

Our Church's Wider Mission

Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) is the name of the congregational gifts that support wider United Church of Christ ministry in Conference and National settings. Why give to OCWM? Because these gifts make it possible for our Church to emphasize God's continuing testament in the world, to support the extravagant welcome of our churches and to change lives.

The Missouri Mid-South Conference adopted an OCWM goal for 2019 of \$583,188.00. Of this amount, 80% is retained for use within the Missouri Mid-South Conference and of that amount, 7.8% is allocated for use at MoVal and 5.9% is allocated for use at Shannondale.

The OCWM Covenanted Ministry seeks to encourage intentional annual growth in all congregational mission giving but especially OCWM growth. The Covenanted Ministry supports OCWM promotion and development in each congregation through personal visits with church councils and mission committees, providing mission moments during worship, printed materials and other resources. We also encourage the use of the 2019 stewardship theme materials, *The Way – "I am the way..."* based on John 14:6.

The Covenanted Ministry seeks to engage each local church in conversations leading to the establishment of a budget line item for OCWM or to an understanding of the other unique ways congregations make decision regarding OCWM support. Through its individual members, the Covenanted Ministry attempts to say, "Thank you" to you for your gifts as often as we can. We seek to send a quarterly email thank you for your gifts as well as offer expressions of support and appreciation for total annual giving from each local church.

Our Church's Wider Mission dollars carry on church-wide ministries we cannot do by ourselves. The wider church helps us reach out to the whole world while informing and helping us participate outside the footprint of our local faith communities. Through these connections, our ministry is bigger than when we work by ourselves. We become part of the wider Body of Christ. We connect to each other in a wonderful process that informs and changes us as our ministry serves others in Christ's name.

Beyond Our Church's Wider Mission, there are *four other Special Mission Offerings*. Each provides valuable programming resources to the ministries of the United Church of Christ. Those four are:

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) - an ecumenical offering which supports development work around the world as well as national and international disaster relief work.

Strengthen the Church - an offering to support new church starts, church renewal and leadership development (scholarships). The income from this offering is shared with our Conference and the Missouri Mid-South Conference keeps a portion of this offering for new church starts and leadership development within the Conference.

Neighbors in Need (NIN)- this offering is used to address injustice in the United States and for grants to provide change which reduces suffering in our world.

Christmas Fund/Veterans of the Cross – this offering provides assistance to retired clergy and lay leaders with pension supplements, health insurance grants and emergency assistance.

Thank you for sharing the journey and for sharing a portion of the resources you have been given by God in support of Our Church's Wider Mission and these four Special Mission Offerings. Churches who give to all five offerings are celebrated as "Five for Five" congregations.

The OCWM Covenanted Ministry membership continues to evolve. The membership at this time is noted below.

Faithfully,

Karen Aitkens

Max Bade

Bill Biedenstein

Lorin Cope

Norma Klemme

Jeanne Lischer

David Mehl

David Poe

Ginny Brown Daniel