45 minutes away, to find work (where there are also informal clothing and food tables set up), or are *chiripas*, or those who take any odd job that they can find. Many of the women also do domestic work in the area. In the local community of Santa Fe there is a lot of diversity with Dominicans, those of Antillean origin, and Haitians living side-by-side. However, many of the communities just outside the town are *bateys* and are predominately of Haitian origin. Bateys are small villages in the middle of sugar cane fields that were formed when Haitian workers came to cut sugar cane for the summer but never left. Batey communities often struggle more than others for lack of surrounding resources.

Ministries:

Santa Cruz has a very active community. With about 150 people that come to church on Sunday mornings, it is one of our churches with the highest attendance.

Monday-Friday they have morning devotionals in the church, and throughout the week they have other ministries. On Sundays besides church they also hold their Bible school for roughly 50 kids who are divided into two groups based on age. Since Bible school is a lot of work, they have a rotating list of volunteer teachers to lead the classes every month. The consolation ministry meets on Mondays to go out in the community and try and help people, no matter what their religion or denomination, with basic needs. Whether that be prayers, food, house repairs, helping pay for medicines, clothes, etc... the church sets aside an amount of money to this ministry every year. They have two separate Bible studies weekly for adults with the women meeting on Wednesdays and the men meeting on Fridays. The youth group meets on Saturdays and about twice a month individual groups in the church have retreats on Saturdays as well. They also have a women's music ministry that is composed of women of their church, but serves in other churches across the diocese at times as well.

Future Plans:

Thanks to a United Thank Offering grant, they are building a vocational school a block away from the church. Unfortunately the grant was not enough to completely finish the school. This summer, the Tampa Deanery stepped in to help where they could and we will be looking for other churches to help finish the project. There is high unemployment in Santa Fe and therefore technical school would fulfill a large need in the community. Training in practical jobs like mechanics, electricians, carpenters, bakers, souvenir makers, etc... would provide a lot of people in the community with jobs. With each class that they want to teach, they would like to have a business aspect so that the school could

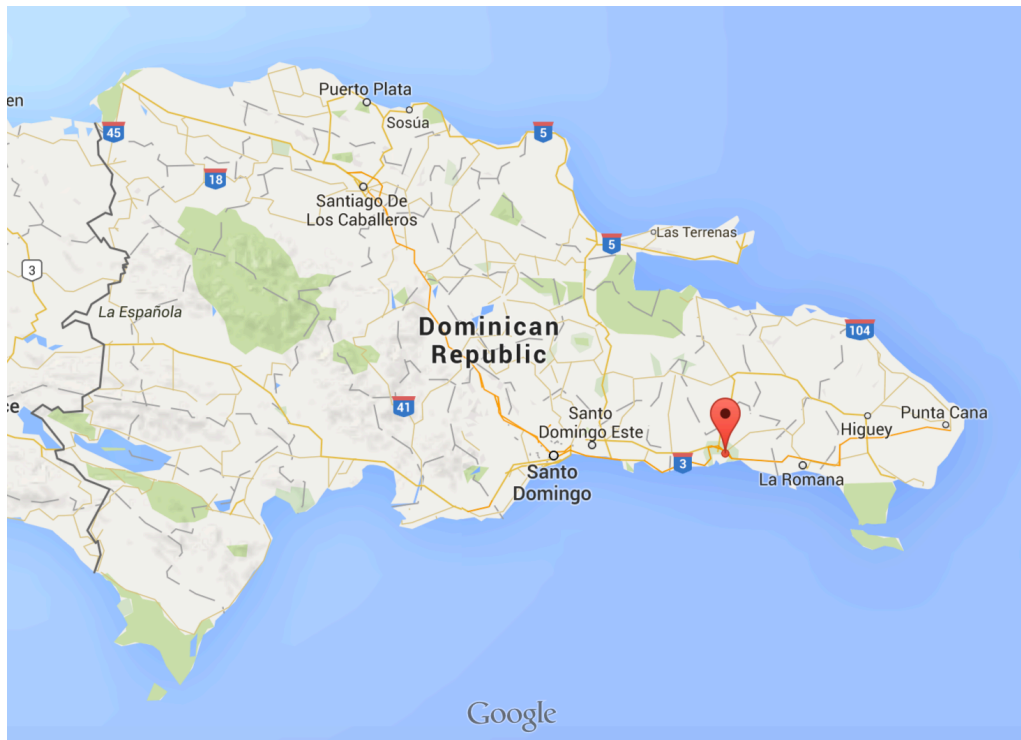
be self-sufficient. With all the various technical supplies they would need to teach the students, the school will need some source of income.

Location

Latitude and longitude, traditional format: 18° 26' 30.8"N 69° 18' 21.2"

Latitude and longitude, decimal format: 18.475056N 69.275083W

Google Maps location: <https://goo.gl/maps/ZU4Un>



Bibliography

The Rev. Félix Encarnación, Interview by Emily Gibson. Santo Domingo, June 9, 2015.

Obispo Telésforo Isaac, *La Labor Educativa de la Iglesia Episcopal Dominicana* (Santo Domingo, 1971).

Robert Stevens, *Mission Santa Cruz, Ingenio Santa Fe: The 2012 Tampa Deanery Project*, 2012.