



PIT CREWS

Supporting our mission partners



A small group of people that meets regularly to serve a specific mission partner. Their primary ministry is listening to and learning about a partner and their work. In almost every case, a pit crew becomes a close-knit support network for the missionary. Consistent and informed prayer is the other important way a pit crew serves their partner.

FOREWORD

by WCC Senior Pastor, Todd Gerst

I am so excited about the growth we have made in fulfilling the Great Commission at Warsaw Community Church. Our missions team has helped us be more mission-focused as well as an effective partner as a sending and supporting church.

Here is the latest example of that growth and next step. I am grateful to have the opportunity to acknowledge and honor our ministry of Pit Crews. It is a vital role. As you will soon see when you read this manual, Pit Crews were born out of a need to love, support, encourage, and pray for our Missions Partners. But Pit Crews are much more than that. They have evolved into a vital and defining ministry at WCC.

For our Missions Partners, Pit Crews are the personal connection between them and the body of believers at WCC. For the missionary on the field, who is away from family, friends, and sometimes any other Christian, this can be the vital support and encouragement they need to sustain and motivate them to continue their ministry. The Pit Crew can be the personal touch when the missionary is discouraged. The Pit Crew can pray for them, talk to them through technology and message them directly – the means of communication are endless in this day and age. Having spent so many years overseas, Karen and I can attest to just how necessary and important that kind of support can be.

Also consider the impact this experience can have on the members of the Pit Crew that you lead. We have seen how it has become the key to opening and enlightening their minds and hearts to world missions. It has become one of the ways people see what God is doing outside the walls of the church and how they can be involved.

We all have a part to play in reaching the lost.

This Pit Crew Leader Guidebook is the next step in your Pit Crew being more effective as they support and care for our Missions Partners. It is also a key in connecting more and more people with their important role in fulfilling the Great Commission.

I want to thank our Missions Pastor, Mike Boze and the entire missions committee (list their names) for their faithful leadership. I am also thankful for those who have worked hard in seeing this guidebook developed. I know it will be a helpful resource for you as a leader.

I also want to thank you for your role in this ministry. Please know that your leadership is vital to the effectiveness and growth of your Pit Crew. Thank you for your servant leadership!

Todd



SECTION 1 — MISSIONS PIT CREW

HISTORY

For years WCC had no missions committee, and for the most part, just a part-time missions director. The missions director made all the decisions and did all the budgeting, encouraging, and communicating with the church's missionaries (who are referred to throughout the rest of this document as "Missions Partners" or "Partners"). As the church adopted more and more Missions Partners, it became impossible for a missions director to stay in touch with everybody, let alone care for their physical, relational, and spiritual needs. Hence, the care from the church was spotty at best – to some it seemed almost non-existent. Most of the real care was coming from isolated pockets of friends and family members — not "the church." And there was no pathway for the typical churchgoer into one of these groups. They were (unintentionally) closed.

So, the elders, with direction from Todd Gerst (our former missionary to Papua New Guinea), mandated the formation of a missions committee. That committee spent a lot of time analyzing what our church was failing at when it came to missionary care. As we studied the problem, we realized that our Missions Partners were lacking a few things:

- 1. Consistent prayer**
- 2. Real relationship/community**
- 3. Regular communication with the church**
- 4. An opportunity to share their story**

Up to this point, our primary mode of missions communication was stage time on a Sunday morning. This was problematic, as our services are tightly programmed and little time was allowed for anything special like a "missions spot." A missions spot would be about seven minutes in length, allowing only time for a brief sketch of a Partner's work, a few slides, and an appeal for prayer or giving. We had no Sunday School classes nor a mid-week service conducive to a longer missions-focused communication time. It was frustrating. It seemed like we were boxed in, with no obvious options.

One solution was to start our own monthly meeting, "Missions Night." It was designed to feature one of our Partners every month. These meetings included announcements and quick updates from Partners in attendance, half-hour interviews of a featured Partner, and small group prayer for the featured Partner at the close of the meeting. But as the number of our Missions Partners continued to increase, we recognized that this program also fell short of the interaction (in terms of both frequency and intimacy) that we knew each of our Partners needed.

It also became apparent that members of the missions committee were growing spiritually by being in relationship with our Partners, and that there could be a variety of benefits for the church if we could push the care for our missionaries out into our congregation. But it was important to design an official "on-ramp" or access for the regular WCC attendee to serve in this way. So, after much prayer and planning, the missions committee decided to dive in and launch a new ministry designed to decentralize the care of our Missions Partners — the Pit Crew Ministry.

SERVING

Romans 10:14-15

1 Corinthians 12:12-15

Ephesians 4:11-16

Even while missionaries are far away, and perhaps out of sight, out of mind, they're still part of the church body. They're the beautiful feet sent out from the church with the good news. Christ gave each of us a role within the body, that we would build one another up to maturity. Missionaries play a significant role in building up the body they're sent from by sharing their experiences of God's faithfulness and glory and by modeling obedience and faith in the face of challenges. As part of a Pit Crew, you'll get a front row seat!

WHAT IS A MISSIONS PIT CREW?

Every driver in the Indy 500 depends on a team — a pit crew. The pit crew knows the driver and the car well. They are in constant contact, lap after lap. And when it is time for a pit stop, the crew springs into action. They know exactly what to do — working in harmony to get the driver back on the track to finish the race, striving to win. Together.

We, at WCC, want that kind of team for our Missions Partners — teams of specialists who are familiar with and passionate about a partner's work. A small group community, working in harmony to support their partner in ministry — to help them finish their race, striving to win others for Christ. Together.

A Missions Pit Crew is a small group organized for the purpose of serving a specific Missions Partner through informed prayer and growing relationship. The purpose of a Missions Pit Crew is summarized in our Mission Statement:

“To mobilize the church body in serving our missionaries through informed prayer, growing relationship, and advocacy.”



SECTION 2 - MISSIONS PIT CREW IMPACT

WHY ARE MISSIONS PIT CREWS IMPORTANT?

Pit Crews can help meet the needs of the missionary. . . physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Missionaries are on the front lines of the spiritual battle. Often, there is no one to help carry that burden. Pit Crews can encourage and support the missionary by regular communication, informed prayer, and advocating for them at home.

Serving God vocationally is a challenge. Our Partners are engaged in a spiritual conflict. Whether serving here in Warsaw or in another country and culture, it's important for our Partners and their work to be understood and consistently lifted up in prayer. In the process of being used by God, you will grow in faith!

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A MISSIONS PIT CREW LEADER?

- Coordinate regular voice or video meetings between your crew and your Missions Partner. Use this time to learn about, connect with, and pray for your Missions Partner as a group.
- Provide your Pit Crew with regular and timely updates on the prayer needs of your Missions Partner, encouraging the members to pray for and connect with your Partner on an individual basis.
- Look for opportunities to build relationship within the Pit Crew and between your Pit Crew and Missions Partner (i.e., birthday or anniversary celebrations, group participation in charitable activities that benefit your Missions Partner or another organization, meet in person with your partner when they are on home visits, etc.).
- If applicable, look for opportunities to visit your Missions Partner on the field. The church is very supportive of Pit Crew trips. Contact the Missions Pastor ([see Section 6 – Contacts](#)) as early as possible in the planning to discuss how the church might be able to support the group in terms of the planning, travel, in-country stay and/or debriefing upon return.
- If you sense that your Missions Partner has spiritual or physical needs that go beyond prayer or routine care (i.e., support of a monetary or resource nature, assistance with travel to home or another location, etc.), relay those needs to a member of the Missions Committee.
- Actively work to identify the spiritual gifts and interests of the members on your Pit Crew and look for opportunities to help them use those gifts/interests to benefit your Missions Partner.
- Coordinate representation of your Pit Crew at church missions events (e.g, Pit Crew-related Missions Week activities, monthly Missions Prayer, and Missions Night activities, etc.).
- Look for one or two others within the Pit Crew that have the passion and interest to be a potential successor as leader and work to mentor them over time.
- Engage in this ministry of encouragement as a leader for at least one year.

SPIRITUAL BATTLE

Ephesians 6:18-20

Romans 15:30

Paul is asking the believers to join in the struggle with him— through their prayers. Keep in mind that your missionaries are in a spiritual battle and as they engage in it, they need constant prayer. Paul is in prison, but he asks for boldness in his words to proclaim the Gospel, not comfort. Keep in mind what your missionaries are up against and take it seriously. Study the concept of spiritual warfare and the worldview that your missionaries work among. There is power in prayer against the evil forces of this world, and you can join the battle on their behalf.

PARTNERSHIP

Philippians 1:4-5

Paul rejoices because of the partnership the Philippian church shares with him in spreading the Good News. Partnership is built on relationship and can often be seen as mutually beneficial. As you participate in this Pit Crew, you'll be blessing your missionary through encouragement and prayer, but they'll be a blessing to you as well, in sharing with you all that God is doing and giving you a glimpse of the bigger picture.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A MISSIONS PIT CREW MEMBER?

- Meet regularly with your crew to learn about, connect with, and pray for your Missions Partner.
- Pray for, and communicate with, your Missions Partner on an individual basis regularly.
- Engage in this ministry of encouragement for at least one year.
- Whenever possible, assist in the identification and training of a replacement leader for your Pit Crew.

WHAT DO OUR MISSIONS PARTNERS SAY ABOUT THEIR PIT CREWS?

We survey our Missions Partners on an annual basis to gather information and feedback on their ministry and relationship with WCC. Here's what some of our Partners have shared with us regarding their Pit Crew:

"Our Pit Crew has been amazing this year. They've been prayer warriors for us and also resource gatherers for us. I don't know how better they could serve as they have done an amazing job."

"We can't say enough about our Pit Crew! They are faithful to meet with us online monthly to facilitate discussion, prayer, and practical needs. They have shipped and gifted us with ministry needs (Bibles, logos, materials) and family needs. They have continually been full of encouragement, and they communicate for us to the local WCC body. We are so thankful!"

"My Pit Crew has been such a blessing. It's so nice to have them already know what's going on with my life, and I don't have to explain and fill them in, they already understand where I'm coming from. Their sweet smiles on that video screen are so precious and loving! And now our times in-person and our prayer time together has been sweet. They've been so great at sending me stuff and providing for me when I came home for Christmas. It's so nice to be able to share prayer requests with them and have them pray and care how God answers. And it's a blessing to share that God DOES answer."

"My Pit Crew has been most effective! They have greatly inspired me and helped me to remain on course, focused and accountable in these turbulent and uncertain times. They are very committed and regular in communication which helps me to share what the LORD is doing so we are able to jointly worship the Lord and give thanks for answered prayers. They have helped me where I am struggling and encouraged me and advised. They have both supported financially and given practical advice. They have used all fronts to communicate: emails, WhatsApp, calls. My Pit Crew has been a huge blessing and mega contribution to the visible fruits of what the Lord is doing over here."

CARING

Philippians 2:25-30

Epaphroditus was sent out from the Philippian church to care for Paul's needs. He had a close relationship with them, longing for them and both having concern for one another. As you support your missionary, evaluate if you have a relationship that is close enough to cause you to long for one another and be concerned when they're ill. If not, dig deeper!

SECTION 3 - BEST PRACTICES

INFORMED PRAYER

Prayer, both individual and corporate, is the most significant way that we can advocate for our Missions Partner. God hears our prayers, and He is able to respond. Our prayers should be “informed” prayers, meaning that they are based on an understanding of the current needs, challenges, and successes. Informed prayer helps us to pray for specific requests. Informed prayer also blesses your Missions Partner. It confirms to them that you have an understanding of their situation, and they are not alone. Here are some ways to exercise informed prayer in your Pit Crew:

Pit Crew Meetings:

- Where feasible, hold a preview call with your Partner to go over agenda items and key discussion items. This can also deepen the relationship between you and your Partner. Just be sure to always clarify with your Missions Partner what is okay to be shared in the group meeting if you are uncertain.
- When you start your meetings, follow-up on prior prayer requests. Ask your Partner for follow-up details about the things you have prayed for previously.
- Inquire about recent events and new prayer needs/praises – both from the Partner and the Pit Crew members.
- Make a list of those needs/praises.
- Pray corporately for those needs/praises before closing the meeting.
 - Ask your Partner to open the prayer and you close or vice versa.
 - Invite Pit Crew members to pray if they feel lead to do so in between.
 - Be sensitive to the fact that some members may not feel comfortable praying out loud; that is fine.
- Distribute the list of prayer needs/praises after the meeting and encourage members to pray individually for these items at least once per week until the next meeting.

WhatsApp or other group communication channels:

- Reach out to your Partner (weekly or at an appropriate frequency) for interim updates on prayer items. If your Partner is serving in a region that is hostile to Christian ministry be sure to adhere to any proper discretion that they have provided for communicating with them on a social media platform.

PRAYING

2 Corinthians 1:8-11

Paul was not wanting the church to be uninformed about the troubles he had experienced, even great pressure and despair. Create opportunities within your Pit Crew that enable your missionaries to share the hard things. As their partners in this journey, ask questions, make sure you are fully informed as to their struggles. Paul saw their deliverance as being a result of the church helping them with their prayers and as an opportunity for many to give thanks as a result of the answer to the prayer. A beautiful part of being part of a Pit Crew is praying together frequently and rejoicing together as God answers. Ask follow-up questions and provide opportunities for missionaries to share the praises as well as the requests.

WELCOMING

Acts 14:26-28

1 Corinthians 16:6-7

Paul and Barnabas come back to their sending church in Antioch and stay a long time. Then Paul is offering the Corinthian church the opportunity to be involved through welcoming him in and sending him out again. He doesn't ask hesitantly for them to support him on his journey. As a Pit Crew, think of ways you can make your missionary feel welcome on their home assignments.

- Encourage your Pit Crew to be conscientious about responding. Remember a lack of communication in a group channel can have a negative impact on your Missions Partner. Pit Crew members may be following the discussion, but if they rarely respond or add comments, this can give your Partner the impression that no one is following along or cares enough to respond.
- Consider using the audio recording function of the messaging service (WhatsApp, FB Messenger, etc.) to send a voice message or voice prayer to your partner. The sound of a caring voice can often make the message even more impactful.

RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

It's a good practice to always be on the look-out for individuals who might have interest in joining your Pit Crew. We all go through seasons in life, so your Pit Crew is naturally going to lose some members over time. Here are some things to consider as you look to expand your crew: Start with your Missions Partner:

Ask your Partner if they know of (or have had recent contact with) someone that might be interested in being part of the Pit Crew (previous co-workers, family, people that respond to their newsletters/communications, current or past church members, those that have visited them on the field, etc.). The key element that all Pit Crew members share is an affinity for the Partner, so it is always best to start by looking for people who already have this relationship established.

Inquire with the Pit Crew members:

Similar to the suggestion above, check with your Pit Crew members. Sometimes they will have had contact with someone that expressed interest in the Partner or serving on a Pit Crew.

Personal invitation:

- Share your passion for this ministry and its importance with others and invite them to join you.
- Invite people to the Missions Week Expo or other missions activities where details of our Pit Crew Ministry will be discussed. WCC typically organizes a Missions Week Expo where Missions Partners and Pit Crews can share about the ministry and how to get involved. Certain other events such as monthly Missions Night meetings and Missions Prayer meetings can also be great opportunities for introducing someone to Pit Crews.

Utilize Social Media Effectively:

Social media can be a great tool to reach family, friends, and others who may have an interest in being part of your Pit Crew. You may be able to attract interest by taking simple steps like:

Involving your Missions Partner:

- Ask them if they have a presence on social media. If they do, follow their account and turn on notifications so you know when they post.
- Share their posts to your stories, adding any personal comments of encouragement where appropriate.
- Tag your Missions Partner in posts/stories when you share pictures of events/gatherings when they are in town.

Adjusting your own activity:

- Tag friends in your posts/stories who may have expressed interest in joining a Pit Crew.
- Occasionally invite your followers to join an upcoming Pit Crew meeting or missions activity.
- Share Pit Crew activities (i.e. Pit Crew meetings, Missions Week activities, etc.) as a way to invite friends to attend to learn more about your Missions Partner and our Pit Crews.

- Tag Warsaw Community Church on your posts and stories so they can share them on their social media accounts ([Instagram: @wccconnect](#) / [Facebook: @Warsaw Community Church](#)).

Involving your Pit Crew members:

- Ask them if they have a social media presence. If they do, ask them to follow these same practices as well to reach an even larger audience.

Align with Warsaw Community Church's activity:

- Turn on notifications so you know when they post ([Instagram: @wccconnect](#) / [Facebook: @Warsaw Community Church](#)). Share their posts and stories regarding either your Missions Partner or the different Pit Crew activities to create excitement and generate greater awareness.

ONBOARDING NEW MEMBERS

Conduct an on-boarding meeting for new members:

Once a new member has joined your Pit Crew, invite them to an "on-boarding" phone or video call with you and maybe one or two members of your crew. This on-boarding call should ideally be held before the first monthly Pit Crew meeting that they would be joining. Use this on-boarding call to cover the following items:

- Background on the Mission Partner (e.g., their family, ministry, hobbies/interests, how long they have been serving, recent challenges/successes, etc.)
- Take turns sharing some details of how those on the call got involved, how long they have been part of the Pit Crew, their roles on the crew (if any), etc.
- Ask the new member for some detail about themselves: their family, hobbies/interests, any relationship they might have with the Missions Partner, why they wanted to join the Pit Crew, etc.
- Provide an overview how the Pit Crew meetings are structured, what is usually covered, expectations related to member participation, etc.

ENCOURAGING ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

Encourage members to use their interests and talents for the needs of the Pit Crew. You are the Pit Crew Leader, but that does not mean that you need to take on all the organization and meeting activities for the group. That is not sustainable for you, and it often discourages members from being more involved. Identify the interests and talents of your Pit Crew members and invite them to help with certain related tasks. Here are some examples:

- **If their gift is hospitality** – invite them to host a Pit Crew meeting or activity.
- **If their gift is organizing** – invite them to take notes of the call to share with the team after.
- **If their gift is marketing** – invite them to help with preparing information materials on your Missions Partner, the people they serve, or other needs.
- **If their interest is cooking/baking** – provide appetizer/baked goods for meetings or activities.
- **If they are bilingual** – interpreting for the Missions Partner (if necessary).

Another way to encourage member activity is to reach out directly to members who have been absent for a while. Sometimes it is helpful to make a short call or send an email to someone who has been absent from recent meetings. It lets them know that they have been missed and it allows you to see if there is anything that you can do to make it feasible for them to return. For example, the member may have taken a new job (or their child may have a new activity) that conflicts with the regular meeting time. You may not be able to resolve the conflict in the short term, but this opens the opportunity for a solution to be identified and communicates that the member is important.

You can also encourage attendance by making the meeting accessible for both live and virtual participation. Virtual attendance allows remote members, and members with very busy schedules, the opportunity to attend when they would otherwise have to decline. Alternatively, if the group has been meeting in an all-virtual manner, consider offering a live meeting option – some of the local people may prefer to meet in person and would be more inclined to attend if there was a live meeting option.

CONDUCTING REGULAR PIT CREW MEETINGS

Organize and lead periodic meetings where the entire Pit Crew is invited to meet with the Missions Partner. Most Pit Crews hold one group meeting per month, but there is no prescribed frequency. Similarly, there is no prescribed location, format, or length for these group meetings. Each Pit Crew leader should work with the Missions Partner and members to decide what works best for everyone. Often the Mission Partner as well as some (or all) of the members may be joining the discussion via a telecom connection. These meetings are intended to help the group build stronger relationships so that they can pray for each other in a more informed way. As the leader, you should be open to structuring these meetings in a manner that best accomplishes this goal.

As mentioned above, there is no prescribed frequency for Pit Crew meetings, but consistency is important. Once you identify a preferred day, time and location that works for all, it is typically best to keep this consistent so that your Partner and crew can plan for meetings. This sets the expectation for when the group is going to meet next (barring any unexpected circumstances that would necessitate a change). Leaving the meeting time undefined from one meeting to the next usually results in a flurry of back-and-forth communications before each meeting trying to identify a workable time. At best this approach is inefficient, and at worst it can result in frustration or disappointment for those in the group who either need more time to plan or who have a conflict with the time that is eventually selected.

It is also a good practice to get feedback at least annually from your Pit Crew as to whether the regular meeting time still works for everyone. January is a good time to send out the schedule of meetings for the coming year. In that same communication, you can ask for feedback from the group on whether the existing schedule still works for them. Based on the responses you should be able to get a good sense for whether there are conflicts that might necessitate a broader discussion to identify a new regular meeting time.

Pit Crew meetings can be held at the church. Contact the Missions Pastor ([see Section 6 – Contacts](#)) for assistance in scheduling the use of a specific room, and AV equipment if videoconferencing will be needed.

Solicit a volunteer or nominate someone in your Pit Crew to take notes during the regular meetings to capture the major points of discussions so that you can send that detail out to everyone after the meeting. These notes do not need to be elaborate but at a minimum you should record details (a paragraph or a few bullet points) covering what has happened in the following areas since your last meeting:

- Family and life events affecting your Mission Partner
- Key ministry activities/interactions
- Prayer requests and praises for your Missions Partner
- Prayer requests and praises for the Pit Crew members

Distributing the notes after the call helps to keep everyone informed and prompts members to pray in an informed way between meetings.

SHARING

Acts 14:26-27

As Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch, the church they had been sent out from, they gather the church together to share with them all that God had done through them. They used their experiences to glorify God and uplift the church. When missionaries have the opportunity to share what God is doing and not just a report of what they themselves have accomplished, it builds up the body. Meeting in these smaller Pit Crew groups, gives missionaries a chance to share on a deeper, more intimate level.

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT YOUR MISSIONS PARTNER

In addition to prayer, group meetings and regular communications, a Pit Crew can be a blessing to their Missions Partner in many other ways. Here is a list of some practical ideas:

- Assist your Missions Partner with the preparation and stay for a home assignment (see related section below for more discussion on this topic).
- Send a care package to your Missions Partner. It can be difficult to send packages to Missions Partners in certain countries, so be sure to check with them to see whether sending a package is feasible.
- Provide care and/or resources for your Mission Partner's loved ones back home (if applicable).
- Participate in the annual Missions Week activities.
- Participate in the monthly Missions Prayer meetings (1st Sunday of each month, 9:30 am at the church).
- Participate in the monthly Missions Night events (3rd Thursday of each month, 7 pm at the church).
- Send encouraging cards and/or letters to your Missions Partner, as a group or individually.
- Cover the cost of an online retreat, workshop, or other appropriate spiritual encouragement opportunity. You or the entire Pit Crew could potentially participate in the activity together in certain cases. Some organizations that provide these types of services include:
 - Velvet Ashes | <https://velvetashes.com/>
 - Global Trellis | <https://globaltrellis.com/>
 - Thrive Ministry | <https://thriveministry.org/gatherings>
- Assist with physical/tangible needs where appropriate and feasible — check with the Missions Pastor ([listed in Table 2 below](#)) if you are uncertain about the appropriateness of a specific need or request.
- Advocate for the needs of your Missions Partner — relay their needs to the Missions Pastor if those needs require broader support from the church than the Pit Crew can provide through relationship and prayer.

RESTING

Mark 6:30-32

In these passages, Christ has sent out His disciples to do ministry and they've come back and want to tell Him all about it. He offers them the opportunity to come away with Him and get rest. Give your missionary permission and opportunity to come away with Jesus for some reflection and rest. You can even join in that time with them!

ASSISTING YOUR MISSIONS PARTNER WHILE ON HOME ASSIGNMENT

It is always exciting to hear that your Missions Partner is going to be returning for a home assignment. We naturally think of the joy of gathering together in familiar places and doing activities in person. But for our Partner, organizing and managing a trip home often involves a lot of work and stress. One way the Pit Crew can provide practical encouragement and support is to assist with the needs related to the return and home assignment.

Listed below are some of the areas to be considered and practical ways to assist your Missions Partner as they are planning for, or once they are back, on home assignment. Remember that it is always important to discuss and coordinate with your Missions Partner in advance on any efforts you make to assist with their needs. This will ensure that you are helping where they truly need the assistance, and not inadvertently duplicating efforts or creating a problem for them. Pit Crew members could individually or collectively offer to help in any of the following areas/ways:

• General

- Confirm that the Missions Pastor is aware of the home assignment as well as the dates, duration, and reason for the return.
- Help them schedule any appointments in advance of their arrival (or during their stay) as needed.
- Invite your partner to one or more group get-togethers during their stay, but be mindful of their need to relax and unwind – make any events voluntary.

• Housing

- Offer space in their home or find a suitable location for the Partner to stay.
- Assist with some of the costs of the stay.
- Offer to clean the home where their partner will be staying before they arrive or after they depart.

• Transportation

- Airport pick-up and drop-off
- Provide transportation to appointments, activities, and services during their stay.
- Offer the use of a vehicle or find a suitable vehicle for the Partner to use during their stay.
- Assist with some of the costs of a rental vehicle.
- Provide access to bikes if the weather is appropriate.

• Food

- Stock the cupboard and refrigerator before arrival.
- Offer to prepare some meals during the stay.
- Provide a gift card to the local supermarket.
- Provide a gift card(s) to local restaurant(s).

• Clothing

- Provide coats, boots, hats, gloves, or other items that the Partner might not own, as appropriate.
- Offer to coordinate with the partner to collect or purchase any of the items above prior to their arrival.

• Childcare

- Offer to babysit during the stay (if applicable).
- Provide items necessary for childcare (i.e., crib, toys, diapers, humidifier, etc.).

• Healthcare

- Provide any medicines or home therapy items during the stay.
- If any members of the Pit Crew have gym memberships, consider providing your Partner with a guest pass or accompany them as a workout buddy.

• Entertainment/Relaxation

- Gift cards – consider asking the Pit Crew members to give some money to purchase a gift card to local attractions, hair/nail salon or spa.

- Tickets to a Wagon Wheel play, movie theater, or other attractions that may be of interest during their stay. It is often good to invite your Missions Partner to go with you to these types of entertainment activities as this allows time for fellowship with them in a relaxed setting. Extend the invitation but remember that they may need some time to themselves as well. Don't be discouraged if they decline or if they prefer to attend the event by themselves or just with their family.

• Debriefing

- Ask if they have considered taking time during their stay to meet with the appropriate church staff for a period of debriefing. If they have interest, they can coordinate this directly with the Missions Pastor ([see Section 6 – Contacts](#)).



SECTION 4 - RESOURCES

USEFUL COMMUNICATION TOOLS

WHATSAPP | www.whatsapp.com

WhatsApp has become a widely used web-based communication platform for facilitating group communication. Many Missions Partners and Pit Crew Leaders utilize this platform for their regular day-to-day communication due to its wide adoption and the transmission speed of text, picture, and video files. If your Pit Crew is not already using WhatsApp, leaders are encouraged to check it out. Included below are some instructions for creating a WhatsApp group. Leaders should also consider the use of WhatsApp Web and the Broadcast List function which are also described below.

Create a group:

1. Add Pit Crew member's contact info to your phone contacts (the phone number with the + and country code and first name at minimum)
2. Download and open the WhatsApp app on your phone from the Apple App Store or Google Play
3. Create group: click New Group at top
4. Choose the members from your contacts
5. Title your group with a name (this is your Pit Crew name)
6. Click Create at top
7. You can now start sending group messages

Create Broadcast Lists

Use this if you want to send a message to the group that is primarily information only. Their responses will only be seen by you, not the group. This helps limit important info getting lost in the thread.

1. Ask Pit Crew members to add your name and phone number to their contacts in their phone. If you are not one of the contacts in their phone, they will not get your messages.
2. Open WhatsApp
3. Under Chats, select Broadcast Lists at top
4. Click New List
5. Select Pit Crew members from your contacts
6. Click Create
7. You can now draft and send a Broadcast message as you would in a regular WhatsApp message

EQUIPPING

3 John 5-8

These passages talk about sending missionaries on their way in a manner worthy of God so that they may work together for the truth. As a Pit Crew and a church, how can you send your missionaries back out again refreshed and equipped for their return to the field?

Using WhatsApp Web

WhatsApp Web is a desktop version of the phone application which can be easier to use for certain activities where you may be attaching files to a post.

1. Go to <https://web.whatsapp.com>
2. Follow the onscreen instructions:
 - a. Open WhatsApp on your phone
 - b. Tap Menu or Settings and select Linked Devices
 - c. Point your phone to the QR on the screen to capture the code
3. Your WhatsApp thread from your phone will now be displayed on your computer screen

Here's a short list of some other popular messaging applications that you may want to review if you find that WhatsApp is not a fit for your Pit Crew for one reason or another:

- GroupMe – <https://groupme.com/en-US/>
- Facebook Messenger – <https://www.messenger.com/>
- Telegram – <https://telegram.org/>
- Signal – <https://www.signal.org/>
- Slack – <https://slack.com/>

Zoom Meetings| <https://zoom.us>

Zoom is a popular web-based videoconferencing platform for facilitating group video meetings. Many missionaries and Pit Crew Leaders utilize this platform for their regular group meetings because it doesn't require a login and can run in your web-browser. It is also easy to use, has good A/V quality and is availability in most countries. The primary downside to Zoom is that the free version limits the duration of a group meeting to 40 minutes. If your Pit Crew is not already using Zoom, leaders are encouraged to check it out. Included below are some instructions on how to schedule a Zoom videoconference.



Setting up a Zoom meeting:

1. Check-out the Zoom website for [helpful video tutorials](#) before setting up your first call.
2. Download and open the Zoom app on your phone from the Apple App Store or Google Play. (You will also want to notify your Pit Crew members and advise them to download the Zoom app as well so they can join your meetings from their phone. Alternatively, you and/or your meeting participants can join from a computer or smart TV by going to the Zoom website.)
3. Click the "Schedule" icon at top.
4. Type in a title for your meeting.
5. Select a meeting duration (note that the free version of Zoom limits the call time to 40 minutes). The church has a premium Zoom account so if this time limit is a problem for your meetings, contact the Missions Pastor (see Section 6 contacts) to determine if it would be possible to schedule your meetings using the church account.
6. Be sure to set your correct time zone (for Warsaw, IN select "America/Indiana/Indianapolis" from the Time Zone dropdown list.)

7. Toggle on the “Use Personal Meeting ID” (This ensures that any meeting options you have set up in your personal profile will be applied to the current meeting.)
8. Toggle on the “Require Meeting Passcode” if you would like to add a level of privacy. (Participants will be required to enter the passcode you provide in order to access the meeting. This passcode will be available to them when you send out the meeting invitation.)
9. You can adjust other settings as appropriate for your meeting.
10. Click “Save” at top.
11. An email message with the meeting invitation and a hyperlink will be automatically created. You will simply need to add the email addresses for your participants and send the email. When the participant receives the email, they will be able to click the hyperlink to join the meeting at the appropriate time.
12. You can also copy the body of the email with all the invitation information and paste it into your WhatsApp group message feed or a group text message and send the meeting invitation via these mediums as well.

Here’s a short list of some other popular videoconferencing applications that you may want to review if you find that Zoom is not a suitable videoconferencing tool for your Pit Crew:

- Google Meet – <https://meet.google.com/>
- Google Hangouts – <https://hangouts.google.com/>
- Skype – <https://www.skype.com/en/>
- Whereby – <https://whereby.com/>

WCC Resources:

- WCC Missions Page | <https://warsaw.cc/missions>

Practical Books on Missionary Care:

- *Serving as Senders* – Neal Pirolo
- *Tender Care* – Wilson & Kronbach
- *Mind the Gaps* – David J. Wilson
- *Well Sent* – Steve Beirn
- *Receiving them Well* – Ennis & Bryan
- *Thriving in Cross Culture Ministry* – Carissa Alma
- *Re-Entry* – Peter Jordan
- *The Grief Tower* – Lauren Wells
- *Third Culture Kids: A Gift to Care For* – Ulrika Ernvik
- *Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds* – Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock
- *Raising up a Generation of Third-Culture Kids* – Lauren Wells



Practical Podcasts on Missionary Care and Global Missions Issues:

- "The Sent Life" – <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-sent-life/id1515311884>
- "Global Missions Podcast" – <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/global-missions-podcast/id998360427>

Links to Organizations involved in Missionary Care:

- Life Impact Ministries – www.lifeimpact.care
- Barnabas International – www.barnabas.org
- Global Member Care Network – www.globalmembercare.com
- Here 2 There Ministries – www.here2there.org
- Catalyst Services – <https://catalystservices.org/Postings/>
- Upstream Collective – <https://www.theupstreamcollective.org/>

Links to Organizations involved in Global Missions Education:

The following links provide information on the importance of missions rather than how to care for your Missions Partner. The more your Pit Crew understands the need for missions, and what it actually is, the more engaged they will be.

- Wayumi – <https://ethnos360.org/short-term-trips/wayumi>
- MomentumYes – <https://www.momentumyes.com/>
- The Joshua Project – <https://joshuaproject.net/>

Gift Ideas and General Resources for your Missions Partner:

- Kids books: *Goodbye, Friend! Hello, Friend!* – Cori Doerrfeld
- Young adult books: *Any of the Christian Heros: Then and Now* – Geoff & Janet Being
- Ladies: Online retreats, workshops offered by groups like Velvet Ashes or Global Trellis
- All: Subscriptions to appropriate music services, periodicals, phone apps, etc.
- All: Family games (board games, card games, etc.)



SECTION 5 - FAQs

This section provides a list of some commonly asked questions and answers.

How often should my Pit Crew meet?

Pit Crews typically meet with their Missions Partner about once per month, but there is no required frequency for these meetings. [See Section 3, Conducting Regular Pit Crew Meetings](#) for more details.

Should I include our Missions Partner at every Pit Crew meeting?

Sometimes your Pit Crew may need to meet without your Missions Partner to focus on items that don't concern the partner or to plan some type of surprise. This is perfectly fine and should be done whenever needed. You may find that it is helpful to meet as a team before or after your meeting with your Missions Partner, or you can meet at a separate time if that works better for your group.

Where should my Pit Crew meet?

Any place that is conducive to gathering for community and prayer can be appropriate for your group meetings. You should try to ensure that the location is convenient and comfortable for everyone, and that the environment has low background noise so everyone can communicate easily, whether in-person or online.



What's the right amount of members for a Pit Crew?

There is no "correct" number of members for a Pit Crew. Pit Crews tend to range in size from roughly 5-15 members. Depending on various circumstances and the needs of the Missions Partner, larger or even smaller numbers may be appropriate.

Do I have responsibilities outside of our regular Pit Crew meetings?

Yes, as Pit Crew Leader you do have some responsibilities beyond organizing and leading the meetings for your Pit Crew. You are generally responsible for creating an environment that promotes informed prayer, growing relationship, and advocacy for your Missions Partner. This will be different for each Pit Crew, so you will need to think and pray about what actions you and members of your Pit Crew can take to accomplish these functions. [See Section 2, What is Expected of a Missions Pit Crew Leader](#) for more details.

Who should I contact if our Missions Partner brings up a tangible need that goes beyond what the Pit Crew can provide?

It is certainly possible that your Missions Partner will relay physical needs that the Pit Crew is unable to assist with beyond taking the matter to God in prayer. If you believe that the need is something that the church may be able to address, you should contact the Missions Pastor. [See Section 3, Special Opportunities to Support Your Missions Partner](#) for more details.

What should I do if my Pit Crew members stop showing up for our meetings?

Our Pit Crew Ministry is volunteer based, so the level of active participation that an individual member contributes is largely up to them. As a leader, you should focus on the things that you can control:

- Be excited and regularly let your passion for the care of your Missions Partner show.
- Give your Pit Crew plenty of advanced notice of upcoming meetings and events.
- Be sure to inquire about members interests and spiritual gifts to be sure you are involving them in a way that appeals to them.
- Reach out separately to an individual member that has missed consecutive meetings or activities without clear reason.

Let them know that they are missed and ask them if there is something you can do to make it easier for them to join.

[See Section 3, Onboarding New Members](#) for more details.

I don't think I can continue in my current Pit Crew Leader role; how do I transition out?

We all go through different seasons of life and personal change. The church, your Missions Partner, and your Pit Crew will be grateful for the time that you have served them in this role. If you see the need to step away, try to identify it as early as possible so that the Missions Partner and/or the Missions Committee can work with you to identify a new leader. In this way the new leader will have an increased amount of time to work with you to become familiar with the role, and responsibilities, making the transition as seamless as possible. If you experience a sudden change of circumstances and need to end your role quickly, advise the Missions Pastor and your Missions Partner at your earliest opportunity and they will work with you to find an interim solution until a new leader can be identified.



SECTION 6 - CONTACTS

PIT CREW LEADER CONTACTS

MISSIONS PARTNER	PIT CREW	PIT CREW LEADER	LEADER CONTACT INFO
Clark & Mary Kate Shepherd	Allowing Christ to Shine (A.C.T.S.) Lafiteau, Haiti	Heather Garcia	Phone: 574-265-4608 Email: h_enderich@hotmail.com
Dan & Carmen Hale	ELAM Ministries Iran Region	Mike Boze	Phone: 574-265-7470 Email: mboze@warsaw.cc
Summer Zimmer	Ethnos 360 Lapilo, Papua New Guinea	Sue Vercauteren	Phone: 574-549-8063 Email: suevercauteren4@gmail.com
Eric & Tammy Lane	Fellowship Missions Warsaw, IN	Jack Jennings	Phone: 574-453-6144 Email: jdjennings96@gmail.com
Sally DeWald	Hands of Hope Guatemala	Becky Stevens	Phone: 574-265-6988 Email: blsstevens@hotmail.com
Roger & Karen Reyes Riley & Naz Fuller	Humanity & Hope United Foundation El Progreso, Honduras	Jack Jennings	Phone: 574-453-6144 Email: jdjennings96@gmail.com
Jason & Shae Brown	Kutoa Project Nairobi, Kenya	Joey DiRico	Phone: 574-306-7762 Email: joeydirico@gmail.com
Chris & Evie Jones	Least Reached/PNG Pei, Papua New Guinea	Karen Gerst	Phone: 574-527-3648 Email: kkgerst@gmail.com
Leda Shelburne	Media 7 Albania/Kosovo	Becky Stevens	Phone: 574-265-6988 Email: blsstevens@hotmail.com
Beth Baleke	Scripture Union of Uganda East Africa Region	Sue Vercauteren	Phone: 574-549-8063 Email: suevercauteren4@gmail.com
Josh & Erin Porter	2nd Mile Missions Bavaro, Dominican Republic	Greg & Maria Demopoulos	Phone: 574-376-0001 Email: mdemopoulos74@gmail.com
Rod & Nancy Wildman	2nd Mile Missions Bavaro, Dominican Republic	Carissa Metzger	Phone: 574-551-9509 Email: cmetzger@warsaw.cc
Ben & Krista Balke	Life Impact Grecia, Costa Rica	Mark Gregory	Phone: 574-312-8097 Email: mgregory7605@comcast.net
Jim Brenneman	Leadersource China & worldwide	N/A	N/A
	Heartline Pregnancy Center Warsaw, IN	N/A	N/A
Dickens Zziwa Ssenyonjo	Scripture Union of Uganda Kampala, Uganda	N/A	N/A

MISSIONS COMMITTEE CONTACTS

MEMBERS	PHONE	EMAIL
Mike Boze (Missions Pastor)	574-265-7470	mboze@warsaw.cc
Amy Baumann	574-527-6760	jaebaumann@gmail.com
Karen Gerst	574-527-3648	kkgerst@gmail.com
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