**Connecting with our Mission Partners**

***“How to” and Guidelines/Tips for Communicating***

*First Presbyterian Church’s Mission Council goal is for our mission partners to experience regular connectedness and prayer support from our church through virtual communications during this COVID19 crisis, and hopefully beyond this critical time.*

*Link to prayer requests:* [*https://firstpresevanston.org/missions/*](https://firstpresevanston.org/missions/)

Are you interested in connecting with one of our mission partners? Follow these easy steps.

1. Choose a mission partner found at this link:  [First Pres Mission Partners](https://firstpresevanston.org/mission-partners/)
2. Contact Kelly Levander by email: [klevander@firstpresevanston.org](mailto:klevander@firstpresevanston.org) to get contact information for the mission partner and your mission council liaison. Each mission partner will have a mission council liaison to assist with connecting and provide you with more specific information as needed.
3. Kelly will inform the mission council liaison of your interest, and she will share the mission partner’s contact information with you. Your mission council liaison will connect with you.
4. Start connecting with your mission partner! If you have any questions, just ask your mission council liaison.
5. Send prayer requests you receive to mission council liaison. Mission council liaison will forward requests on for review before sharing publicly. This is for the mission partner’s protection and privacy as needed in certain ministries and locations.

The role of our mission council liaisons is to assist in facilitating the initial connection/introduction and help with any questions you might have about the mission partner and communicating with them.

Things to consider when reaching out and connecting….

* Take a moment to learn about the partner’s community, country, culture, and organization they are affiliated with. Maybe even learn a few greetings in their language.
* Learn about their families, support networks, what gives them joy and hope, concerns, and challenges.
* Be respectful and polite, and be aware of cultural differences. Some live in very different conditions compared to our Evanston community. We can have different perspectives and opinions about certain things, but we are one in Christ - that needs to be the centralizing focus and unifying factor of our relationships.
* This is a partnership - we have much we can learn and share with our partners. There is much wisdom and insight from our experiences and lives to be shared both ways.
* Listen. Listen. Listen. As much as we may want to, we can’t always “fix” some things. You are providing terrific support by responsively listening.
* Look for unique and fun ways to connect other than emails - can you (“Face Time,” Google Hangout, Zoom, Skype….. ) with their family? Could your kids be penpals with their kids or someone else in their organization/church?
* Share pictures of your family, updates about First Pres and our community/country - similar things - joys, praises, concerns, prayer requests.
* Think of ways that members and regular attendees at First Pres could learn more about the mission partner you’re connecting with. Our goal is for all members/attendees to gain a better understanding and awareness of our mission partners and why these relationships are so very important for all of us.

Things you could ask (or share):

* How is their family? How is their community?
* Tell them about yourself. Introduce yourself and your family.
* Share about your connection to the church.
* Tell them what life is like for you /your family during this “shelter in place” time.
* An update on their ministry? People they are serving, projects they’re working on…..
* Share and receive praises, joys, and hopes.
* Prayer requests
* Your ideas!! If you have a great question - or unique way of interacting - let us know so we can share that!!
* Ask for permission to share prayer requests and information that they share.
* For some of our mission partners, for their safety, they may need to keep their identity, specific location, and organization private - not known to the general public. Ask how best to share - maybe by region or country and a general description of their ministry. I.e. “We have a partner in Egypt that needs prayer for their family and ministry to students.”

THANK YOU!!