

Westkirk Presbyterian Church

Evangelism Commission

Mission Statement

The vision of Westkirk Presbyterian Church is “To Know Christ and Make Him Known.”

To further that vision, the mission of the Evangelism Commission is **“TO MAKE CHRIST KNOWN AMONG THE NATIONS”**.

Evangelism Defined

Evangelism at Westkirk Presbyterian Church encompasses the sending, supporting, *and* going of God’s people. We trust the Holy Spirit to accompany us beyond the doors of our church as we proclaim God’s glory, announce the Good News, and seek to make disciples of Christ in our neighborhood, our nation, and around the world. Through Christ, God has reconciled us to Himself, and He has now given us, His Church, the ministry of reconciliation.

Biblical Basis for Evangelism

We have Good News!

“For God so loved the world, that he gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.” John 3:16-17

In response to the Good News, the people of Westkirk Presbyterian Church are called to...

“send, support, *and* go...”

“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” Romans 10:13-15

“... trust the Holy Spirit to accompany us beyond the doors of the church...”

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8

“... proclaim God’s glory,...”

“Sing to the Lord, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!” 1 Chronicles 16:23-24

“... announce the Good News,...”

“... but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.” 1 Peter 3:15

“... seek to make disciples of Christ in our neighborhood, our nation, and around the world.”

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:19-20

“the ministry of reconciliation.”

“All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 18-19

Our mission TO MAKE CHRIST KNOWN AMONG THE NATIONS is to be firmly grounded in these eight essential and non-negotiable doctrines of true Christianity:

- The authority and inerrancy of the Bible
- The reality of the Trinity
- The virgin birth
- The deity of Jesus Christ
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead
- The deity of the Holy Spirit
- Justification by faith alone in Christ alone
- The Church as the body of Christ.

Missions Strategy

1. Ministry Tasks and Types

Westkirk is evangelical in spirit in that we are committed to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20) given to the Church by our Lord, Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Evangelism Commission will lead the church in engaging non-believers in an encounter with Jesus Christ through these core tasks:

- 1) *Evangelism* - presenting the message of the Gospel with words that challenge all who hear to respond to the individual call of the Holy Spirit in repentance of sin, and faith in Jesus Christ.
- 2) *Mercy* - showing “the Father’s mercy to lost sinners, in the Gospel of his son, by the power of the Holy Spirit.”¹

¹ Philip J. Ryken and Noah J. Toly, *What is Mercy Ministry?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 17.

3) *Equipping* - encouraging emerging disciples toward greater leadership and future evangelistic and disciple-making ministry (Acts 4:11).

All missions efforts supported or performed by Westkirk must have the goal of accomplishing one or more of these core tasks.

2. Partnership

Westkirk Presbyterian Church believes our core ministry tasks will most successfully bear fruit in the context of partnership. There is a clear Biblical basis for partnership. In John 17:20-21, Jesus prays for unity for himself, his disciples and all future believers so “that they may all be one ... so that the world may believe”. In Philippians 1:3-5, Paul gives thanks to the church in Philippi for their “partnership in the gospel.”

We view a partnership to be “a relationship between two or more interdependent churches or organizations that pray, plan, leverage resources (financial, material and personal relationships), and intentionally work together to achieve the shared vision God has given them to advance His kingdom, in ways they could not accomplish alone.”² Recognizing that not all partnerships offer opportunity for individual or church-wide participation, we see partnering to have great potential for:

- reaching across cultural, language and economic class boundaries where we, by ourselves, may lack knowledge, financial resources and experience,
- sharing resources to more effectively advance God’s Kingdom, and
- providing a potential avenue for increased participation by the Westkirk congregation - another key element in our mission strategy.

3. Participation

We believe God is calling the people of Westkirk to be more proactive in going outside the comforts of the church to evangelize, show mercy and/or equip others to do the work of Gospel ministry. Indeed, participation in missions is an obedient response to Christ’s command (Matt 28:19-20), “a faithful thing” (3 John 1:5), and a privilege because we are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). In order to be Christ’s witnesses, “in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8), we encourage participation in ministry locally, nationally and globally.

² Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) ReachGlobal’s workshop “Developing a Missions Strategy That Fits Your Church”.

Allowing for the leading of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), the Westkirk Evangelism Commission will establish at least one local, one national, and one international partnership to provide intentional opportunities for the congregation to participate in:

- local outreach **at least three times annually,**
- short-term domestic mission trips **at least once per year,**
- short-term international trips **at least once every three years,**
- long-term missions **for candidates who are called by the Lord and equipped by the church.**

These intentional opportunities do not preclude members, attendees, Housekirks, or any other group within Westkirk Presbyterian Church from being involved in other ministries or preclude the Evangelism Commission from presenting such ministry opportunities. However, the Evangelism Commission is first committed to establishing 'all-church' partnerships that offer regular and on-going evangelistic opportunities for ministry to all.

Intentional opportunities must include (documented and approved by Session):

- 1) Predetermined internal (congregational involvement, financial support, etc.) and external (completed tasks or organizational support) goal(s), and a
- 2) Time frame for accomplishing the determined internal and external goals and evaluating their progress.

To encourage greater participation from the congregation in evangelistic ministry, the Evangelism Commission will also:

- 1) Regularly submit and review evangelistic, apologetic and missions-related curricula to the Discipleship Commission for inclusion on the list of approved Housekirk Bible Study Curricula. Approved curricula will be provided for the church resource center through the Evangelism Commission budget;
- 2) Promote and Encourage the use of evangelistic, apologetic, and missions-related curricula through the Housekirk ministry of the Discipleship Commission; and
- 3) Provide a teacher/facilitator and offer at least one independent, scheduled Housekirk study through one of these curricula each year.

4. Gifts and Talents

God's Word teaches that all Christians are blessed by the Holy Spirit with various spiritual gifts. God calls us to invest and exercise them for His glory (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11). We desire to see Westkirk use these spiritual gifts in evangelistic ministry. In order to encourage participation, the ministry passions of our people should be linked with their spiritual gifts when planning outreach and missions endeavors. To accomplish this, each year during "Missions Week" at Westkirk, the Evangelism Commission will provide a gift and interest inventory to the congregation at each of our various missions-related events (as well as to new member classes

throughout the year). The stated purpose of the inventory will be to collect information for the long-range planning of future outreach and missions activities.

5. Missionary Selection, Accountability, and Care

A. Missionary Selection

The missions activities of the local church are an extension of that church into their community, their nation, and the world. Therefore, Westkirk Presbyterian Church will exercise much care in selecting missionaries as well as mission projects or organizations to support.

1) Affiliation

Westkirk Presbyterian Church relies on long-standing and accredited mission sending agencies, and other Christian organizations or denominational bodies to provide specific and individual accountability and care to the workers we support. This care and accountability extends to physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial well-being of each missionary, as well as to the accomplishment of practical ministry goals and objectives and the ability to provide adequate health and security as deemed possible. Therefore, all missionaries we support, and all serving opportunities we provide must be organized through and affiliated with a reputable missions sending or other Christian service organization that is also accredited through the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA).

2) Compatibility

Local congregations carry out the work of the Great Commission in part, by extension through supporting missionaries as well as engaging in missions-related serving opportunities. Therefore, missionaries selected for support by Westkirk Presbyterian Church must meet similar criteria that members of the church affirm upon being received into membership. By interview with a selected committee of Evangelism Commission members, candidates for support must give a credible profession of faith and trust in God through Jesus Christ alone, and demonstrate a regular, consistent and growing prayer and devotional life.

Since missionary selection should also be done with a similar concern for calling and giftedness by the Holy Spirit for ministry as the pastor of the local church, missionaries selected for support by Westkirk Presbyterian Church must also give testimony to the selection committee of the calling, giftedness, experience, and training they have received that uniquely qualifies them for their particular missions assignment. Preference will be given to missionaries and missions organizations that are broadly Reformed, giving affirmation to one of the following creeds: The Westminster Standards, the Belgic Confessions/Heidelberg Catechism, or the Second London Baptist Confession.

3) Ministry Tasks and Types

The Evangelism Commission will recommend and partner with individuals, families, and organizations that are compatible with the **Ministry Tasks and Types** defined in part 1 of our Missions Strategy. These partners must either be directly involved in evangelism, mercy and/or equipping ministry, or allow the members and attendees of Westkirk to pursue evangelism, mercy, or equipping through partnership with their mission organization.

B. Missionary Accountability

We believe there is scriptural support for the idea that missionaries sent and supported by the local church should remain accountable to the local church (Acts 14:27; 18:22). The Evangelism Commission of Westkirk Presbyterian Church is responsible to know the informational accountability requirements of each missionary's sending organization, to receive such communications at least quarterly, and to communicate that missionary's story, including joys, challenges, financial needs, and prayer requests to the congregation on a regular basis. Westkirk Presbyterian Church reserves the right to sever a commitment to any missionary or missions organization if reporting is not sufficient, reliable, or truthful.

C. Missionary Care

The importance of caring for those who labor to deliver the Gospel message is evident in New Testament scripture. Prayer (Acts 13:2-3; 1 Th 5:25; 2 Th 3:1) and other kinds of support (2 Cor 1:15-16; Rom 15:24) are critical functions of the local, supporting church and essential for sustaining our missionaries in the field.

In appropriately caring for our missionaries through the local church, the Evangelism Commission will pursue a three-fold method of care: Prayer, Communication, and Gifts.

1) Prayer

Prayer is the single most important avenue of care for our missionaries. The Evangelism Commission is responsible for seeing to it that each missionary supported by Westkirk Presbyterian Church is regularly and consistently prayed for. This will include:

- A. Procuring prayer requests from each missionary,
- B. Filtering (when necessary) and relaying prayer requests and missionary communications, and
- C. Following-up with the missionaries.

2) Communication

In addition to holding missionaries and their sending agencies accountable, regular communication is vital to the ongoing relationships between Westkirk Presbyterian Church and her missionaries afield. The Evangelism Commission is responsible for encouraging regular and consistent, two-way communications with each of our missionaries. We will utilize:

- A. Communication through media, such as: written prayer support letters and updates, phone conversations and live video messaging.
 - B. Communication in person, such as: annual visits from missionaries to Westkirk and from Westkirk staff, lay leaders or teams to missionaries on the field.
- 3) Gifts

Celebrating together birthdays, anniversaries, births, graduations, weddings and other special occasions is an integral part of any thriving and caring relationship. To encourage these caring relationships with our missionaries and thank them for their ministry on our behalf, the Evangelism Commission will celebrate milestones and regularly thank our missionaries by budgeting for cards, small tokens/gifts, and postage.

Westkirk Presbyterian Church will also offer financial assistance to our missionaries in emergency situations when funds are available and needs arise.

6. Commission Education and Growth in Missions

Westkirk Presbyterian Church values spiritual growth through intentional, Bible-centered education. The Evangelism Commission commits to an annual plan of growth and renewal in education for its members.

Each November, the Evangelism Commission will preview the educational opportunities and resources that are available for the next year. They will also review the Evangelism Commission monies that are currently available and the budget for the following year. Support for Commission Education and Growth must be included in the annual budget, however, the monies appropriated for commission education and growth from the commission budget should be modest.

An annual growth and renewal plan might include one or more of the following:

- 1) Reading and scheduled discussion of a classic or current missions related book or essay(s),
- 2) Participating in a local missions workshop or seminar,

- 3) Inviting a speaker, teacher or leader in the field of missions to engage commission members (congregation or community), and
- 4) Attending or hosting a class utilizing strong missions or evangelistic curricula, such as *Perspectives in World Missions* or *Bridges* (Crescent Project).

7. Celebrating and Affirming Missions

In order to enlarge the vision of missions in the hearts and minds of church members and attendees, the Evangelism Commission will celebrate the Kingdom work God has and is accomplishing locally, nationally, and globally through the ministry and ministry partners of Westkirk Presbyterian Church.

This celebration will include an evangelism emphasis during the regularly scheduled services of worship at least one Sunday each calendar year. A qualified, special speaker may be invited to preach from the Bible for this occasion. In conjunction with this “Missions Sunday,” other events will be organized to offer congregation members, attendees, and their guests, opportunities to interact personally and in smaller groups with Westkirk missionaries or other ministry leaders. On this Sunday, the Evangelism Commission is given latitude to work with the staff and Worship Commission in developing the elements of the worship services. A special theme may be promoted for this celebration.

Whenever missionaries gather at Westkirk, the Evangelism Commission will purposefully plan opportunities for missionary accountability and care. *See section 5 above.*

Celebrating evangelism and missionaries need not be limited to one week per year. Whenever possible, the Evangelism Commission will arrange for visiting missionaries to have opportunities to report, speak, or otherwise engage our congregation. Planned in advance, this may take place during regular times of study or fellowship.