



GUIDELINES



Mission

Share God's Transforming Love with the World



G U I D E L I N E S

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Share God's Transforming Love with the World

Barbara Wheeler-Bride

MISSION

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Blessed to Be a Blessing

If you are reading this Guideline, you have said yes to servant leadership in your church. You are blessed to be a blessing. What does that mean?

By virtue of our baptism by water and the Spirit, God calls all Christians to faithful discipleship, to grow to maturity in faith (see Ephesians 4). The United Methodist Church expresses that call in our shared mission “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, or the *Discipline*, ¶120). Each local congregation and community of faith lives out that call in response to its own context—the wonderful and unique combination of God-given human and material resources with the needs of the community, within and beyond the congregation.

The work of servant leaders—your work—is to open a way for God to work through you and the resources available to you in a particular ministry area, for you are about God’s work. As stewards of the mysteries of God (see 1 Corinthians 4:1), servant leaders are entrusted with the precious and vital task of managing and using God’s gifts in the ongoing work of transformation.

In The United Methodist Church, we envision transformation occurring through a cycle of discipleship (see the *Discipline*, ¶122). With God’s help and guidance, we

- reach out and receive people into the body of Christ,
- help people relate to Christ through their unique gifts and circumstances,
- nurture and strengthen people in their relationships with God and with others,
- send transformed people out into the world to lead transformed and transforming lives,
- continue to reach out, relate, nurture, and send disciples . . .

Every ministry area and group, from finance to missions, engages in all aspects of this cycle. This Guideline will help you see how that is true for the ministry area or group you now lead. When you begin to consider all of the work you do as ministry to fulfill God’s mission through your congregation, each task, report, and conversation becomes a step toward transforming the world into the kingdom of God.

Invite Christ into the process to guide your ministry. You are doing powerful and wonderful work. Allow missteps to become learning opportunities; rejoice in success. Fill your work with the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

God blesses you with gifts, skills, and experience. You are a blessing when you allow God to work through you to make disciples and transform the world. Thank you.

(Find additional help in the “Resources” section at the end of this Guideline, in *The Book of Discipline*, and through <http://www.umc.org>.)

Prepare for the Journey

The United Methodist Church has a long history of engaging in the transforming work of *Missio Dei*, or God’s mission. To begin, we turn to John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, who put his faith into action when living out his daily life. He practiced a faith that was dedicated to loving God (“works of piety”) and loving and caring for others (“works of mercy”). Wesley believed, and practiced, that the essence of Christianity was love, “the never-failing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world” (*The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, Vol. VI* [New York, NY: J. & J. Harper, 1826], 109).

“I look upon all the world as my parish.” —John Wesley
(*Journal*, June 11, 1739)

Theology of Mission

Now we’ll turn to the mission theology statement of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries, the official global mission agency of The United Methodist Church, its annual conferences, missionary conferences, and local congregations (*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2012*, ¶1301–1330). This statement guides Global Ministries’ participation in *Missio Dei* and will serve as a basis for understanding our partnership with God as we plan a mission program in your congregation.

The mission theology statement 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. 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

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.

What examples of “servanthood for humanity” come to mind when you think of Jesus’ life and ministry? Name examples of servanthood in your congregation and local community. How can you practice that type of servanthood in today’s world?

The Church as a Community of Servanthood in Mission

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

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.

Who are the marginalized, exploited, or oppressed people in your local community? How might your mission outreach transform relationships with them and work toward justice and peace?

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 to the Great Commandment that we love God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength and our neighbors 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 day in new ways.

What are the signs of the Spirit moving in your congregation? How might you incorporate that movement of the Spirit into your mission outreach?

Your Congregation's Journey into God's Mission

We are all called to be part of God's mission, *Missio Dei*: individuals as well as local congregations. Your church doesn't need to be a certain size or be located in a specific part of the country. Every church is a part of God's mission. All it takes to begin is one enthusiastic person to serve as a leader. Beginning the mission journey might feel overwhelming. Start with your own mission awareness and interest combined with what you learn from this Guideline. Then move your congregation to engage in mission together with the people in your community and the wider world.

You don't need to do everything listed here to be successful. There is no magic formula for a perfect mission program. (Don't think that 2 mission trips + 50 UMCOR Health Kits + 1 mission study = success!) Use these practical, useful, and helpful ideas to aid you in your planning. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, your personal gifts and passions, and the creativity of others who want to help, you can shape authentic mission opportunities for your congregation.

"The church is the church only when it exists for others." —Dietrich Bonhoeffer
(John W. de Gruchy, *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer* [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 144)

Your Church's Mission Opportunities

1. Mission Education that will help the congregation become better informed, more knowledgeable, and more motivated to support the mission outreach of the church.

2. Mission Experiences that address the needs you identify in your local community, your country, and around the world.

3. Mission Support that helps fund local mission outreach and the global mission work of The United Methodist Church.

There are plenty of opportunities for every member of your congregation to be engaged in mission outreach. Through a process of discernment and planning, you'll arrive at a combination of mission education, mission experiences, and mission support that will be the best fit for your congregation. Mission is done with intention, and if we are careful and intentional, as partners in God's mission (missionaries), we will be transformed in the process.

At moments when you aren't sure what to do or you think you're doing too much, take time to check in with God. Say a prayer to guide you as you make decisions and take

the next steps on your mission journey. With God's help and the support of others in your congregation, you will be able to take the next step.

Prayer for Guidance

*Loving God, Help me to feel your presence as I begin the mission journey in my church.
Guide my steps toward meaningful outreach and a deeper relationship with you.
Show me the way to take each "next step" toward being an active part of Missio Dei in today's world. Amen.*

Remember, you are not alone! Other people are coordinating mission in congregations throughout the United States and around the world. You are linked by the United Methodist connection—a network of individuals and organizations that are engaged in mission work and have resources and experiences to share with you. Now, it's time to get started.

Participate in God's Mission

Getting Started and Growing Your Mission Outreach

With the biblical and theological groundwork laid out, you're ready to build and expand mission outreach in your local church. It's important to remember that mission in your congregation isn't the work of one individual or even a church committee. We are all called to be part of God's mission.

What's Happening in Your Church?

Work with others in your church and in your wider community and annual conference. Here are a few of the key people you should consult as you're getting started:

- **Pastor**—Have a conversation with your pastoral leader to get suggestions for networks you might tap into as you begin organizing your mission work. You might also talk about ideas for incorporating mission and mission themes into worship.
- **United Methodist Women**—Talk with the president of your United Methodist Women unit and find out what mission outreach the local unit is doing. You might ask for examples of ongoing mission work and see how you might cooperate.
- **Youth Group/Children's Ministries**—Meet with the leaders of your youth group and children's ministries. Share ideas for how youth and children already are or might be involved with church mission work, for example, helping with fundraisers, inviting a missionary who is itinerating at your church to Sunday school or youth group, including a mission service project as part of vacation Bible school, etc.
- **Outreach Ministries**—Meet with the organizers of any existing outreach ministries (for example, food pantry, clothing closet, tutoring program, homeless shelter, etc.) that are already part of your church's ministry. Learn about ways you can help with their outreach and encourage others in your church to get involved. Working together with existing ministries will allow you to celebrate and share what is already happening in your church and avoid duplication.

Who Will Help?

Remember, Jesus had 12 disciples to help him with mission outreach. So don't do this alone. Your church might already have a mission committee. If not, recruit four to eight people (depending on the size of your congregation) to be part of your Mission Team. Who should you ask? Think about individuals in the congregation who have been on a mission

trip or do volunteer work. Does anyone work in social services, healthcare, or education? These would be good people to ask. Invite people from diverse backgrounds (age, race, gender) to be involved. If you're stumped, ask your pastor and nominations committee for help. And go to the congregation and ask directly; you don't know who might have a passion for mission and want to help.

"To change the world we must be good to those who cannot repay us." —Pope Francis (tweeted from @Pontifex October 18, 2014)

What Are Your Goals?

Having goals to work toward is important, but it's just as important to make sure they are realistic and reflect the spirit of mission in your congregation. First, consider how you can create new goals for any mission opportunities that are already on the church calendar. How can you set more challenging goals for these opportunities?

Starting completely from scratch? In your first year, set two mission education goals and two mission experience goals. In the area of mission support, prioritize five ways you can raise funds for local and global missions. If the number of goals doesn't seem to be up to what you know your congregation can accomplish, adjust them accordingly. Use the evaluation tool in the "Evaluate Your Mission Outreach" section (see page 24 to set your goals. The important thing to remember is to make sure these goals are specific, measurable in some way, and supported by strategies to achieve them.

What's Your Budget?

Look at the goals you've set for your mission program in order to determine what expenses you might incur in the coming year (likely related to mission education and mission experiences) and what amounts you can project in terms of mission support or benevolent giving to mission needs in your local community and around the world. If your church is already giving to mission, what is a realistic increase in that amount that reflects the current world's mission needs and what God expects of us? Set your budget prayerfully and consider what your congregation could do if it really got serious about its benevolent giving.

What's Your Timeline?

First Month

- Meet with existing mission connections in your church and find a team of people to help you with planning your mission program.
- Set reasonable goals for the next 6-month and 12-month periods. Use the evaluation tool in the "Evaluate Your Mission Outreach" section to help you think through your desired outcomes and strategies.
- Begin to plan your first mission opportunity.

Second Month

- Decide on a plan to share your mission program with the congregation. Use suggestions in the “Share the Mission Story with Others” section.
- Set the budget and fundraising goals for your mission program.
- Create a timeline to go along with the goals you set last month.

Month-to-Month

- Continue to follow your plan for sharing the mission story with your congregation.
- Begin planning for upcoming mission opportunities and recruiting volunteers to help.
- Meet regularly with your Mission Team and update them on your progress. Celebrate your mission successes and discuss any roadblocks.

Sixth Month

- Use your evaluation tool to track your progress at the halfway point of the year.
- Decide on any changes or additions you’d like to make to your goals.

One Year

- Use your evaluation tool to track the progress of your first year.
- Make a plan for the next 6/12 months. Expand your goals to challenge your congregation to become more involved in mission opportunities.

What mission ministries are already happening in your church? How can you lift those up to your congregation to encourage greater participation? There’s no reason to re-create something that already exists. Build relationships with those who are already involved with mission outreach and look for opportunities to help people make connections with existing mission ministries.

When to Plan Mission Opportunities

One of your goals when coordinating mission in your congregation will be to involve as many people as possible. Think about the best days or time of year to hold specific mission-related activities. Look at your church calendar to see if there are any natural connections between what you want to do and what’s already scheduled. These might be opportunities for collaboration and reaching a wider audience. (Include the calendar of national holidays and observances, too.) For example, Maundy Thursday during Holy Week focuses on serving others. This might be a great opportunity to emphasize mission in the service by praying for missionaries who are serving others and collecting an offering for mission.

When is your church’s stewardship campaign? That *might not* be the best time to plan a fundraiser. Check out the “Use an Annual Mission Calendar” section for a list of United

Methodist Special Sundays and more church-wide observances that are opportunities for mission education, experience, and support. Be creative with your calendaring and—most important—once a date is set, get it in the church calendar, bulletin, newsletter, Facebook page, or website ASAP.

When do you think the most people will be available for a mission activity?
What are the natural connections between your ideas and what's already on your church calendar?

Connect Mission and Spiritual Practice

Growing deeper in our relationship with God is intrinsically linked to our relationships with those around us, and, for our purposes here, to our *mission* relationships. As you do mission in your congregation, it will be important to link mission with others to our spiritual life through prayer, worship, Bible study opportunities, and more. Mission isn't something that sits on the sidelines while we engage in spiritual growth and religious ritual. Use these tips and resources to incorporate mission into the spiritual practice of your congregation.

- **Prayer**—Incorporate praying for your mission outreach into your personal prayer life as well as any and all gatherings related to your mission program, for example at Mission Team meetings and the start/end of a mission project such as assembling UMCOR kits. You might also enlist some “prayer warriors” during the seasons of Lent and Advent to pray each day of the season for one United Methodist missionary or mission project.
- **Prayer Calendar**—If you read that last sentence and wondered, “How will I know who to pray for?” here is the answer. The Prayer Calendar includes a directory of United Methodist missionaries and mission projects. In addition to being a useful tool for your mission prayer life, it is a useful calendar for planning church and everyday life activities. Order a copy from www.umwmissionresources.org. Turn prayer into action and plan a coffee-hour activity for members of the congregation to send birthday cards or holiday greetings to missionaries in the Prayer Calendar.
- **Worship**—There are suggestions for incorporating mission into worship throughout this resource (planning a Mission Celebration (page 18), recognizing Special Sundays and other church-wide celebrations (page 16), making announcements in worship (page 23). You might also talk with your pastor about planning a sermon discussion or talkback after church on a Sunday when the lectionary readings (and sermon) are focused on serving others, Jesus’ ministry with the marginalized, or other mission-related themes.
- **Mission Study and Spiritual Growth Study**—Talk with your United Methodist Women unit about co-sponsoring a Mission Study or Spiritual Growth Study from United Methodist Women. These studies motivate, inform, and enrich our commitment to global ministry. Local leaders receive training to lead these studies. Go

to www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/mission-studies for details about this year's themes, and ask your United Methodist Women unit to recommend a study leader.

- **Mission u**—Again, partner with your United Methodist Women unit and encourage members of your congregation to attend a Mission u event, where they will have the opportunity to study mission topics impacting society. These events are held during the summer around the country. Go to www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/mission-u for details.

Connect Mission and Social Justice

When we plan our mission outreach, it's important to remember that we aren't doing mission in a vacuum; along with meeting immediate human needs, larger social issues require our action. Specifically, when we engage in mission with the poor and marginalized in society, our service can extend to address larger social justice and systemic issues. These can include poverty, education, discrimination, racism, immigration, economic inequality, health care, and climate change, to name a few. As partners in God's mission, we are called to work for the true human dignity of all people, and that means tackling societal issues that create indignity and injustice. The United Methodist Church has adopted Social Principles that "are a call to all members . . . to a prayerful, studied dialogue of faith and practice" (*Book of Discipline*, part V, preface).

Glory Dharmaraj, Ph.D., talks about the idea of "social action as mission" in her book, *Concepts of Mission* :

We live in a world that is profit-centered, not people-centered. Christian mission must amplify the human cries in these situations, raise awareness of the issues, mobilize collective efforts, and address the root causes so all of God's children may live in peace, reconciliation, and harmony with God and one another. (Glory Dharmaraj, *Concepts of Mission* [New York, NY: General Board of Global Ministries, 1999], 50)

Here are a few ideas and resources you can use to extend your mission into social action.

- **Link service and social action.** When you engage in a mission project or volunteer service, build in some reflection time to talk about the larger social justice issues that you encountered. Ask questions like: "What surprised you about the work you did today and the people you met?" "What did you learn about the larger social issues affecting this community?" "What did people share?" "What did you observe?" Making these links is the first step in addressing these larger concerns.
- **Invite a speaker.** Reach out to someone in your community who can come to a Bible study or Sunday school class and talk about a specific social justice issue that is relevant to your congregation and community.
- **Utilize Ministry With* the Poor resources.** As you engage in conversation about larger social justice issues, explore www.ministrywith.org, facebook.com/ministrywith.org

ministrywith, and @ministrywith on Twitter, where you'll find resources for learning, mobilizing, connecting, and engaging with ministries and people to eradicate poverty.

- **Plan a seminar.** The United Methodist Seminar Program hosts custom-designed, interactive educational seminars for groups to study complex social issues from a perspective of faith. Go to www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/seminars or www.umc-gbcs.org/um-seminars for details.

"I saw the suffering and I let myself feel it... I saw the injustice and was compelled to do something about it. I changed from being a nun who only prayed for the suffering world to a woman with my sleeves rolled up, living my prayer." — Sister Helen Prejean ("Living My Prayer," www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=17845521)

How to Fundraise for Mission

Our gifts and offerings to mission work make a difference at the local, national, and global level. Mission work in your local community will be supported by funds you raise in your local church. There are also many ways to support mission at national and global levels through financial contributions. And the good news about these gifts to United Methodist mission efforts such as Global Ministries', UMCOR, and Advance projects is that your gifts are combined with gifts from across the United Methodist connection to have an even greater impact in the world. Here are a few ways to fundraise locally for mission work in your community and around the world.

Simple Fundraising Ideas

- Hold a bake sale, yard sale, car wash, or other fundraiser to support mission work. Be sure to be specific about what you are raising money for.
- During the season of Lent, when Christian traditions of fasting, prayer, and giving are emphasized, suggest that people make an effort to support mission as part of their spiritual practice. For example, give up daily specialty coffee and give that money to a mission project instead; say a daily prayer for a missionary or make a special gift to your church's mission outreach.
- During Advent and Christmas, when the rest of the world is focused on Black Friday sales and spending money on the latest gadgets, focus your giving on others. As an alternative to the consumerism of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, give to Advance projects on Giving Tuesday (the Tuesday after Thanksgiving). Encourage the idea of "alternative" gifts (for example, Advance projects, UMCOR kits, fair trade items) or making donations to mission projects that will truly help those in need during the holiday season.
- Encourage your congregation to pay annual conference apportionments (or benevolences) in full. These funds help support the work of the general agencies of The

United Methodist Church, and a significant percentage of the dollars are used to support local and regional mission ministry.

Supporting United Methodist Mission Work

- **Covenant Missionary**—Your church can begin a Covenant Relationship with one of the more than 300 Global Ministries missionaries serving around the world (*Book of Discipline* ¶1302). The suggested financial contribution is \$5 minimum per church member per year, but these relationships are much more than financial commitments. Churches and missionaries pray for one another and communicate regularly. Go to www.umcmision.org/Get-Involved for details.
- **The Advance**—The official program of The United Methodist Church for designated, second-mile giving (*Book of Discipline*, ¶822). Through The Advance, you may choose to support specific mission programs or mission personnel with your financial gifts. For details go to www.umcmision.org/giving.
- **Special Sundays**—Support mission work in the United States and around the world through six church-wide “Special Sunday” offerings for mission (*Book of Discipline*, ¶¶262, 263). See the “Annual Mission Calendar” section on page 17 for details.
- **Giving Tuesday**—Held every year on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, Giving

“Giving liberates the soul of the giver.” —Maya Angelou (*Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now* [New York: Random House, 1993], 15)

Tuesday is an international movement to extend the spirit of giving thanks into the Advent season. Go to www.umcmision.org/givingtuesday for details and resources to share in your congregation.

Giving More Than Money

- **UMCOR Relief-Supply Kits**—Relief-supply kits help provide care for the most vulnerable people during times of crisis. UMCOR collects various types of kits for global distribution and cleaning buckets for U.S. distribution after storms. Go to www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Relief-Supplies for details and a video demonstrating how to assemble various UMCOR kits.

UMCOR Relief-Supply Kits

There are several types of kits you can make to help the most vulnerable during times of crisis:

- Bedding Kit
- Birthing Kit
- Health Kit
- Layette Kit
- School Kit
- Sewing Kit
- Cleaning Bucket

Go to www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Relief-Supplies for details.

- **Local Mission Projects**—You can collect supplies to donate to your church’s mission outreach programs (for example, food pantry, homeless shelter, tutoring program) or other local social service programs. Be sure to ask each agency what they need or what’s on their “wish list” before you start collecting supplies, and update these supply lists on a regular basis.
- **Global Health**—an enhanced international and US focus of Global Ministries (*Book of Discipline* ¶1313.5) and an Area of Focus for The UMC, including initiatives such as “Abundant Health: Our Promise to Our Children,” and the “10,000 Church Challenge” (<http://www.umcmmission.org/Abundant-Health/churchchallenge>). Sign up for the Global Health newsletter to keep abreast of developments and opportunities to engage (<http://www.umcmmission.org/find-resources/newsletters/global-health/2016/issue6>).
- **Practical Giving**—Don’t miss the upcoming section on “Guidelines for Disaster Relief” to assist you in making the most helpful and practical donations.

Use an Annual Mission Calendar

Utilize the following dates to connect your church with wider celebrations of mission in The United Methodist Church.

January

- **Human Relations Day**—the first of six church-wide Special Sundays that The United Methodist Church asks all congregations to observe (*Book of Discipline*, ¶263.1). This Special Sunday celebrates the connectional work of United Methodist churches. It is acknowledged on the Sunday closest to the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Invite people who work in the Community Developers program on behalf of the church in local communities or United Methodist service agencies to address the congregation. Go to www.umcgiving.org for details.

February

- Celebrate **Black History Month**. Go to www.umcmmission.org or www.umcdiscipleship.org for resources.

March

- Celebrate **Women’s History Month**. Go to www.umcdiscipleship.org for worship resources.
- Promote **Women’s Ministry Sunday** (*Book of Discipline* ¶264.5), which may be observed annually, on a Sunday designated by the local congregation, to celebrate a variety of women’s ministries, women’s history, and the contribution of women within and beyond the local church.
- Promote **UMCOR Sunday** (second Special Sunday offering, formerly known as One Great Hour of Sharing), which is essential to funding the United Methodist

Committee on Relief (UMCOR) (*Book of Discipline*, ¶263.2). Gifts to this offering underwrite UMCOR's costs of doing business. This makes it possible for UMCOR to use 100 percent of all other contributions for disaster response efforts, not administrative or fundraising costs. Go to www.umcgiving.org for details.

April

- Celebrate **Native American Ministries Sunday** (third Special Sunday offering) (*Book of Discipline*, ¶263.6). This Special Sunday recognizes and supports the contributions of Native Americans to the church and society. Your offering helps to empower local spiritual development and provides scholarships for Native American seminary students to serve God faithfully; and to strengthen, develop, and equip Native American rural, urban, and reservation congregations, ministries, and communities. Go to www.umcgiving.org for details.
- Celebrate **World Malaria Day** (April 25). This is a day to remember that approximately one million people die from this preventable disease each year. It's also a day to take action to put an end to malaria. Go to www.imagenenomalaria.org for details.

May

- Celebrate **Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month**. Go to www.umcmmission.org for resources.
- Celebrate **Heritage Sunday**, May 24 (Aldersgate Day) or the Sunday preceding (*Book of Discipline*, ¶264.1). This is a day to reflect on our heritage, celebrate the church's history, and look forward to the future. Go to www.gcah.org for resources.

June

- Celebrate **Peace with Justice Sunday** (fourth Special Sunday offering) (*Book of Discipline*, ¶263.5; also see related resolution in *The Book of Resolutions*, approved in 2016). This Special Sunday supports church-related peace with justice ministries that transform lives in the United States and globally. Go to www.umcgiving.org for details.

September

- Celebrate **Hispanic Heritage Month** (September 15–October 15). Go to www.umcmmission.org for resources.
- Celebrate **Volunteers in Mission (VIM) Awareness Sunday** (2016 *Book of Discipline* ¶265.5). UVMIM Sunday calls each annual conference to designate a Sunday each year to celebrate those who have served in short-term missions and the work of UVMIM throughout the world. If the annual conference so directs, an offering may be received and used by the annual conference VIM program.

Have a **Mission Celebration**. Set aside a weekend to train your church's mission committee and others interested in being involved in mission. Design the Sunday worship service with a focus on mission work. Invite itinerant missionaries and leaders of local community ministries to share. Saturday, offer a mission-focused task that the whole church can participate in (for example, packing UMCOR kits or disaster buckets, volunteering at a local mission or outreach ministry, holding an Ubuntu Day of Service). Go to www.umcmmission.org/missioncelebrations for event resources and a planning guide. Go to www.ministrywith.org for an Ubuntu Day of Service Toolkit.

- Mark the **International Day of Prayer for Peace** (September 21). Go to www.umcmmission.org for resources.

October

- Celebrate **World Communion Sunday** (fifth Special Sunday) (*Book of Discipline*, ¶263.3). The offering supports scholarships for students preparing for Christian leadership in the world. Invite people from diverse backgrounds to participate in worship, dress the altar to represent different cultures of the world, serve Communion with bread from different parts of the world, and incorporate more than one language in the litany. Go to www.umcgiving.com for details. Go to www.umcmmission.org for worship and Global Praise music resources.
- Plan a **Children's Sabbath** celebration for your congregation. Join thousands of churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, and other faith communities in celebrating children as sacred gifts of God. This is an opportunity to renew and live out the moral responsibility to care, protect, and advocate for all children. Go to www.childrensdefense.org for planning resources.

November

- For **Thanksgiving**, plan a worship service that celebrates the abundance of God's love and calls the congregation to be in ministry with those who physically and spiritually hunger and thirst. Go to www.umcmmission.org for worship resources.
- Celebrate **United Methodist Student Day** (sixth Special Sunday) (*Book of Discipline*, ¶263.4). This offering funds scholarships and loans, supporting students who are finding new ways to serve God in the world. Go to www.umcgiving.org for details.
- Promote **Giving Tuesday** (the Tuesday after Thanksgiving), an international movement to extend the spirit of giving thanks into the Advent season. It offers an opportunity to start off the holiday season focusing on giving instead of getting by supporting organizations that are transforming the world. Go to www.umcmmission.org/givingtuesday for details and resources to share in your congregation.

December

- Honor **World AIDS Day** (December 1). This observance helps to raise awareness and understanding of this deadly disease. Go to www.umcmision.org for planning resources.

Guidelines for Disaster Relief

Sometimes, despite our best intentions, our ideas about what a community needs following a disaster are not what is most helpful. In The United Methodist Church, we support disaster relief through UMCOR (*Book of Discipline*, ¶1330). Decades of experience on the ground after natural disasters and a foundational theology of doing mission *with* communities who are suffering have made UMCOR an expert in how to respond. The following list of the “Top Five Best Donations” was compiled from responders and disaster survivors. You’ll find more resources and suggestions like this in the Resources section below and at www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Resources. Use these guidelines to make your efforts go further toward helping those in need.

1. **Cash Donations**—There’s a reason this is first: It’s the best donation. Give money through the UMCOR website, via text or telephone, or by setting up an automated monthly withdrawal.

2. **UMCOR Relief-Supply Kits**—Assembling or purchasing kits helps keep UMCOR’s Relief-Supply Network ready to quickly deliver vital goods into the hands of disaster survivors (<http://www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Relief-Supplies>).

3. **Prayers**—Responders urge people never to overlook the power of prayer as a response—both in the hours after a disaster strikes and through the long haul.

4. **Training and Education before Disaster Strikes**—The best help comes from those who are equipped for their role in assisting survivors. Learn how to help with cleaning up, providing comfort and care, and planning for local church involvement, including offers of shelter, food, or hospitality.

5. **A Sanctuary**—Open up your church as a safe place where survivors can experience love, care, and peace. A sanctuary isn’t just a place. People can be a sanctuary to others, too.

(Source: “Worst (and Best) Donations Ever” by Susan Kim. www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Resources/News-Stories/2013/July/0730-Worst-and-Best-Donations.)

Plan Volunteer Service and Mission Trips

In Matthew 10:8, Jesus commissions his 12 disciples to “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with skin diseases, and throw out demons.” The disciples are to go out into the world and become the hands and feet of Jesus. We too are commissioned to provide healing, compassion, and justice in a hurting world. Sometimes that will take the form of physical work. These tips will help you plan for volunteer mission service in local communities and around the world.

Getting Started

Volunteer work and mission trips take a lot of planning. First, find a few people to be part of a planning/logistics team. As early as possible, think about where you want to volunteer and make contact with the organization or agency to work out the details. Remember, each organization is different, and some might not need volunteers, or as many volunteers as you'd like to bring! Be understanding and respectful of an organization's needs and requests for your help.

In Your Community

In order to involve the most people from your congregation, look for opportunities to volunteer close to home. These might include volunteer opportunities in outreach ministries at your church and local mission or social service organizations. To help you plan for a full day or half day of volunteer work, use the Ubuntu Day of Service Toolkit (www.ministrywith.org/downloads/ubuntutoolkitweb.pdf). This step-by-step guide will help you plan your mission service experience.

In Your Conference

Visiting and volunteering at one of the United Methodist mission agencies in your conference or even a nearby conference will expand your congregation's understanding of the church in mission. Contact your annual conference, conference secretary, or conference board of Global Ministries for suggestions of local mission agencies where you might volunteer. In addition, check out the map of United Methodist Women-supported National Mission Institutions online at www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/nmi. As mentioned earlier, not every mission agency will be able to facilitate volunteers or a large number of volunteers, so it's best to start your planning early and talk with a few agencies about their specific needs.

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission

You may have heard of United Methodist Mission Volunteers in Mission or UMVIM, a grassroots movement within The United Methodist Church designed to provide an official channel where you can offer your skills and talents for Christian service at home and around the world (*Book of Discipline*, ¶1302.14). UMVIM trips can help you serve as an individual or on a team. There are a variety of domestic and international mission trips and mission volunteer opportunities connected to UMVIM. Read *A Mission Journey: A Handbook for Volunteers*, and do some research at www.umcmmission.org/Get-Involved/Volunteer and then contact the annual conference or UMVIM volunteer coordinator in your jurisdiction for details.

Answer God's Call to Mission Service

You probably know the chorus of the hymn "Here I Am, Lord":

Here I am Lord. Is it I, Lord?

.... I will go, Lord, if you lead me. . . .

(Dan Schutte, *The United Methodist Hymnal* [Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989], 593)

The lyrics are based on Isaiah 6:8 and Isaiah's response to God's call to be a prophet to the people of Israel. We are all called to be partners in God's mission. There may also be someone in your congregation who feels the urge to step forward as Isaiah did and make a more formal, or even lifelong, commitment to mission service. The following United Methodist mission service opportunities can help these individuals engage in short-term and long-term mission and further discern God's call.

Young Adult Mission Service—Generation Transformation

- **Global Mission Fellows** commit to two years of service and community living. Young adults engage in justice work and become ambassadors for mission internationally and domestically.
- **Mission Volunteers**, both individuals and couples, serve internationally or domestically for a period of two months to two years.

Generation Transformation

Go to www.umcmmission.org/gt for details about Global Mission Fellows and Individual Volunteers.

Volunteer Opportunities

- **United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) Teams** do mission service in the United States and around the world.
- **Primetimers** offers educational and mission service experience for older adults.
- **Nomads On a Mission Active in Divine Service (NOMADS)** provide volunteer labor for United Methodist organizations.
- **Mission Volunteers**, both individuals and couples, serve internationally or domestically for a period of two months to two years.
- **Health Care Volunteers** have specific training or interest in health care; you can volunteer to increase community health in a variety of ways around the world.
- **U.S. Disaster Response Teams** are specially trained volunteers who travel to the site of a disaster to help organize and distribute aid.

Mission Volunteers

Go to www.umcmmission.org/Get-Involved/Volunteer to learn more about these opportunities for volunteer mission service.

Missionaries

Global Ministries helps identify and assist people who are responding to God's call to mission and volunteer service, provide training, resources, and support for missionaries in their domestic and international contexts (*Book of Discipline*, ¶1302.3). Missionaries are

pastors, teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers, church planters, evangelists, and more. Use the resources at www.umcmmission.org/Get-Involved/Missionary-Service to help you discern your call and take the first steps to become a missionary.

Share the Mission Story with Others

In the Gospel of John, we hear the story of how “the Word became flesh and made his home among us” (John 1:14).

In the beginning was the Word
and the Word was with God
and the Word was God.

²The Word was with God in the beginning.

³Everything came into being through the Word,
and without the Word
nothing came into being.

What came into being
⁴through the Word was life,
and the life was the light for all people.

⁵The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness doesn’t extinguish the light. (John 1:1-5)

Today, these verses serve as a call to mission, to share the light of God with a hurting world. And just as important, we should reflect on the idea of “the Word” and how our communications, photographs, and tweets about mission can help shine a light in the darkness.

How can you let others in your church and community know about your mission outreach? What important mission stories do you have to share?

Use the following tips to share your mission story with others.

Church Newsletter, Website, Bulletin Board

- Write a “Mission Update” for every issue of your church newsletter or e-newsletter. Keep people informed about upcoming mission events, let everyone know about emerging needs for donations or supplies for mission, share an update on your Covenant Missionary.
- Create and keep up to date a “Mission” section of your church website. This can include a list of current mission outreach, suggestions for supporting mission with volunteer time, donations, and financial gifts, and who to contact if you’d like to get involved. Also, feel free to use any of the biblical and theological explanations of mission in this Guideline to give a basis for your mission outreach.
- Photos are important! Try to include a photo with each newsletter article and add several mission “action” photos to your church website. Snap pictures at a volunteer

service event or of a missionary who visits your church. These really help to capture the human story of mission.

- Don't underestimate the power of a creative bulletin board! This can be a space where you display the photos already mentioned. You might also put a "spotlight" on your Covenant Missionary one month or feature lists of alternative gift-giving ideas in December. There are a lot of ways to make use of bulletin board space to share the mission story. Ask the most creative person on your mission team (or the most creative person you know) to help you think of ideas.

Church Announcements

- Keep it simple (and short). Pick up to three key messages to convey in an announcement and stick to them. You can always point people to the church bulletin, newsletter, website, or social media for more details.
- Use props. If you're making UMCOR School Kits or Cleaning Buckets, hold one up as an example for everyone to see.
- Invite other members of your mission team to speak. The "chair" of the mission committee isn't the only one who can make church announcements. Invite diverse voices (different ages, races, etc.) to speak to the congregation about your mission outreach.
- Ask a mission partner or missionary to briefly share a "Mission Minute" in your worship service. To abide by the "keep it simple" tip above, ask her or him to share for only a minute or two. You can designate a more formal time for a presentation or Q&A at coffee hour, in a Sunday school class, or another time after church.

Follow Us!

Facebook

- www.facebook.com/GlobalMinistries
- www.facebook.com/UMCOR

Twitter

- [@umcmision](https://twitter.com/umcmision)
- [@UMC_UMCOR](https://twitter.com/UMC_UMCOR)

YouTube

- www.youtube.com/ConnectnMission
- www.youtube.com/TheUMCOR

Social Media

- Create Facebook events for mission-related activities at your church.
- Post status updates and tweet "live" from mission events on your church or personal accounts.
- Share photos of mission trips and mission activities.
- Share or re-post relevant news and information about mission activities in the wider United Methodist connection.

- Follow your partners in mission! Think: Covenant Missionary, local mission agencies, and United Methodist mission projects that your congregation and your annual conference support.

Evaluate Your Mission Outreach

You, your team, and your church want to have a vital ministry. An evaluation process helps us learn from any mistakes and welcome new insights into the process. Periodic evaluation with established measures also allows us to avoid: 1) continuously doing without any sense of accomplishment, and 2) evaluating simply by way of numbers. One way to guard against the “we’ve always done it that way” syndrome is to build into your plans when and how you will evaluate your mission outreach and the measures by which you will judge your efforts.

You can quickly evaluate a mission program or event by asking yourself and your mission team these questions:

- How did the mission program or event go? What, if anything, was missing?
- What would you change if you did this again?
- Are there any preparations (logistics or spiritual preparations for participants) that should be addressed when you do something like this again?

In addition to this discussion, you can use the following tool to measure your desired outcomes against your impact. These are guidelines and suggestions. Create your own measurements to fit your needs.

Sample Evaluation of Your Mission Program

	Mission Education	Mission Experiences	Mission Support
Definitions	Develop a continuous, year-round mission program that helps the congregation be better informed and more knowledgeable about the church's role in mission.	Engage your congregation in hands-on service opportunities that address the needs identified by your community, your country, and around the world.	Expand and increase your congregation's mission giving and ensure that your congregation is provided every opportunity to participate financially in God's mission through the church.
Results	People are more motivated to be supportive of the mission outreach of the church.	People volunteer for mission service projects.	People participate in mission giving to support mission.
Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a bulletin board and write monthly newsletter articles about the mission program. 2. Use With* campaign resources to lead a Bible study on ministry with the poor (see www.ministrywith.org) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan an Ubuntu Day of Service. 2. Host a missionary speaker from a local mission program to share his or her experience in mission. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Celebrate Special Sundays in worship and Sunday school. 2. Educate the congregation on giving opportunities through The Advance (with bulletin inserts, emails, social media, newsletter updates).
Measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 30% of the congregation participates in the Bible study. 2. 50% of Sunday school teachers emphasize mission in their classes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All participants in the mission experience report greater understanding of mission and mission opportunities. 2. 50% of participants commit to future mission work. 3. 30% of the congregation participates in the missionary speaker event. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 50% of the congregation gives to Special Sundays. 2. 50% of the congregation gives to mission through The Advance. 3. The church commits to one Covenant Relationship with a United Methodist Missionary.

Resources

Christmas Is Not Your Birthday: Experience the Joy of Living and Giving Like Jesus by Mike Slaughter (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011). This guides readers to approach Christmas differently and emphasize the true meaning of the season with their gift giving, not the commercial, shopping frenzy that the season has become.

connectNmission (www.umcmmission.org/resources). Digital newsletter featuring Global Ministries' grants, resources, projects, events, and more.

"Creative Donations Capture a Memory" by Susan Kim (www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Resources/News-Stories/2013/October/1008reative donations). Examples of practical and creative donations in the wake of a disaster.

Generation Transformation (www.umcmmission.org/gt). Opportunities for short-term and long-term young adult mission service.

Global Ministries Store (www.shop.umc.org/more/global-ministries). Where you'll find mission study books, brochures, maps, and other resources for coordinating mission in your congregation.

Global Praise (www.umcmmission.org/globalpraise). Songs gathered from Methodists and other Christians around the world.

Ministry With* the Poor (www.ministrywith.org; [Facebook.com/ministrywith](https://www.facebook.com/ministrywith) and @ministrywith on Twitter). Resources for learning, mobilizing, connecting, and engaging with ministries and people to eradicate poverty.

Mission Celebrations (www.umcmmission.org/missioncelebrations). Planning guide and details for holding an event to celebrate mission in your congregation.

A Mission Journey: A Handbook for Volunteers (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2013). A resource for those planning and participating in short-term mission.

Mission u (www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/mission-u). Opportunities to study mission topics impacting society based on three themes: spiritual growth, geographic, or current issues.

Mission Volunteers (www.umcmmission.org/Get-Involved/Volunteer). This is the best way to connect to volunteer mission service in The United Methodist Church and plan mission trips for a team of people or individuals.

National Mission Institutions (www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/nmi). These United Methodist Women-related agencies provide direct service to local communities and are a great place to volunteer.

New World Outlook (www.umcmmission.org/resources). The United Methodist Church's mission magazine, available in print and digital versions.

response (www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/response). United Methodist Women's magazine with articles and examples of mission with women, children, and youth around the world.

The Advance (www.umcmmission.org/give). The accountable, designated mission-giving arm of The United Methodist Church, where 100 percent of your donation reaches your chosen mission or ministry.

The Prayer Calendar (www.umwmissionresources.org). A useful calendar that includes a directory of United Methodist missionaries and mission projects.

"Theology of Mission" (www.umcmmission.org/resources). A mission theology statement that frames the role of Global Ministries within the denominational mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

"Top Four Worst—and Best—Ways to Help after a Disaster" by Susan Kim (www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Resources/News-Stories/2014/April/0423worsthelphafterdisaster). This article helps you understand the most, and least, helpful things you can do in response to a disaster.

Ubuntu Day of Service Toolkit (www.ministrywith.org/downloads/ubuntu toolkitweb.pdf). A step-by-step guide to planning a day of mission service in your local community.

UMCOR (www.umcor.org). The United Methodist Committee on Relief is dedicated to alleviating human suffering around the globe with programs and projects in disaster response, health, sustainable agriculture, food security, relief supplies, and more.

UMCOR Relief Kits (www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Relief-Supplies). These kits are assembled and donated to help people in a time of crisis in their lives.

United Methodist Seminar Program (www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/seminars [New York, N.Y.] or www.umc-gbcs.org/um-seminars [Washington, D.C.]). Custom-designed, interactive educational seminars for groups to study complex social issues from a perspective of faith.

"Worst (and Best) Donations Ever" by Susan Kim (www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Resources/News-Stories/2013/July/0730-Worst-and-Best-Donations). Examples to inspire the most helpful donations after a disaster.

UMC Agencies & Helpful Links

General Board of Church and Society, www.umc-gbcs.org, 202-488-5600; Service Center, 1-800-967-0880

General Board of Discipleship (d/b/a Discipleship Ministries), www.umcdiscipleship.org, 877-899-2780; Discipleship Resources, <http://bookstore.upperroom.org>, 1-800-972-0433; The Upper Room, www.upperroom.org, 1-800-972-0433; email: info@umcdiscipleship.org

General Board of Global Ministries, www.umcmmission.org, 1-800-862-4246 or 212-870-3600; email: info@umcmmission.org

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, www.gbhem.org, 615-340-7400

General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, www.gbophb.org, 847-869-4550
General Commission on Archives and History, www.gcah.org, 973-408-3189
General Commission on Religion & Race, www.gcorr.org, 202-547-2271; email: info@gcorr.org
General Commission on the Status & Role of Women, www.gcsrw.org, 1-800-523-8390
General Commission on United Methodist Men, www.gcumm.org, 615-340-7145
General Council on Finance and Administration, www.gcfa.org, 866-367-4232 or 615-329-3393
Office of Civic Youth-Serving Agencies/Scouting (General Commission on United Methodist Men), www.gcumm.org, 615-340-7145
The United Methodist Publishing House, www.umph.org, 615-749-6000; Curric-U-Phone, 1-800-251-8591; Cokesbury, www.cokesbury.com, 1-800-672-1789
United Methodist Communications, www.umcom.org, 615-742-5400; EcuFilm, 1-888-346-3862; InfoServ, email: infoserv@umcom.org; *Interpreter Magazine*, www.interpretermagazine.org, 615-742-5441
United Methodist Women, www.unitedmethodistwomen.org; 212-870-3900

For additional resources, contact your annual conference office.