

# Missions Policy

## Potomac Hills Presbyterian Church

### Adopted February 2015

#### **Purpose**

The Missions policy provides direction and guidelines for all international, US, and local missions programs and activities at Potomac Hills Presbyterian Church (PHPC). All missions decisions will be founded on these established guiding principles and priorities with the goal of actively engaging Church members.

#### **Authority**

The Session at Potomac Hills serves as the final authority on this policy and the missions budget, and provides oversight to the overall missions program. The Session will assign a Teaching or Ruling Elder to provide direct leadership to the Missions Committee, and serve as the liaison to the Session. The Session can approve any amendments or exceptions to the policy.

#### **Guiding Principles**

- We affirm that the authority in heaven and on earth given to Christ compels the Church Universal to be wholly and mutually committed to the Great Commission, that Christ would be glorified by the expansion of His kingdom to the ends of the earth.
- We actively encourage all church members to be informed and involved in the PHPC missions program as they are called, as well as other missions work beyond the church program. We prioritize financial support to PHPC members affirmed and called to full-time missions work.
- We select missionaries and missions programs where there is an active local reformed and covenantal church permanently located in the service area.
- We seek to identify a specific local and focus ministry for a long-term, relational partnership and widespread investment of PHPC human and financial capital.

#### **Missions Committee Description**

The Missions Committee will establish a comprehensive mission vision, implement this vision, and actively inform and involve church members. The Missions Committee will handle all foreign, non-local, and local missions trips and activities. This will include oversight of money given and activities performed with local ministries, including such things as pregnancy centers, youth evangelism, and homeless ministries. The Missions Committee should strive to keep the congregation informed, challenged, and concerned about reaching people with the saving message of the Gospel.

The Committee will involve church members with a love and passion for missions. The Committee can include only one member of a family, and cannot include individuals seeking funds from the Committee for full time or long-term missions. A Session-assigned Teaching or Ruling Elder will provide oversight and leadership to the Committee, and will serve as the Committee liaison to the Session. He will also have final say over who is on the committee, and has the authority to ask a member to resign his/her position. With Session approval, the Elder may assign a Missions Committee member to provide administrative leadership to the committee.

The Committee will meet regularly through the year, at least quarterly, to identify and recommend focus ministries, to oversee missionaries and missions partnerships, to plan upcoming missions trips, to plan local missions activities, to approve requests for funding, and to make policy and budget decisions. Votes need to reflect a majority of the committee, not just those present at meetings. Members of the missions committee are required to recuse themselves from any decisions that impact themselves or a family member.

The Missions Committee will assign a member to each of our long-term missionaries to provide active prayer, support and accountability. The Committee member will be the main point of contact between the church and the missionary, so they know that they have an ally and an advocate at the church. Annually, the assigned committee member will prepare a brief report for the Session on their missionary's work and a recommended support level for the coming year.

All requests for missions funding or speaking at the church must be recommended by the Missions Committee to the Session, and then approved by the Session. In the case of mission activities funded by the PHPC, the Missions Committee requests mission teams/members prepare a brief presentation of the trip for presentation during Sunday school and/or the church service. This allows church members to see the work that God is doing and further develops the body's love of missions.

### **Missionary Selection Priorities**

Potomac Hills does not have a specific target area for new missionaries. Missionaries called to many different parts of the world will be considered. However church-planting and missions done in the context of a local church will be strongly favored over independent or para church groups. *Even if funds are available, the missions committee will not necessarily add missionaries unless that requests comes from a member of our congregation or another with a long established relationship with PHPC.*

Mission selection is based on the following priorities:

- 1) Current Missionaries
- 2) Members of PHPC Congregation (Up to 20% of their annual budget)
- 3) Focus Ministry Partners (see guiding principles)
- 4) Mission to the World (MTW), Mission to North America (MNA), or Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) Missionaries from the Potomac Presbytery
- 5) MTW, MNA, or RUF Missionaries outside the Potomac Presbytery
- 6) PCA Missionaries Not Sponsored by MTW, MNA, or RUF
- 7) Reformed Missionaries Not Sponsored by MTW, MNA, or RUF

### **New Missionaries**

When a new missionary wishes to be considered by Potomac Hills for monetary support, the missionary should fill out an "Application for PHPC Support" (Appendix A) and return it to the Chairman of the Missions Committee. The Committee will consider the Application at a subsequent meeting in light of the total budget and the priorities of the Church at the time. The committee is not obligated to interview every applicant. The Committee will interview a prospective candidate over the phone or in person.

### **Summer Missions Projects**

The Missions Committee should work closely with the Missions Pastor and the Youth Pastor, with the approval of the Session, to choose Summer Missions Projects that will utilize the gifts and abilities of

church members. It is imperative that short-term mission trips be tied into a local church. Groups going to an area where there is no ongoing local body of believers have no chance to connect their work with long-term kingdom ministry. A week or two of ministry that does not connect people to a local church is a “drive by” project that leaves people unconnected to the chance to grow in their faith. Ideally, the mission project will be connected to a long-term PHPC focus ministry or ministry partner.

**Who Should Attend?** It’s ideal to find projects that both teens and adults can attend.

**What Kinds of Projects?** In the past, priority was given to Hurricane/Flood-Relief Construction Projects (5 projects between 2006 and 2013) and “Children/Families in Poverty” Projects (5 projects between 2004 and 2014). Other types of projects could be considered: evangelistic, church planting, mercy/medical, etc. depending on the abilities and desires of the church members most likely to attend.

**What Missions Agencies Should We Partner With?** Priority is given to MTW and MNA projects, or with missionaries supported by PHPC. The only reason for using another missions agency is if there are no MTW or MNA projects that will work.

**Where?** There is no limitation except that the location matches the congregation’s interest and capability.

**Should We Return To Past Projects Or Always Find New Ones?** There are pros and cons to repeating trips. As of 2014, the Church had only repeated one trip (Hurricane Katrina relief work on the Gulf Coast). There are great advantages to establishing a relationship with a church or project where we can send a team back every year.

### **Short-Term Missions Support (for Non-PHPC Trips)**

Short term missions (for Non-PHPC trips) are considered trips by an active PHPC church member who is not a career missionary supported by PHPC. These trips are distinct from PHPC organized short-term and summer trips. To encourage and support members of the Church who are called to Non-PHPC short-term missions trips, the Mission Committee may provide up to 25% support for a short-term missions project. Any requests for funding will be made using the Missions Support Application. (See the Missions in the General Fund section for further details.)

### **Fundraising Guidelines for PHPC Short-Term Trips**

For PHPC short-term mission trips, the individual is responsible for raising 100% of the funds for the trip. If the church receives general gifts for the trip, they will be evenly allocated to each attendee who cannot raise 100% of the funds. If any attendee/family raises funds in excess of the trip costs, the trip leader will distribute the funds to other members of the team who have not met the trip costs or to defray the costs of previously unexpected expenses. The church will budget for 100% costs for 1 or 2 trip leaders.

It is expected that anyone attending a mission trip will pay the trip deposit and any portion of the trip that is not obtained through fund-raising. Raising support is strongly encouraged as it is a wonderful way to get a large network of people interested in, invested in, and praying for the trip! This is also a way to confirm God’s call “to go....” There are primarily five ways for individuals to raise funds:

- 1) Send out support letters to friends and families, and ask the congregation to give to the trip (*above* their regular tithe).
- 2) Work and raise money on their own. This may include mowing lawns or other activities to raise money to help pay for the trip. These activities may be publicized on PHPC media, but are not set up or sponsored by the Church. (See the *Fund Raising Policy* below.)
- 3) Set up an online “Crowd Funding” site to receive money online (such as purecharity.com )

- 4) Apply for a grant from the Loudoun Missions Foundation which was specifically established to support short term missions activities of residents of Loudoun County (loudounmissions.org).
- 5) Request a scholarship from the congregational missions budget.

### **Fund-Raising Policy**

Potomac Hills follows the Fund Raising Policy established at the PCA's Fourth General Assembly in 1976, particularly points b and c:

- "b. God has revealed in His Word that His kingdom on earth is to be supported by the cheerful, willing and loving tithes and sacrificial offerings of His children.
- c. Commercial activities such as suppers, bazaars, rummage sales, etc. held primarily to raise money are improper activities for the Church."

Therefore, the church will not plan fund-raisers for those who wish to participate in missions trips, retreats, camps, etc.

### **Missions in the General Fund**

Missionary support, short-term missions trips, and any other missions expenditures come out of the General Fund of the church. There is not a separate Missions Fund. Every September, the Missions Committee will present its recommendations to the Finance Committee for budget amounts in the upcoming year's budget.

Within the approved annual budget, the Missions Committee has the authority to fund Congregational Missions (59130) and Loudoun Area Missions (59200) in amounts up to the discretion of the committee and following the guidance of the PHPC Missions Policy. The Missions Committee recommends long term missionaries to the PHPC Session for their consideration and approval; the committee has no authority to commit funds from the Global Missions (59100) budget. Further, the Missions Committee has no authority in the area of PCA Denomination Support (59300) which is under the full governance of the Session.

### **Tax-Deductible Giving To Missions**

All money given to missions projects that the Church organizes is tax-deductable, unless the money is given for the giver's benefit. By IRS law, charitable contributions cannot be in exchange for goods or services. For example: a check given by the Smith family for someone in the Brown family to attend a mission trip would be tax-deductible. But a check given by the Smith family for someone in their own family to attend the trip would not be tax-deductible.

Any money given to the Missions Fund will be considered non-refundable unless a trip is cancelled. In the case of cancellation of a trip, all contributions should be returned.

Potomac Hills will only receive checks for mission trips that the PHPC has organized. The church will not receive "pass through" checks for any individually arranged trips with MTW, MNA or other groups (AIM, YWAM, RUF, etc.). These groups are 501c (3) non-profits providing the same tax-deductions for contributions and monies should be sent directly to those organizations.