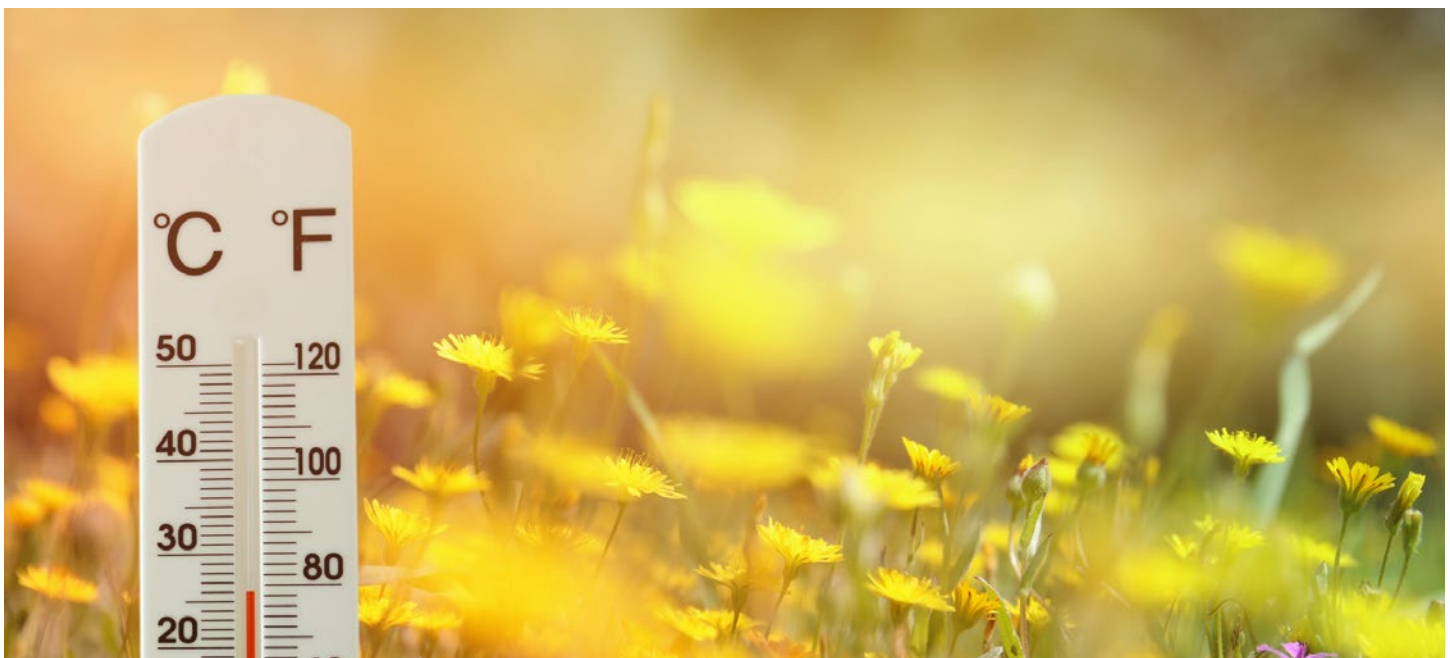


POSTINGS

articles for missions mobilizers



January 2026 | Vol. 21 | Issue 1 | by Ellen Livingood

Raise Your Church's Missions Temperature

**Creating goals that
engage more people**

“Our church is missions minded!” church leaders often said. Or they lamented, “I wish our church was more missions minded.” The term seems to have fallen out of favor, maybe because it often was nebulous and because a mindset is inadequate unless it leads to action.

Funding designated for missions was a primary measurement of missions mindedness. Yet today, the average church attendee has no idea of how much of their giving goes to missions, especially if it is bundled into the general budget.

Sending and supporting workers frequently was used as a measure. But beyond sheer numbers, the significance of fielding missionaries must be linked to an assessment of how strategically they are deployed, what the attrition rate is, and how dedicated the larger congregation is to the sending and sustaining process.

Prayer was, appropriately, included as an aspect of being missions minded. However,

if proof is the same 8-10 people meeting to pray for missionaries, it provides little evidence that the whole church has a prayer commitment.

Attendance at a missions event sometimes gauged missions passion. This marker was easier to measure, but there was often no direct connection from the event to a greater love for lost people or a pathway for the average attendee to get involved.

Maybe these inadequate measures are one reason the term, “missions-minded church,” is heard less often. But the question remains, how can we gauge a church’s missions temperature, and perhaps more important, how can we proactively set goals to engage the entire congregation more missionally and measure our progress in doing so?

HOW FOUR CHURCHES EXPRESS “MISSIONS-MINDEDNESS” PURPOSE AND GOALS IN 2026 TERMS

Lancaster (PA) Evangelical Free Church

The goal: Engage well with our global and local partners, and equip and involve each person in our church family for gospel ministry to those who don’t yet know Jesus.

The measure: Pastor of Mobilization Bob Travis describes it this way: “We are convinced that we can’t separate outreach/evangelism from discipleship if we really want to create a missions culture where our people are reaching out to those who don’t yet know Jesus.

An action step this month is bringing in Kevin King, author of *Living Out Loud*, to equip our church family to have spiritual conversations with nonbelievers. Along with equipping sessions like this, we will create intentional sharing opportunities beyond the church walls. Because churches celebrate what they value most, we hope to celebrate when our people are making conversations about Christ a natural part of their daily lives.

Appleton (WI) Alliance Church

The goal: Connect the world with God and one another.

The measure: Executive Pastor of Outreach and Care Mark Byrom explains: “We analyze things like how many people are participating in a small group where discipleship is taking place. We look

at how many short-term teams we have sent. We also consider how many of our people are going through leadership training, and specific ways we are investing into both local and global partnerships. We compare to prior years and assess why these numbers are going up or down.”

Valley Community Baptist Church, Avon, CT

The goal: Embrace the Great Commission by praying faithfully, giving generously, and going courageously.

The measure: Outreach Pastor Asher Sarjent says: “We have annual goals for the number of people who sign up to pray for our

missionaries, how many family units are giving, and how many have gone on a short-term trip or are in our missions pipeline. For our missions week, we look specifically at these numbers and have attendance goals for each event. We share our giving goal during this week and tally the number of commitments and special gifts received.”

Crossroads Christian Church, Evansville, IN

The goal: We want to see the Lord warm the hearts and minds of congregants to the joy and adventure of being part of what we call an Advocacy Team focused on an issue, a region, or a people group.

The measure: Global Engagement Lead Matthew Philip has some concrete measurements: “In

terms of quantity, we will evaluate the number of our people in Advocacy Teams, and the annual growth or attrition in these areas. In qualitative measurement, we will ask our Advocacy Team members how many names and stories they know involving not just their missionaries but the indigenous people in the arena their Advocacy Team serves. This will highlight how deeply they are learning and connecting with what God is doing there.”

TAKE GOAL-SETTING SERIOUSLY

- 1 **Set goals for raising your congregation's missions temperature.** Of course you want to have increased global/local impact, but unless your people are constantly expanding and renewing their passion and involvement, missions will become perfunctory. Ask God to give you creativity in defining the “how” so that you are measuring quality as well as quantity. For example, how do short-term trip goals not just send more people but result in long-term, cross-cultural relationships “here” and “there”?
- 2 **Create memorable vision statements and concrete, annual goals.** Is your overall purpose captured in a memorable phrase or short sentence? If it is very long, it won't be remembered. Are your goals specific enough that you will know how well you achieved them by the end of the year? Does talking about these goals naturally popcorn fresh ideas about how to reach them?
- 3 **Identify several action steps for each goal—steps that excite your team and stimulate creativity.** Intentionally include your Millennials and Gen Zers as you seek ideas. What ignites their imagination and elicits excitement about helping to make it happen?
- 4 **Share your proposed goals and activities with your lead pastor before finalizing them.** Do your goals and plans fit with the overall direction of your church in the next year? Could they be better synchronized? Will achieving your goals help forward what your church as a whole wants to do?
- 5 **Celebrate success by sharing stories of people and ministries that have been changed as a result of your church's higher missions temperature.** Missions goals that require life change can take time to see “wins” and generate excitement. Your congregation and your missions leadership team need to celebrate concrete progress and spiritual growth in living missionally.



GOALS AND ACTION-STEP EXAMPLES

- **Engage 15% of our previously unengaged attendees in a meaningful, personal contact with a global worker.**

Potential action steps: Each time one of our missionaries visits for a meal or overnight, we will recruit a family to host them who has never done so before. We will create a sheet with ideas to reduce fears, suggest questions to ask their guests, etc. Afterward, we will debrief with each host to see how it went and identify next steps to connect them further with this global worker. Alternately, we will ask an experienced host to include another family who has not yet hosted to join them for dinner with the missionary.

- **Become more proactive caregivers for our global workers.**

Potential action steps: We will designate funds to send two people to a missionary care conference this year. When our members return, we will facilitate one or more sessions where they share ideas and tools with others who want to provide good care for global workers. [Here is one East Coast and one West Coast possibility: **Care Providers for Missionaries Conference** Spring '26 in the Northwest; PTM (**Pastoral Training in Missionary Care**—NOT just for pastors) October in North Carolina. Others are offered around the world.]

- **Improve the quality of our short-term team ministries so that each participant returns with a commitment and pathway to living missionally here at home.**

Potential action steps: We will recruit an ad hoc team to review the Standards of

Excellence for Short-Term Missions from **MissionExcellence**. They will be asked to come back to our leadership team with specific recommendations for post-trip follow-up designed to sustain witness and service here at home.

- **Implement two or three ways to help our global workers communicate better with our congregation.**

Potential action steps: We will consider sending a small team of college students to help one of our missionaries make a video that captures their purpose and key activities. And we will share with all of our global workers examples of letters or emails that really engage our people and explain why, encouraging them to set their own goals for enriched communication with folks “back home.”

- **Make our missions festival something every family wants to attend.**

Potential action steps: We will include a wildly different family activity in this year’s festival. We could ask one of our farmers to create a missions corn maze with the involvement of our college and career group. Or we could sponsor a family picnic that includes families from a nearby immigrant community who as part of the event will teach us an ethnic dance from their country.

- **Expose and engage 20% more of our people in strategic local ministries than are currently involved.**

Potential action steps: We will organize a Saturday morning bus tour of three local

ministries that are making a difference to hear firsthand how God is changing lives. A leader at each stop will briefly answer the question, “What could you do if you had more volunteers and/or funds?” We will use the ride back to the church to brainstorm ideas about how individuals or our church could fast forward these ministries. Follow-up will provide participants with opportunities to help us put one or two of those ideas into action.

- **See half of our small groups engaging members in specific global prayer in their group and individual prayer habits.**

Potential action steps: We will recruit a creative teacher to help us develop an informal Missions Prayer 101 introduction and then offer it as a one-off session for each of our small groups. We will keep it simple to encourage those just beginning to explore global prayer by including illustrations of short, practical prayers and demonstrating how to read a prayer letter and turn it into simple prayer requests. We will introduce one prayer app and also model how to use the children’s book, *Window on the World*, to help families pray for global people.

- **Create an environment where generosity, especially for global/local impact, is a natural and exciting part of normal Christian living regardless of age or economic resources.**

Potential action steps: Because our congregation needs to learn from role models, we will develop a series of short videos in which church members describe how they have personally grown in generosity to missions. If individuals are hesitant to share, we will help them think about how to focus their story on God, not themselves. Or instead we could ask them to write out their story and have someone else read it anonymously. The testimonies on **The Finish Line podcast** will be inspiration, although our stories will need to be far more brief.

None of these ideas may exactly fit your church currently, but do they stimulate your thinking about concrete goals and action steps that could begin to raise your church’s missions temperature? We would love to hear what 2026 ideas you have! Please share them with us [here](#).

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