



Mission Support Team Short-term Handbook

A guide for supporting Eastern Mennonite Missions' short-term mission workers

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Introduction

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” — Philippians 1: 3–6)

Thank you for your willingness to serve on a mission support team and be a partner in the gospel. As the mission workers are encouraged by you, in turn they will have fresh strength and love for those they are sent to reach. Your labor of love on behalf of a particular mission worker will be multiplied to bless many.

By saying “yes” to this ministry opportunity, you are inviting God to continue a good work in you. Your heart will be opened to a new part of the world. Together with the mission worker, you will see God’s kingdom established in the place where he or she is sent.

What is a mission support team?

A mission support team (MST) is a group of four to six people who have an interest in missions and in supporting a mission worker. The MST’s role is to help and support the mission worker throughout the various stages of his or her assignment. Each mission worker serving with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) is required to form an MST.

Each person on the MST has a specific role. The various roles for MSTs of short-term mission workers include team leader, prayer facilitator, pastoral care provider, finance coordinator, church communicator, and newsletter manager. In addition to their specific roles, MST members are responsible together for helping to raise financial and prayer support and to encourage the mission worker.

Parents of mission workers often make valuable contributions as MST members; however, in the formation of your MST, EMM recommends that a parent not serve in the roles of team leader, finance coordinator, or pastoral care provider. In a time of crisis for the worker, it can be very difficult for a worker’s close relative to lead the MST or to be involved in decisions related to the crisis. In such situations, family members need their own support and care. Furthermore, in certain types of crises, it can become a conflict of interest for family members to remain on the MST during the crisis processing.

Why MSTs?

MSTs build a vital bridge between the mission worker heading into short-term missions and his or her home congregation and community. As an MST you can help by praying, listening, discerning together, raising and monitoring finances, communicating with the church, and ministering to the mission worker while on the field and upon return.

For the MST to fulfill its purpose, it must function as a team. Please read this entire handbook, including the descriptions for each member’s role (not only your own). Together, these descriptions give a fuller understanding of how the MST works.

For more information

EMM’s MST Coach for short-term assignments is Ryan Umble and he is available to answer any questions your MST may have along the way. Contact Ryan at 717 898-2251 (ext. 219) or ryan.umble@emm.org.

Cord of Three: EMM's Philosophy of MSTs

“Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their labor:
If either of them falls down,
one can help the other up.
But pity anyone who falls
and has no one to help them up.
Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.
But how can one keep warm alone?
Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

The mission worker, the MST, and EMM — three strands woven together into a strong cord. Although each strand has strength of its own, three strands working separately will reach their breaking points more quickly than three strands woven together into one cord. May we be woven together in a unified mission vision, experiencing the strength and joy of interdependence!

MST member covenant

I commit to:

- pray regularly for the mission worker we support
- stay in relationship with the mission worker
- carry out the duties of my role on the team

As a team, we commit to:

- work with the mission worker to develop a support network that enables full financial support
- take primary responsibility for raising funds and maintaining necessary balances while the mission worker serves on the field

Role descriptions

Team leader

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.”
(Hebrews 10:24)

MST leaders lead team members in loving and serving the mission worker. They remind MST members that their efforts are not in vain and that their service is truly a ministry to the mission worker. Leaders encourage members to continue to walk in committed relationship with the mission worker.

EMM will communicate with you

Team leaders serve as a communication link between EMM and the other MST members. Some of the reasons we may contact you include:

- to send resources
- to send a financial report
- to inform in the event of an emergency situation

When you receive mailings from EMM, please share the information with the rest of your MST.

Communicating with MST members

- Team leaders keep a current list of contact information for each person on the team.
- Together with the rest of the team, leaders decide upon a regular way for the MST to keep in touch, for example, by email, WhatsApp group, etc.

Planning and organizing MST meetings

- The mission worker should schedule the first meeting, but after that the team leader will initiate other MST gatherings.
- The team leader also gathers the team together for a special re-entry planning time before the mission worker comes home.

Prayer facilitator

“... as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.” (2 Corinthians 1:11)

As prayer facilitator, you have the privilege of empowering others to love and serve the mission worker through intercession. You will also enjoy times of thanksgiving as prayers are answered. Prayer is the foundation upon which all mission work is built. Your role as prayer facilitator is vital in establishing God’s kingdom where the mission worker serves. By mobilizing others to pray, you are multiplying the Spirit’s work in building the kingdom, and thus blessing the mission worker and those he or she serves.

Who is a prayer facilitator?

A prayer facilitator is a trusted friend of the mission worker. He or she is a person who has a heart to pray and to mobilize others to pray for the mission worker. The prayer facilitator makes a commitment to pray regularly for the mission worker and to keep the rest of the prayer network informed of prayer requests and praises. The prayer facilitator regularly checks in with the mission worker and reports back to the praying network, and vice versa.

What is a prayer network?

A prayer network is a group of five or more people who are committed to pray for the mission worker on a regular basis. The mission worker has invited them to pray, and they receive updates from the prayer facilitator. They do not need to meet in person, but are connected by their common commitment to pray, wherever they are located.

Why a prayer network?

Missionaries need a trusted “inner circle” of persons with whom they can share vulnerably from the heart. Some prayer requests can be mentioned in a regular newsletter to all supporters, but other things are better shared with a smaller group of intimate prayer partners.

Who forms a prayer network?

The mission worker pulls together the prayer team by inviting trusted persons to pray. Once a team is formed, the mission worker gives the names and contact information to you, the prayer facilitator.

How does the network function?

You coordinate with the mission worker and the prayer network and decide how you will communicate. We suggest connecting once or twice a month, but this is up to your discretion. Figure out how you will check in with the mission worker — by email, phone, or Zoom. How will you relay needs to the prayer network?

You will receive the mission worker’s requests and may want to add some additional comments or direction for prayer. Remember that you are an advocate, encouraging others to pray.

Pastoral care provider

“Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them — not because you must, but because you are willing ...” (1 Peter 5:2)

A pastoral care provider commits to mentor the mission worker in spiritual and emotional well-being throughout preparation for service, time on the field, and re-entry into the home culture and sending community.

Who can be a pastoral care provider?

A mission worker’s pastoral care provider can be his or her current pastor, an elder from the home congregation, a mentor, or any other trusted spiritual advisor. Ideally, the person serving in this role has relational history with the mission worker and develops awareness of the mission worker’s areas of vulnerability and struggle before departure for the field. For a couple, we recommend having two separate pastoral care providers to maximize the care given to each person.

A special word to pastors

In Acts 13:1–4, early church leaders set apart Saul and Barnabas for their mission worker’s journeys. EMM rejoices when church leaders take the lead in identifying and shoulder-tapping missionaries for service. EMM desires that all missionaries are walking in partnership with church leaders and going with their blessing.

Bridge builder

Pastoral care providers who are not pastors or elders provide an important bridge between congregational leaders and the mission worker/MST. Take the lead in confirming that the mission worker is walking in partnership with and going with the blessing of their church leadership. Keep church leadership updated on the mission worker’s well-being, and take back to the MST any resources that church leaders offer.

Commissioning

Pastors and elders serving as pastoral care providers are invited to take the lead in planning a commissioning church service for the mission worker. (If you are not a pastor or elder, work with church leaders to plan the service.) EMM conducts a larger group commissioning service that the mission worker will likely participate in, but the smaller, more personal commissioning service with the home congregation can be especially meaningful and provide a good opportunity for warm goodbyes and blessings.

Pastoral care

Together with the mission worker, decide on a system for monthly check-ins concerning his or her relationship with God, family, and neighbors, and his or her emotional well-being. You can do this via phone, email, or video chat. Ask questions that lead to sharing from the heart:

- What are you feeling excited about? Feeling sad about? Angry about? Where do you hurt?
What are you giving thanks for?
- How are you maintaining your connection with God?
- What are you struggling with?
- What is God showing you? Teaching you?
- Where do you see God at work in you? Through you?

Important: If during face-to-face meetings with the mission worker every month, you see signs of acute or chronic stress that are concerning, please direct and encourage the mission worker to contact their supervisor or EMM's Human Resource Director and request additional resources.

Spiritual encouragement

If the mission worker is not serving in a sensitive location, consider sending electronic resources: i.e., online sermons, podcasts, worship music, etc. to feed the mission worker's spiritual life. Important: Read the sensitivity guidelines on [pages 20](#).

During re-entry

The pastoral care provider's role doesn't end when the mission worker returns. Re-entry into the home culture at completion of service can be a difficult time for many missionaries, often producing more stress than the adjustment to the new culture at the beginning of service.

Pastoral care providers walk closely with the mission worker during the months following re-entry — listening, loving, encouraging, and helping the mission worker to integrate his/her experiences on the field with the current realities of the home culture and sending community. God is likely to use you to help the mission worker discover his/her new place or role within the sending community.

Finance coordinator

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over ...” (Luke 6:38a).

Many missionaries walk the financial journey alone. Providing assistance in the collection and monitoring of finances for EMM to underwrite the mission worker's assignment blesses the mission worker greatly! Your work will begin after your EMM-supported mission worker has been officially appointed by EMM. (EMM asks that you don't solicit or collect funds before that time.)

As finance coordinator, you are responsible to help the MST and EMM-supported mission worker plan fundraising, handle all charitable gifts, keep records, and track financial gifts. Please read this material carefully.

Collecting charitable gifts

Donors may write checks to the EMM-supported mission worker's church (if the church allows) or to EMM. In consultation with the EMM-supported mission worker and church treasurer, decide whether funds may be channeled through the mission worker's church.

If the church will receive checks, the church treasurer is to receive charitable gifts, record them, and forward one check to EMM each month for the amount of charitable gifts received to date. (If your church receives charitable gifts, the church should issue tax-deductible receipts. For receipting guidelines, refer to [pages 18–19](#).) These monthly checks are to be made payable to Eastern Mennonite Missions and preference them for the mission worker's support. Mail to: Eastern Mennonite Missions, PO Box 8617, Lancaster, PA 17604. Please do not send cash in the mail.

If you choose to have checks written out directly to EMM, these checks should be made payable to Eastern Mennonite Missions and include a note preferencing it for the ministry of your EMM-supported mission worker. Checks written out to EMM should be mailed to: Eastern Mennonite Missions, Attn: Account Manager, PO Box 8617, Lancaster, PA 17604. Please do not send cash in the mail. (When charitable gifts are written out to EMM, EMM will send tax-deductible receipts to donors.)

People may give through special gifts or pledges. See the response form on [page 21](#) for methods of giving.

If someone wishes to give anonymously, he or she may send funds directly to EMM, preferenced for the EMM-supported mission worker's ministry, and preferenced as an anonymous contribution.

Due to tax regulations, any excess funds donated to EMM cannot be returned. We will keep excess funds designated for a mission worker for up to two years to use toward future assignments with EMM. If the funds are not used within that time frame, they are donated to our short-term scholarship fund to help future participants in need.

Until 100% of the EMM-supported mission worker's financial commitment has been met, EMM will email you and the team leader monthly financial reports that list the amount of finances EMM has received to date. Please note that these monthly reports do not include pledged amounts. You as finance coordinator should track pledged amounts to determine the overall percentage of funds received/pledged. If people have made pledges but are not fulfilling their commitment, it is helpful for you to connect with them. Remind them if they have forgotten, or

make plans for replacement funds if they are no longer able to keep their commitment.

Sending the EMM-supported mission worker money while overseas is risky via post and not recommended. Depending on location, you could deposit money into a bank account for ATM withdrawal. Check with the mission worker before taking action. EMM cannot forward personal financial gifts.

Church communicator

“Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you may also know how I am and what I am doing” (Ephesians 6:21).

“Out of sight, out of mind” is too often the case when it comes to churches and their missionaries. For that reason, you have a vital role in keeping the connection strong between the church and mission worker. You are the mission worker’s “living representative” to the church, finding creative ways to help your church remember the mission worker.

Before the assignment begins, discuss with the mission worker how you, and the rest of the MST, can help him or her share about his or her call to missions and vision for ministry. Here are some ideas for sharing with the congregation:

- Contact the pastor on behalf of the mission worker to plan a missions message the same day the mission worker gives his or her testimony. Together you can plan a service with a missions theme. Someone from the MST can explain the MST mission vision and how this connects to the congregation. You may want to introduce the MST members at this time.
- Within one month prior to his or her assignment, help plan a time when the mission worker can share in Sunday school classes with children, youth, and/or adults. In this type of setting, the mission worker can be more informal and share things about the culture, the people, the geography and climate, and a sample of the food. Together with the mission worker you can research the country where he or she will serve.

Make plans for how the congregation will stay in contact with the mission worker throughout the assignment (newsletters, emails, videos that can be played for congregation or email to members etc.).

During the assignment

- Update the congregation on the mission worker and his or her team’s outreach location, sharing praises and prayer concerns.
- Keep the mission worker informed about what is happening at church, if they desire this.
- Encourage creative ways for the church to remember the mission worker. If the mission worker is serving in a sensitive location, be sure to check the sensitivity guidelines on page 20 before sending!

Upon completion of assignment, and in consultation with the pastor, plan a time when the mission worker can share with the congregation about his or her experiences.

Newsletter Manager

“Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.”
— Proverbs 25:25

An update from mission workers in a “distant land” can refresh and uplift supporters. As newsletter manager, you have the privilege of releasing reports that tell what God is doing and that keep the mission worker “alive” in the hearts and minds of many back home. Newsletters can also help to introduce the mission worker’s ministry to new or prospective supporters.

You are a blessing!

Many mission workers find designing, managing, and/or mailing a newsletter while overseas a time-consuming and stressful task. With the MST’s help in the newsletter process, the mission worker is freed to focus on ministry. By assisting with newsletters, you are not only blessing the mission worker, but also those they serve on the field and the readers at home.

Who writes the newsletter?

Generally, the mission worker sends the text of the newsletter and any photos for you to do the layout and distribution.

Printing and distribution

You then print and mail the newsletters or send them via email. The [mission worker support response form](#) (sent with the first mailing to raise support) allows recipients to indicate whether they prefer email or hard copies.

Getting started

Before the mission worker leaves for assignment:

1. Together agree upon a title, layout, and design for the newsletter. You can use a simple word processor template, Google Doc template, or try a free [Canva](#) account to design your newsletter template.
2. Decide how often you will send a newsletter. (EMM recommends sending a one-page newsletter once every two months, starting one month after the fundraising mailing and continuing through completion of assignment. Newsletter frequency should never be less than quarterly—every three months.)
3. Talk about what features you may want to include, e.g., ministry activities, prayer request section, victories/joys, calendar of upcoming events, etc.
4. Newsletters sent before the mission worker’s departure can include information available about the outreach location, the mission worker’s specific needs, information about commissioning services, an update on the fund-raising project, or a testimony from the mission worker.
5. Make sure you have access to the database of the mission worker’s contacts. You can do this on a spreadsheet or Google sheets.
6. Decide which platform and format to use to send out your email newsletters. Be sure to **BCC all email addresses on group emails** if using something like Gmail with a PDF attachment. Or try a free eNewsletter platform like [MailChimp](#).

A picture is worth a thousand words!

Newsletters should contain several good pictures if possible. Photos capture the reader's attention and bring the mission worker's world to life.

Editor's eye

The mission worker will receive guidelines for newsletter writing from EMM's Advancement team. As newsletter manager, you don't need to be an experienced editor, but keep an eye open for things in the mission worker's writing that don't make sense. If something is hard for you to understand, more than likely it will not be clear to other readers. Ask the mission worker for clarification or rewording. If you need help with layout and design, EMM's Advancement team is available to assist with a one-time critique of your newsletter (717 898-2251 or <https://www.emm.org/staff/main-office/>).

How is the newsletter funded?

Costs related to newsletters can be handled in one of these ways:

1. The mission worker can supply funds from his/her monthly allowance.
2. MST members can pay equal shares of these costs.
3. If the mission worker's home congregation is receiving and receipting contributions for the mission worker's support, newsletter costs can be paid with above-budget funds received by the church. This does not reduce the amount sent to EMM.
4. Check with your home congregation if they would allow you to print newsletters on their copier, or offer a discounted rate per copy.

What if the mission worker is serving in a sensitive region?

Find out from the mission worker before he or she leaves if specific communication guidelines exist for the country of service. Some language in the newsletter may need to be sensitized. And if the mission worker has designated a "gatekeeper" for his/her correspondence, the mission worker's email address listed in the newsletter would be that of the gatekeeper.

Reminder: "It's time for your next newsletter."

Mission workers usually appreciate reminders from their newsletter coordinators that it's time to do the next newsletter. With the mission worker, schedule newsletter distribution dates in advance and then send reminders to the mission worker at the appropriate time. Be persistent: some workers need more than one reminder!

Resources

Overview of tools for raising financial support

When a person senses a call from God to be involved in missions, along with the call comes a big question: “How can I raise all my financial support?” We at EMM do not want the missionaries serving with us to carry that weight alone, so part of the MST’s commitment is to help with raising financial support.

The list below describes the tools available to the mission worker and the MST as they engage in raising financial support:

1. Prayer and study

Talk with God, study the Bible, and read books about fundraising until you can freely and confidently engage in the work of raising financial support for ministry. (Consider *A Spirituality of Fundraising* by Henri J.M. Nouwen and *The God Ask* by Steve Shadrach — both are available from the MST Coach.)

2. Mailings

Mission workers and MSTs work together to create and mail communication pieces that invite potential partners to give financial, relational, and spiritual support to the EMM-supported mission worker.

3. Face-to-face invitations

EMM-supported mission workers prayerfully discern which individual or small groups to meet face-to-face in order to present their mission vision and invite financial partnership.

4. Invitations to large donors

EMM-supported mission workers and MSTs work together to identify churches and businesses that may be interested in supporting the mission worker. Arrange times for the mission worker and/or MST to present the vision and invite financial support.

5. Fundraisers

EMM-supported mission workers and MSTs work together on a variety of activities that educate potential partners, create enthusiasm, and generate funds.

No two EMM-supported mission workers walk identical paths in raising financial support. But almost all journeys involve some combination of the tools above. All journeys to full financial support require action on the part of the EMM-supported mission worker and the MST. So together, you will “plan the work and work the plan.”

More information on raising financial support

Raising financial support is a team effort involving all the members of the MST, along with the help of the EMM-supported mission worker. One person is designated as the finance coordinator, to receive and monitor the funds. However, all the members of the MST can work together to:

- Contact the church leaders to help the EMM-supported mission worker present a request for financial support to the congregation. Ask for permission to have the church set up an account to handle the EMM-supported mission worker’s funds as tax-deductible charitable gifts. (See the receipting guidelines on [pages 18–19.](#)) If the church is not able to do this, please contact us.

- Make a contact list of relatives, friends, and neighbors. See the sample form on [page 23](#). The mission worker will include his or her contacts and each person on the MST will add their connections. MST members can pray and ask the Lord who they might invite to join in supporting the mission worker. This way the EMM-supported mission worker's base of supporters enlarges as MST members introduce them to new people.
- Plan to contact each potential supporter personally through visits, phone calls, or letters. If you send letters, we recommend that you send a cover letter from the MST requesting financial support that accompanies a letter from the EMM-supported mission worker sharing about his or her potential upcoming assignment and sense of call to missions. (See the enclosed sample letters on [pages 16-17](#) for ideas.) These letters can go out to both the MSTs' and the EMM-supported mission worker's contacts.
- Work together to identify ways in which financial support can be raised.
- Plan creative fundraisers. Help the EMM-supported mission worker plan projects such as car washes, BBQ chicken dinners, bake sales, yard sales, etc.

EMM expects 100% of the EMM-supported mission worker's support to be raised or pledged before departure to mission assignment location. EMM will purchase plane tickets only after 90% of the support needed for the mission worker's assignment is raised or pledged. The earlier this happens, the better the chances of getting the most economical fares for flights. Please note that if support is not received or pledged on time, the EMM-supported mission worker could be disqualified from beginning the program. It is never too early to begin making plans for raising financial support, even if the specific assignment location has not been identified.

However, keep in mind that you cannot collect or solicit support until after the EMM-supported mission worker has officially been approved for an assignment by EMM.

Tracking financial support

EMM recommends that the Finance Coordinator on the MST tracks support with a spreadsheet. If they don't create their own, contact the MST Coach for a sample spreadsheet to use.

Sample MST letter

Jill Seedsower MST:

Jim Chair, Team Leader
Anytown, PA 717 333-3333

jim@lllll.com

Jane Intercede, Prayer Facilitator

Mytown, PA

717 555-5555

jane@lllll.com

Matt Money, Finance

Coordinator Yourtown, PA

717 000-0000

matt@ffff.com

Sally Talks, Church Communicator

Ourtown, PA 717 222-2222

sally@cccc.com

George Listener, Pastoral Care Provider
Othertown, PA

717 888-8888

george@ppp.com

Dear friends of Jill Seedsower,

We are excited that Jill Seedsower is planning to begin a short-term assignment with Eastern Mennonite Missions. As members of her mission support team, we are here to assist her in raising financial support, prayer support, and to help keep her family, friends, and congregation informed about her assignment.

Jill has enclosed a letter to tell you more about what is in store for her during the months to come. As Jill's MST, we support her call to missions. We are writing to invite you to consider how you might support Jill throughout her upcoming assignment.

Included with this letter is a form for you to complete if you are able to help support Jill through praying or giving financially to EMM to underwrite her assignment. Jill will need to raise approximately \$8,000 – \$10,000 for her assignment, depending on her outreach location. We expect to find out the exact amount of financial support needed in the next several weeks.*

If you have any questions about Jill's assignment or support, please feel free to contact one of the members of her MST. Thank you for considering how you can support Jill in this short-term mission assignment!

In Christ's service,

Jill Seedsower's MST

*If funds received by EMM are not needed for the preferred missionary's support, EMM will determine how the excess funds will be used. The money will be used for other, approved missions efforts such as another EMM-supported mission worker's assignment, a ministry project, administrative costs, etc.

Sample letter from mission worker

The following letter is an example to help the mission worker get started writing a letter to people being invited to support him or her. This should be sent to potential donors with the letter from the MST.

The letter should be personalized to reflect the personality and writing style of the mission worker, including why he or she feels called to missions, and/or a brief testimony of what God is doing in his or her life.

Dear family and friends:

I am writing this letter with great excitement and anticipation as I'm about to begin a new experience in my walk with Christ.

I am planning to participate in a short-term missions assignment in Guatemala through Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM). My assignment will begin with a four-week training. Then I'll minister cross-culturally for eight months working alongside a long-term mission worker in the area who will also serve as my mentor. As I participate in this short-term program, I'll have the opportunity to grow in my relationship with Jesus Christ, develop a greater understanding of the world, be equipped for a lifestyle of ministry, and share the love of Jesus with others.

Thank you for taking the time to consider supporting me through prayer and by giving financially to EMM to underwrite my assignment. I look forward to this experience, but realize that I cannot do this on my own. I need God's strength and the support of my family and friends.

Blessings,
Jill Seedsower

Receipting guidelines for congregations

Receiving charitable gifts for EMM-supported missionaries

Congregations that receive funds preferenced for missionaries serving with EMM are often uncertain about receipting the funds. Following are general guidelines based on our understanding of IRS regulations. Each congregation should contact their denominational or local tax consultant for more information.

Guidelines

1. The appropriate decision-making body in the congregation should take action to include the EMM- supported mission worker as part of the church's ministry. The congregation should include the EMM- supported mission worker in its spending plan and establish a separate account for his or her support.
2. The IRS recommends that the following or something similar be included with all solicitations: "Charitable gifts are solicited with the understanding that the church has complete control over the use of all donated funds."
3. The church should send a receipt for all charitable gifts. We recommend receipting charitable gifts as they are received or on a regular schedule, but not later than January 31 following the calendar year in which the charitable gift was made. The receipt should provide enough information to substantiate the amount of the charitable gift.
4. The church, and not the EMM-supported mission worker, must control how funds are used. This will normally be done in consultation with EMM and according to EMM policies. In compliance with IRS regulations, funds sent into EMM to support the mission worker are under EMM's full control and discretion.
5. The church will seek to honor the donor's wishes. If the funds are not needed to fulfill the financial commitment to EMM, the church will determine how the excess funds are to be used. If requested, EMM will work with the congregation to find ways to use the funds in the country or region where the worker served.
6. If funds received by EMM from a congregation are not needed for the preferenced mission worker's support, EMM will determine how the excess funds will be used. Often the funds are placed in an MST reserve account for use when mission worker expenses exceed the amount budgeted and given. EMM seeks to honor the donor congregation's wishes.

Background

1. To be considered tax-deductible, charitable gifts must be made to a qualifying organization. The IRS considers a church a qualifying entity even if it does not have a specific letter ruling from the U.S. Treasury.
2. To issue a tax-deductible receipt, the IRS requires that the charitable gift must be given to the church. The IRS uses two tests to determine if the charitable gift was to the church:
 - Does the church have complete control of the donated funds and discretion as to their use?
 - Does the donor intend the charitable gift to be to the church and not to the individual?

3. Donors may indicate their preference that their charitable gifts are to be used for a particular individual or project and the church will normally honor that preference. However, the final decision must rest with the church.
4. If the congregation is asked to forward a contribution to a specific individual (for example, as a birthday or Christmas gift), no tax-deductible receipt should be given. This is true whether the funds go directly to the worker or are channeled through EMM. If the church does not control the use of the funds, the money is considered a personal gift to the worker. Personal gifts are never tax-deductible for the donor.
5. The church should not use tax-deductible charitable gifts to fund special gifts to workers unless they are small gifts of merchandise. Money given to individuals from tax-deductible charitable gifts is usually considered taxable compensation to the worker.
6. A donor may claim a tax deduction for a charitable gift of \$250 or more only if they have a written receipt from the church. A canceled check alone will not serve as sufficient substantiation. The church is responsible for issuing receipts before the donor files their tax return, or by the due date of the return, whichever is earlier.
7. Normally receipts should include the following: "Donor has not received any goods or services in exchange for this gift." If the donor does receive any goods or services in exchange for a contribution of more than \$75, the church must inform the donor in writing that the tax deduction is limited to the excess of the donation amount over the value of the goods and services.

Sensitivity guidelines to learn and teach others

In some regions of the world, Christian workers are under careful surveillance since they are considered to be religiously and/or politically threatening to the national population or government. In order to avoid endangering Christian missionaries (and any national Christians with whom they relate), use caution when communicating. Use extreme caution when corresponding with someone serving in a high-sensitivity area. (If serving in a sensitive region, your mission worker will receive location-specific guidelines for his/her assignment during training.)

If your worker is in a sensitive location, please:

- Keep the subject line of email messages free of Christian language since email can be easily intercepted and copied.
- Keep the mission worker's name and location out of any communication piece that is transmitted electronically or might find its way to a website or blog.

Do:

- Identify the mission worker as an "international worker" (and not as a mission worker).

Discuss a mission worker's professional occupation in business, education, medicine, etc.

Ask about life in the country where the mission worker is serving.

- Send non-religious news about life in the home country.
- Let missionaries know you are "thinking of/remembering" them (code for praying).

Do not:

- Mention religion or politics
- Use letterhead or envelopes from a church or Christian ministry
- Use the mission worker's name and refer to the country where the mission worker serves in the same message
- Share the mission worker's email address; always consult with the mission worker first
- Add the mission worker to a mailing list without permission

Avoid these words in correspondence:

Jesus, Jesus Christ	EMM
Believer, Christian	Eastern Mennonite Missions
Bible	Evangelism/evangelist
Body of Christ	God
Church	Holy Spirit
Church planter/planting	Mission/mission worker(s)
Conversion	Pray/prayer/praying
Disciple/discipler/discipleship	Unreached people group

Partnering with EMM in _____ through the work of _____

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Church: _____

Spiritual partnership

- ☐ I commit to pray regularly for _____
and EMM's work in _____

Relational partnership

- ☐ I commit to read newsletters from _____
I want to receive them by:
- ☐ email
☐ U.S. mail

Financial partnership

- ☐ I commit to give to EMM, with a preference that my contribution(s) be used to support the ministry of _____

a monthly contribution of	\$_____	until it is determined that support is no longer needed* for _____ months
a quarterly contribution of	\$_____	until it is determined that support is no longer needed* for _____ quarters
an annual contribution of	\$_____	until it is determined that support is no longer needed* for _____ years
a special gift of	\$_____	

*You will be contacted by the MST when support is no longer needed.

Notes: EMM makes every effort to honor the preferences of donors regarding use of their contributions. However, use of contributions is under EMM's full control and discretion. EMM requires that 100% of needed funds be committed before a mission worker is released to begin his/her assignment.

Giving options

- Automatic withdrawals from bank account: download the authorization form at emm.org/give
- Credit card: set up recurring gifts or give a special gift at emm.org/support/ or scan the QR code below
- Check: make payable to **EMM, PO Box 8617, Lancaster, PA 17604** and write on the memo line,

- Note: Because charitable gifts made via credit card involve a fee of 2 – 2.5%, checks and automatic withdrawals are preferred. Nonetheless, 100% of charitable gifts made via credit card go toward the ministry of the preferred mission worker.

Please return this form by _____ to **EMM, PO Box 8617, Lancaster, PA 17604**

Thank you for partnering in mission with EMM and _____



Giving to support EMM mission activities

If you are planning to help support the work of EMM on the mission field through a charitable gift, the first thing we want to communicate to you is our thanks. Through your generous gift, the lives of people around the world will be reached and affected. Because you support EMM, people will be reached in different ways. Whatever the case, please know that it is our desire to be faithful stewards of the funds which you entrust to us. We take our role as stewards very seriously. It is our goal to have integrity on location around the globe and also in our fiduciary responsibilities at the administrative offices.

We would also like to communicate some of the legal and tax issues associated with giving a tax deductible charitable gift to the work of EMM. When you receive a funding appeal from one of our workers, you are receiving a request that you join in the ministry of EMM. The workers who have been appointed for an assignment with EMM are each responsible to raise the necessary funds to cover their portion of the EMM budget while on assignment. Although the responsibility of raising the support funds is up to the worker in partnership with their Mission Support Team (MST) members, each preferenced gift should be viewed as a gift to the overall work of EMM and not to the worker raising the funds. As long as the total preferenced funding for the worker is available through the fundraising efforts of the MST, and other conditions do not change, EMM will proceed to accomplish its work.

While we want to be as accommodating as possible with our donors, the Internal Revenue Service laws concerning the tax-deductibility of charitable gifts limits us in what we are able to do. It is due to these laws that we are communicating to you how we can, and cannot, accept tax deductible gifts. According to the IRS, the tax-deductibility of your charitable gift is dependent on it being “unconditional and without personal benefit to the donor,” and that it “is made to or for the use of” a qualified charity. Further, EMM must have “full control of the donated funds, and discretion as to their use, so as to insure that they will be used to carry out its functions and purposes.” Thus, we can only accept tax-deductible charitable gifts which are given in this way.

When you give to EMM, you should only give if you can agree that your charitable gift is unconditionally given without personal benefits from EMM. This means that you have given your gift to be used for EMM's purposes, and this is what it will be used for. If the project you received an appeal for is over-funded, EMM reserves the right to direct such funds to other approved mission activities. If for some reason the worker you received an appeal from is unable to participate in the assignment, EMM can not legally refund your charitable gift. Those funds will first be used to pay for his/her administrative costs and any airline tickets and/or equipment purchased on his/her behalf. EMM reserves the right to use any remaining funds for other expenses incurred by that assignment or any other EMM mission activity.

In addition, if for some reason the project must be cancelled or postponed, EMM will be unable to refund your charitable gift. However, in the event of a cancellation or postponement, monies preferenced for the project engaged by an individual worker will be held in an account for 24 months for them to be used towards a future EMM missions assignment or project.

Please call the EMM administrative office if you have any questions. We would be happy to discuss these issues with you further. EMM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated in the state of Pennsylvania and our federal tax ID number is 23-6005847. All charitable givers will receive confirmation of their gift upon receipt of that gift.

Contact list

Name	Address Phone	Contacted

Goals and action plan

For raising financial support

Goals

- 50% of support by (date)
- 90% of support by (date)
- 100% of support by (date)

Game plan

MST member	Task & Due date
Example: Mary	Speak to Sunday school class Monday, April 28