

*Midland First United Methodist Church (FUMC)*  
*Missions Work Area (Cont'd)*

The Missions Work Area of Midland FUMC is a work area supporting outreach ministries of this congregation beyond Midland County. (The Church and Community work area covers outreach within Midland County) A key partner in the effort of the Missions Work Area is the UMC Board of Global Ministries whose purpose and vision provide key guideposts for the work area. That purpose and vision are as follows:

**Purpose:** Connecting the Church in mission

**Vision:** The General Board of Global Ministries equips and transforms people and places for God's mission around the world.

Since there are a large number of worthy opportunities and around the world, the work group has developed a series of considerations and principles to guide their decisions. These are intended to provide focus and consistency to facilitate decision-making.

The considerations listed below have been developed over many years based on the input of many work group members and from missionaries we support.

Support from the Work Area for worthy projects is provided on an ongoing basis where appropriate. The work area desires to help those working in a project area minimize the time they must spend soliciting funds. For projects that address ongoing needs, an entry into the Work Area's budgeting process is desirable enabling the work area to provide funds annually.

Funding is often available for projects that come to the attention of committee members or other church members. In such cases, the committee will work to screen the project to determine that it is worthy of initial funding which may or may not evolve into ongoing support. Much depends on the nature of the project and the financial ability of the committee to support the projects beyond those for which long-term commitments have been agreed to be worthy. Generally, support of such projects is generated only after a person who is well-acquainted with the project has provided input to the committee.

The committee also recognizes the value of supporting projects in cases where no financial commitment is involved. For projects which reflect the Wesleyan tradition and reinforce the goals of FUMC, funds from congregation members are sometimes accepted by the committee and issued to the project by FUMC such that the church's support of the project is clear in cases where that is deemed to be helpful. Generally, support of such projects is generated only after a person who is well-acquainted with the project has provided input to the committee.

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Missions Work Area considerations when evaluating which programs to support and the level of support:

- The work area focuses on support of people (missionaries) and their program needs (ministries).
- The work area strives to be a consistent partner over an extended period of time. One comment often heard from missionaries is how much time and effort they put into "fund-raising." They are highly appreciative of Midland FUMC's consistent support. Ongoing support greatly facilitates their planning and frees up their time for ministry. We try to be faithful.
- The work area places a high priority on connections that can be established and maintained over many years, even decades. It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of efforts without consistent communication. It is impossible to represent to our broader congregation the mission work with passion and conviction if work area members cannot maintain consistent and high quality communications.
- The work area strives to support close family connections of current and former members of the congregation who enter missions ministry.
- While urgent needs (such as hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, fires, etc.) are worthy of support, the bulk of support should be directed to programs developing long-term solutions. It looks for solutions that are locally viable, cost-effective, and culturally appropriate among other considerations.
- The work area strives to maintain geographic diversity in its support as well as a balance of missionary salary support and program support.
- The work area has made a conscious choice to support fewer programs with higher levels of support. This concentration further facilitates deeper, more meaningful connections.
- Perhaps most important of these considerations is that programs be faith-based. There is a preference for UMC programs although not a hard and fast rule given the above considerations. Similarly, there is a benefit to aligning with DAC priorities to facilitate connections, communications and impact. Again missionaries have shared how helpful it is to have a consolidated group of congregations when they return to the US or attend certain conference-wide meetings.
- The work area takes seriously its responsibilities to be good stewards of the money distributed. While the congregation has policies in place for all work areas, the focus on using registered US charities, DAC advance or UMC Global Ministry advance accounts provides another level of oversight to ensure funds reach missionaries and their programs. Work area members follow up with local program contacts when money is released to them to ensure they actually receive the funds.

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The Work Area understands and appreciates that members of the congregation come across a number of potential opportunities that the work area may consider for support. It provides this guidance to help members of the congregation in effectively communicating those additional opportunities.; there are far more good and worthy opportunities in need of support than the work area can support.

It is worth noting that the work area does not support causes.

Additionally, the work group is very grateful to receive additional funds above and beyond those allocated by the Finance Committee, as gifts or-as memorials. Additional funds allow the work area to respond to unexpected opportunities that arise during the year and traditionally are spent on "one-time" needs since they are not necessarily expected from year to year. Those additional funds must be received as undesignated and will be spent according to the decisions of the work area based on priorities at the time and the considerations listed above. Individuals wishing to support a specific ministry or program are asked to make those donations directly (i.e., the work area will not act as a "pass through" to funnel donations for specific requests of individuals on behalf of the church).

The work area will continue to make calls to support specific needs and projects such as UMCOR disaster relief, matching funds for specific opportunities such as sponsoring a Habitat for Humanity House or a Tiny House at Cass Community Social Services and so forth. Over the years, much has been accomplished through these efforts. If possible, the work area will contribute from its funds for these opportunities in solidarity with the congregation.

Further questions about the Missions Work Area, its processes and priorities, or programs supported may be directed to the current chair of the group.