



With picturesque views like this one taken from Ram's Head in St. John, the retreat for the V.I. Disciples of Christ proved to be a time of true refreshment, spiritual edification, and growth.

V.I. Disciples of Christ

8th Annual Retreat at Concordia - St. John

August 2014

The Virgin Islands Disciples of Christ has their 8th annual summer retreat at Estate Concordia, on St. John!

Back in 2007, the disciples on this island of tourism decided they needed a little down time and spiritual revival. Whereas disciples in the States would normally have a conference that they could go to, the expense of getting off St. Thomas and traveling to the mainland made it prohibitive for many of the members. So, the disciples decided to spend a weekend at one of the most beautiful eco-tourism resorts in the Caribbean, Estate Concordia.

Built on a hillside overlooking the Caribbean waters and British Virgin Islands, Concordia is a compound of framed cabins covered in canvas, each one solar-powered and able to sleep 5 people, and each with its own kitchenette, shower and toilet. The units are elevated 3-to-7 feet above the wild brush and are connected with walkways, also elevated, and stairways. Looking over Drunk Bay to south and east and Salt Pond Bay to the southwest, with Ram's Head between the two, make for some gorgeous, sweeping vistas. The trade winds blow consistently from the east and keep the temperatures pleasant throughout the day and cool at night.



Continued:

The church initially brought in guest speakers to do classes in a conference format (i.e.: men's class, followed by a women's class, followed by a marrieds or parenting class, followed by a single's class), but with one couple doing all of the classes.

Over the last two years, the format has become more relaxed, with a "retreat" atmosphere being the operative word – plenty of time to swim, fellowship, and enjoy a devotional or two, rather than more formal "classes."

For 2014's retreat the church invited Jon and Brittany Sherwood, currently from Columbia, South Carolina, to join us and do one of the devotionals, and for Jon to preach on Sunday morning. The Sherwood's were joined by Brian and Deb Taylor, also from Columbia, who are considering the possibility of moving to St. Thomas to help with the work here.

The weekend kicked off with a singing devotional on Friday night. Saturday morning, a group of about a dozen people completed the hike to Ram's Head. It was a great time to enjoy the beauty God has created all around us, and the views at the end of the hike were particularly breathtaking. At the top of the climb, Jon and Brittany shared some thoughts leading us to praise God for his hand in our lives.

The middle of the day was spent in fellowship, and in the late afternoon Brian and Deb headed up a devotional at the edge of Coral Bay, St. John's large natural bay and harbor on the east end. The evening was capped off with a moonlight devotional led by Dean and Melissa Bump. Sunday's service was held at Concordia's Pavilion, a weather-protected structure looking out at the gorgeous blue waters to the south, and Jon preached a great message on persevering by keeping God's promises before us, just as Caleb did, while he waited 40 years for God's promise to him and Joshua to be fulfilled.

~ Dean Bump



From the Sherwoods

Brittany and I are so grateful for the opportunity to be with the church and all of the disciples in the V.I. We had an incredible time and were so encouraged by the faithfulness, perseverance, and love of the church.

We are confident that Jesus will continue to grow his church and that the love of the disciples there will continue to display God's glory. Brittany and I look forward to a continued partnership in the gospel with the V.I. Disciples of Christ and pray that God will grow the love and concern in the hearts of others for our smaller churches around the world, as He has for my wife and I through this retreat.

~ Jon Sherwood



**To him who is able to do
immeasurably more than all
we dare to ask or imagine ...
Ephesians 3:20**

The church looks forward to many more incredibly encouraging retreats together, and that the disciples will return rested, re-energized and refocused on God, His church and His mission.