

Missions Policy

Potomac Hills Presbyterian Church

Adopted June 2023

Purpose

The Missions policy provides direction and guidelines for all international, U.S., 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 for Missions, and to 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.

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, PHPC will not necessarily add missionaries unless that request 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 “Missions Support Application” (Appendix A) and return it to the Elder in charge of missions. The Session will consider the Application at a subsequent meeting in light of the total budget and the priorities of the Church at the time. The Session is not obligated to interview every applicant. The Session may interview a prospective candidate over the phone or in person.

Summer Missions Projects

The pastoral staff, with the approval of the Session, will 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 is ideal to find projects that both teens and adults can attend.

What Kinds of Projects? In the past, priority was given to Disaster Relief Construction Projects and “Children/Families in Poverty” Projects. 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.

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 Session may provide up to 25% support for a short-term missions project. Any requests for funding will be made using the “Missions Support Application” in Appendix B.

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 fundraising. 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 Fundraising Policy below.)
- 3) Set up an online "Crowd Funding" site to receive money online
- 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.

Fundraising Policy

Potomac Hills follows the Fundraising 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 fundraisers 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 Finance Committee will present its recommendations to the Session for budget amounts in the upcoming year's budget. Within the approved annual budget, the Session has the authority to fund Congregational Missions and Loudoun-Area Missions in amounts up to the discretion of the Session and following the guidance of the PHPC Missions Policy. The Elder in charge of

missions recommends long-term missionaries to the PHPC Session for their consideration and approval.

Tax-Deductible Giving To Missions

Money given to missions projects that the Church organizes is generally tax-deductible, 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 John Smith for Joe Brown to attend a mission trip would be tax-deductible. But a check given by the John Smith for himself or a minor in his family to attend the trip would not be tax-deductible.

Further guidance on the ability of a congregant to deduct or not deduct specific donations can be found in the appropriate year's Church and Clergy Tax Guide located in the church office, official IRS regulations, or a certified tax preparer.

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 PHPC has organized. The church will not receive "pass through" checks for any individually-arranged trips with MTW, MNA or other groups. Monies should be sent directly to those organizations.

Appendix A

Missions Support Application

Long Term Projects

Potomac Hills Presbyterian Church

Potomac Hills Presbyterian Church requests that missionaries seeking financial support (whether annual or a one-time request) complete this application. The application will assist the Session in its evaluation of whether, and to what level, to assist you financially. An interview is normally required for your application to be accepted for consideration.

Please return this questionnaire to Potomac Hills by mail (2 Cardinal Park Dr. SE, Suite 101A, Leesburg, VA 20175) or by email to the Senior Pastor, Dr. David Silvernail, dsilvernail@potomachills.org.

Name (and Title):
Home Address:

Birthday:
Cell Phone:
Email:

Home Church:
Senior Pastor:
Church Website:

Denomination:
Pastor's Phone:
Pastor's Email:

Additional References (Pastor, Elder, Deacon, or Ministry Leader):

1. Name
Address:

Phone:
Email:

2. Name
Address:

Phone:
Email:

Missions Agency / Sending Organization:

Contact Person:
Address:

Phone:
Email:

Describe the project for which you are raising money, including location, time frame, type of ministry activities, intended ministry recipients, and your specific role.

List your training for ministry (ordination status, seminary, internships, classes, church training, etc.) and any church leadership positions you have held in the past:

List your abilities, gifts and talents that will be used on the field:

Please write a brief testimony about your conversion and why you believe God is calling you to this mission field. (Use a separate page if needed.)

What is your connection, or who referred you, to Potomac Hills?

What is the total cost of your trip or your total annual budget (include both personal and ministry expenses)?
\$ _____

How much of the above budget goes to support the sending agency? \$ _____

How much financial support are you requesting from Potomac Hills? (Select one)

One-time \$ _____ Monthly \$ _____ Yearly \$ _____

Appendix B

Missions Support Application
Short Term Projects
Potomac Hills Presbyterian Church

Potomac Hills Presbyterian Church requests that those seeking financial support for short-term mission trips complete this application. The application will assist the Session in its evaluation of whether, and to what level, to assist you financially.

Please return this questionnaire to Potomac Hills by mail (2 Cardinal Park Dr. SE, Suite 101A, Leesburg, VA 20175) or by email to the Senior Pastor, Dr. David Silvernail, dsilvernail@potomachills.org.

Name (and Title):

Birthday:

Home Address:

Cell Phone:

Email:

Describe the project for which you are raising money, including location, time frame, type of ministry activities, intended ministry recipients, and your specific role.

Please write a brief paragraph on why you believe God is calling you to this mission trip.

List your abilities, gifts and talents that will be used on the trip.

What is the total cost of your trip (include both personal and ministry expenses)? \$_____

How much of the above budget goes to support the sending agency? \$_____

How much financial support are you requesting from Potomac Hills? \$_____