

Basic Mission Giving: 7 Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

This overview of mission funding in the Whitewater Valley Presbyterian (WVP), Synod of Lincoln Trails and General Assembly, is designed to help sessions, mission committees and church staff make sound decisions about the use of their mission funds. It provides basic information. For more information please contact the Presbytery office, additional resources can also be downloaded on-line at www.whitewatervalley.org.

1. **What is Basic Mission?** Basic Mission is the foundation of PC(USA) funding. A primary responsibility of each Presbyterian Session, Basic Mission is key to planning and implementing programs for the entire church. Basic Mission provides food for the hungry, shelter for homeless, a voice for the unheard and places to worship for the unchurched.

Basic Mission provides or supports:

- Missionary salaries and benefits
- Grants to ecumenical agencies
- Assistance for overseas church, hospital, school and other partners
- Funds for New Church Development
- Resources and services for congregations
- Church camps for children and adults
- Work of the Presbyteries, Synods and General Assembly

Basic Mission Support is funded in two ways: *Shared and Directed*. **Shared Mission Support**- Generally, Sessions provide Shared Mission Support – Gifts and contributions made with no restrictions. Shared Mission gifts fund the adopted mission budgets of the presbytery, synod and the General Assembly. **Directed Mission Support** - Sessions may decide to provide Directed Mission Support – Gifts are “directed” for use within the adopted mission budgets of the Presbytery, Synod or the General Assembly.

2. **What is Extra Commitment Opportunities?** Extra Commitment Opportunities (ECOs) are mission projects supported with gifts over and above adopted budgets. General Assembly has an extensive list of such projects from which to choose. Please contact the presbytery office or www.pcusa.org for more information.
3. **Isn't this “Per Capita”?** - Per Capita is a voluntary per-member contribution that congregations make to Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly to defray most of the cost associated with office space, insurance, administrative supplies, technology, and the salaries and benefits for the staff. Presbytery disbursements relating to per capita are approved each year and are detailed within the Mission Operations fund.
4. **Who decides where my congregation's mission funding goes?** - Your Session. The Session of each church is responsible for leading the congregation in its participation in mission and determining what will be done with the funds the congregation gives.
5. **Who decides how Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly mission funding is used?** - In short, all of us make these decisions. Presbytery priorities are submitted through our representation on our committees and the Council. Alongside Presbyteries and Synods, we participate in the discussions regarding our Synod's and the General Assembly's mission budgets through our representation on regional mission committees and advisory boards.
6. **What happens to the Shared Mission funding that we send to the Presbytery?** - Presbytery recommends a ratio according to which Shared Mission giving is to be disbursed between our three governing bodies. 14% is disbursed by Presbytery to our Synod and 38% to our General Assembly Council to help support the mission budgets. The balance or 48% of the funds are used to support the mission budget as approved each year by our Presbytery and as detailed within our Mission Focus Units fund. This budget includes allocations to missions and mission partnerships, and other ministries related to the work of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and Committee on Ministry which includes nurturing our congregations who are in transition, providing counseling, pastoral care, and responding to and supporting those who are discerning God's call on their lives.
7. **Do you have any recommendations about mission giving?** - We encourage sessions to help their congregations rethink their stewardship of resources in light of the church's missional calling and connectedness by intentionally investing personal and financial resources in both local and global mission endeavors and in each other.

Want to learn more about the Whitewater Valley Presbytery, Synod of Lincoln Trails and General Assembly mission budgets and priorities? - The Presbytery's Mission Focus Units and Mission Operations Budgets may be found at www.whitewatervalley.org. In addition, links to the Synod of Lincoln Trails and General Assembly's mission budgets may also be found at this location. Additional information is available through the Presbytery office by contacting Eric Herzog at (317) 542-5500.