

Partners in Mission

Texas Annual Conference
United Methodist Church



Missions

- How?
- What?
- When?

The Partners In Mission and Sending Ministries committees want to make sure you have all the information necessary to create a healthy, active mission program in your church. Information in this *Guide* has been collected from local, national and even international mission programs.

It is our desire to help you in creating a connectional mission ministry that will follow the "Bound for Greater Things" strategic plan for the Texas Annual Conference. Missions can begin in your own church, move to the community and beyond. We hope that you will use this guide to find your way on your mission journey.

How to Plan a Local Church Mission Program

1. List everything that your congregation is doing in mission. Think broadly about programs with financial support; remember to include youth, men, women, classes etc. Include local and regional.
2. What are your needs in Mission? Where are the weak spots? What areas of programming would be most helpful and interesting to your congregation? Are you involved locally but not around the world?
3. Select one or two projects/ideas to work on. Be specific.
4. Develop a year round mission education program. Plan a set of activities and programs that liven up missions during the year.

Missions Education Events

Mission Education allows our congregations to understand the ministry and realities of God's work in the real world. Studying Biblical mandates, learning about the history of mission in the United Methodist tradition, studying current events and being involved in hands on mission work creates an educated congregation.

Working with the Mission and Outreach Committees in the churches, allows Partners In Mission (PIM) and Sending Ministries to facilitate mission awareness and education at the local level. There are many opportunities for each church to become involved through workshops, Conferences and forming mission teams to go out of the church into the community.

Here are some ideas that can help keep missions active and energized in your church.

- District Mission Event

If your District advertizes a "Mission Event" please take time to attend. You will learn about all aspects of "service" in your church and receive current information on numerous opportunities for involvement. This event might be sponsored by the District Superintendent, Center for Missional Excellence, Sending Ministries or through Partners In Mission. Keep informed by subscribing to the Conference email (contact Rebecca Garcia at garciar@methodists.net) with up coming events and reading the Cross Connection for dates and places you can attend.

- Church Family Night Program

Find out from the Sending Ministry Chair when missionaries are traveling in the Texas Annual Conference and invite them to your church. Organize a Family night with a pot luck/covered dish or use this as a fundraiser for missions and prepare a meal. Advertize weeks ahead that a missionary is coming from the General Board and invite the congregation to hear about missions in the field. You could use this evening to advertize other mission ideas in your community, Disaster Teams needed etc.

- Cooperative School Of Missions

This program is done yearly in our Conference, usually in July. Again watch the Cross Connection and the Conference email notices for registration etc. In the Texas Conference this program is a 3-4 day event organized by a representative group of pastors and laity from across the conference. Following the guidelines of the Women Division ministries, the school is structured in three parts: Bible Study, social issue and a geographical area. Then during the year these studies can continue in your church by people who attended the summer session. It is a great time to learn about National and International Mission opportunities and how our church is involved. Send several people to the summer "school" as men, women, youth and children will find it rewarding.

- Mission Festival or Fair

There are many ways to design a Mission Fair at your church. If you sponsor a missionary, plan to highlight them during the service. The mission fair can be an "Alternative Christmas Fair" using the idea of Heifer Project International Alternative Christmas which can be downloaded from www.heifer.org.

Add to your fair:

- PIM display and hand outs
- The Mission Store
- Christian Alliance
- Medical Bridges
- UMArmy and BIG House
- Disaster Relief/UMCOR
- Local food pantry or resale shop if they need volunteers
- Your own mission outreach groups in your church

- Mission Speakers

Invite someone from the Speakers group of Sending Ministry or Partners In Mission for Sundays where the topic is Missions or Apportionments. Use any time the Pastor is on vacation to see if missions can fill the pulpit. Project Coordinator from Partners in Mission will be happy to talk to any Sunday School class educating the groups about missions and encourage them to participate in a specific area. UMW, Methodist Men, Confirmation Classes, Youth Groups and others can benefit by hearing the mission story first hand from volunteers who have experienced the journey.

- Mission Films

The Conference Audio/Visual Library has a wide variety of video and CD's pertaining to work being done by mission workers around the world. This is an excellent way to touch and inform people who can't travel and visit mission projects firsthand. Call the AV library at 713-521-9383 for more information. They will mail the film/CD to you and all you have to do is return it.

- Mission FORUM

The PIM committee organizes each fall a mission conference, usually called the FORUM. With specific themes, the conference includes special guest speakers from the General Board, visiting missionaries, hands on projects, a Global village which highlights mission ministries of our Conference plus worship services. Go to the PIM website at www.PartnersInMission.org to download the current registration form or call the office and request information.

- International weekend

Invite a group of international college or high school students to your church. Begin with a banquet for the students and congregation. Again you could use this as a fund raiser if you wanted. Allow the students to work in small group discussions, or have some give presentations. The students can stay in homes of the congregation overnight then come to church on Sunday and participate in worship. They could visit Sunday School classes and talk about their lives, cultures etc. You could also plan an afternoon program with the youth of the church.

- Partners in Mission

Seeing mission projects firsthand sparks more interest and lifelong concern for God's mission than almost any other program. PIM has Project Coordinators who promote specific sites that meet the criteria for approved projects. These projects could be construction of a parsonage, clinic, school or a medical team. Volunteers make up the team and can all come from one church or be a combination of several churches. Contact the PIM office or look on the website for contact names to ask question about this program.

Other mission opportunities at the local church

- Worship committee - address the importance of the local church being in mission, importance of World Service giving, to applaud the church for its mission participation and participate in the mission offerings
- Children's sermon - volunteer to give a mission story during worship or in children's church
- Choir - work with the choir director to have international music for mission Sunday programs.
- Meetings - over coffee, on retreats, at church meals take time to visit with people about missions.
- Confirmation Classes - ask for time to present the need for mission to these youth. See if you can work in a "mission service day" for them in your community.
- Children's Sunday School classes - Visit with the Education Director about having Heifer Project as a mission emphasis for the younger classes. Give the children a goal to reach and see how they do.
- Mission or Outreach committee - communicate to the congregation often on what the committee is doing. Keep them informed on mission work teams, donations, missionaries, special offerings for missions.
- Mission Suppers - Suppers are a great way to get people together and present a mission theme. If a guest speaker can be brought in that would be great. The meal can be part of the theme and also increases the awareness of the mission field.
- Letter writing - look at the Prayer Calendar (UMW) for addresses of missionaries around the world. Challenge a youth class to find pen pals. Ask Adult classes to find a missionary who they will communicate with on a regular basis and then support them with a donation.
- United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women - are great resources for volunteers. Not only ask them to participate in hands on mission opportunities but see if you can get speakers to talk to each group. Both of these groups are very willing to accept the challenge of special mission projects and funding if asked.
- Vacation Bible School - go to the planning committee and see how they can use you. Add mission ideas to the "theme" and have the children to a collection of items or money for a specific project.

Mission Advertizing for Every Church

Every church needs to keep missions in the fore front of the congregation. This can be done in easy and inexpensive ways. Look at the following ideas and see what will work for your church. Make sure to include as many people as possible so everyone has an opportunity to serve.

1. Mission Minutes or "Moment for Missions"

Volunteer or find someone from a recent mission team to give a short 3-5 minute presentation about some aspect of God's mission. Prepare a power point presentation to run before the service begins if your church has media equipment. Ask Sunday School teachers if you can have just a moment in class to hand out information or talk to them about missions. Go to the gbgm-umc.org website and find missionary profiles to promote specific people or areas. If you are communicating with a missionary, read the letters as they come in from the mission field. Ask your pastor for the Service Center Catalog where you can find many leaflets, flyers and resources to assist in telling the story.

2. Literature

Assign one or two people on the missions committee to order and distribute mission literature obtained from the Service Center. Be as creative as possible when distributing literature so it is not wasted. Perhaps youth could hand out information as people leave the sanctuary. Request to be on the Conference Group Email (garcia@methodists.net) which gives information about special workshops, conferences and mission opportunities. Also contact Partners In Mission and ask to be on their newsletter mailing list (713-521-9383). This publication lists conference projects, UMCOR needs, Disaster work, and hands on projects for all ages and contacts for mission ministries. Also, look at the webpage for PIM at www.txcumc.org as many news and current items will be listed.

3. Mission Displays and Bulletin Boards

Maps, posters, pictures and leaflets may be used to make attractive, eye-catching mission displays. These are visual reminders that the church reaches out and is in mission throughout the world. Even if someone doesn't stop to thoroughly read the bulletin board, they know at a glance that your church is a mission church. Change the display often to continue to keep the attention of the congregation.

4. Missionary of the month

Select a missionary to highlight each month in your church. Contact the Chair of Sending Ministry for the Texas Annual Conference for missionaries related to our Conference. Also look in the Prayer Calendar (find it through Cokesbury, UMW president for your church, or go to the Service Center catalog) as all missionaries are listed. Throughout the month your congregation could learn about the missionary through pictures, displays, article and information in your church bulletin or newsletter. Ask the congregation to pray for the missionary, send cards and letters. Special offerings for support could be received or consider a special Covenant Relationship with one or more missionaries. Get information about being a Covenant Partner through the Sending Ministry chair or go to gbgm-umc.org to find it on the website.

Money For Missions

Financial support for United Methodist mission comes from the following funds:

World Service - This is the basic undesignated fund of the denomination and provides the primary support for most of the general agencies of the Church and programs around the world.

The Advance - The major source of designated funding for missions is the Advance. Individuals, groups and local churches can specify funds for missionary support, for approved projects of the World and National Divisions and of the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

United Methodist Women - The Pledge to Mission is undesignated giving of the UMW in support of mission. Allocations are made by the directors of the Women's Division for specific mission activities of the World and National Divisions.

One Great Hour of Sharing - This offering is taken the fourth Sunday in Lent and goes entirely to the UMCOR as its basic form of support. By combining our gifts on this special day, we can respond through UMCOR wherever and whenever we hear people cry for refuge and basic necessities of life.

World Communion - This offering is taken the first Sunday in October, and provides support for the Crusade Scholars program for international and racial-ethnic graduate students. Half of the offering receipts must go to ministries beyond the U.S.

Rural Life Sunday - This offering is for town and country ministries within the Annual Conference.

Native American Awareness Sunday - This offering is used to enhance Native American ministries within the Annual Conference and to provide scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist schools of theology.

Human Relations Day - Is received on the Sunday before the national observance of the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. It supports United Methodist Voluntary Services and Community Developers of the National Division in low-income, racial- and ethnic - minority communities.

Golden Cross Sunday - Provides funding for hospitals, homes for the aging, youth and children's homes, and other agencies related to and determined by each annual conference.

Youth Service Fund - Is administered through the National Youth Ministry Organization and is an avenue of mission education and giving for youth.

Planning a Mission Experience

When we are involved in MISSION we are fulfilling Christ's call to go into the world and feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, visit the sick and welcome strangers. The Great Commission is still our challenge today. It is a challenge that the local church is called to answer. So, how do we go about answering this call? The first step is to open the doors of the church, to step outside and look around. Look at and listen to your community.

STEP 1

What are the needs of my community?

- What group of people has unmet needs?
 - Unemployed
 - Children
 - Underprivileged families
 - Youth
 - Senior Adults
 - Illiterate
 - Non-English speaking
 - Families of disasters
- What groups are already at work in our community?
 - Food pantry
 - Social services agencies
 - School literacy programs
 - Drug Awareness programs
 - Senior Adult Centers
 - After school programs
 - Pre-school programs
 - Disaster/rebuild programs

- How can we support those services already in place?
 - Volunteer Hours
 - Financial contributions
 - Donation of Goods
- What new ministries need to be started?
 - People who fall through the cracks
 - The lepers of society

Once we understand the needs of our community, we need to put on our binoculars and get a good look at the world.

Step 2

Looking beyond the Community to the World

- Learn about the world
 - Newspaper
 - Television
 - Methodist publications
 - Response
 - New World Outlook
- Take an Educational trip to inform yourself
 - Visit the *General Board of Global Ministry* in New York
 - Find a mission site near you and take a field trip
 - Visit Sager Brown/UMCOR Depot in Baldwin, Louisiana
 - Visit Heifer Project in Perryville, Arkansas

Feeling overwhelmed? Well, one person can make a difference but a team of Christians committed to mission work can change the world.

Step 3

Form a Team

- Go to www.PartnersInMission.org and find the "contacts" sheet. This will give all the contact names for ongoing mission sites for our Conference.
 - Contact a Project Coordinator in your area of interest
 - Set up a time for a meeting with the mission committee
- Look on the gbgm-umc.org website for Approved National and International projects
 - Contact the person responsible for the projects
 - Find out all you can and share the information
- Take advantage of the connectional system.
 - Working with the PIM office will simplify the process
 - Invite other churches
 - Talk to your D.S. to see if a District team can form
 - Stay in touch with the Project Coordinator
 - Keep the congregation involved through fund raising and prayer
- Sign up for Team Leader Training with the Partners In Mission office (713-521-9383).
- What should our plan include?
 - Set up short term and long term goals
 - Find projects with a variety of skills needed
- Who should be on the team?
 - Those committed to caring for others
 - A diverse Group of people
 - Many different talents
- How should our team be structured?
 - Team Leader Training will give you all the information
 - Hand outs from the manual can be copied for your team
 - Be flexible

Step 4

Get excited and go to work!

- Attend the Texas Conference School of Mission
- Work with Sunday School Teachers
- Make mission resources available to members
- Bring in speakers
- Hold a mission study
- Write articles for the newsletter
- Set up displays and bulletin boards
- Plan an annual Mission Sunday
- Use the fifth Sunday for missions
- Hold a dinner celebrating a different culture
- Make a mission banner
- Write letters to missionaries
- Become a Red Cross Shelter
- Host a Souper Supper

Be in Missions Now

- Collections of all types of prescription eye glasses. The glasses are used throughout the Caribbean, Central and South America with medical teams on Mission trips. Ask your local eye doctor.
- Hearing Aids - the over the ear, external type of aid. These are cleaned and reconditioned to use in Haiti and Russia for children. Call Gil Hanke, Nacogdoches, Tx. - 409-506-6746
- Package food for Disaster Response - Bulk grains are packaged in family size bags to send to the hungry around the world. Call the Christian Alliance - 281-412-2285
- Sort and Inventory Medical supplies for distribution around the world. Call Medical Bridges - 713-748-8131
- Volunteer at Mission Milby in Houston to help with a wide assortment of needs from construction to teaching. Call Will Reed - 713-454-6411

MANNA MADE MANIFEST

Recipe: 1 gallon size Ziploc bag
1 toothbrush
1 small tube of toothpaste
soap, shampoo, rinse (travel size)
1 wash cloth
2 granola bars
1 small package of raisins, or other dry fruit
1 tuna snack can with crackers
1 small bottle of water

Buy or collect the above and prepare the bags. The cost of each bag is about \$6.00, depending on the amount of donated materials received.

Members of the congregation purchase the bags for \$7.00 or \$1.00 over the original purchase price so that more supplies can be bought. Individuals keep the bags at home or in their vehicles so they are ready when they encounter someone in need.

Other Suggestions For Mission Outreach

- Be a volunteer at the Hospital
 - Drive the elder to appointments or shopping. Visit the nursing home.
 - Learn the history of missions of your church and share it with congregation
 - Participate in your church worship service
 - Sing in the choir or help organize a youth choir.
 - Go Christmas caroling
 - Volunteer to keep the nursery during church
 - Cut the grass for the elderly
 - Help with Vacation Bible School
 - Be a Big Brother or Sister to a youth at school
 - Pack a "Kit"
 - Health Kit - bar of soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, wash cloth.
 - School Kit - 2 spiral, lined notebooks, pencil sharpener, 6 pencils with erasers, 12 sheets construction paper, crayons
- Mail kits to: Christian Alliance for Humanitarian Aid
4401 Rice Dryer Road
Pearland, Texas 77581
281-412-2285
- Sponsor a tutoring program or after-school program for children.
 - Serve breakfast or lunch to homeless at a shelter
 - Help sort clothes at a shelter
 - Volunteer for Meals-On-Wheels
 - Hold clothing drives for Women's shelters
 - Send letters and cards to missionaries
 - UMCOR website - gbgm-umc.org/umcor/getconnected/supplies for recent kit contents

**MISSIONS IS A THRILLING OPPORTUNITY TO HELP
SOMEONE UNDERSTAND JESUS' LOVE BY SHARING
YOURSELF!**

LOCAL MISSIONS

All churches regardless of size can be involved in missions. Consider joining forces with other churches in the community if a task is larger than your church can complete. It's important to network with other churches and organizations to make use of all available community resources and coordinate efforts.

"Fix up" projects such as painting in or outside a church have been successful district workday projects. Investigate to see what funding is available in the community and contact your District Superintendent to discuss funding from the District office.

Home Repair Programs:

Many elderly and handicapped homeowners on limited incomes are unable to keep their homes painted or in good repair. Not only will you be involving volunteers from your church and community but also contributing to neighborhood revitalization. It is important to have some skilled people involved, but the majority of volunteers can be relatively unskilled.

You will need:

- A group of committed volunteers
- Homeowners who need help
- Structurally sound houses
- Release of Liability forms signed by homeowner and volunteers
- Materials
- Money to cover cost of materials
- One person who understands the construction to be on-site

Church Revitalization:

Churches with elderly membership or transitional churches in changing neighborhoods with limited resources are in need of volunteers. Approach your District Superintendent to request names of pastors for contact. You will need to make sure the work is what the congregation needs and follow the guide of the trustees. You again will need a foreman or supervisor for the work. This could be a person from the church who is skilled and able to be there at all times. If you are working with Hispanic or Asian congregations, make sure that

your volunteers understand cultural nuances so the partnership will be positive. It is not recommended to begin a large renovation project unless you know in advance that you have funding and volunteers to complete the project.

Depending on the needs, these repairs could vary from:

- Painting
- Minor carpentry
- Landscaping
- Teaching VBS
- E.S.L. programs

Churches are encouraged to commit their own funds as well as labor to their projects. This not only helps with funding but also builds relationships that will strengthen everyone. It is common for the church to provide noon meals for the team. Look toward other churches in the district to help if the project is large.

Habitat for Humanity:

This is an ecumenical organization that builds comfortable and affordable housing for low-income families in need. Their concept is to build homes with community partnership to change lives and to demonstrate Christian faith in action. Contact your Local chapter of Habitat and see if there are homes already under construction. You might be able to work with several churches in your community and sponsor one home. These projects do require money from churches but the amount varies. So contact your local area office first.

Early Response Teams:

Contact your District church office to find out if you have an organized Disaster Team. See how your church can become involved in the training so you can be prepared for disasters in your community. This can involve as many as 50-70 people in your church and the Texas Annual Conference will provide training. Contact Clay Whitaker at 713-521-9383 for more information.