

OCWM: An Explanation

Part One

At our Annual Gathering a few weeks ago, there were some questions regarding what OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) is, what it supports, and so on. I have decided to devote some space in the Nebraska Beacon to give a 5 part overview of OCWM.

OCWM, simply put, is the basic support that churches send to the wider settings of the United Church of Christ. If you or your church sent money to the Conference that wasn't for some specific purpose, it is OCWM. It is initially split in two parts: the bulk (85% in Nebraska) stays with the Conference. The remainder goes to the national setting of the United Church of Christ, which has four separate ministries.

Today, we will focus on the Conference. OCWM funding from churches form the bulk of the Nebraska Conference's budget. It pays for our staff, facilities, youth camp, education and virtually all other Conference-sponsored ministries and events. In other words: if it's got the Conference's name on it, OCWM probably paid for it.

OCWM: Explained

Part Two

This is the second installment of our OCWM: Explained series. In Part One, we looked at how your OCWM giving is used in the Conference. This week, we focus on the first of the four ministries of the general setting: the **Office of General Ministries**. This office has three general components: The General Minister and President, General Synod, and Communications.

First, the OGM includes the General Minister and President of the UCC. The GM&P represents the UCC in ecumenical gatherings, and serves as a facilitator in many capacities, including the Council of Conference Ministers, seminaries, and various Conferences and associations. The idea is to encourage cross-resourcing, coordination, and general discussion on how to build a more vibrant church.

Second, the OGM manages the biannual General Synod. General Synod makes it possible for UCC members from all over the country to converge as one church family, to educate, and be educated, and decide on important matters of church policy.

Finally, General Ministries is responsible for the general church's communications. Falling under OGM's purview are the national website and all of its attendant resources, the general setting's presence on social media, and the issuing of regular newsletters, devotionals and "e-zines."

If you have any questions about this, or any other aspect of OCWM, do not hesitate to contact the Conference office. Next week, we will look at **Local Church Ministries**

OCWM: Explained

Part Three

This is the third installment of our OCWM: Explained series. In Part One, we looked at how your OCWM giving is used in the Conference, and Part Two focused on the Office of General ministries. This week, we will focus on **Local Church Ministries**.

Local Church Ministries encompasses the General Setting's services to individual congregations. LCM can be further divided into 6 categories: evangelism, stewardship and church finance, worship and education, publications, resources and distribution, parish life and leadership, and church building and loan fund.

Evangelism focuses on church planting, revitalization, outreach, and welcome.

Stewardship and Church Finance shares stewardship information and best practices with conferences and churches. Our More Money for Mission series this summer used resources provided by Stewardship and Church Finance.

Worship and Education creates resources for congregational worship and music, including sermon resources for pastors and church service examples.

Publications, Resources, and Distribution include all items and resources sold on the UCC's website.

Parish Life and Leadership provides resources for those considering or pursuing authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ.

The **Church Building and Loan Fund** shares best financial practices with churches and helps fund new churches and improvements with low interest loans.

OCWM: Explained

Part Four

This is the fourth installment of our OCWM: Explained series. In Part One, we looked at how your OCWM giving is used in the Conference, Part Two focused on the Office of General ministries, and in Part Three, we examined Local Church Ministries. This week, we explore **Wider Church Ministries**.

Wider Church Ministries consists of two major divisions: Disaster Ministries and Global Ministries.

Disaster Ministries

The UCC's Disaster Ministries is one of the more public faces of the United Church of Christ. DM's national division responds to disasters throughout the United States, as it did in offering recovery grants to churches affected by the Pilger tornado.

One Great Hour of Sharing is an ecumenical partnership that responds to disasters and conflict around the world. Through OGHS, the UCC and 8 other denominational partners provide more than \$20 million annually in assistance to those who have suffered from the effects of natural disasters, wars, famine, and extreme poverty.

Global Ministries

Global Ministries is the international ecumenical missionary arm of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It is present on every populated continent except Australia, seeking to *"share the Good News of Jesus Christ by joining with global and local partners to work for justice, reconciliation and peace."* *Global Ministries workers are involved in many different fields including education, advocacy, interpreting, and other special projects.*

The Nebraska Conference's global partner is the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana. The Global Ministries missionary there is Kristine Tisinger, who visited Nebraska last summer. Kristine is presently teaching English to teenage mothers at the EP Church's headquarters in Ho.

In the next Beacon, we will wrap up our OCWM series with **Part 5: Justice and Witness Ministries.**

OCWM: Explained

Part Five

This is the fifth and final installment of our OCWM: Explained series. This week, we will be exploring **Justice and Witness Ministries.**

J&W Ministries is the advocacy arm of the United Church of Christ. This ministry advocates peace and justice on a variety of issues locally, nationally, and globally. Efforts include letter writing campaigns, meeting with local and national leaders, and even lawsuits.

J&W Ministries also offers justice training and education. Learning centers such as the UCC Environmental Justice Center and Centro Romero lead seminars on issues ranging from globalization to immigration.