

How Our Mutual Financial Covenant Supports the Ministries of the United Church of Christ

By definition, Covenant - (noun) cov·e·nant | \ 'kəv-nənt - is an agreement or promise that binds two or more parties together. This voluntary 'binding together' is unique to the UCC denomination, and is unlike the hierarchical structures of other mainline churches. In Minnesota, both *churches* and *individuals* enter into a **financial** covenant with the Conference to voluntarily support ministries locally, statewide, nationally, and globally.

YOUR CHURCH'S FINANCIAL COVENANT. Church support is twofold:

- **Per Capital Annual Dues.** Each year, congregations are asked to commit \$10 per person in their church towards supporting the basic covenantal ministries of the Minnesota Conference. 100% of these funds are used for general church and clergy administration and recordkeeping, including congregational support during leadership transition, assistance with interim ministry, pastoral search and call process help, and supporting pastors navigate their ministry in your church.
- **Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM).** OCWM is the denominational connection with the ministries of the local church, the Conference and the national setting of the United Church of Christ. *65.25% of your church's gifts to OCWM stay in Minnesota* for the *basic support* of the work of your Conference. 34.75% is shared with our UCC national setting and global ministries. In 2021, 91 of Minnesota's 121 churches gave to OCWM at a rate between 1% - 15% of their operating expenses, with an average of 3.4% .

Examples of OCWM services and ministries in Minnesota include:

- Outdoor ministry
- Lay leadership education, training, and support
- Faith formation
- Ecumenical partnerships
- Congregational visioning, growth, support, and transitions
- Clergy education, training, and support
- Social justice initiatives

Together, **Per Capita** and **OCWM** gifts support the vital ministries of the Minnesota Conference.



Each January, churches are asked to pledge their support to both **Per Capita Annual Dues** and **Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)**. Pledge forms are sent to churches (and are available online), and should be returned to the Conference office shortly after the congregation's annual meeting for Conference planning purposes.

INDIVIDUALS COVENANT FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF MINISTRIES, TOO. Church members and friends can give directly to national UCC ministries that they choose through special offerings:

- **Strengthen the Church (STC).** The STC offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the UCC to build up the denomination by supporting leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. The Minnesota Conference splits the gifts received 50/50 with the UCC's national setting. The funds raised *The STC offering is generally received on Pentecost Sunday.*
- **One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS).** The UCC responds to humanitarian and development needs in the world through work with local churches, conferences, international partners and organizations. OGHS provides sources of clean water, food, education, health care, small business micro-credit loans, advocacy, resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, emergency relief and rehabilitation as well as disaster preparedness and response. *The OGHS offering is generally received in March.*
- **Neighbors in Need (NIN)** supports ministries of justice and compassion central to the UCC's identity throughout the United States. NIN assists local churches with worship and faith forming publications, resources, education, and grants for projects that are seeking peace and building vibrant faith communities that are welcoming to all. *The NIN offering is generally received in October.*
- **The Christmas Fund** is a special mission offering that individuals in congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. This *December offering* is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards.

Together, **Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), The Christmas Fund, One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, and Neighbors in Need,** make up the UCC's **5 for 5 recognition program.** **5 for 5** churches are recognized nationally, and locally in the Conference's annual Generosity Report published in the *COMMAntary* e-newsletter.



YOUR CONFERENCE IS HERE TO SUPPORT YOUR STEWARDSHIP EFFORTS. Watch for stewardship best practices by signing up for the weekly e-newsletter, **COMMAntary** to learn about seminars, webinars, tips, and one-on-one consultation opportunities all year long.