

How to connect with a Presbyterian mission worker

If a Mission Committee doesn't exist, form one. Then have the group discern which mission workers fit with the interests and the faith life of your congregation. Go to www.pcusa.org/missionconnections and look closely at the home pages of the approximately 250 PC(USA) missionaries. Read their profiles and newsletters and you'll get a sense of who these folks are and how they talk about their witness.

Be patient. There's a lot to explore—about 4,000 with 600 added every year and at least that many photographs. Time spent getting to know what PC(USA) mission workers are doing is not time wasted.

Next, choose a few mission workers, write them, and tell them you're interested in them. Tell them about yourselves and why their ministry resonates with your church. Then ask to get on their mailing list. They may have both a mailing list and an email newsletter.

Then get conversant with their lives and pray for them. The better you know them and what they're going through, the better you can pray for them. Write to say you have prayed for them. Encourage them. Ask them questions. Maybe you will inspire their next newsletter. Missionaries love it when people are interested enough to ask questions.

If the missionary has special prayer needs or if important events have happened in her or his life recently, include those prayers or announcements in your Sunday worship. This way the whole church can be in prayer for the mission worker.

Now that you're beginning to relate to this missionary, look for news about the country and region where he or she serves. Educate yourselves about the issues that people face in that country or region, and pray for them.

Mission workers will let you know when they're coming to the U.S. on interpretation assignment. If you'd like to invite them, decide on several dates and extend the invitation right away. Call Carol Somplatsky-Jarman in the Mission Connections office at (888) 728-7228 x5826 for more information.

Consider supporting the mission worker(s) through Directed Mission Support or an Extra Commitment Opportunity. Contact Presbytel at (800) 872-3283. They'll always be able to direct you to the right person.

Other things you might consider:

- It's good to find a mission worker who makes his or her home base near you (preferably within four hours driving distance). Call K.T. Ockels at 888 728 7229 x5977 to find out who may be close to you.
- Put the mission worker's name and address in the church bulletin and church directory.
- Make a bulletin board to highlight the mission worker's ministry.
- Arrange for a telephone call with the mission worker, who could address the congregation during Sunday morning worship via speaker phone. Or use Skype.
- Some mission workers are in a position to welcome visitors to their country of service. If you're interested, inquire about this possibility.