



Mission

Share God's Transforming Love
with the World



G U I D E L I N E S

Mission

Share God's Transforming Love with the World

Dr. David W. Scott and Glenn Kellum

General Board of Global Ministries / UMC Missions

MISSION

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“A Wreath for Your Excellent Leadership”

Thank you for assuming the important and awesome work of providing spiritual leadership to your congregation. The work of church leadership is shared and synergistic. Pastoral and laity leadership combine to provide the widest possible set of gifts, knowledge, abilities, skills, experience, and passions to fulfill our United Methodist mission to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (*The Book of Discipline*, ¶120). What you do as a gifted, spiritual leader is of vital importance.

Spiritual leadership differs from other forms of leadership in the foundational ways it allows us to live out the vows and promises we make when joining the church: to uphold The United Methodist Church through our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness.

The first work of all church leaders is to pray for the ministry of the church: local, denominational, and global. Our work is always worshipful work. Our ministry of presence strengthens our church’s ministry and mission. By combining our gifts, knowledge, experience, and passion we can achieve wonderful things together through the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Together, we strengthen our congregation for service to those within the community of faith and beyond. Accepting the mantle of leadership provides a powerful witness to the world of what it means to be a faithful disciple.

Together, we fulfill our mission of making disciples and transforming the world by reaching out and receiving people in the name of Jesus the Christ, relating people to God in covenant community, nurturing and strengthening people in their faith, and equipping and supporting people to live their faith in the world.

The *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation* draw upon a wealth of experience and expertise to provide you with the basic resources you need to do effective, impactful ministry. Each Guideline focuses on a key area of ministry and church leadership, providing information and processes to help your working group—committee, council, board, or other configuration—excel and support all other working groups. See the accompanying Guide to the Guidelines for useful information on how the *Guidelines* and ministry areas work together.

We recommend that each group member read this Guideline and noted paragraphs from the *Discipline*. Take time at meetings to discuss ways to implement identified tasks and responsibilities, plan for the future, and assess and evaluate your work.

The apocryphal book of Sirach reminds leaders to be humble servant leaders, make sure the needs of others are cared for, and then receive “a wreath for your excellent leadership” (Sirach 32:2 NRSVue). We invite you to lead with humility, compassion, patience, and grace, that The United Methodist Church might be a witness to the light and love of Christ for all the world.

Leading Your Congregation in Mission

Congratulations! You have agreed to help lead your church in its mission outreach. This may seem like a large and vague responsibility. Mission is indeed a broad activity and includes all of the ways in which Christians join in God's redemptive work in the world. You may have a number of questions about your new role like the ones below:

- If your church has strong and longstanding mission engagement, how can you continue and even deepen that work?
- If your church wants to rethink or redesign how it does mission, how can you go about that process?
- If your church is not currently involved in mission but has members who want to do mission, where do you start?
- How can your church and its mission partners (those with whom you are/will be in mission) learn from and share with one another and help foster mutuality in mission?
- How can your church successfully engage in mission in your local community and around the world?

By working in partnership with others in your church, your community, and throughout the United Methodist connection, and by following the guidance in this Guideline, you can find answers to these (and other) questions. This Guideline will give you the tools to lead your church in mission that is well-planned, mutually beneficial to you and your partners, transformative, and spiritually enriching.

To help you do this, this Guideline is organized into four sections: mission spirituality, which focuses on integrating prayer and discipleship into mission; mission activity, which provides guidance on mission engagement, including mission journeys and individual mission service; mission generosity, which offers suggestions about fundraising and other forms of mission support; and mission growth, which includes measuring and celebrating your success, sharing it with others, and learning from your mission experiences.

Mission Spirituality: How Does Mission Relate to Our Faith?

The spiritual component of mission is crucial to keep in mind, right from the beginning of your work as a mission leader. As Christians, we engage in mission, not just because of some vague sense of the impor-

tance of doing good, but because mission is a primary way in which we live out our faith. By engaging in mission, we joyfully respond to the love and grace that God gives us. We answer the calling of Jesus Christ, who sends us out in mission.

This section will examine two ways—prayer and discipleship—in which you can ensure that mission remains a spiritually grounded activity in your church, integrated into the broader life of faith in the congregation.

“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.’” —John 20:21

Prayer—Sustaining Mission

Mission expresses our relationships with God and our neighbors, and those relationships are grounded in prayer. Prayer is the way we connect with God, listen to God, and share our joys and sorrows with God. Incorporating prayer into your mission work will help ensure that your mission work stays spiritually grounded and that your church is open to hearing the voice of God in its mission engagement.

As the mission leader in your church, you should be in prayer about your church’s mission work. Pray that God leads you and your church into the forms of mission work that God would have you do. Pray that others will see God’s grace and love in the mission work in which your congregation is engaged. Pray that God blesses you, your church, and your mission partners through that mission work. Pray that your congregation will engage

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom
thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for
thee,
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things
to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
Let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.
—A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition
(UMH, 607)

in mission that makes long-term impact. Pray that mission will permeate everything the church does locally and globally.

Yet supporting mission through prayer is not something that you should do alone; it is something your entire congregation should be engaged in! Ensure that prayer is a component of your Mission Committee or other mission planning group meetings. If groups from your church go on mission journeys, ask the congregation to pray for them before their departure, while they are in service, and after they return. Encourage each participant in the journey to have a prayer partner at home who will pray for them during the journey. If you collect donations during a church service, say a prayer of blessing over the donations and the people who will receive them.

Prayer should also involve your mission partners. Indeed, mission is mutual! Ask your mission partners to pray for you and your church, not just about your mission involvement but other concerns in the life of the church. Prayer is an important way in which you and your mission partners can support each other.

“Because of this, since the day we heard about you, we haven’t stopped praying for you and asking for you to be filled with the knowledge of God’s will, with all wisdom and spiritual understanding. We’re praying this so that you can live lives that are worthy of the Lord and pleasing to him in every way: by producing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.” —Col 1:9-10

Discipleship—Learning about Mission

Another way to ensure that your mission work remains spiritually grounded is to include study of mission in your congregation’s ongoing discipleship programs such as Sunday schools, Bible studies, women’s circles, men’s groups, and youth groups. Mission study can help your church better understand the mission work in which it is engaged, the context of that work, its partners, and the role of mission in the life of faith.

Mission study can take many forms: learning about various types of mission, the Scriptural foundations for mission, ways in which a local church can engage in mission that focuses on building relationships and long-term impact, specific places of mission work and their cultures and contexts, spiritual and theological issues connected to mission, and social issues affecting mission work.

United Women in Faith’s Mission u curriculum and Reading Program provide yearly curricula, trainings, and lists of readings at different age levels related to mission, including books about spiritual growth, leadership development, and specific social issues. For more, see <https://uwfaith.org/events/mission-u/> and <https://uwfaith.org/resources/reading-program/>.

Mission Activity: How Can Your Church Effectively Engage in Mission?

Spirituality is the essential undergirding for mission, which leads to mission relationship and then ultimately to mission action. First and foremost, mission involves God's action in the world, reclaiming, redeeming, and restoring it. But mission also involves our action as we join in the work that God in Christ is already doing. Indeed, when many people think about mission, they think primarily about the actions we do: the programs we run, the journeys we take, and the money we raise. As the previous section implies, mission goes beyond these programs, journeys, and fundraisers to encompass all aspects of our day-to-day walk with Christ. Moreover, action should always be rooted in relationship. Nevertheless, formal activities are important for churches' mission engagement.

This section will help you think through the activities and journeys that your church undertakes as part of mission, while the next section will address fundraising and other aspects of mission generosity. This section offers guidance on how to plan both programs and journeys that follow best practices to ensure meaningful, transformative outcomes for your church members and those with whom they are serving in mission.

Building on Your Congregation's Passions, Strengths, and Networks

In planning mission engagement, start with your church's passions, strengths, and existing relationship networks in mind. Opportunities to serve abound; it is wise to focus on those that will generate the greatest enthusiasm in your church—its passions, where your church can have the greatest impact, its strengths, and where your church already has connections—its relationship networks.

Identifying the passions and strengths of the members of your congregation is something that can be done only in cooperation

"The church exists by mission just as a fire exists by burning." —Emil Brunner, *The Word and the World* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1931), 108.

"The place where God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger coincide." —Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 95.

with others. Collaboration with your church's pastor is an important first step. So, too, can be conversations with your church's lay leader and members of the Administrative or Church Council. Your pastor and other congregational leaders will have a sense of the overall vision and existing connections of the church, and this vision and these connections can help identify mission opportunities that align with that vision.

Do not neglect, however, to talk to other members of your congregation. Some members of your congregation may have special skills related to their professions or hobbies that they are willing to share with others in mission. Some may have untapped energy and passion for specific dimensions of mission that you can help call forth and direct. Some may have connections in your community or elsewhere that can be helpful in identifying partners or locations for mission service. It is best to always have your ears open for good ideas!

Once you have a sense of who in your church is excited about what issues or mission work, who in your church has skills in particular areas, and who in your church has relevant connections, it is time to prayerfully consider what type of mission your congregation should enter into. How can the gifts, graces, callings, and relationships of the members of your congregation help serve your neighborhood, city, country, and world? Is God calling you to a particular type of mission work, such as health, education, or evangelism? Is God calling you to be involved in mission in a particular location? Prayerfully discuss these questions with others in your congregation.

Engaging your church in mission does not need to involve starting something new; it can involve continuing and strengthening existing congregational and United Methodist mission efforts. Talk to those leading current mission efforts and ask them to share with you how they connect with the passions and strengths of your church and what their impact is. Being able to set forth that case will help you and other leaders continue to attract support and involvement in these forms of mission engagement.

Occasionally, it may happen that a particular form of mission engagement no longer has a constituency within your church dedicated to keeping it going, or you may determine it no longer has the effectiveness and impact that it once did. If that is the case, it may be time to celebrate its legacy and end it to free up energy and resources for something new. However, before ending a program or relationship, ask yourself whether lack of enthusiasm for it could be solved by inviting new people to take leadership. Facilitating such transitions in leadership is an important way you can keep the current mission efforts of your church vital.

Identifying Partners

When starting new mission engagement, the next step after identifying your church's passions, strengths, and networks is to identify partners with whom you can work, especially local partners in the communities where you will be in mission. Mission happens in partnership with others. Partners support each other, bringing strengths to the partnership that complement each other, and help each other to do more together than either could do alone. Mission stems from relationships through which all partners grow in their discipleship.

“When we think about our church’s mission efforts, the first question we ask ourselves should not be ‘What should we *do* for mission in our church?’ It should be ‘Whom should we *relate to* in mission at our church?’” —David W. Scott, *Crossing Boundaries: Sharing God’s Good News through Mission* (Nashville, TN: Wesley’s Foundry Books, 2019), 76.

Because of the important role of partnership in mission, it is critical to approach choosing partners in a thoughtful and respectful way. You want to form healthy partnerships that will ensure fruitful mission. Such healthy mission partnerships are based on shared power and decision-making, appreciation of the assets that each partner brings to mission, and vulnerability among partners who are mutually invested in achieving transformative and sustainable mission outcomes.

In the process of talking with others in your church about their existing relationship networks, you may have already identified some potential mission partners—organizations or individuals that people in your congregation know who may be able to work with your church in its mission efforts. Such partnerships are an excellent place to begin because these preexisting connections can facilitate cooperation.

Another great place to begin when identifying potential mission partners is with United Methodists across the world. At the annual conference, jurisdictional, and general church level, there are individuals and organizations tasked with helping your church connect to mission partners locally and around the world. Prioritizing United Methodist partners helps strengthen the church and its global connection.

Annual conferences usually have well-established mission priorities and mission networks. Connecting to partners through your annual conference can help ensure solid and fruitful partner relationships. At the annual conference level, your Conference Secretary of Global Ministries, Conference Disaster Response Coordinator, and Director of Connectional Ministries can identify partner organizations and congregations within your annual conference or those with whom your annual conference has established a relationship. Contact information for these people can be found on your annual conference’s website.

Each U.S. jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church has a United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) Coordinator, who helps churches in that jurisdiction identify partners for mission journeys and supports churches in planning and executing those journeys. Jurisdictions also have a Mission Advocate, who is a staff person for Global Ministries assigned to help churches in that jurisdiction connect more deeply with the various forms of mission work in the denomination. Contact information and websites for the jurisdictional UMVIM Coordinators can be found at <https://umvim.org/>.

Global Ministries can help you establish relationships with missionaries, United Methodist projects, disaster response efforts, and more (<https://umcmmission.org>). This agency works to help connect churches with a variety of mission activities and partners, including support for The United Methodist Church’s work in both local and global health (<https://umcmmission.org/global-health/>). The United Methodist Committee on Relief

(UMCOR) is part of Global Ministries. It facilitates partnerships around disaster response and development work (www.umcmmission.org/umcor).

United Women in Faith facilitates partnerships with national mission initiatives, partner organizations engaged in various mission work in the US (<https://uwfaith.org/what-we-do/what-we-fund/national-ministries/>).

Planning Mission Engagement

Once you have identified a type of mission and mission partners, it is time to get specific about plans for your mission engagement. This subsection will discuss mission engagement broadly, while the next subsection will examine mission journeys in particular.

While mission begins with relationships—with God and with our partners—successful mission also depends upon clearly identified goals around a joint project or program, sufficient volunteers and resources, and reasonable timelines. Thus, goal setting, budget making, and timeline planning are important skills in planning mission programs. Yet it is absolutely critical that your partners also have a role in setting goals, making budgets, and determining timelines. Planning must be done together, even if it takes longer to collaborate. Focusing on assets that each partner offers helps strengthen the planning process.

Before engaging in mission, it is important to discuss the goals of your mission involvement. Those discussions should happen both internally within your church and externally with your mission partners. This type of discussion can lead to essential clarity about what your church is doing in mission, why it is doing it, and how it is done in collaboration with your partners.

Good goals should be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. They should explain exactly what you and your partners are hoping to accomplish (specific) and how you will know whether or not you have accomplished it (measurable). These goals should be realistic (achievable) and meaningful to both members of your church and your partners (relevant). Last, you should give some thought as to the time frame for determining your progress on these goals—after a specific event or ongoing, perhaps on a quarterly or yearly basis (time-bound).

Good goals should be:
Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time-bound

Along with a list of goals, you should develop an estimate of the resources—human, financial, spiritual, and other—that will be needed to undertake your mission. How many volunteers are needed, for what amount of time, and with what skills? Are there age restrictions for the projects you will undertake? How much money will be needed, and how will that money be spent? Are there buildings, specific pieces of equipment, or other physical assets that are important for carrying out activities? These resources should not all come from your congregation. Your partners also have assets and resources to contribute to your joint mission, and it is important that all contributions be taken into consideration. Thinking through these issues in advance will ensure that you have what you need to successfully carry out your mission and ensure you are not suddenly left short in the middle of it and unable to finish it.

Finally, as you are planning your mission engagement, think through the timeline of events that must happen for the planning, execution, and follow-up of your mission. Do certain events need to happen in a specific sequence? What amount of time should be allotted for each stage? Thinking through a timeline is important both for one-time and ongoing mission engagement and can save you a lot of last-minute frustration.

Planning Mission Journeys

All of the above considerations about goals, resources, and timelines apply to planning a mission journey just as they apply to planning other forms of mission engagement. But when planning a mission journey, there are other elements to take into consideration.

While United Methodists engage in a variety of mission journeys to a variety of places and for a variety of purposes, United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) journeys, including US Disaster Response Teams, are popular forms of mission service. Specific supports exist for these types of mission journeys. Churches planning UMVIM journeys can find support through jurisdictional UMVIM Coordinators (see above) and the UMVIM website (<https://umvim.org/>). UMVIM Coordinators and conference staff can help provide training for churches beginning or expanding their mission journey programs. They can also assist in technical issues related to journey planning, such as necessary vaccinations and securing travel insurance.

UMVIM Coordinators and annual conference Disaster Response Coordinators can help churches participate in disaster-response mission teams. Such teams involve both early-response teams and long-term recovery teams. Since situations on the ground immediately following a natural disaster can be chaotic and confusing, it is highly recommended that any church interested in participating in early response to a disaster do so through UMVIM or another official channel that can ensure that volunteers are serving productively. Independent work in such situations can actually burden those experiencing trauma and drain resources intended for survivors.

There is extensive literature about the potential pitfalls of short-term mission and best practices associated with it. Having your mission team familiarize themselves with some of these resources during the planning process is highly encouraged. One such resource is *A Mission Journey: A Handbook for Volunteers*, published by Global Ministries. See the Resources section for other resources.

Whenever your church goes outside of the United States for a mission journey or works with people of another racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic background in the United States, it is essential to learn more about those

“A mission *journey* as opposed to a mission *trip*, involves dialog, respect, and relationship building.” —*A Mission Journey: A Handbook for Volunteers* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2013), xiii.

Whenever your church works with people of another nation, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background, it is essential to learn more about those with whom you will be in mission before going.

with whom you will be in mission before going. Learning about the culture, local social and economic conditions, and even acquiring some language skills will help facilitate smooth interactions, avoid painful and disruptive conflicts, and open you up to receive from others while on the journey. Remember, those with whom you are working are your partners and your hosts, and it is important to always treat them with courtesy and respect. That involves seeking to learn about them, learn from them, and understand the world through their eyes.

Serving Beyond the Congregation

While most people in your congregation will probably participate in formal mission activities as just one component of their lives, it is possible that some people in your congregation will feel called to devote themselves more wholly to mission service, perhaps even as full-time missionaries. The United Methodist Church has several options for such service:

“I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.”
—Dan Schutte, “Here I Am, Lord,”
UMH 593

Global Mission Fellows (GMFs) is a two-year program of mission service for young adults (ages 18-30) throughout the world. Participants in the GMF program enroll and serve across geographic and cultural lines. Within the program, the US-2 track is specifically designed for those from the United States seeking to serve within the United States. For more information, see <https://umcmmission.org/global-mission-fellows/>.

Global Missionaries is Global Ministries’ long-term mission program for adults. Global missionaries serve in mission for three-year, renewable terms, doing work in areas where their skills can make an impact in the life of local congregations and communities. Global Missionaries serve all around the world with a variety of local partners. Church and Community Workers are a specific group of Global Missionaries serving poor and disadvantaged communities within the United States (<https://umcmmission.org/church-and-community-workers/>). Some Global Missionaries also serve in the United States with the UMC’s ethnic/language ministry plans. For more information on global missionaries, see <https://umcmmission.org/global-missionaries/>.

There are other opportunities for individual service that go beyond a one-week mission journey but do not involve committing to two or three years of service. Among these are the **Mission Volunteers** and **NOMADS** (Nomads On a Mission Active in Divine Service) programs. For more about Mission Volunteers, see <https://umcmmission.org/mission-volunteers/>. For more about NOMADS, see <https://www.methodistnomads.org/>.

Mission Generosity: How Can Your Church Raise Money for Mission?

In this section, as you link what you have learned in the preceding sections with your charge to raise money for mission, keep in mind that fundraising, or mission generosity, is an important expression of sustaining, learning about, celebrating, and reflecting on God's work in the world. Raising money for mission can be a way to help your church members engage in a ministry that is spiritually meaningful and fulfilling, exemplifying fruitfully what many churches have called "extravagant generosity."

As you think about your role, where is your church in the growth of its mission fundraising?

- Is your church already raising money for mission?
- Does your church want to raise more money?
- Are you just beginning or want to know how to get started?

In every case, the work you do to raise money specifically for mission will help enable those who are involved in God's mission at home and around the world. Moreover, fundraising for mission can also be its own missional activity, honoring and participating in God's mission. It is valuable for your mission partner to also engage in raising money for joint mission engagement.

Here are some key practical steps to keep in mind:

Step One: Develop a mission fund-raising focus

Unless your church already has decided where to focus its mission engagement and where it wants to raise money for mission, or in some cases, even if your church has already made those important decisions, it may be helpful to keep in mind the following four areas of mission. These areas can help focus efforts as your church emphasizes or expands how it relates to the United Methodist connectional system and others and grows its work in mission, especially globally.

Missionaries

Jesus commanded us "to witness to the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:47 NRSVue). More than 200 United Methodist missionaries and mission volunteers and more than 300 Nationals in Mission witness and serve in different locales and engage in a range of professions and

activities. They serve in more than 60 countries. Missionaries work as church planters, pastors, congregational and leadership developers, educators, community developers, agriculturalists, and healthcare providers.

Evangelism and Church Revitalization

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19). The church seeks to evangelize, make disciples of Jesus Christ, and establish new faith communities globally, as well as in the United States. In many places, United Methodist “Mission Initiatives” evangelize and plant churches. Mission Initiatives have been established in central Africa, Honduras, and Asia.

Global Health

We are called to follow Jesus who was sent so that we all “may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10 NRSVue). The church’s vision of abundant health for all includes physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being, especially among the economically vulnerable. Global health programs concentrate on supporting the most vulnerable populations, including mothers, newborns, and children. Programs help strengthen whole networks of health responses, from revitalization of facilities and staff training to building better water sources, developing sanitation facilities, and promoting nutrition. Global health programs also help prevent diseases such as malaria, HIV and AIDS.

Humanitarian Relief and Recovery

“The disciples determined that, according to their ability, each would send relief” (Acts 11:29 NRSVue). UMCOR trains Disaster Response Coordinators and supports communities in the United States and around the world that are overwhelmed by natural and human-caused disasters. UMCOR also addresses migration, sustainable development, and agriculture. UMCOR’s EarthKeepers program helps churches create environmental ministries.

Step Two: Talk about Impact

The impact you envision regarding your church’s mission outreach certainly can be affected by the amount of money you and your church raise for mission, but the amount is not as important as ensuring your church is simply engaged. To set monetary goals, consult with your pastor and key lay leaders about what amount seems feasible, based on your church’s recent history of giving to mission and its current capacity, present readiness for monetary giving, and appetite for spiritually fulfilling “extravagant generosity.”

What kind of mission impact does your church want to have?

Impact through Missionaries

Establish a personal relationship with at least one missionary. Each missionary around the world welcomes a relationship with churches. For the greatest impact, ask your church to establish what is called a “Covenant Relationship” with a missionary. Covenants recur throughout Scripture. A biblical covenant is a relationship based on mutual obligations. In contemporary Christianity, a covenant relationship is marked by partnership, commitment, and mutuality as two groups work together toward a common goal. Covenants reflect the connective nature of The United Methodist Church, which is characterized by mutual relationships. Covenant Partner Relationships draw upon these biblical and theological roots to provide an opportunity for missionaries and churches or individuals to support one another spiritually, emotionally, missionally, and financially.

By creating these relationships, your church commits to providing annual financial support for one or several missionaries in their place of assignment. Any amount is welcome. A goal might be \$5 per member per year. The relationship is important not only for financial reasons but also for the dynamic partnership it brings: the church and missionary pray for one another and communicate regularly. This may include your invitation for the missionary to visit your church when traveling in your area. For more information about Covenant Relationships, go to <https://umcmmission.org/covenantrelationships/>.

Impact through Evangelism and Church Revitalization

Focus on evangelism. Consider raising money to help faith communities grow and flourish. Over 1,000 new faith communities have been planted through Mission Initiatives in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America over the last 20 years. Your church can assist these new faith communities with contributions of any amount. Your financial support will complement the contributions from within a Mission Initiative, helping it grow toward sustainability, which is a primary focus for all new faith communities. Mission Initiatives, including their individual faith communities, depend for their success and sustainability on funds to cover clergy, evangelism, worship, and other ministries crucial for developing disciples of Jesus Christ.

Your church may want to consider partnering with other churches in your local area. This increases the financial and spiritual resources that will assist the new faith community in growing and contributes toward your congregation’s own spiritual formation. For more information, go to <https://umcmmission.org/evangelism-and-church-revitalization/>.

Impact through Global Health

Establish or expand your church’s focus on health. Consider one of the United Methodist healthcare initiatives addressing maternal and child health, hunger and nutrition, or access to care at one or several of the United Methodist hospitals and clinics across the globe.

Specific opportunities include funding a missionary doctor, dentist, mental health, or community health worker; supporting transportation for patients to emergency and other clinics, especially in rural areas; purchasing equipment; or supporting interventions

to help mothers and infants avoid disease. Organize a team to visit the clinic/hospital and area where you are partnering. For more information, go to <https://umcmission.org/global-health/>.

In your church and community, raise money to develop or expand your health ministries. Options include creating health assessments for church and community members, offering programs to encourage healthy cooking and eating, and fitness activities for all ages.

Impact through Humanitarian Relief and Recovery

Support UMCOR. If your church wants to expand its impact, for example beyond initial disaster response, UMCOR offers a range of ways to help.

- Volunteer to be trained as disaster responders or fund the training of others.
- Prepare relief-supply cleaning kits or hygiene kits for communities impacted by storms or times of crisis.
- Adopt a community in need and give toward materials for rebuilding structures.
- Support farming and other livelihood initiatives around the world that facilitate start-up projects to help people become economically self-sufficient.
- Sign up to be trained as a United Methodist EarthKeeper in your community.

For more information, go to www.umcmission.org/umcor.

Step Three: Promote Relationships

If your church already has strong mission engagement, or if your church is just getting started or wants to expand, many annual conferences and the United Methodist general program agencies can help add to, deepen, and enrich your network and your church mission engagement.

Global Ministries can assist in scheduling a missionary to visit and speak at your church. Relationship-building, especially with missionaries, has never been easier. Global communications technology allows you to participate in Facebook Live or Zoom conversations with a missionary. These relationships can be invaluable, even if your church already enjoys mutually beneficial relationships with United Methodist missionaries. Stories from the field are inspiring, insightful, and instructive, no matter where your church is in its mission engagement.

Step Four: The Advance for Christ and His Church

Especially when your church wants its mission engagement to become more global, a crucial step can be getting to know The Advance for Christ and His Church (The Advance).

In addition to providing opportunities to support missionaries, global health, disaster response, and evangelism and church growth, as described earlier in these mission guidelines, The Advance currently provides information on more than 700 mission projects, each of which represents an opportunity for your church to raise money to support mission. Many of these projects focus on specific communities or challenges, offering churches the ability to connect with places or concerns of special interest to their members.

For more information about The Advance, go to: <https://umcmmission.org/about-the-advance/>.

Step Five: Promote the Connection

The United Methodist Church's work in mission depends on the generosity of churches and conferences. In addition to the general church's financial support received through annual apportionments, which enables the church's World Service Fund, the church's work in mission depends on "second-mile giving." This can be an important message to promote in your church.

An example is how United Methodist missionaries are funded. Missionaries receive a portion of their funding through the World Service Fund. However, "second-mile" giving, from churches and other generous donors makes up the remainder and ensures the continued training, commissioning, and sending of missionaries on behalf of the church. Other areas of mission likewise depend on second-mile giving.

A financial commitment is just the beginning of a fruitful, mutual relationship between churches, individuals, missionaries, and other mission partners—a relationship where each party faithfully engages through their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Want to Learn More?

The United Methodist Church provides fundraising expertise for churches. The general program agencies of the church can be helpful resources. For example, you might explore how Global Ministries' Development Office can help your church discuss strategies for raising money for mission either through current gifts or planned (estate) gifts.

Additional resources are available. For some fundraising basics, ResourceUMC provides helpful guidance (<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/churchwide/umcgiving>).

Mission Growth: Assessing, Celebrating, and Learning from Mission

Mission begins with spirituality, which leads to relationship, action, and generosity. But mission does not end there. We are called to reflect on that action and generosity from time to time for the sake of assessing, together with our partners, the ups and downs of our joint mission work; sharing these results with members of our churches, our mission partners, and others; and articulating what we have learned through our mission engagement. In this way, we close the circle and come back to spirituality by identifying the ways in which we have grown in our understanding of and relationship with God and others through our mission engagement.

Measure Your Success

At regular intervals during your mission engagement, it is important to pause for some assessment and evaluation. Reflecting back on the accomplishments and challenges of your mission work can allow you to celebrate significant successes, build support for this or other projects, learn from and improve on current mission work, and assure your church that their resources have been used well.

Evaluation can begin with three simple questions:

- Did you achieve the mission goals that you identified with your partners during the planning process?
- What helped or hindered you in trying to achieve those goals?
- What did you and your partners learn by engaging in God's mission?

Just as the planning process involved many people in your congregation, so, too, is it important that many people be involved in the evaluation process. Participants, supporters, other leaders in the church, mission partners, and those with whom you were in mission may all have valuable perspectives to contribute when reflecting on the successes and challenges of your mission activity.

When discussing this work with others, remember that the goal is mutual learning. Fault-finding and defensiveness hinder learning, so try to avoid both as much as possible. Grounding the evaluation process in prayer can help all participants listen to the Spirit through the evaluation process and remind all that the ultimate goal of evaluating our mission activities is to better serve God in Christ.

Tell the Story of Your Mission Engagement and Generosity

At key stages, quarterly for example, keep in mind the value of telling the story of your congregation's mission engagement and generosity. Your congregation will enjoy stories about the impact of its mission work, fundraising progress, and the impact their giving has helped to inspire. Stories about giving can also play an effective role in setting the stage for asking church members for new or increased giving. Within your mission planning group and/or fundraising team, it is also important to celebrate, as well as rehearse how you might put in place new strategies, even if you have already met your goals.

There are many ways to share such stories. Most churches have newsletters, announcements, bulletin boards, and the like. But remember that the form of storytelling that has the greatest impact is usually face-to-face. Also, don't hesitate to get creative in sharing your story in new and innovative ways. Pictures, video, and social media can be influential ways of sharing your story, though you should take care to always depict mission partners in respectful ways.

Celebrate Mission in Worship

One way to share your mission story and celebrate what God is doing in mission through your congregation is in worship. Incorporating a focus on mission into your church's weekly congregational worship service will not only encourage people to engage in mission but also continue shaping the church's mission engagement around seeing God's active and transforming grace around the world.

"Called by worship to your service,
forth in your dear name we go."
—Albert F. Bayly, "Lord, Whose Love
Through Humble Service," v. 4, *UMH* 581

Some churches hold yearly mission Sundays, where the entire theme of the worship service, including Bible readings, the sermon, and worship music, relates to mission. Other churches have a regular "mission moment" in their worship services, where church members share information or short reflections related to mission. Whatever model you choose, keeping the focus on mission throughout the year will not only strengthen the church's mission engagement; it will strengthen its members' faith journey.

If your church sends out mission teams, incorporating members of the teams into a worship service, before and after traveling, is a good way to involve the entire congregation in that mission effort. If your church supports missionaries through a covenant relationship, involving them in worship during an itineration visit or including them via technology will not only enrich worship; it will also demonstrate the impact funds donated for mission make around the world. You can also invite leaders or participants from local and global mission partners to be involved in your worship services, by delivering the sermon on a designated Sunday, for example.

Reflect on Mission Theologically

As you assess and celebrate your impact through mission, it is also important to think about what you and your partners have learned from that mission engagement. Some of this learning is practical or relational and will be captured in the assessment process. But some of this learning involves reflecting on how our mission work connects to our faith. This is the work of theology—articulating what we believe about God and the Christian life. Our theology of mission shapes the way we engage in mission, which demonstrates what we believe about God, and what God is doing in the world.

“Theology moves us to engage in mission, and mission rightly practiced enables us to develop theology.” —Glory E. Dharmaraj and Jacob S. Dharmaraj, *A Theology of Mutuality: A Paradigm for Mission in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: United Methodist Women, 2014), 26.

One resource for doing such theological reflection is Global Ministries’ *Theology of Mission Statement*, the complete text of which can be found in the following section. The Theology of Mission Statement encourages those involved in mission to listen for God’s voice, which is present in all cultures, traditions, political arrangements, economic structures, and languages; to discover the signs of how the Spirit, which calls the Church into being for mission, is moving in the world today; and to bear witness to God’s activity in every setting, as God in Christ leads us to deliver exploited persons and oppressed peoples, to restore the sanctity and integrity of God’s creation, and to reconcile division in the households of faith and among the peoples and nations of the earth as all of creation groans for redemption.

Your church and your mission partners can use the Theology of Mission Statement (or other materials) as a way to reflect together upon the theological significance of your mission efforts. Discussing this statement can help you name the ways in which God has been at work through and among you, what you have learned about God in the process, and what you have learned about and from each other as partners. In this way, mission engagement feeds back into spiritual growth, continuing the process by which we are made perfect in love.

Global Ministries' Theology of Mission Statement

The Mission Theology statement guides Global Ministries' participation in the *Missio Dei*. It frames Global Ministries' role within the denominational mission to *make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world*. The transforming power belongs to God, and Global Ministries is in mission to witness to what God has done and is doing and to learn from what God is doing in every land where disciples gather in the name of Jesus Christ.

God's Mission from Creation to Completion

"EarthKeepers look at communities and the resources they have at hand to make a difference in the climate crisis. They are living examples of how each of us can look at the needs of our communities and our gifts and how we can make a difference." —Rev. Jenny Phillips, senior technical advisor of Global Ministries' Environmental Sustainability program, quoted in Christie R. House, "29 EarthKeepers Commissioned for Service," Global Ministries (Sept. 29, 2022), <https://umcmmission.org/story/29-earthkeepers-commissioned-for-service/>.

God's Mission reclaims the life of all creatures and redeems all creation for God's intended purpose. Holy Scriptures bear witness to mission that begins with God, belongs to God, and will be fulfilled by God at the end of time. The Spirit of God, which moved over the waters of chaos at creation, and the Word of God, which became Incarnate in Jesus Christ, leads on to fullness in God's purpose.

The Self-Emptying Life of Jesus the Christ in Service to the Least and the Last

In response to God's Mission for him, Jesus—whom we Christians acknowledge as God's Son, the Christ, the anointed servant of God, and our Savior—poured himself out in servanthood for all humanity and emptied himself of divine privilege, assuming the trials and risks of human limitation. Jesus identified in compassion with all humanity and lived in radical faithfulness to the will of God. He became obedient unto death—even a humiliating public execution. In raising Jesus from the dead, God shows willingness and power to reconcile all creation and to restore the world to its divine purpose.

The Church as a Community of Servanthood in Mission

“The UMC in North Katanga means life, education, food security. The church, through its mission, has become the center of hope, development, and national peacebuilding.” —Bishop Mande Muyombo, North Katanga Episcopal Area, unpublished keynote address at “Answering the Call,” the Methodist Mission Bicentennial Conference.

God’s Holy Spirit calls the Church into being for mission. The Church is one sign of God’s presence in the world and of God’s intention for creation. In response to God’s call and the leading of the Holy Spirit, women and men, young and old, of all nations, stations, and races, and in all times and places, unite as the living body of Christ to join God’s mission of redemption, bearing witness to God’s presence in the world. This community of faith aspires to live out the potential of new life in Christ among all human beings now, while envisioning the fulfillment of God’s reign and the completion of God’s mission. The Church experiences and engages in God’s mission as it pours itself out for others, ready to cross every boundary to call for true human dignity among all peoples, especially among those regarded as the least of God’s children, all the while making disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world.

Grace at Work Everywhere

“Being a missionary means being in service to others, working alongside them and doing the work that God has called us to do. It means showing up in ways we may never have done before or thought that we would ever need to do.” —Arabia Sweet, Church and Community Worker serving as coordinator of program development for the Bennettsville-Cheraw Area Cooperative Ministry in South Carolina, in “Christ: The Guiding Star in Bennettsville,” Global Ministries (Nov. 16, 2023), <https://umcmmission.org/reflection/christ-the-guiding-star-in-bennettsville/>.

In our Wesleyan tradition we acknowledge the grace of God placed in our hearts and at work in the world before any action on our part. In response we accept and proclaim grace that sets us upon the right path of obedience to the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ. This grace calls us to repentance, and to active faith and good works in Christ. Active faith participates in the perfecting and fulfilling grace of God, which claims and implements the promises of God to deliver exploited persons and oppressed peoples, to restore the sanctity and integrity of God’s creation, and to reconcile division in the households of faith and among the peoples and nations of the earth as all of creation groans for redemption. The Wesleyan expectation of “perfection in love” draws redeemed individuals into appropriate, active, transforming relationships of wholeness and unity with God, all people, and creation. Repentance and faith elicit both personal salvation, and social and cosmic transformation.

“I see and testify to God’s love and faithfulness every day through his son, Jesus Christ . . . When people work together, and in the process come to trust God, their lives will never be the same. They will change positively and people around them will see and testify how God is good and faithful.” —Nana Fatuma Katembo, agricultural technician missionary serving in the West Angola Annual Conference, in “Lives of Women in Bomjesus Change through Faith in God,” Global Ministries (Nov. 10, 2023), <https://umcmmission.org/reflection/lives-of-women-in-bomjesus-change-through-faith-in-god/>.

Transformative Witness

The Church in Mission lifts up the name of Jesus in thought, word, and deed, proclaiming Jesus Christ as “the Word become flesh” through its own incarnate living; deeds of love; and service, healing, and renewal. By representing the revelation of God in Christ in word and deed, the Church remains faithful both to the Great Commandment that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves; and to the Great Commission that we make disciples of all nations. The Church as faithful community moves full of hope toward the transformation of the world and the day when God’s mission is fulfilled.

God’s Prior Presence, Our Current Response

God’s light shines in every corner of the earth, and God’s mission extends to all creation. There are no places where God’s grace has not always been present, only places where God in Christ is not recognized, served, or heeded. Because God’s image is present in every human being throughout the world, mission partnership embraces witness in all cultures, traditions, political arrangements, economic structures, and languages. Partners in God’s mission seek to hear God’s voice, to discover the signs of the moving of the Spirit through the world today, and to bear witness to God’s activity—overarching past, present, and future—in every local setting.

The Spirit’s Surprising Activity

The Spirit is always moving to sweep the Church into a new mission age. With openness and gratitude, we await the leading of the Spirit in ways not yet seen as God continues to work God’s purposes out in our own day in a new way.

Resources

As you continue to lead your church in its mission engagement, these resources may be of assistance to you.

People

Annual Conference Staff, such as the Director of Connectional Ministries, Conference Secretary of Global Ministries (or the chair of the Conference Committee on Global Ministries), and Conference Disaster Response Coordinator can help you connect to existing partnerships, programs, and resources for mission at the annual conference level. See your annual conference's website for more information.

Mission Advocates in the US jurisdictions are staff of Global Ministries assigned to help churches in that jurisdiction connect more deeply with various forms of mission work in the denomination. Ask your annual conference leaders to identify the Mission Advocate for your jurisdiction.

UMVIM Coordinators in the US jurisdictions help churches in their region or jurisdiction identify partners for mission journeys and support churches in planning and executing those mission journeys. Contact information can be found at <https://umvim.org/staffleadership>.

Programs and Organizations

Global Ministries is the United Methodist general agency tasked with connecting the church in mission. It engages in mission work and facilitates mission with United Methodists and other partners around the world. For more information, visit www.umcmmission.org.

United Women in Faith is the largest denominational faith organization for women in the United States, with sister organizations across the globe. Its mission is to foster spiritual growth, develop leaders, and advocate for justice. For more information, visit <https://uwfaith.org/>.

ResourceUMC is a website with resources related to various topics, including mission involvement and mission generosity—why United Methodists give, how we give, and the impact of our mission giving. For more information, visit <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/>.

Special Sundays include six churchwide special offerings to support mission in targeted areas of denominational emphasis. For more information, visit <https://www.umc.org/en/how-we-serve/umcgiving/how-we-give#sundays>.

Reading Materials

A Mission Journey: A Handbook for Volunteers (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2013), provides specific resources to prepare short-term mission groups before traveling, to support groups during their journeys, and to assist groups in reflecting after journeys, as well as several tools to assist groups in planning and implementation.

David W. Scott, *Crossing Boundaries: Sharing God's Good News through Mission* (Nashville, TN: Wesley's Foundry Books, 2019), shares practical steps for cultivating mission relationships that promote conversations about God's good news across differences. It is designed for group study.

Glory E. Dharmaraj and Jacob S. Dharmaraj, *A Theology of Mutuality: A Paradigm for Mission in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: United Methodist Women, 2014), draws on biblical and theological insights to explain why mutuality is a necessary value in mission.

Michael Mather, *Having Nothing, Possessing Everything: Finding Abundant Communities in Unexpected Places* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), uses the author's ministry experiences to show what the principles of asset-based mission engagement with the community can look like for churches.

The **UM & Global blog** posts regular articles about mission in The United Methodist Church. It also posts content designed to foster conversations about the global nature of The United Methodist Church. To read the blog, visit www.umglobal.org.

Those looking for further guidance in planning mission journeys should read "**How To Do Short-Term Missions the Right Way**" by Dan Wunderlich, <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/how-to-do-short-term-missions-the-right-way>. The UM & Global blog has additional articles reflecting on practical and theological issues related to UMVIM and short-term mission. See www.umglobal.org/search/label/short%20term%20missions and <http://www.umglobal.org/p/um-global-collections.html>.

UMC Agencies & Helpful Links

The United Methodist Church, www.umc.org

General Commission on Archives and History, www.gcuh.org, Madison, NJ,
973-408-3189

General Board of Church and Society, www.umcjustice.org, Washington, DC,
202-488-5600

United Methodist Communications, www.resourceumc.org/communications,
www.umns.org, Nashville, TN, 615-742-5400; InfoServ 1-800-251-8140

General Board of Discipleship, www.umcdiscipleship.org, Nashville, TN, 877-899-2780

General Board of Finance and Administration, www.gcfa.org, Nashville, TN

General Board of Global Ministries, www.umcmmission.org, Atlanta, GA, 800-862-4246

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, www.gbhem.org, Nashville, TN,
615-340-7413

General Commission on Religion and Race, www.gcorr.org, Washington, DC,
202-495-2949

General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, www.gcsrw.org, Chicago, IL,
1-800-523-8390

General Commission on United Methodist Men, www.gcumm.org, Nashville, TN,
615-340-7145

The United Methodist Publishing House, www.umph.org, www.abingdonpress.com,
www.cokesbury.com, www.ministrymatters, Nashville, TN, 615-749-6000

United Women in Faith, www.uwfaith.org, New York, NY, 212-682-3633

Wespath (retirement/benefits), www.wespath.org, Glenview, IL, 800-851-2201

For additional resources, contact your annual conference office.