

Newsletter Article: Why Care about OCWM?

for use in a print or email newsletter during campaign

By Mayflower UCC, Minnesota Conference

“What is OCWM?” could well be a question in a United Church of Christ trivia contest, a question many of us at [name of congregation] might not be able to answer correctly. Acronyms aside, OCWM (Our Church’s Wider Mission) is an important part of the covenant which binds individual members, congregations, Conferences, and the National setting together to form the United Church of Christ.

OCWM is the annual contribution congregations make to the UCC, through our local Minnesota Conference, to fund all the ways we strive together to make a more just world for all. OCWM dollars fund the wide range of resources and services that undergird the ministry we do together at [name of congregation] from providing the foundation for the search and call process that brings us our clergy leaders to nourishing and eventually authorizing our members preparing for ordained ministry, from developing and making available a wide variety of resources for justice work and faith formation to providing training and support for those using the resources, from raising up prophetic voices on the state and national level to facilitating structures and alliances that amplify the justice work of [name of congregation]’s members.

As a congregation rich in resources, both financial and human, [name of congregation] could find it easy to minimize its relation to the wider church and be a beacon on our own little hill, but by maintaining a strong commitment to the UCC, both by strong support of OCWM and by the efforts of individual [name of congregation] members actively engaged in wider church ministries, [name of congregation] honors its covenant. With the assistance of OCWM, members of the UCC gave scholarships to 32 theological and medical students in China and Africa, offered 87 mission trips within the USA (attended by 3,354 volunteers), developed the White Privilege: Lets Talk curriculum that was downloaded 3,475 times from the UCC website, endorsed and credentialed 55 military chaplains, provided micro-loans in Africa that assisted 350 families and so much more. OCWM reflects the wisdom that “In isolation, no single UCC congregation can be the church the world needs today. To be that world-changing church, we work together through Our Church’s Wider Mission to support and inspire each other.”

Other special offerings (Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, The Christmas Fund) provide opportunities for individual members to contribute to the work of the wider UCC and its ecumenical partners, OCWM is the vehicle for [name of congregation] as a congregation to live out its covenantal promise of support. So when you see OCWM as a line item in [name of congregation]’s budget, rejoice both because you know what OCWM is and, more importantly, because you belong, through [name of congregation], to a much larger and more world-changing church, the United Church of Christ.