



MISSIONS POLICY

St. Joseph Island Free Methodist Church

Purpose Statement

To fulfill the Great Commission by making disciples who worship, pray, care, and serve.

Governance/Processes: The Missions Committee

The Official Board has established the Missions Committee in our local church who operate under the authority of and report to the **Official Board** within the mandate and **Job Descriptions** they have been given. It is the responsibility of the Missions Committee to oversee, encourage, and inspire a heart for missions (foreign/home) within our local congregation. All Missions / Missionaries and Project Applications are processed by the Missions Committee, and then recommended to the Pastor and Official Board for final decision.

The Missions Committee is responsible for keeping the local congregation informed of and promoting interest in our Missionaries and Organizations with an emphasis on prayer, awareness of needs, and holistic support. The Missions Committee also facilitates opportunities for our congregation to participate in short-term missions.

Missions Overview

At St. Joseph Island Free Methodist Church, we provide various ministry opportunities in keeping with our **Missions Objectives & Values** for our church family to get involved in Global Missions and participate in God's call to the Great Commission. These opportunities include:

- Supporting Our Missionaries and Missions Organizations around the world.
- Participating in a variety of Missions Events throughout the year.
- Participating in one of our Short-Term Missions Trips.

Missions Objectives & Values:

Our objectives are the practical applications of the mission statement of our church, but specifically applied in the realm of foreign missions.

1. In keeping with our church's mission statement, **we will focus our funding and resources on the following priorities:**

- a. **Active sharing of the gospel** (proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ: that God loves us and sent His Son Jesus to redeem us and save us from our sins.)
“Active sharing” means teaching, preaching, and evangelism: we will always use words; our conduct and the way we conduct ourselves and our ministry will always be above reproach and worthy of the name of Christ. *Sometimes* this will mean using material goods—but it is always done in support of active proclamation of the gospel and God’s Word.
- b. **Discipleship** of believers
Seeing indigenous believers raised up who are worshippers of Jesus Christ; whose conduct is worthy of the name of Christ and who continually grow in Christ-likeness; who worship God in every aspect of their lives; who become students of the Word of God; who manifest the Fruit of the Spirit in their lives, and whose love for Christ motivates them to pray and serve in their own vocations and realm of influence to see others come to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour.
- c. **Training and assisting in raising up healthy local churches**
We are not abroad to replace or to remain forever but to train either current generations of church leaders (leadership development) and/or future generations of leaders (church planting) so that their congregations and converts can be disciples.

2. Shift our investment away from primarily capital improvement projects to invest robustly in Kingdom objectives

We will shift from a more recent focus on humanitarian projects to gospel-centered objectives. This is because no secular organization will fund the proclamation of the gospel although many other organizations, including the government, will carry out capital improvement and humanitarian activities. Only the church will fund the sharing of God’s Word and the gospel—this is our responsibility.

3. Ministries and Missionaries who are part of Registered Canadian Charities will be preferred above those that are not part of registered charities

This relieves our smaller church from the heavy administrative burden of accounting and enforcing regulations in order to issue tax receipts and remain a charity under the CRA. Giving to other registered charities/mission agencies, including ones in our own denomination (like giving streams) removes much administrative burden.

As always, individual church members are encouraged to give to the needs of those around them—this is not limited within the church. For example, if one gives his shoes or coat to a needy mother, or gives food to a hungry child, one does not ask for a tax receipt for such purposes. We always want to be both wise and lavish in our generosity (With or without a receipt).

Note: Many developing countries also have their own governance regulations and accounting processes for outside development and money. Usually these have been implemented where there has been a documented history of indigenous people misusing the generosity of foreigners. Mission agencies and charities seek to ensure appropriate reasonable compliance to local laws and governance—but this burden of indigenous compliance is much too heavy for a foreign church to carry.

4. **Those involved in Missions ministry (either short or long-term) should be healthy members or regular participants of a local church**

One does not become, for example, an evangelist abroad when he/she is not one in their home location. Likewise, one does not suddenly become an active church planter abroad if he/she is not already contributing to the ministry and life of their own local church.

In addition, when a missionary is abroad, we also want them to be connected to the work of a local church/church plant on the field. A vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ and a commitment to His Word and His ways starts at home and simply continues to grow abroad.

5. **Shift to a more relationship-based support of missionaries and projects** (preferring quality and depth over quantity). We will grow in our pursuit of a more robust and holistic model of support and accountability.

On Field: We desire to help more robustly care for missionaries on the field and provide resources to help meet specific needs or help them through challenges or trials—which EVERY missionary will face at some point. This could include resources for personal counselling, addressing health issues, language learning resources and much more. “Missionary Member Care” We desire to build a relationship with our missionaries and be the safe supporting place that a missionary can confidently trust and turn to for support.

Off field: During end of term/furlough this may involve in helping Missionaries resource/ensure they have housing, transportation and other necessary details and basic needs. It could practically look like buying a few groceries to ensure the family has food for the first few days home, or helping them borrow a car or rent a place to stay during their furlough. It may also mean that we as church introduce our missionaries to other churches and help raise support above what we can provide.

We will also assist our long-term missionaries in going through an official individual debriefing after each completed term if one has not already been provided by your mission agency.

Missionaries & Organizations: Our Missionary Family

We support missionaries and mission organizations currently deployed around the world and who are engaged in preaching, teaching, evangelism, discipleship, church leadership development, and church planting.

New Missionary Applicants: Becoming Part of Our Missionary Family

In its desire to be obedient to fulfilling the Church's role in the Great Commission, SJIFMC is considering new additions to its supported missionary family. For those interested in being considered for missionary support, please see the **Application Form for Missionaries/Projects**.

Those who desire to become a supported full-time missionary/ministry, part of our "Missionary Family" will go through the following process:

- The Missionary will complete the **Application Form** to be submitted to the Missions Committee.
- The Committee will then prayerfully review the application, interview and interact with the missionary, review character references, and will provide further direction to the candidate. This direction will be either wait (not the right time), no (process is stopped), or go ahead.
- If the missionary is given the direction to go ahead, the Missions Committee will make a formal recommendation to the Official Board regarding the amount of support and their endorsement of the applicant as a candidate. A copy of the completed application and any additional documentation or certification will be attached and forwarded to the Board. Final approval will be made by the Board.
- Only those missionaries/projects who have been approved by the Missions Committee will be funded. Likewise, the final decision regarding support will be carried and made by the Official Board.

Requirements for Continued Funding of Long-Term Missionaries

1. Regular Reports to the church for general distribution including prayer requests. (No less than 3 per year).
2. An in person visit when home on furlough to meet with the Missions Committee, and if requested by the church to share at a gathering or meeting of the church (either in a home or at a church location).

3. Regular communication with the Missions Committee regarding more personal needs, decisions, and opportunities (not necessarily to be shared with the broader church).
4. Seeking out the confidential prayers of the Pastor / Missions Committee individuals for input and support in decisions that are being considered. (i.e. changing ministry emphasis, moving to a new ministry location, moving home, or considering a sabbatical or leave.) The missionary will involve the pastor or missions committee members in the decision-making process.
5. The registered charity you are serving under remains in good standing with the CRA.

Short-Term Mission Trips

Short-term Teams are “Senders” in the Missions Relationship

As a church we highly value short-term missions as a learning and exposure opportunity. We want to offer short-term trip experiences to church members to partner with our missionaries to further their work of reaching the lost and creating discipleship moments where we can fulfill God’s Great Commission personally and grow in our faith and dependence on Christ.

While short term missions (STM) missionaries and teams can have a positive impact on those taking part, we are at times ignorant of the host culture and its dynamics—a STM can have a detrimental effect without realizing it. One’s impact for good is increased when he is under the guidance of a local ministry/missionary. A successful STM team can also go with simply a goal to encourage and build up a missionary unit.

Sending STM teams will only be done in areas where we can work with and learn in partnership with a full-time missionary (preferably our own), in order to achieve long-term fruit and furtherance of our gospel objectives. Although STM teams “go” to foreign locations, they are going primarily in a *sending posture* to support or assist the existing missionary unit/ministry.

The focus of our short-term mission trips is as follows:

1. Present the Gospel message
2. Encourage and support our missionaries in the field
3. Support our missionary’s ministry in the field
4. Model global evangelism and outreach
5. Spiritually stretch and grow our members participating in the trips
6. Expose and encourage SJFMC members to commit to a life of mission’s service

STM trips are proposed and coordinated by the Missions Committee to the Official Board. Proposals are submitted to the Chair of the Board at least 6 months prior to the trip/project in order for the Official Board to do due diligence. Final Decision of proposals is with the Official Board.

Proposals for STM Teams must include the following:

- Overview of the mission trip/project
- Goals and activities to be carried out, including its purpose and benefits
- Projected start and end date, including proposed timeline
- Estimated total budget for the trip/project, including any estimates
- Location of the project and responsible contact person at project location
- Person responsible for overseeing the overall project on behalf of our church
- Process for monitoring project (communication, progress reports, photographs)
- Estimated number of participants
- Evaluation of risk and health & safety considerations
- Required travel documentation and immunizations
- Outline of fundraising plans

Proposals will be considered in the context of our church's **Mission Statement** and our **Missions Objectives**.

Fundraising for STM

All fundraising methods must be approved in advance by the Official Board and be coordinated with the Missions Committee. In the event that sufficient funds are not raised, the Official Board will determine whether the trip/project will proceed.

STM Participant Requirements

Each person participating in a short-term mission trip must complete an application form which will include:

- Personal and emergency contact information
- Character References (not family members)
- List of experience and skills
- Expectations of Short-term Missions Trip Participants
- Physician medical note
- Background checking consent
- Consent from parents or guardians, if under the age of majority.
- Copy of valid passport (not due to expire within 6 months of the date of proposed trip).
- Copy of Any Vaccination Requirement Documents (i.e. Yellow Fever card).

An interview may also be requested. The Missions Committee will review the application forms and then make recommendations to the Pastor and the Official Board. Those candidates approved, will form the short-term mission team, subject to adequate funding being in place.

A **release of liability form**, customized for the trip, will be reviewed with and signed by each participant of the mission trip.

STM Reporting

Upon completion of a trip/project a written summary report must be submitted to the Board for our records. This is to be done within one month of returning home or the completion of a project.

Original signed expense receipts to support expenditures must be submitted to the Treasurer within two weeks of returning home. There must be a clear paper trail of all monies; showing when, where, and how the money was spent from the time it leaves the church account. All currency exchange receipts/rates must be obtained and submitted to the Treasurer.

If financial assistance is given to non-qualified Donees; progress reports, financial records, copies of communication, and photographs are needed to prove resources have been used for our own activities as required by the Canada Revenue Agency.

All documentation must be translated into English so church treasurer can follow the trail of all monies.

STM Debriefing

Short term Missionaries and teams **will always go through a debriefing as a team** with a seasoned leader, either a pastor or another missionary leader.

During the debriefing, STM teams will receive guidance and work to prepare a brief ten-minute presentation to be shared with the church at a later date.

Summer Students Serving at Home in Ministry

We are thrilled when young people from our own church chose to spend their summer serving Christ alongside local ministries, for example at Christian summer camps. Our Church is happy to consider providing a small gift each summer to our own Students. Students who would like to be considered are encouraged to submit a prayer letter to the Missions Committee.

Missionary/Project Support Application Process at a Glance:

