



OUR CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION

*The Southern California Nevada Conference
Of the United Church of Christ*

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WHAT IS OCWM? Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) is the primary way ministry is funded in the United Church of Christ beyond the local church.

WHO IS THE 'OUR'? The local churches who know that they can be stronger in ministry for Jesus Christ by doing some things with other local churches! That basic idea has evolved into local churches coming together to create Conferences. There are 38 Conferences in the United Church of Christ. Most Conferences are subdivided into Associations, smaller groupings of congregations to do special work like licensing and ordaining ministers. Your congregation is part of the Southern California Nevada Conference, a covenant community of 128 congregations (plus 5 new church starts).

WHO PROVIDES THE MONEY FOR OCWM? Again the answer is local churches. In order to do the work congregations want to do together, they give a portion of their own budgets to the Conference to make many shared ministries possible. Local churches are encouraged to give 10% of their operating budget to OCWM.

WHEN OUR CHURCH GIVES TO OCWM, WHAT HAPPENS TO THAT MONEY? Every year the Conference holds an Annual Gathering at which delegates from local churches approve a budget for the use of OCWM (and other income, like interest income). The Southern California Nevada Conference has approved that 40% of all OCWM received will be sent to make possible our national United Church of Christ ministries while 60% stays in the Conference.

SO WHAT IS THE MONEY SENT TO THE NATIONAL UCC USED FOR? Many things! Here are just a few but your congregation can obtain a detailed brochure which tells you more or you may check out the UCC.org website. But here's a sample:

- Sending missionaries, working in partnership with churches in 85 countries around the world
- Justice and peace ministries, advocacy for human rights
- Refugee resettlement
- Disaster preparedness and response
- Interfaith and ecumenical dialogue
- Creating Christian Education materials for children, youth and adults
- Starting new churches
- Resources for all aspects of congregational life

- Supporting educational ministries on campuses and seminaries
- International social and economic development
- Keeping UCC members and others informed through United Church News, the ucc.org website, and God is Still Speaking resources
- Leadership training in stewardship, evangelism and more

THEN WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE PORTION OF OCWM THAT STAYS IN THE CONFERENCE?

Again, many things! A large part of the Conference budget provides staff services to and for local churches. Your staff work with the Board of Directors, Association and Conference committees and other leaders to:

- Support new congregations and congregations seeking new vitality
- Provide support for pastors
- Provide resources of all kinds for local churches from church finances to global ministry opportunities;
- Leadership training
- Ministry of reconciliation in times of church conflict
- Assistance to local churches searching for new pastors
- Youth ministry
- Involvement in and support of ecumenical, interfaith and advocacy organization in our region
- Send Conference delegates to General Synod (biannually)
- And more!

The details of your Conference budget are available to you at any time (www.scnuc.org)

DOES THE CONFERENCE RECEIVE OTHER FUNDING? Yes, this Conference also asks congregations to give \$12/member as ‘per capita’ giving. Some of that amount is given to support the work of our four associations while the rest helps provide the needed ‘infrastructure’ for the life of the Conference (office space, technology, programs, etc). The Conference also receives some giving from individuals, interest from investments, endowments and assets from closed churches. The Conference also retains part of the Strengthen the Church special offering (see below).

SO WHAT ARE THE SPECIAL UCC OFFERINGS? Our Church’s Wider Mission giving is called ‘basic support’. But most congregations also give to what is called ‘special support’ by inviting members to give to one or all of the four other special offerings:

- **One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)** Usually received in the spring, One Great Hour of Sharing is an offering dedicated to global ministries of economic development, disaster relief, refugee settlement, etc.
- **Strengthen the Church.** Usually received around Pentecost, 50% of the offering is retained in the Conference while the rest is sent to the national church. In the Conference and national, STC funds go to support new churches, congregational vitality programs, youth/young adult ministries, multiracial/multicultural projects, etc.
- **Neighbors in Need.** This offering is taken in the fall, near the Thanksgiving season (it replaced and expanded the former Family Thank Offering). Funds from NIN support justice and peace ministries, racial justice projects, community development projects, etc.
- **The Christmas Fund.** Gathered during the Christmas season (though some congregations take it in the summer because so many other projects happen at Christmas), this fund gives assistance to retired UCC clergy and lay workers whose pension incomes do not meet their needs.

People, projects and congregations in our very own Conference have benefited from all of these offerings in a variety of ways. A dozen retirees in our Conference will receive income support from the Christmas Fund, congregations may apply for Neighbors in Need funds for local projects, Strengthen the Church funds are assisting our 8 new church projects, and One Great Hour of Sharing funds help train UCC folks in this Conference for disaster response and can provide immediate funding to a local church impacted by a local disaster. So even though some of the income from these offerings go to share the love of Jesus Christ in other places in this country and around the world, they also benefit us and our near neighbors.

And remember: giving your members a chance to give to these offerings will not reduce your local financial support and may even encourage more giving because it feels so good!

SO WHAT IS A ‘5 for 5’ CHURCH? That’s a church that gives to OCWM and all four of the special offerings. We love to celebrate 5 for 5 congregations!

***Thank you for thinking about
OCWM and our 4 Special offerings!***
Still have questions? Contact your Conference office 626.798.8082