



# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF KINGWOOD

## Peru Mission Team Information

### Frequently Asked Questions

**1. When are you going in 2010? Where will we be staying in Lima?**

ANS: Two one-week mission trips will be conducted during the week of July 23-July 30 and July 30-August 6, 2010. Two medical sites and one VBS site are planned during this two week period. VBS will be the second week. It is possible to stay for both weeks if desired. As in previous years, we will be staying at the Miraflores Colon Hotel ([www.miraflorescolonhotel.com](http://www.miraflorescolonhotel.com)) at negotiated group rates.

**2. Why do I need to fill out a Peru Mission Application form?**

ANS: Peru is a third world country and our mission work takes us into the poorest sections of Lima, Peru. Individuals need to be physically and emotionally prepared to serve under challenging conditions. In addition, we need to bring our mission trips into compliance with our church's child protection policy which requires child protection training as well as background checks. Child protection training opportunities will be communicated to all those who need it prior to the trip.

**3. Where do I find the application form? When will I know if I am approved?**

ANS: The application form will be available shortly in the Mission section of our FPC-Kingwood.org web site, and in paper form from Pastor Tom Edwards office. Forms can be submitted electronically or dropped off at Pastor Tom Edwards office ([tom@fpc-kingwood.org](mailto:tom@fpc-kingwood.org)). If you do not have a Child Protection Background Check form on file with FPC-Kingwood, please fill out the Background Check Authorization form and send to Donna Hanson, Director of Administration, FPC-Kingwood, 5520 Kingwood Dr, Kingwood, TX 77339. Applications will be reviewed by a three person team consisting of a minister, a medical doctor, and the mission's Trail Boss. Every effort will be made to respond in a timely manner. All applications for 2010 should be submitted no later than Friday, June 4, 2010

**4. What other paperwork should I provide the church?**

ANS: After application approval, please provide a scanned (electronic) copy of your Passport Picture and Information Page. This is essential should you lose your passport and have to apply for a replacement from the US Consulate while in Peru.

**5. What am I expected to pay for?**

ANS: Individuals are expected to pay for their own air transportation, hotel and individual food. Breakfast is included in the hotel rate. FPC-Kingwood provides group in-country transportation including to/from the airport, to/from church on Sunday, to/from the work site(s), and one group dinner on Saturday night to meet the translators who work with us during the week. In addition, for logistical reasons, lunch and bottled water is provided by the church at the work sites.

**a. Airline Ticketing and church donation credit procedures?**

ANS: Group air tickets will no longer be used. Approved missionaries will be asked to book their own air arrangements directly using one of several airline choices which arrive in Lima within one hour of each other. For 2010, the following flights are recommended:

Continental Flight #590 IAH non-stop to LIM return flight CO #591

American Airlines #2234/917 connecting in Miami to LIM return flights

#918/1263 also connecting via Miami. There are several other combinations of connecting flights that will work okay.

When booking flights, remember the group needs to meet in the baggage claim area outside customs in the Lima airport between 9:30 pm and 11:00 pm on the day of arrival. Most international flights land in this time frame, but check. On the return flight pay special note to day and time of the departing flight. Most flights leave just before midnight, some leave just after midnight. A flight that leaves 30 July at 12:10 am is a day too early, while a flight that leaves at 11:50 pm is fine. All flights should land in the USA a day later, 31 July in this example. Please coordinate alternate schedules with the Trail Boss. For 2010, Gary Chapman has agreed to be our trail boss. His email is: [gary.chapman@chevron.com](mailto:gary.chapman@chevron.com)

To receive appropriate church mission donation in-kind credit, just mail or email a copy of your paid round trip ticket to/from Lima, Peru to Paula Trigg at FPC-Kingwood, and she will record your donation in-kind for tax purposes. Alternatively you can claim your air fare as a charity deduction on your itemized tax return directly without going through Paula.

**b. Hotel reservation and payment. How is this handled?**

ANS: Hotel arrangements are made as a group, and payment for base room and breakfast will be handled by the church. You will be asked to reimburse the church based on the costs of room (single, double) either before or after the trip. You should be prepared to settle any incidental expenses such as use of the in-room bar, laundry, or restaurant charges made to your room prior to check-out. Costs are on a room basis, so if you share a double room, your cost is half the double room rate. For 2010, single and double rooms are \$65/night. We use 7.5 nights which means a single room will cost \$487.50 for one week and a double would be  $\$487.50/2 = \$243.75$  per person for the week.

**c. Meals? How does this work?**

ANS: Lunch at the mission sites will be provided along with bottled water. Dinner Saturday night is also paid by the church as part of the mission expenses. Breakfast all days is provided as part of the room rate. This leaves evening dinners and weekend lunches to be paid by individuals. Prices are similar to USA food depending on type of food and type of restaurant. Most folks gather at the end of day in the lobby and split into informal groups that then walk together to a nearby restaurant. It is recommended that you carry bottled water with you at all times. Bottled water can be purchased with your meals in the restaurants. Nearby shops sell bottled water at about half the cost the hotel or restaurants will charge.

**6. What additional optional expenses/activities might there be?**

ANS: Optional tours on Saturday morning and afternoon will be outlined before departure. These typically run \$35-\$45 per person on tour. Shopping is available on Saturday and Sunday at the local Indian Market and nearby shopping center.

**7. Are there scholarships available? Where do I apply?**

ANS: There is a limited amount of scholarship funding available. The FPC-Kingwood web site under missions has a section outlining our scholarship and application process. The link is: <http://fpc-kingwood.org/mediafiles/missions-ii-scholarship.pdf>

**8. I want to go to Machu Picchu , what do you recommend?**

ANS: Machu Picchu is a fascinating site, highly recommended. However, the church does not coordinate nor give donation credit for any side trips. We have had good success using an in-country travel agent for such arrangements at [www.perusportstravel.com](http://www.perusportstravel.com). Make sure you communicate you are part of the FPC-Kingwood mission group.

**9. What is the weather like in Lima, Peru?**

ANS: Lima is a coastal desert at the foot of the Andes mountains. Rain is never a concern in Lima. Lima is 10 degrees latitude below the equator, which means July is winter. Evenings on the coast where the hotel is can get cool (60 degrees and breezy). Daytime temperatures in the 70s to low 80s should be expected inland.

**10. What do I pack (wear)?**

ANS: Best to wear jeans or informal clothing. Most medical folks work in scrubs. No coat or tie will be needed even in church. One "nice" casual outfit for dinner on Saturday night and church on Sunday is OK, but best to stay informal. As a rule, no shorts, and no open toed shoes. The high-end restaurants will expect you to wear something other than jeans. A nice pair of pants and a long sleeve shirt will do much better.

**11. What are the current luggage rules?**

ANS: Check your airline web site. International rules are often different than domestic policies. Typically one checked bag is included along with the usual carry on rules. Best to check to be sure.

**12. Will I be expected to carry supplies? Who will pay for any extra luggage fees?**

ANS: Many folks carry on a bag with their week's clothing, leaving a normal luggage bag available to carry supplies and donated used clothing. Medicine for the most part is shipped ahead, but we will work to use our luggage allowance to the fullest to bring needed donations with us for the poor. Should you be asked to carry in additional luggage, the church will cover the fees. If you anticipate a piece of luggage returning empty, consider using a duffel bag or other luggage that can be folded or otherwise fit into a larger bag on the return flight.

**13. What is the local currency? What's the current exchange rate?**

ANS: The Peruvian Nuevo Sol is the currency of Peru. The currency code for Nuevos Soles is PEN, and the currency symbol is S/. Currently 1 US \$ will purchase 2.85 Soles.

**14. Can we use US dollars?**

ANS: Yes, US dollars are accepted everywhere. Change is often offered in either currency. However, your US currency needs to be crisp, no marks on the bills, and no tears. Also, use small denominations, nothing larger than a \$20 bill is recommended. It is recommended to have a small amount of local currency for small purchases such as bottled water at the corner store, or for paying taxi drivers.

**15. Are there any ATMs? Where? Do ATMs dispense dollars or local currency?**

ANS: ATMs are available at the nearby Marriott Hotel and the Airport. ATMs are not nearly as common as the USA. ATMs often dispense both types of currency.

**16. How should I handle the local currency and currency exchange?**

ANS: Small amounts can be exchanged at the hotel desk but the best rates are at banks. Most folks use US dollars and accept change in Soles.

**17. How much cash should I take? Are credit cards accepted?**

ANS: Plan on spending as much in Peru as you would in the USA for food. Shopping is an individual choice, you may need a lot or little. At the Indian Market, cash is needed, most fine restaurants take all types of credit cards, much as in the USA. Not all businesses take credit cards, so some cash is appropriate in small bills.

**18. What is the tipping protocol?**

ANS: Most restaurant and bar bills include a 10% gratuity. It's customary to add an extra 10% if the service has been satisfactory. Most Peruvians only tip one or two Soles at small "mom and pop" restaurants that do not add a tip to the bill. It is true that Peruvians are not big tippers, however, tipping is a great way to show your appreciation to the people serving you and to have your dollars go straight into the pockets of the people that need it most, a 10 to 20% tip will be warmly accepted at any restaurant and will put a surprised smile on a person's face. Taxis do not expect tips. Fares are negotiated prior to initiating the trip.

**19. What Peruvian documents do we need to fill out to enter Peru? What information is required?**

ANS: On the flight down, the air crew will pass out Peruvian immigration documents which you will need to fill out. These documents require your name, passport number, location of your stay (hotel name and location), purpose (vacation), flight information.

**20. What Peruvian immigration documents do we need to leave the country? What happens if I lose them?**

ANS: When you enter the country, the lower portion of your immigration documentation contains your EXIT visa. You must have this to leave the country. Most folks keep this with their passport. Make sure when you are processing through immigration that you get the lower part back and keep it safe. At the hotel, they will ask you for both your passport and the Exit visa. They will make a copy and return your passport the following morning. Stop by the desk and pick up your passport/exit visa and keep them in your room safe. During your stay in Lima, carry a COPY of your passport with you and leave your passport and exit visa locked up in the hotel room safe. It's also a good practice to keep an extra copy of your passport as well as an extra copy of your passport photo in a secure location. Because of revised consulate procedures, we are asking you to provide the church with an electronic scanned copy of your picture passport page.

If you lose the exit visa, you will need to pay for a "copy" before being cleared to leave Peru. Your processing through immigration is also likely delayed, hopefully not so much that you miss the flight. Best to keep the Exit Visa and passport safe.

**21. What is the airport "Exit" fee?**

ANS: All departing international travelers pay an exit fee (tax), currently about \$31 payable in cash either US\$ or Soles or both. This is a great way to consume your last Soles as you leave Peru.

**22. How do I communicate home? Phone? Internet?**

ANS: Most hotels including the Hotel Colon now have business centers with one or more common use computers connected to the web. Also, most hotels now have wi-fi available from the room or lobby should you bring a wi-fi enabled device. Phone rates are high.

**23. Should I bring my camera? Laptop?**

ANS: Yes and maybe. Bring high value equipment at your own risk. If you do bring it, keep it safe and in your carry-on luggage. Do not bring expensive watches, jewelry, etc.

**24. Personal Medicine/Health**

**a. How do I handle my personal medicine? Should I bring Dr's prescription for backup?**

ANS: It is recommended you bring twice your normal personal medicine, stored in separate locations. Do NOT expect to be able to purchase medicine in Peru like you can in the USA. Many types are simply not available.

**b. What vaccinations or other pre-trip preparations should get/verify?**

ANS: Recommended if you are not up-to-date with routine shots such as, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine, etc. also Hepatitis A and B.

CDC yellow fever vaccination recommendation for travelers to Peru: For all travelers  $\geq 9$  months of age traveling to the areas east of the Andes Mountains and for those who intend to visit any jungle areas of the country  $< 2,300$  m ( $< 7,546$  ft). **Travelers who are limiting travel to the cities of Lima, Cuzco and Machu Picchu do NOT need vaccination.**

**c. Other recommendations? (traveler's diarrhea (TD) prevention, sun screen, sun glasses, dust conditions)?**

ANS: The best way to prevent TD is by paying meticulous attention to choice of food and beverage. Wash your hands at every opportunity and use antibacterial hand wipes or gel before eating. To prevent travelers' diarrhea Rifaximin (Xifaxan) 200 mg twice a day, with the 2 largest meals, beginning with the first meal consumed in the risk country and continuing for 24 hours after eating the last risk meal. Rifaximin is obtained by prescription. Alternatively, Pepto-Bismol 2 tablets chewed with each meal and at bedtime (total 8 tablets/day). Pepto is not recommended for persons taking daily doses of aspirin, aspirin-containing drugs or Coumadin. Use of Pepto-Bismol may cause ringing in the ears (tinnitus) in which case the medication must be discontinued. Another side effect of taking Pepto is black stools. Don't be alarmed.

**25. What should I plan on eating? How about the local water?**

ANS: Avoid drinking tap water and swallowing shower water. Brush your teeth with bottled water or water from the hot tap, as long as you don't swallow it. Drink bottled water that has a sealed cap you open yourself. Drinking carbonated water that has a fizz when it's opened insures it is not tap water that has been re-capped. Tap water that has been brought to a boil, and beverages made with it (coffee and tea), are safe. Single serving-sized carbonated soft drinks, fruit juice, beer, wine and alcohol that are commercially canned/bottled are safe. Wipe moisture off the top of a can with an antibacterial wipe before popping the tab and use straws if available. Avoid putting bottles and cans directly in your mouth. Avoid ice unless you can be certain it is made from purified water (often very difficult to verify).

Avoid all raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish or shellfish even if it has been pickled or prepared with lemon/lime juice or vinegar. Avoid eating any ground meat, cooked or otherwise. Eat meat, poultry and fish that is recently cooked and served piping hot. Avoid raw vegetables, leafy salad materials and fruits that are consumed with their skins i.e. grapes, berries, tomatoes. The skin may be contaminated during the growing or harvesting state and not adequately cleansed before consumption. If the skin has been broken, don't eat the flesh. Wash vegetables and fruits (with bottled water) before cutting through the skin with a knife. Fruits and nuts that can be peeled are safe, particularly if you peel them yourself. Citrus fruits, freshly prepared fruit juice (without added tap

water), and any fruit peeled prior to eating are generally safe. The acidity inhibits bacterial growth. Hard-boiled eggs served in the shell are safe. Eggs served “sunny-side up” or lightly scrambled are not heated to a high enough temperature to kill some organisms and therefore, should be avoided. Avoid creamy foods and desserts. Dry foods (cereal, bread, crackers) are safe because they lack moisture necessary for bacteria to grow. Condiments with high sugar content (jelly, syrup) are safe. Commercially prepared mustard and ketchup are safe.

**26. We will be there over a Sunday, what are the plans to attend Church?**

ANS: A bus will leave the hotel for church at a posted time. We typically attend the English language service at the Union Church. After church, the bus will drop us at a location within walking distance of restaurants and the Indian Market.

**27. Do I need traveler’s insurance?**

ANS: This is an individual decision. Some may also want to consider medical evacuation insurance.

**28. Should I use the local taxis?**

ANS: Taxis arranged via the hotel are considered safe. Negotiate the fare for transport to a specific destination before getting into the cab. If leaving a restaurant by taxi, ask the restaurant to call the cab. Pick up a business card from the hotel before leaving to give to the taxi driver for the return.

**29. What type of electricity and plugs do they use? Can I plug in my laptop? Is a hair dryer provided?**

ANS: Peru normal voltage is 220, 60 HZ and two types of outlets/plugs can be encountered. Most laptops and electronic chargers can work with 220v power provided you can plug them in. Leave your 110 v hair dryer at home, it will burn up if you try to use it. The hotel provides hair dryers.

The Type A electrical plug, or flat blade attachment plug, uses two flat parallel pins or blades. It is found in most of North America and on the east coast of South America on smaller devices that do not require a ground connection. Polarized USA plugs with one flat blade bigger than the other will not fit into a Peruvian Type A outlet without a plug adapter (available at Radio Shack).

The other plug is Popularly known as the Europlug, the Type C electrical plug is a two-pin round unearthed plug used throughout continental Europe, parts of the Middle East, and much of Africa, South America, central Asia, and the former Soviet republics. Again a plug adapter from Radio Shack will allow you to plug in your USA flat bladed plugs into the 220 v source, provided your transformer/charger can handle 220 v.

**30. What tourist options will be available during the week? Cost?**

ANS: Optional tours will be communicated to participants before the trip and you will have a chance to sign up. These tours are only for Saturday, the day after we arrive. The rest of the time is mission work and preparation. Those

staying in Lima for a side trip to Machu Pichu need to book their travel arrangements separately. We have had good success using an in-country travel agent for such arrangements at [www.perusportstravel.com](http://www.perusportstravel.com). Make sure you communicate you are part of the FPC-Kingwood mission group.

**29. I am not going to Peru, how can I help?**

ANS: Helping with donations and packing is always helpful. The mission participants will carry into Peru items for distribution directly to needy Peruvians. Donated items needed include:

Used children's clothing

Reading glasses (1.0 or 1.25 strength) available from the Dollar store

Costume jewelry in small zip lock bags

Small travel sized hygiene items such as toothbrush, toothpaste, soap

Items NOT needed: make-up, combs, blankets, men's clothing

**Local Customs/ Security Notes**

1. No toilet paper in the toilet, use the wastebasket next to the commode.
2. No purses on the back of chair or dangling from arms/shoulders. Wear purses with strap diagonally across body.
3. Don't drink local water, bottled water only in sealed bottles, no ice!
4. Travel in a group and always let others know of your plans. Do not "go off" on your own.
5. No cut-offs or shorts. Closed toe shoes strongly recommended. Very dusty, daily fresh socks feel good.
6. Copies of passport and credit cards kept in separate location. Leave your passport in the room safe, carry a copy with you with your picture and information; store a 2nd copy elsewhere in your room.
7. If you become ill, make sure that one of the Doctors and the Trail Boss are aware of your condition.

**Helpful Links for more Peru Background**

- 1 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pe.html>
- 2 <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107883.html>