

# **Missionary Support**

## **Covenant Relationship Program**

Since 1974, the Covenant Relationship Program has enabled United Methodist congregations to surround our mission personnel with love and prayer, and to grow in understanding the context in which these missionaries serve by learning about the place of service and its people, culture, traditions and religious life.



This mutual relationship calls for the church to participate in the work of the missionary through financial and prayerful support, and for that missionary to share with the church firsthand experiences of working in God's Mission.

## **The Relationship**

Through this program, both the congregation and the missionary promise to enter into an ongoing and dynamic relationship with one another-- a relationship that continues to grow as both the connections and financial support increase over time.

Members of the local church and the supported missionary agree to communicate regularly, to uphold each other in prayer, and to meet face-to-face during the itineration assignment.

As part of its commitment to strengthen the partnership between local congregations and mission personnel, the General Board of Global Ministries provides for the regular itineration of all missionaries who participate in the Covenant Relationship Program. All Covenant Relationship churches are eligible for visits from missionaries during their itineration assignments. The supported missionary will notify churches when available to visit.

## **How A Missionary Is Funded**

The Covenant Relationship Program is one of the three financial support bases for United Methodist mission personnel commissioned by the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM).

- Of primary importance is the World Service Fund (WSF), one of eight funds to which congregations contribute through their apportionments. The WSF provides basic financial resources for the core ministries of our denomination, underwriting the work of GBGM and its mission personnel, as well as the work of other general agencies of the church.
- Secondly, a portion of support for all mission personnel comes from the undesignated Pledge to Mission from local United Methodist Women's units channeled through the Women's Division of GBGM.
- The third avenue of support is through the second-mile giving of the Covenant Relationship Program, which is part of the Advance for Christ and His Church.

None of these three financial support bases alone can fully sustain the financial responsibility for the many missionaries serving through GBGM. As the number of missionaries increase and the cost of supporting them rise, bases of financial support must expand.

## **The Program**

The average support cost per missionary is \$55,000 annually. This amount covers salary, training, benefits, housing and children's education.

A congregation establishes a covenant when it agrees to contribute \$2,500 or more per year, or at least \$5 per member per year as a beginning commitment for a small membership congregation.

## **Steps Toward Entering Into A Covenant Relationship With Mission Personnel Through The Advance**

1. Seek a challenging annual financial goal for your Covenant Relationship commitment, using the \$2500 or more per year (or \$5 per member per year) amount as a guideline.
2. Give consideration to missionaries serving in the mission partnerships of West Ohio Annual Conference. Those missionaries include Gaston Ntambo (North Katanga Conference), Jeanne Ntambo (North Katanga Conference), Karen Vo To (Vietnam), Ut To (Vietnam), Willie Berman (Oriental Conference, Mexico), Esther Gitobu (Cambodia) and Nicholas Gitobu (Cambodia). To learn more about these missionaries, please go to [www.westhioumc.org](http://www.westhioumc.org) and search for

“missionaries.” For further information, please contact Dee Stickley-Miner at 1-800-437-0028; 614-844-6200; [dstickley@wocumc.org](mailto:dstickley@wocumc.org).

3. When you make a decision, complete the covenant form and report your selection to the General Board of Global Ministries and Dee Stickley-Miner, Director of Mission and Justice, West Ohio Conference. GBGM will confirm the commitment and inform the selected missionary. The Covenant takes effect on the date you indicate and continues according to your directions, though you are encouraged to make a three year commitment. Adjustments to the commitment amount, timeframe, or missionary selected may be made at any time, and should be reported to the Office of Covenant Relationships so that accurate records can be kept.
4. Funds are to be sent by your local church treasurer through your conference treasurer, clearly designated for the missionary with his/her Advance code number. Gifts may be sent monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually, as you choose.
5. Churches participating in the Covenant Relationship Program will be notified when a visit from the missionary can be considered. Churches contributing at least \$2,500 annually (or \$5 per member) will receive priority for such a visit.

**To participate in the Covenant Relationship Program, please complete the accompanying form.**

## **More Information**

*For more information, or to participate in the Covenant Relationship Program, please contact Dee Stickley-Miner, Director of Mission and Justice, West Ohio Conference*

Dee Stickley-Miner, Director of Connectional Mission and Justice

32 Wesley Blvd.

Columbus OH 43085

Phone: 614-844-6200' 800-437-0028

Email: [dstickley@wocumc.org](mailto:dstickley@wocumc.org)