



Long's Chapel United Methodist Church Mission Trip Protocol

General

- Mission trip planning begins 12 mos. in advance of the event.
- The Missions Committee has overall responsibility for overseeing all Long's Chapel UMC mission trips and must approve all planned events.
 - Mission trips for the next calendar year will be submitted to the Missions Committee one year in advance or by Aug. 15, whichever comes first (there will be an exception for 2011 trips...the deadline will be Oct. 15).
 - The Missions Committee may limit the number of participants based on the age of the participants, experience of leaders, cost of trip, purpose of the mission, effectiveness, etc.
- Each trip should consist of a well-trained cadre of persons who are versed in cross-cultural communication. Each Team should meet multiple times to ready themselves for the experience. A curriculum and calendar of meetings is to be prepared before the enlistment phase to ensure the readiness of the team.

Financial

- Develop a budget for the trip:
 - Projected income from fundraisers, Long Fund, donations
 - Income from amounts participants will pay
 - Travel Expenses
 - Airfare
 - Meals
 - Lodging
 - Trip insurance
 - (Vaccinations, personal medical issues, passport fees, etc. are not considered travel expenses and are non-tax deductible. These should be paid for by each individual participant, not out of church funds.)
 - Mission expenses (building supplies, medical supplies, etc.)
- Any appeals for donations must be coordinated through the Church Administrator.
- Contributors may get a tax deduction for gifts generally designated for the trip, but not for gifts to individual participants, except when a parent pays specifically for their child's *unreimbursed* travel expenses, provided there *"is no significant element of personal pleasure, recreation, or vacation in the travel"*.
- Participants may get a tax deduction for their *unreimbursed* travel expenses (those travel expenses not covered by donations, the Long Fund, or fundraisers...expenses they must pay out of their pocket) provided there *"is no significant element of personal pleasure, recreation, or vacation in the travel"*. (Other related expenses such as vaccinations, passports, etc. are generally not tax deductible).
- Participants may be asked for an initial deposit to expedite reserving a block of seats on an airline or other mode of transportation.
- Remaining expenses to be paid by participants will be paid in three equal payments at 6 mos., 4 mos., and 2 mos. before the trip. Payments are non-refundable if expenditures have already been made for a participant.
- Financial record-keeping
 - Participants will pay their three equal payments directly to the Financial Manager, who will post the payments to their contribution record. Payments should not be placed in offering envelopes

or the offering plate. Checks should clearly state the participant's name and the reason for the payment.

- Other general donations for the trip may be handled through Sunday offerings or mailed to the Financial Manager.
- All disbursements of funds (for airline tickets, van rental, etc.) will be made by the Financial Manager. No disbursements will be made in excess of the funds currently in the designated account. All disbursements require appropriate receipts. Checks are only written on Wednesdays of each week.
- One week prior to the departure date, the group leader will request the balance of the funds designated for the mission trip. The Financial Manager will write a check for the entire amount. The trip leader should arrange for these funds to be converted to Traveler's Checks, wired ahead, placed in an ATM account, or any other secure means to avoid carrying large sums of cash.
- The trip leader to whom the funds are given shall be responsible for obtaining receipts for funds spent and for reconciling the account with the Financial Manager upon returning.

Timeline

- 12 mos. prior to event:
 - Initial planning takes place
 - Present trip to Missions Committee for approval 12 months in advance or by Aug. 15, whichever is earlier
 - Request to Long Fund, if appropriate
- 9 mos. prior to the event:
 - Cost estimates of participant's expenses
 - Review planned itinerary with Church Administrator (any significant leisure associated with trip?)
 - Announcement of the trip
 - Begin enrolling
 - Plan fundraisers
 - Determine vaccination schedule, if needed
- 6 mos. prior to event:
 - Fundraising begins or is already underway
 - Planning continues
 - Participants confirmed
 - First participant payment due to Financial Manager
- 4 mos. prior to event:
 - Second participant payment due
 - Purchase airline tickets, if appropriate
 - Purchase trip insurance, including theft
- 2 mos. prior to event:
 - Final participant payment due
 - Shots/passports, checklists
 - Planning continues
 - Contact Pastor to schedule Commissioning service
- 1 week prior to event:
 - Trip leader requests balance of funds
 - Leader converts funds to Traveler's Checks, wire transfer, ATM, etc.
- Immediately upon return
 - Surplus cash, Travelers' Checks, etc. are converted and deposited in trip leader's bank account.
- No later than 2 weeks after return

- Leader gathers all receipts, reconciles funds
 - Leader schedules a meeting with Financial Manager, presents all receipts and reconciliation records, and writes a check to Long's Chapel for any surplus.
- Follow up:
 - Participants attend a de-briefing session at the end of the year with participants from all other mission trips.
 - Pastor follows up with a letter to the host.