

Support-Raising Guide

For Short-Term Mission Teams



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THE LUTHERAN CHURCH— MISSOURI SYNOD

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The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

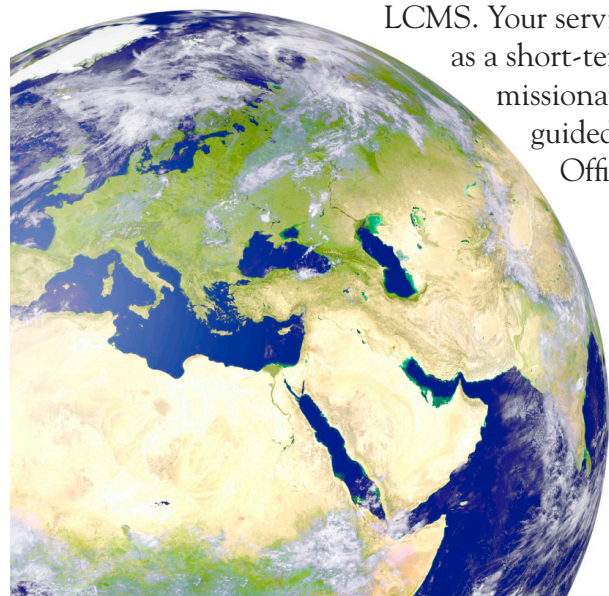
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), is a mission-oriented, Bible-based, confessional Christian denomination headquartered in St. Louis, Mo. Founded in 1847, the LCMS has more than 2.3 million baptized members in some 6,200 congregations and more than 9,000 pastors. Two seminaries and 10 colleges and universities operate under the auspices of the LCMS, and its congregations operate the largest Protestant parochial school system in America. The church broadcasts the saving message of Jesus Christ over KFZO Radio, and it has relationships and active mission work in 89 countries around the world. In the last five years, the LCMS has awarded more than \$35 million through more than 900 domestic and international grants for emergency response and disaster relief. Today, the LCMS is in full doctrinal fellowship with 34 other confessional Lutheran church bodies worldwide and is a founding partner of Lutheran Services of America, a social ministry organization serving one in every 50 Americans. For more information, visit www.lcms.org.



Office of International Mission

The Office of International Mission was created by the 64th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The creation of this office was part of many mandated changes, including the elimination of the former program boards known as LCMS World Mission and LCMS World Relief and Human Care. Another change included the addition of a new position, Chief Mission Officer (CMO). The role of the CMO is to guide the ministries carried out by the International Center of the

LCMS. Your service, as a short-term missionary, is guided by the Office of



International Mission, under the leadership of the executive director of the Office of International Mission and the Chief Mission Officer. Please remember that you are representing the LCMS, especially in the minds of our international church partners.

Office of International Mission Values and Priorities

The LCMS Office of International Mission, under the direction of the Synod President and the CMO, has identified five ministry values to help guide our work.

Fidelity – Be Lutheran
Quality – The pursuit of excellence
Credibility – Inspires belief in project
Sustainability – Financial capacity to last
Stability – Strength to stand and endure

Along with these key foundational principles that guide the work of the LCMS, we have established six mission priorities.

1. Plant, sustain and revitalize Lutheran Churches.
2. Support and expand theological education.
3. Perform human care in concert with Word and Sacrament ministries.
4. Collaborate with the Synod's members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness.

5. Nurture church workers and care for their spiritual well-being.
6. Enhance elementary and secondary education.

Your role as a short-term team will serve to help the LCMS as we strive to live by these values and accomplish these priorities. In some cases you will be able to see clearly how your service relates. Other times it will not be as clear. However, you can be assured that the positions you are filling have been created with these very values and priorities as the foundation.

LCMS International Regions

The LCMS has divided the international work of our church into five different geographical regions. Each region has a director to engage with our partners and to guide the strategic ministry in that area. The five regions include:

- Africa
- Asia Pacific
- Eurasia
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Southern Asia/Oceania

Learn more at www.lcms.org/international.

Witness, Mercy, Life Together

These phrases — *Witness, Mercy, Life Together* — illustrate how the church lives and works together to proclaim the Gospel and to provide for our brothers and sisters in Christ in our congregations, communities and throughout the world. And in all we do, Christ is at the center, leading us, sustaining us, keeping us focused on our mission. This will never change.

As a short-term mission team you have the opportunity to see this work of the church played out in a wonderful and unique way. As short-term missionaries your team will experience Life Together in a very real way. You will live and work in close proximity to people you have never met before. You will be challenged and encouraged by each of these people as you develop a relationship and live out our Life Together by worshiping and serving together. Witness and Mercy are intricately joined together on the international mission field. Your service might be very clearly Mercy-related, caring for the sick or feeding the poor. In those situations, you will be working in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministry to bring Witness to all of your Mercy activities. Conversely, you may be engaged in very clear ministries of Witness, however, all of your interactions will be full Mercy as you engage with believers and unbelievers alike.

Your service as a short-term mission team will be a beautiful representation of our life in the church; Witnessing Always, showing Mercy Forever, and living Life Together in the church and for the world.

Learn more at www.lcms.org/wmlt.

Getting Started

As your team begins the exciting steps towards missionary service, one of the opportunities and responsibilities of your team is to involve those around you in your mission.

Although these individuals will remain in the U.S. while you travel to serve on the mission field, they can be involved in your ministry through the support they give. Their prayer, volunteer and financial support will make it possible for your team to serve, giving your team the chance to share the message of the Good News of Jesus Christ on the mission field. Keep the importance of the task God has given your team in mind as you begin the process of asking others to partner with you and as you share in their blessings of support.

This guide is designed to help your team meet the important need of raising prayer, volunteer and financial support for your mission trip.

What is Support Raising?

Support raising is the combination of prayer, volunteer and financial partnership.

- **Prayer Support** — Prayer support is a very important part of your trip. It needs to be intentionally raised. Before and when you are in the field, you will want to know that people have committed to praying for your team.
- **Volunteer Support** — Volunteer support is the act of service toward your team by others who are not traveling with you. From this point on in this manual, volunteer help will be listed as “assisting.” There may be people who would like to help you pack, serve at your events, collect donations, build your website, etc. These are support roles and it’s VERY important to include these individuals as team members.



- **Financial Support** — Financial support is also an important part of your trip. Mission trips require funding, and often individuals do not have enough on their own to cover trip expenses. Although many people are hesitant about raising funds, it is important to remember that some cannot go, and will enjoy giving to others to enable them to go to the mission fields.

It is always important to keep in the forefront of your mind that there are many ways to respond to God’s Call to mission. Everyone has a role: some go some pray and some give financially in the sending process. All are equally vital to the spreading of the salvation message.

Guidelines

Step 1: Select a Support Raising Coordinator

As stated in the Team Leaders Guide, team members will have different responsibilities on your team. A crucial role is that of Support Raising Coordinator. The coordinator will manage all the aspects of support raising, including:

- logistics for gathering support;
- tracking supporters and donations;
- coordinating events for support raising; and
- helping to guide team members to meet their support goals.

Step 2: Meet With Your Pastor and Treasurer

The Support Raising Coordinator, Team Leader, pastor and church treasure should meet as an early step in the support-raising process. It is important to determine processes for raising, depositing and tracking support for your team. Key discussions items should include:

- In what account will money for the trip be placed?
- Who is responsible and authorized for depositing and withdrawing from the account?
- How can the donations be made tax deductible? (Any checks written to individuals or with an individual's name on the memo line are NOT tax-deductible.)
- How will individual versus team donations be tracked?
- How will donations from support-raising events be allocated?
- What do we do with over-raised funds?

Forms to help the Support Raising Coordinator and team members can be found in the Appendix.



Step 3: Meet With The Team

The logistics have now been decided and it's time to meet with your team. The following are things that should be discussed as your team gets ready to begin sharing about their mission and needs.

Understand Your Message

Before the team begins asking people for prayer and financial support for their missionary service, they need to understand the message they will be sharing. One of the team roles can be that of Researcher. The Researcher can help the team understand the missionary needs and services of the country and cultural issues they will face. Then, with that information, a cohesive message can be conveyed. Questions to guide in developing that message include:

- Which information will you share with potential supporters?
- In what ways will you tell them?
- How will you answer anticipated questions?
- What will you be doing and what expenses do the donations cover?

Information and downloadable resources for every mission field and missionary are available at www.lcms.org/international.

Note: If missionary security is an issue in your country of service, make sure you review with your team the communication guidelines given to you by the LCMS.

Share Support-Raising Logistics

Give the team all of the information they will need to track and distribute personal donations. Clearly describe all of the processes that you have developed to keep track of donations and donors. Set clear deadlines for raising support. This will help hold everyone accountable. Forms for tracking supporters can be found in the Appendices.

Identify Who to Approach

As a team, it is helpful to identify groups or individuals that the team will be approaching as a group. This divides responsibilities and utilizes relationships to ensure that everyone in your church has the opportunity to participate in the mission.

Examples of total team supporters include:

- Church mission board (if not involved already)
- Local LWML
- Bible study groups
- Sunday school or youth groups
- Staff members
- Other boards of church groups
- Congregational Members

Individuals also need to identify personal contacts and make a fundraising plan. Resources are provided in Appendix B to help organize this information.

Forms include:

- Guide to Individual Support
- Tracking Sheets
- Individual Prayer Letters

Be sure to gather email addresses as you collect information about your supporters. You may want to communicate with them while you are on the field.

Events for Support Raising

Your team may sponsor some events with the proceeds going to help support your mission trip. These are great opportunities for fellowship and to invite people to participate in your mission trip as senders. Appendix A includes a list of possible events that have been successful for other teams.

Step 4: Pre-Trip Development of Presentations and Materials for Sharing

Your team should have a person responsible for communication. The first task for this person is to develop communication materials for the group to use while sharing. It is important that ALL team members understand and are able to articulate a consistent message. Be sure to distribute materials to team members for their individual correspondence. Some ideas for materials include:

- Brochures
- PowerPoint® presentations
- Newsletters
- Websites/blogs/Facebook® pages

It is recommended that you take a group picture and add it to your presentations and materials. A map of the country in which you are serving, with a star indicating your exact location, will add to the effectiveness of your communication pieces. Let your creative juices flow! Put your own style to all communication, leaving the important information intact. Develop other creative ways to communicate your mission also.

Step 5: Schedule Pre-Trip Presentations and Sharing Events

Your team should have a master schedule of all the presentations and events you plan to do as a team. Also be sure the presenters know the logistics of donations.

Don't Forget!

- Prayer is a type of support and that should be communicated!
- Assisting in team events and activities is also a way to support.
- Countries with **restricted access** need to have "Volunteer" not "Missionary" on any printed materials. You may also need to avoid using the names of active LCMS missionaries or staff on any materials that may be published online. Please connect with your LCMS contact to understand the best approach.

Step 6: Thank Yous

Encourage individuals to follow-up with prayer supporters, people assisting and financial supporters with thank yous. Also make sure the team is thanking all the supporters. It is important to thank all groups who allow you to present about your trip, even if you do not receive support from them. Thank yous should be sent to supporters within two weeks of receiving the support.

Step 7: Plan Ahead for Post-Trip Communication

Although it may seem premature to plan presentations about your trip before you leave, it has proven to be a very good idea. Often when people return they scatter or become focused on other things. Presenting about your trip to the people who helped you creates positive relationships for future mission support and involvement. Presenting also serves as a good debriefing experience for your team. Before you leave, make sure you have the following things ready for your return:

- Times, dates and types of presentations for groups who supported your team.
- Individuals committed to preparing communications describing your trip.
- Individuals committed to presenting to these groups. Every team member should be required to present to the sending congregation.

Step 8: On-The-Field Communication

If your field has Internet access, you may consider posting updates, prayer requests and praises to your churches website/Facebook page and your team website/blog/Facebook page. You may also want to create a list of supporters to email while you are on your trip. If you plan to communicate via email while you are on the field, please review the Technology Tips document in Appendix D.

Step 9: Post-Trip Communication

It is important that each team member is reminded of their responsibilities to communicate with supporters about the mission trip. This can be done as a group or individual. Again, reinforce the importance of caution in written communication if the country you served has restricted access. Don't forget to include prayer partners in all return communication. Remember that your goal is to personally involve God's people in your mission. Share with them the joy you have in what God has given you to do so that they may be moved to not only support you, but also that others would be moved to serve in mission work like you.

Things to Remember

Five Key Points

1. Pray to our Heavenly Father that He would bless your efforts and use you to share His love with people everywhere. Prayer is the most powerful tool you have, so always pray and ask others to pray for you.
2. You are being sent to serve through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. When talking to your partners, please remember to **include the LCMS** in the information you share.
3. Your ultimate goal is to tell the story of your mission. Explain to your senders what you will be doing, why your team is responding to God's call in this place and how their gift will make an impact. It is important to remember to **engage, not entertain** as you share your message.
4. Focus on cultivating partner relationships. A lack of communication will discourage and frustrate a partner, showing them a lack of commitment on your part. Once you lose a partner's confidence, you will have to work even harder to gain back their trust. If you lose a partner's confidence and trust, you will lose their support of the trip and possibly trips in the future. Communicate with your partners, sharing the ministry with them, thereby encouraging them to continue their support.

5. Remember that God calls ALL to take part in the Great Commission. Going on a trip is not the only way to be involved in spreading the Gospel. Fundraising may seem uncomfortable to some, but please remember it is your opportunity to help others be part of God's command to spread His Word. Not everyone can go. Give people the opportunity to respond to how God calls them.

Funding Responsibilities

Before leaving for the field, a short-term team must have 100 percent of the money needed to support their trip. All funds are due to the LCMS one month before departure.

It is important to remember that the mission field does not have the capacity to pay for your expenses. If you have difficulties and/or questions, please contact the LCMS.

Appendix A:

Group Support-Raising Events

Events for Support Raising

Events are an important part of support raising. They encourage participation in your mission trip on many levels. They give people opportunities to support your trip financially, but they also give people a chance to commit to praying for you. If you have someone who wants to help, but cannot travel with your team, this gives them opportunities to work alongside you. Finally, these events provide fellowship for the whole church body, which is an important part of congregational life. The following are some ideas and resources for these events.

Fundraising Websites

- <http://home.snu.edu/~HCULBERT/funds.htm>
- www.fundraising-ideas.org/DIY
- www.fundraisingip.com (this site also has an iPhone app)
- www.easy-fundraising-ideas.com

Trivia Night Websites

- www.3streetstrivia.com/factSheet.pdf
- www.legendstrivia.com.au
- www.funtrivia.com

Buy-a-Mile Fundraiser

Show your fund raising progress on a map with a little moving van or airplane to show how far you've gotten. Figure out the total number of miles and divide that number into total budget to get cost per mile. Invite people to buy a sequence of miles to get your group there and back. They surely wouldn't want to leave you stranded in the middle of nowhere, would they?

Rock-a-Thon

Have a local or congregational day care center, your Christian day school, Sunday school classes or some other children's group raise money through 'rock-a-thons' — rocking in rocking chairs. This works very well in small communities. In one town of 2,000 people, the local day care center raised more than \$6,000 for the Heart Institute by rocking in rocking chairs in the town square on a Saturday. It is amazing what children can do.

Online Fundraising

There are a variety of new avenues for fundraising as access to the Internet increases. You can consider using social media, such as Facebook, to tell the story of your mission service and invite support. You can use a crowd fundraising site if you feel your support network would be engaged by this method. When using the Internet for fundraising or communicating your mission, it is important to remember that anyone can see the information you are sharing. Be sure you are not serving in a restricted-access country, your facts are correct, everything you write is positive about the people you are serving and most of all that EVERYTHING is glorifying to God.

Appendix B: Personal Support-Raising

Who to Approach

When support raising, try to brainstorm about all the people you can ask to support your missionary service. Do not limit your list to those who are Christian or Lutheran. Inviting non-Christians to support your ministry provides a great opportunity for you to share your faith.

This list should include:

1. Relatives
 - a. Immediate Family
 - b. Extended Family (aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents)
2. Friends
 - a. Close Friends
 - b. High School and College Friends
 - c. Christmas Card List
 - d. Parents' Friends
3. Associates
 - a. Co-workers and Supervisors
 - b. Professional Friends and Peers
4. Neighbors
 - a. Family Doctor
 - b. Banker
 - c. Grocer
 - d. Car Repair
 - e. Hairdresser
 - f. Cleaners
 - g. Day Care

Gather a Team

In order to gain some good insights and understandings and to involve more people in the mission trip, some team members may want to form their own support team. This team should be two to four people. They will help develop the contact list, the communications and tracking, and pray for you.

Ways to Approach Your Contacts

After you have put together a contact list, start making your contacts. If your team developed a team newsletter, include that as well as a personal support-raising letter (a sample is included). Face-to-face contact, presentations, phone calls and mailings are all effective ways to share about your mission trip. Don't forget to pray for and about your contacts.

Individual Support Tracking

Although the team will likely deposit the money to a single account, it is VERY important that each member keep track of their partners. This includes financial partners AND prayer partners. Keeping track of your partners will allow you to send a follow-up newsletter and thank you, as well as know who is praying for you and supporting you in your mission.

Develop a Timeline

With your team, develop a timeline to determine when letters should go out, when thank yous should be sent and when your return communications should be sent. This will help to hold you accountable.

- Your support letters should be sent about six weeks before your team deadline. Make sure to include the team deadline in your letter.
- Thank-you letters should be sent immediately or no less than three days after a response.
- Return communications should be sent no later than three weeks after you return home.

Information to Include in Your Letter

It is important that your newsletter be sincere, informative and reflect your own style. People from your contacts will want to know that this letter is something from you that you truly care about. They will also want to know clearly what help you need, what you will be doing and with whom you will be serving. Items that will help communicate those needs include:

- mission trip dates;
- mission trip destination;
- sending agencies (church and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod);
- amount needed to be raised;
- deadlines for the trip expenses;
- how you were interested and why you feel called to go;
- activities you will be participating in while on the field; and
- personal “p.s.” handwritten on the bottom about anything else going on in your life or questions about their lives.

An example prayer letter is in Appendix C.

Sponsor Follow-Through

When you have received your support, it is important to keep those supporters as part of the mission. Remember, this is their response to the Great Commission. There are several different levels of communication that need to take place. The most crucial are pre-trip and post-trip, but on-the-field communication is a wonderful connection if it is possible.

Pre-trip — After you have received support, follow up with a thank you as quickly as possible.

Post-trip — When you return home, a newsletter reporting what you accomplished, what you learned and pictures is the minimum that should be done. You could make a picture of your trip into a postcard to be sent along with the newsletter. You could include gifts you have picked up on the field. These are some ideas, but be creative!

On-the-Field — You can also be creative in communicating while you are on the field. You can email your supporters or email your “team” of helpers at home and they can pass on your message. You can also look for small gifts to bring back. Handmade items that are small and are purchased in “bulk” are great ideas. Keep in mind that these gifts do need to travel through customs. No fresh food products are allowed. You can send postcards either while you are serving or when you return.

Appendix C: Support-Raising Templates

Sponsor Contact List

Done	Sponsor Yes/No	Sponsor Name	Address	Telephone/E-Mail	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/>				Phone: Email:	
<input type="checkbox"/>				Phone: Email:	
<input type="checkbox"/>				Phone: Email:	
<input type="checkbox"/>				Phone: Email:	
<input type="checkbox"/>				Phone: Email:	
<input type="checkbox"/>				Phone: Email:	
<input type="checkbox"/>				Phone: Email:	
<input type="checkbox"/>				Phone: Email:	
<input type="checkbox"/>				Phone: Email:	
<input type="checkbox"/>				Phone: Email:	

Active Sponsor Report

Sponsor Name and Address (including Email and Phone Number)				Type of Support	Amount of Support	Date	Thank You Letter	Newsletter and/or Brochure
Name:	Phone:	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Funding					<input type="checkbox"/> Sent	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent
Address:	Email:							
Name:	Phone:	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Funding					<input type="checkbox"/> Sent	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent
Address:	Email:							
Name:	Phone:	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Funding					<input type="checkbox"/> Sent	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent
Address:	Email:							
Name:	Phone:	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Funding					<input type="checkbox"/> Sent	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent
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Address:	Email:							
Name:	Phone:	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Funding					<input type="checkbox"/> Sent	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent
Address:	Email:							
TOTAL:								

Sample Prayer Letter

March 10, 20—

Dear Family and Friends,

Did you know that 70 percent of people in (Host Country) have never spoken with a Christian about their faith? Did you know that 60 percent of the population, men and women, have a need and desire to speak English? In response to this need, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is sending teams from congregations to help missionaries at the English Center in (host country or city). (Congregation) will answer the call by sending a team from June 5-26.

This letter is to inform you that I am joining the mission team and invite you to become a partner with me in this mission. Our team will work with students enrolled at the school and host outreach events for the community. These events will invite the local people to the church to practice English, enjoy fellowship, listen to testimonies and sign up for classes. The events will allow the missionaries to meet the local people and invite them to Bible study and worship. English classes are taught using the Bible so the students learn about Jesus and English at the same time. The hope is that these students will then become baptized members of the local Lutheran church.

I am excited about the work God has placed before me and our team. In order for this work to be successful, I have committed to finding partners that will support the team and me. Here is a list of the types of support needed for the mission trip:

- 15 prayer partners — They will pray for me and the team before and during the trip.
- Financial partners — The total cost is \$2,500.00 and must be collected by May 1.

In Matthew 10, Jesus sends out His disciples in twos to preach the Gospel in a “short-term” experience. It is my prayer and desire that I follow God’s model in helping people experience the wonders of Jesus through short-term missions. I ask, as the disciples had people who helped support them in this endeavor, that you consider supporting my trip. I also know that God will work in my life to strength my faith as He did in that of the disciples.

I have enclosed our team newsletter which contains more information on our trip and the country we will be serving. If you would like to financially or prayerfully partner with me, please return the enclosed response card.

I look forward to being able to see you all again soon and share the excitement of this service opportunity God has placed before us.

God Bless,

Ms. Lisa Smith

(Note: You can add pictures, maps, or graphics to help tell the mission story.)

I will directly support _____ with

☐ daily prayer

☐ a gift of \$ _____

☐ volunteering

(help with the fundraisers, driving to airport, collecting supplies, etc.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

I will directly support _____ with

☐ daily prayer

☐ a gift of \$ _____

☐ volunteering

(help with the fundraisers, driving to airport, collecting supplies, etc.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

I will directly support _____ with

☐ daily prayer

☐ a gift of \$ _____

☐ volunteering

(help with the fundraisers, driving to airport, collecting supplies, etc.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Group Sponsor Name and Address (including Email and Phone Number)			Type of Support	Amount of Support	Date	Thank You Letter	Newsletter and/or Brochure
Name:	Phone:		<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting			<input type="checkbox"/> Sent	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent
Address:	Email:						
Name:	Phone:		<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting			<input type="checkbox"/> Sent	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent
Address:	Email:						
Name:	Phone:		<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting			<input type="checkbox"/> Sent	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent
Address:	Email:						
Name:	Phone:		<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting			<input type="checkbox"/> Sent	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent
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Name:	Phone:		<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting			<input type="checkbox"/> Sent	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent
Address:	Email:						
Name:	Phone:		<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting			<input type="checkbox"/> Sent	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent
Address:	Email:						

Appendix D:

General Communication Tips

Technology Tips

Using technology to raise support and communicate with your supporters can be quick and cost effective. Due to the varying levels of experience with technology we have created a list of technology tips to aide you in this important task.

PDF's and Compressed Files

When you send documents to your supporters the file size should be 1 MB or less. To make sure that your file is a manageable size, please compress the photos that you include in the document and convert it to a PDF before sending. Microsoft Word 2007 or newer has a "Save As PDF" feature built into it. If using an older version, you will need to download free PDF conversion software. A PDF is easy for any platform to open and in a file size that is manageable, even for dial-up Internet connections.

To compress your photos within Microsoft Word, go to the picture toolbar. The fifth button from the right has four arrows, one on each corner of the picture. It shows "Compress Pictures" when your mouse hovers over it. Click the button and it will give you the option to compress all the pictures in the document or just the selected picture. You can choose the print resolution setting. This usually makes the file size less than 100 KB, which can be downloaded easily by a dial-up connection. If you have photo management software on your computer, you are able to change the resolution and file size of your photos. For example, if you have the free Picasa® photo management software, you can export compressed versions of your photos to a document or website.

Free downloadable PDF-creation software is available from Primo PDF at www.primopdf.com. If your file is less than 2 MB, you can use a free online service for making a PDF at www.gohtm.com.

Picasa® and Picasa Web Albums

Picasa is a great photo management software program for your computer that you can download for free and takes just a second to install; visit www.picasa.google.com. (For those with a Macintosh computer, you already have iPhoto software that organizes your digital photos.) If you use Picasa to manage your photos, you can create Picasa Web albums directly from within the software on the computer and they will automatically be posted online to share. Picasa Web albums are a great way to publicly — or by invite only — share high-quality photos online.

Avoiding Spam Blockers

Keep files under 1Mb by using the tips above. Then divide your email distribution list into sets of 40 or fewer email addresses. If your email list is short, this may be a great way to personalize the communication by sending each email separately with a personal note.

YouSendIt.com — Sharing Large Files

Have you often wished that you could share larger e-files, like photos or even PowerPoint presentations, but they just wouldn't go via your Internet email connection? www.YouSendIt.com is a website designed to make transferring large files via the Internet easy. YouSendIt serves as a temporary holding place for your file, until your intended recipient can download it onto his or her computer. You can upload as much as 100 MB, and your recipient will be informed via email that the file is ready and waiting for them to download within seven days.

Images

Stock images can truly enhance your communications, but who wants to pay for photos? Pixabay.com is a search engine for public domain images.

Image Editing Tools

Adobe Photoshop too expensive or intimidating? *Pixlr.com* and *Aviary.com*'s Phoenix are free online image editors. *Cropp.me* will help you auto-crop images into multiple sizes — great for blogs and more!

Photo and Video Sharing Tools

These sites create places where you can easily share the pictures and videos from your trip. Please consider sharing a link to your account with the LCMS for our use as we encourage others to serve on short-term mission trips.

- FLCKR - <http://flickr.com>
- YouTube - www.youtube.com

Communicating Your Mission Experience via the Internet

As your team develops supporters you will want to find ways to keep them updated and engaged. Building a team website, blog or Facebook page is an excellent way to engage supporters and your whole team. Meet with your Team Leader and Team Communication Coordinator about this task to choose what is needed and divide responsibilities.

Before you begin

The first question to consider is “Do we need a website, or a blog or a Facebook® page to communicate about this experience?” The following are some questions you might want to ask your team to determine the answer.

- Do we have information that needs to be shared with a wider audience? Will we?
- Will we be serving in a place where we can communicate freely or are we going to a restricted-access country?
- Will we have Internet access?
- Who is our audience? Which tool would serve them best?

The answers to these questions will not only help you determine if Internet communication is needed, but also will help you decide what medium is right for your team. Next, you need to consider what to share. Common items include: a team newsletter, prayer requests, answered prayers, photos, schedule, support opportunities, and general thoughts and observations.

Be sensitive to the kind of information you post.

Keep in mind that your audience may be limited in your mind, but posting it on the Web makes it available to a worldwide audience. Your team represents the LCMS, your congregation, your field... to the world! What they find on your site will form their impression not only of your team, but of all the organizations you represent as well. Please follow the advice of the apostle Paul — in whatever you do, including your words and images, edify and build up of the body of Christ to the glory of God the Father.

In restricted-access countries, or in places where believers or those having Christian contacts may be persecuted or ostracized politically or by family and friends, please refrain from writing about individuals by name or by any other identifying information (photos) that may pose a threat to their security or well-being. If you post this person's story on the World Wide Web with identifying information, you can assume that a family member or anyone may see it there. The LCMS is aware that there are groups that monitor the Web for exactly these reasons, especially in restricted countries. Of more common concern is a seeker or newly baptized person who has not yet shared this information with his or her own family. Please make sure that the family learns of the news from that individual, not through your website.

Resources

Free Blog Sites Providers:

The following sites host blogs — they are easy-to-use websites where you can quickly post your thoughts and photos, interact with people and more. It takes less than five minutes to complete the three steps required to create your own blog — create an account, name your blog and choose a template.

- www.blogger.com
- <http://wordpress.org>

Facebook Page:

You might choose to set up a Facebook® page for your mission trip. You can create and manage your page from your personal account. Like timelines, you can customize pages by adding apps, posting stories, hosting events and more. Engage and grow your audience by posting regularly. People who like your Page will get updates in their news feeds. Pages are for businesses, organizations and brands to share their stories and connect with people. Your page would represent your personal mission trip, not the LCMS. Get more information about Facebook and Facebook pages at www.facebook.com.

Group Coordination:

Teams can use group websites for coordination. These sites can be used to share messages, photos and photo albums, group event calendars, links, and many other things. Some examples of online resources include:

- <http://groups.yahoo.com>
- www.google.com — applications such as calendar and documents
- www.facebook.com — create a closed group for team communication

Sharing Your Communications with the LCMS

There are many ways you can and will communicate with your friends, family and supporters before, during and after your mission trip. The LCMS would also like to be able to celebrate your short-term experience and what God is doing through your service. We encourage you to share links to

any online communications. Share your photos and videos using the links provided and be sure to share your stories with us!

Integrating LCMS Resources in your Web Communications

- Each LCMS mission field has a webpage dedicated to that country. Provide a link to the country page for your supporters, www.lcms.org/countryname. (ex: www.lcms.org/kenya)
- Photos from many countries are available in the LCMS photo gallery, <http://photo.lcms.org>.
- Videos from various mission fields and regions are available at <http://video.lcms.org>.
- A number of mission resources are available on the LCMS website for immediate use. Go to www.lcms.org/resources. You can link supporters to the entire list, or choose a specific resource to highlight.
- Provide a link to the LCMS Pray For Us Calendar: www.lcms.org/prayforus.
- Like our LCMS Missionaries Facebook page and repost relevant mission stories. Find us at www.facebook.com/LCMSMissionaries.

Keep in Mind...

1. You are serving as an extension of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Consider your intended and all possible audiences. Carefully choose all materials you share.
2. You should use brands and logos associated with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in your communications. You can find more information about how to use them accurately at www.lcms.org/brand.
3. LCMS is not hyphenated. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is split by an em dash, not a hyphen.



Published by
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Office of International Mission

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