



WORLD MISSION GUIDELINES

The Episcopal Diocese of the
Central Gulf Coast

A resource guide for both individuals and teams called to meet Christ in the neighbor, and to be part of God's mission to transform both the world and the community of Jesus as it rediscovers its call to reconcile all peoples in Christ and renew the face of the earth.

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF THE CENTRAL GULF COAST WORLD MISSION PROTOCOL MANUAL

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. BCP

I. THEOLOGICAL BASIS: GOD IS ON MISSION IN CHRIST

Christian mission - the activity of sending and being sent in Christ - is grounded in the missionary nature of the triune God as revealed in scripture. In creation, God reached out to create communities of life. With Israel and throughout history, God has moved to restore people to unity with God, with one another, and with all creation. In Christ, God is still on mission in the world through the Holy Spirit. The church's call is to join God in that mission.

The central act in God's mission is God's self-sending in Jesus Christ, the word made flesh and dwelling among us in love. As God's mission became incarnate in the person of Jesus, so people and communities are central in the mission in which God invites the church's participation as the body of Christ. The reign of God that Jesus announced: this we are called to proclaim and enact in mission. The love of God that Jesus expressed in presence, compassion, healing and justice: this we are called to live in mission. The reconciliation that God offers a sinful and broken world in Jesus' death and resurrection: this is the hope we offer the world in mission.

"As the Father sent me, so I send you," said the risen Christ to his disciples, including them and us in the gift of being sent by God. God's sending the Holy Spirit on Pentecost galvanized the earliest Christian community to proclaim Christ in word and deed, with power and joy. In that anointing by the Spirit, Christians from that day to our own have felt moved to cross the many boundaries among human communities to meet and share the presence and work of Christ with people different from themselves. This impulse has made Christian mission global as well as local from its inception.

Ministering in dimensions of difference, eucharistic communities of the baptized become different themselves through mission. We discover the gospel afresh and receive our identities back transfigured, closer to the likeness of Christ. This transfiguration occurred as the early community of Jesus discovered God at work beyond its own Jewish boundaries among the Gentiles, a surprising new people of God. It has continued wherever Christians have reached beyond themselves to meet and embrace others across the divides of culture, religion, race and ethnicity.

What are we sent to do? “You shall be my witnesses,” said the risen Jesus. Storytelling is essential to Christian witness, telling the story of what God has done in human lives in light of the story of what God has done in Christ. In Jesus’ words, “I was hungry and you fed me . . . I was naked and you clothed me,” we hear our call to reach out in deed, offering Christ’s whole ministry of justice and reconciliation in solidarity with a suffering world. As we meet Christ in the neighbor, God’s mission transforms both the world and the community of Jesus as it rediscovers its call to discipleship. As the missionary church witnesses in word and deed, God works through it to reconcile all peoples in Christ and renew the face of the earth.¹

II. AN ETHOS FOR MISSION: GOD’S PEOPLE ARE COMPANIONS IN MISSION

Andy Russell – Young Adult Missionary in Africa

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/video/andy-russell-young-adult-missionary-africa>

In Christ God calls and forms the church to be a missionary people participating by the power of the Holy Spirit in God’s mission in the world. The historic legacies of mission, the nature of the Episcopal Church, and the crises of the world situation highlight particular features of God’s call to us today as Anglicans and Episcopalians. Missionary character is important at all levels in the church: in parishes and dioceses, in individual missionaries and their supporters, in voluntary societies, church-wide agencies and their leaders.

Companionship is the central characteristic that God’s missionary people are developing in the Episcopal Church in the 21st century. God is calling our church to be a companion with other churches in the Anglican Communion and beyond. Dioceses and parishes are living out their call to be companions with dioceses and parishes in other countries. Individual missionaries are ministering as companions in their places of service.

Literally, companions share bread together. Theologically, companions share in Christ the bread of life. Today the missionary and the mission community journey with others and form community in Christ. In such companionship both missionary and supporting

¹ <http://www.gemn.org/resources-page/>

community are transfigured as they experience the gospel life of their companion communities.

Companionship in mission constitutes a shift from some modes of the colonial era, when sending churches in the Global North were sometimes confident that they had everything to teach and nothing to learn... Solidarity with the suffering is a central expression of mission companionship. The mission church may not be able to solve the anguish, violence and injustice suffered by the companion church, but simply being present in the place of fear, loss and isolation expresses the love of Christ.

Other characteristics are integral to the ethos of mission we seek to embody. In the 21st century, God is calling Christians and the church to be a mission companion that is a:

- **Witness** — “You are witnesses of these things,” said Jesus to his disciples. Witness in word means sharing the story of what God has done with us in light of the story of what God has done in Christ Jesus. Such witness is a natural and inevitable fruit of life in Christ, and it is the heart of evangelism as a mission imperative. Sharing the story with those who have never heard it is a crucial gift. This is true equally in Alabama, Austria and Azerbaijan... Sharing our story with others must be part of a dialogue in which we listen to the stories others share with us, whether from places of little faith or other religious paths. The religious diversity of the 21st century, like that of the early centuries of Christianity, calls us to hold together the multiple tasks of listening, learning, and bearing witness to Christ.
- **Pilgrim** — Episcopal missionaries today see themselves as pilgrims, growing in their knowledge of God through the perspectives of the people to whom they are sent, learning as much as they share, receiving as much as they give. The humility of this orientation and the missionary’s eagerness to learn from companions in another culture and socioeconomic context nurtures deep and lasting relationships in mission. The cross-cultural encounter transforms us as we discover Christ afresh through another people’s appropriation of the gospel... the pilgrim motif opens the door to true mutuality in mission.
- **Servant** — “I came not to be served but to serve,” said Jesus. Servanthood in mission means that we listen to the stated needs of our mission companions, look for signs of God’s work in them, and collaborate with them in discerning how God is guiding the implementation of mission vision. It means that missionaries and the mission church put aside prior images of our companions, pre-conceived analyses of their situations, and ready-made solutions to problems. It means that missionaries seek to meet Christ in all situations, including those that arise when new circumstances supersede their stated job descriptions and postpone their cherished goals. For Episcopalians, authentic servanthood is a crucial counter to the assumptions we develop because of our extraordinary access to the power of information, technology and money.
- **Prophet** — Episcopal mission pilgrims today often find their views of political, racial and economic relationships in the world challenged and transformed. Experiences of poverty, suffering and violence alongside experiences of affluence, oppression and security often

radicalize the foreigners, whether they are long-term missionaries, visiting bishops, or short-term teams. These then prophesy to their sending church, prodding it to inquire more deeply into ways in which it may have become complacent or resigned.

• **Ambassador** — In addition to witnessing in word and deed as ambassadors of Christ, the missionary and mission community are ambassadors of the sending church. Individuals and teams must be aware always that companions are experiencing the vision, faithfulness and integrity of the Episcopal Church through their conversation, conduct and life. This calls for living out the highest ethical standards in personal honesty, respect for others, financial transparency, and faithfulness in personal and professional relationships.

• **Host** — “Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet,” said Abraham to the three strangers who appeared at Mamre. “Let it be to me according to your word,” said Mary to the angel Gabriel. In initiating mission, God is not forcible but invites a response of hospitality. As we receive mission companions from around the world, hospitality must be central in our response. Hospitality means that we listen to what our companions say, offer them opportunities to experience the breadth of our church, and care for their needs for food, lodging, travel and friendship.

• **Sacrament** — As the body of Christ, the church is a sacrament of Christ, an outward and visible sign of Christ’s inward and spiritual grace. As members of the body, all Christians participate in the communion of the saints and so are members of the sacramental revelation of God embodied in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. A Christian on mission is a sacramental sign of God’s mission to reconcile all people with one another and with God in Christ. The people and communities the missionary meets are likewise sacramental signs of God’s global presence. This sacramental emphasis on persons helps both missionaries and sending groups to retain an incarnational focus on people, relationships and community, which is where God truly lives and where the most lasting impacts are made. The missionary in any place is a sign of the gospel’s universality, the fact that it transcends cultural, geographical and linguistic boundaries to create local, embodied communities in Christ in all places and times. ²

III. Discerning Your Call to Mission

"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore, will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone." Thomas Merton, "Thoughts in Solitude".

² http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/WorldMissionVisionStatement2003_0.pdf

Being a missionary is being a Christian; it is what defines who we are. Stepping out in mission can be one of the most exciting and transformational life experiences in our faith journey, changing the course of our life and ministry.

If you feel that you are attracted to engaging in short- or long-term mission, be open to the possibility that God might be calling you in this direction. The first step in the journey of discerning this possibility is to examine yourself, your spiritual life, your work life, and your community life. Knowing who you are and what makes you tick is the first step in understanding how you are called to participate in God's mission in the world.

Discernment may be done alone or in a group; with your Christian community, pastor or trusted Christian friends. Questions to ask yourself are:

- 1) What kind of person am I? Do I avoid uncomfortable situations? Do I tend to need predictability in my life? (In any mission situation, there will be things that will challenge you and make you feel uncomfortable. It is important to understand how you deal with the confusion that arises when things, in any situation turn out differently than you expected.)
- 2) Is this the right time in my life? Of course, there are always things that can, and will, get in the way if we let them. We should not let the routine things of life prevent us from engaging in global mission. But if your family is experiencing financial hardship, your employer will be reluctant to give you the needed time off, a family member has a significant illness, or you have just experienced a major life event - then you will need to spend some time in prayer talking with God and some time in discussion with your family and/or Christian community to discern whether this is the right time for you to engage in God's mission in the world.
- 3) Where am I in my life journey? Global mission engagement is an act of faith and a response to a sense of God's plan for our lives and for the world. Mission is not a vacation, a way to live in a particular location, a way to fill a vacuum in our life, a way to run away from relationships, burn-out, failure, reality, or from oneself or God. Responding to a global disaster or being caught up in a recent issue are also not necessarily indicators that we are called to mission. Ideally, we will have a healthy and pervading intuition that this may be the next step in our faith journey.
- 4) Where am I in my faith, what are my spiritual motivations for mission? ...or more simply, why am I going? Spend some time thinking carefully about this question. Be mindful that mission is about serving God as opposed to making us feel good or going on an exciting trip to an interesting destination. Experiencing a sense that compels us to step out in the world in faith, feeling spiritually drawn to engage with our brothers and sisters in Christ in another place in the world,

and feeling compelled to go in a spirit of servanthood are all pretty good reasons to feel that God might be calling us into mission engagement.

5) Am I qualified? We are all qualified; part of mission discernment is identifying a mission partner, a place to serve. If God is calling you, doors will usually open. This may be to serve in your local community or on the other side of the world. All calls are equally valid and valued. The question isn't whether you're qualified, but rather identifying your gifts and determining what aspect of God's mission in the world are you called to participate in.

6) Am I willing to work at developing relationships? Short-term mission trips are ideal for communities and congregations wanting to develop relationships with one another. Primarily, these ministries should be about creating and nurturing relationships ...in other words, your mission trip should be more about "being present with" than "doing for." While that rolls off the tongue quite easily, it's surprising how many people find that challenging. If we are solely focusing on a church, school or housing project, the well we plan to dig, the clinic in which we plan to work, we may find it difficult to be intentional about developing relationships. We are seeking the face of Christ as well as being the face of Christ to others. Think about what mutuality and companionship in a relationship will look like from your personal (or mission team's) perspective and from that of the community in which you would be serving. How will you go about developing that relationship and nurturing it after you return?

8) Am I willing to take my time? Discernment of a call to mission requires at least several weeks, months or occasionally even years (in the case of long-term mission). It is normal to continue to feel a few lingering reservations and doubts even after a period of discernment. If, on the other hand, you have a sudden, overwhelming and urgent desire to travel to a new mission field and are already checking ticket prices online, (particularly in response to a disaster), this is rarely a true call to mission. Feeling rushed to make a decision may be a red flag that you should slow down and take some time to test your discernment. If possible, set aside a few quiet hours, a full day or a weekend retreat for intentional prayer. Listen carefully to where the Holy Spirit might be leading you.

IV. Trip Planning: Sample Meeting Schedule

Once a destination is selected, contact should be made with the host diocese, bishop, or agency to explore dates, costs, projects and overall logistics. Many dioceses have a designated liaison who will work with groups interested in doing short-term missions work in the diocese. Primary contact may often be made by contacting the bishop of the diocese by a letter written in both the local language and English, expressing interest in bringing a group there.

Approximately 12-18 months prior to trip, it is a good idea to assemble a small leadership team of 2-3 people to engage in a Community Asset Development Plan (ABCD - <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/develop-a-plan/main>), and to develop an overall plan for the trip. It is generally easier to advertise and recruit for a trip if the destination, dates, and trip itinerary are pre-set and if a rough idea of the estimated cost can be calculated.

Volunteer recruitment should begin at least 10 months prior to the trip. It is a good idea to set a sign-up deadline and require a non-refundable deposit to “secure” a place on the mission team.

To aid in team-building, it is useful to have between 6 and 8 team meetings prior to the trip, not including fundraising events. Teambuilding exercises are a great way to start forming relationships within the team.

Meeting 1: Introductory Meeting

Gather information from group members, present details of the trip as far as they are known, gather applications and deposits, discuss required documents and CDC recommended vaccinations. Cover group norms, rules and expectations.

Meeting 2: Fundraising

Agree with the group on a plan for fundraising. All group members should participate in fundraising activities for the benefit of the entire group. One rule of thumb is that each member provides part of their own support, the church (e.g. Mission Committee, Mission Fund, or Discretionary Fund) provides part, and parish-wide fundraising provides part.

Meeting 3: Practical Trip Preparation

Meeting should include passport and other documentation, immunization requirements, packing lists, legal issues such as liability waivers, insurance, flight information, etc.

Meeting 4: Health & Safety

Check progress on immunization, passports, etc. Go over health precautions as well as safety precautions. Obtain information on medical needs and emergency contacts for each group member.

Meeting 5: Cultural Education & Spiritual Preparation

Gather and discuss various aspects of the target culture. If applicable, watch movies or read books as a group to help everyone prepare. Discuss spiritual preparation and support before, during and after the trip. Discuss how the group will bring the experience of the trip back to the parish, deanery or diocese. This may require more than one meeting.

Meeting 6: Last Minute Issues & Packing

Resolve any last-minute issues such as transportation to airport, packing of donations, gifts for hosts, money management while in the country, dress codes and communications protocols or phone chains within the team and with folks at home.

V. Guidelines for Volunteers

This document was provided by Episcopal Relief & Development to groups traveling to El Salvador. For the most part, the guidelines are applicable to just about any other region in the world. As such, they offer some useful advice for travelers preparing to depart from the United States. Solidarity El Salvador

1. Please DO bring your address and emergency phone numbers with you wherever you go.
2. Please DO carry a copy of your passport on you at all times. Leave copies of your passport with at least two people that you know well. Hide an additional copy of your passport in your carry-on baggage.
3. Please DO NOT wear expensive jewelry or watches or carry expensive items that you don't need.
4. Please DO NOT leave the group without advising someone else. Never leave the group alone. Always travel in groups of two or three.
5. Please DO NOT give money or other donations to people at the worksite, or in the streets of the villages or cities that you visit. When Americans give gifts to people it creates the expectation that all Americans will give them gifts, and that opens the door to begging.
6. Please DO NOT accept food from anyone but staff associated with your trip. Food often carries bacteria that American stomachs are not used to digesting.
7. Please DO NOT drink local water. Always use bottled water for drinking and brushing teeth.
8. Please DO NOT promise things to people you meet on the worksite. If you see someone with a condition, or situation you would like to help, first speak to a member of the project team, and arrange how best to do so.
9. Please BE AWARE that you will see poverty that may upset you. A few dollars will not help these people. It will only help alleviate your feelings of upset and guilt.
10. Please BE AWARE that you are guests in a foreign country. As such, be mindful of different cultural expectations, and DO NOT seek to manage your surroundings. You are encouraged to enter in as volunteers in service, and fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

11. Please BE AWARE that every mission volunteer has duties and responsibilities that may include caring for the mission community members, paying for materials and labor, finding materials, directing workers, meeting with government officials, architects and engineers, and overseeing the many disputes that come up in the community. When carrying out these activities please BE PATIENT and make every effort to understand and respond appropriately to the culture of the people with whom you are in companionship with.

VI. Sample Covenant of Conduct

It is important to agree upon a code of conduct prior to departure. This is particularly important with youth groups. This Sample Code of Conduct was used by a group of parishes that worked together to travel to Belize. You may want to customize it to better address your circumstances, but this sample is a good place to start.

1. Always pay attention to, and follow, the instructions of your mission team leader
2. No possession or consuming of alcoholic beverages on church property
3. Appropriate behavior as a representative of the Episcopal Church. No public display of sexual activity at any time
4. Do not have in your possession anything illegal: in the US or the host country
5. Medical Mission Teams must check with the host country's Ministry of Health to determine allowable medications for the treatment of pediatric and adult patients.
6. Show respect for everyone; treat others as you would want to be treated
7. Use good manners, be polite and culturally sensitive
8. Share all resources with others
9. Look out for each other. Always travel in 2s or 3s, and with the permission of your mission team leader
10. Respect everyone's (including your own) space
11. Only go into other hotel/bunk rooms if invited and if appropriate
12. Be on time for travel and/or your assigned activity
13. Be inclusive. Don't form exclusive groups.
14. Be open to differences, including beliefs and ways of life
15. Be respectful of the environment. Do not discard trash in anything but identified trash collection bins
16. Be positive in all of the challenges that you meet. Do not complain. Think before you speak
17. Always communicate questions and feelings out loud so no one is confused by your behavior
18. Listen to everyone's opinions and ideas

VII. Sample Health Information Form

Health Information Sheet

Your name: _____

Your address: _____

Your home phone: _____ Cell: _____

Health Insurance Company: _____ Insurance #: _____

Your Primary Doctor's Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Medical Conditions:

Medications:

Allergies:

In case of Emergency: _____

Please contact: Name: _____

Relationship to you: _____

Phone: _____

Alternate phone: _____

Special Diet Concerns (we need to be aware of):

Any other information we should know before departure?

VIII. Sample Parent Consent Form

PARENTAL CONSENT/RELEASE FROM LIABILITY

I/We, the undersigned parent(s) or guardian(s) of _____, a minor, consent to him/her participating in a voluntary mission trip to _____ organized by _____ Church of _____ scheduled for _____, 20__ (mission trip). I/We release and discharge each of the participating churches, their officers, employees and all organizers of the mission trip from all claims, damages, or losses of any nature that: 1) I/we may have or acquire as the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the above-named minor from him/her voluntary participating in the mission trip; and 2) the above-referenced minor may have arising out of or resulting from his/her participating in the mission trip.

I/We authorize adult participants in the mission trip to act on our behalf in authorizing and consenting to emergency medical care for the above-referenced minor if he/she becomes ill/injured while participating in the voluntary mission trip. This consent may be presented to the appropriate medical emergency medical staff at the time emergency medical care is required. I/We release and discharge the participating churches, their employees, organizers of the mission trip, and adult participants in the mission trip from any claims of any nature that may arise out of the decision to provide emergency medical care.

Signature(s) of Parent(s) or Guardian(s)

Relationship

Date

IX. Sample Acknowledgment of Risk Form

Acknowledgement of Risk Form

This ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RISK, WAIVER OF CLAIMS AND HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT (the "Release") is made by and between _____ (the "Participant") residing at _____, _____, and the [church name and address here].

In consideration of her/his participation in the trip between [dates] (or close to), and in full knowledge that international travel and work project may involve significant risks, including without limitation loss of or damage to property, personnel injury or death, the Participant agrees and covenants, now and forever, to waive on behalf of himself/herself and any heirs, estates, executors or executrices, any claim, suit, demand, action at law, or in equity against the [church name], the [host diocese] (the host country) or any of their trustees, officers, directors, employees, contractors or agents (hereinafter individually and collectively called the hosts), for or on account of any personnel injury, loss of health, death, loss of property, inconvenience, delay or any other damage sustained by him/her directly or indirectly arising from or relating to her/his participation in this trip.

The Participant also agrees and covenants, now and forever, on behalf of himself/herself and any heirs, estates, executors or executrices, to hold the hosts harmless against all liabilities and expenses and reasonable attorney's fees that the hosts may incur in respect of any claim, suit, demand or cause of action, either actual or threatened brought in any jurisdiction in violation of the covenants made in the previous paragraph.

Any of the hosts not party to this Release shall be intended third party beneficiaries hereof and shall have standing to raise any defense or bring claim under this Release in their own names.

The Parties intend that this Release be executed as a seal instrument under seal and that it be governed by the laws of the State of Florida, exclusive of choice of law provisions. Any action about this contract shall be brought only within a state or federal court of competent jurisdiction that is located within the State of Florida.

The provisions of this Release shall be severable, and if any provision or provisions hereof are invalidated, struck or reformed, the remaining provisions hereof shall continue in full force and effect.

The Release reflects the full and complete agreement of the parties as to the subject matter hereof any may not be modified except in writing.

Signature of Participant: _____ Date signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Witnessed by: _____ Date signed: _____

(or Legal Guardian if appropriate)

Print Name: _____

[Church officer]

By: _____

Date signed: _____

X. Mission Resources

Country-specific Partnering Organizations:

- [American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem](#)
- [American Friends of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan](#)
- [El Hogar \(Honduras\)](#)
- [Cristosal \(El Salvador\)](#)
- [COLFORPAZ \(Colombia\)](#)
- [The Elewana Education Project \(Kenya\)](#)
- [The Dominican Development Group \(Dominican Republic\)](#)

National Organizations:

- [The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Episcopal Church](#)
- [Young Adult Service Corps \(YASC\)](#)
- [The UN Millennium Goals](#)
- [The Episcopal Church](#)
- [Episcopal Migration Ministries](#)
- [Episcopal Public Policy Network \(EPPN\)](#)
- [Anglican Women's Empowerment \(AWE\)](#)
- [Episcopal Peace Fellowship](#)
- [Council for World Mission](#)
- [Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries](#)