

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



GO THE EXTRA MILE.

2016 PLANNING & RESOURCE GUIDE



One Great Hour
OF SHARING

photo by Paul Jeffrey

700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100 | 216.736.3215 | www.ucc.org/oghs | 1



Ruth 1: Walk the Extra Mile

One Great Hour of Sharing

By José Francisco Morales Torres and Amanda Garcia

Table of Contents

Sample Letter—Theme interpretation	3
OGHS Preparation and Instructions	3
Worship Resources	4–5
Sermon Starter	6
Children's Sermon	7
Children's Sunday School Activity	8
Intergenerational Activity	8
Mission Moments	9–10
Sharing Calendar	11
Contact Information	12



Sample Letter & Preparation

Walk the Extra Mile

In a world where communities are being displaced by the catastrophes of war, famine, and natural disasters, the Church is called to reclaim the spiritual discipline of solidarity. Christians are summoned to adopt and live out a “theology of *acompañamiento* [accompaniment],” in the words of the theologian Roberto Goizueta. As natural, economic, and political forces disrupt and uproot communities, the Church is called to stand in solidarity with those who seek to move beyond the trauma of displacement toward a promise of healing and peace.

The story of Ruth is ultimately about this solidarity. Naomi and Ruth were very much like today’s refugees: they never *chose* to move from country to country, rather, it was *imposed* upon them by forces beyond their control. They lived in a society where the patriarchal economy meant that a woman’s livelihood was *entirely* dependent on her male relationships (father, husband, even son). Yet when that system failed them, Ruth chose solidarity with Naomi over despair, and accompanies her mother-in-law to pursue a livelihood for both of them.

This option for accompaniment is truly a biblical principle that saturates the pages of scripture. From God who is present with Hagar in the desert and calls her to remain close to her son Ishmael (Genesis 21), to the Parable of the Sheep and Goats where the criterion for judgement is that of compassionate accompaniment (Matthew 25), to St. Paul’s exhortation that Christians should “rejoice with those who rejoice [and] weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15). This promise to walk together is mutual and reciprocal, where both parties are in need, and both experience the real power that emerges from the spiritual discipline of solidarity.

Ruth’s promise to Naomi defines what solidarity authentically entails, and it stands as a challenge for Christians today to walk with refugees as they build new homes in strange lands.

Through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering, we, as the body of Christ, have opportunity and power to help those who are living in despair as refugees. If refugees had the choice to return home, many would not have a place to return because their home most likely has been destroyed—either burned, severely damaged, or is still an unsafe place to live.

This year as you consider your gift to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering, for one moment, think of what it would be like to not have a place to call home, and then make your very best gift. Let us make Ruth’s promise our own. Let us live out the call of solidarity with all people, especially those displaced by disaster, war, and famine.

Thank you!

—*Interpretation by José Francisco Morales Torres*

OGHS Preparation and Instructions

OPEN YOUR HEART by praying for guidance and becoming familiar with the materials in your packet. Additional quantities of items are available and can add excitement to your promotion. Organize a small group or team to share the resources with and discuss your promotional plans.

GENERATE EXCITEMENT around the offering. Create a buzz by announcing a goal at least one month in advance. Involve key people in setting your goal and have them spread the word. Include a pastoral letter on the offering in your newsletter or on your Facebook page. Include the offering envelope in your bulletin or mailing. Use the bulletin inserts. Remind people of the offering at weekly services and gatherings.

HELP YOUR CONGREGATION LEARN something new about the offering. Use the sample adult and children’s sermon, stories, skits, and video resources. Make the offering a special part of the service on the suggested offering date, March 6, 2016. Additional resources are available for your use at: www.ucc.org/oghs/resources.

SHARE YOUR GOOD NEWS by announcing the amount received for the offering in worship and in your church newsletter. Thank the congregation for every gift, whether big or small. Celebrate reaching your goal or let members know they can give to One Great Hour of Sharing if you fall short of reaching your goal.

- Send your congregation’s gift to your UCC Conference Office making sure it is clearly marked “OGHS.”
- A Week-by-Week guide to promoting OGHS UCC can be found online at: www.ucc.org/oghs/resources.
- Order additional resources by sending an email to UCCORDERS@ucc.org or call 1-800-325-7061.



Worship Resources

Liturgy

Call to Worship/Reading from the Psalter (based on Psalm 146)

Leader: Praise God!

People: Praise God, O my soul!

Leader: I will praise God as long as I live,

People: I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

Leader: Do not put your trust in princes,

People: In mortals, in whom there is no help.

Leader: Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,

People: Whose hope is in God,

Leader: Who execute justice for the oppressed,

People: Who give food to the hungry.

Leader: Praise God!

All: Praise God, O my soul!

Prayer

God of Naomi and Ruth, in our journeys through life, we have been both broken and blessed. In solidarity, you accompany us. You receive us as we are, in our own weakness and vulnerability. For your immanent presence in our journeys, we are ever grateful. With thankful hearts we gather as your people to praise you for redeeming us. And by your Word and through your Spirit, we ask that you transform us into redeeming and reconciling people in the world. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, now and forever. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Old Testament—Ruth 1:6–18

Epistle—2 Corinthians 5:16–21

Reading of the Gospel

Gospel—John 15:1–17 (or 12–17) or

Matthew 5:38–48

Prayer of Confession

Leader or all: God our Redeemer, you are “our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1). You accompany us in moments of blessedness and in periods of brokenness. Yet at times we fail to recognize your presence and choose instead to live in self-centered reliance as though we are in isolation. In turn, we treat others in the same way, especially the most vulnerable. Unlike Ruth and Naomi, we live up to Orpah’s namesake and have turned the “back of

our necks” to others.¹ We give into the fear of uncertainty instead of the grace of solidarity. We confess that by expulsion or neglect, we push away “the other” who seeks refuge in our midst, ignoring that you are the Redeemer who offers refuge to all. Free us now from our suffocating isolation, that we may breathe anew your liberating Spirit, the source of all compassion, the strength of all justice. We pray in the name of Christ Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

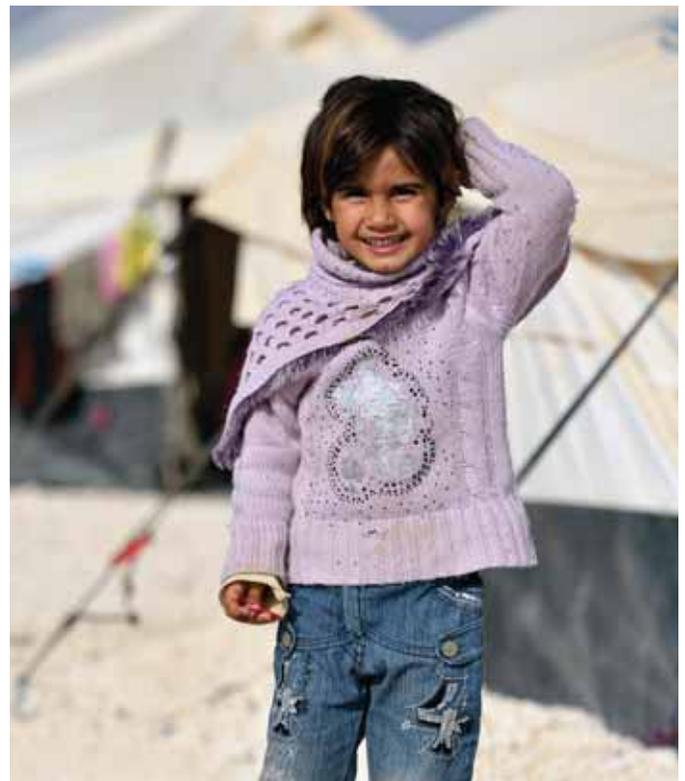
Assurance of Pardon & Passing of the Peace

Leader: Scripture bears witnesses to a God of justice who “sets the prisoners free” and “lifts up those who are bowed down” (Psalm 146:7–8), a God of grace who has “reconciled us to himself through Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:18).

Therefore be assured, sisters and brothers, that our God liberates, Christ reconciles, and the Spirit lifts us up!

People: Praise be to God! Amen!

Leader: As a redeemed and renewed people, let us share the peace of Christ with one another.



¹Orpah’s name means “back of the neck.” Orpah is the daughter-in-law who goes back to Moab.



Invitation to Offering

In Ruth we read of the encounter between two refugees, Naomi and Ruth. Naomi is a refugee in Moab due to famine in Judah, and Ruth is a refugee due to patriarchal systems that rendered single women utterly vulnerable. Both Naomi and Ruth took refuge in Naomi's land, and they survived such tumultuous transitions because each one gave the greatest gift: their very selves.

By participating in the One Great Hour of Sharing offering, we follow God's command to love. Through this ministry we stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable. Through our giving, we as a Church stand in solidarity with refugees as they seek to rebuild their lives.

Yet this time of offering—of giving a portion of our financial resources—is only the beginning of our call to give. Jesus declared, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). In addition to your financial gift, consider other ways that you can accompany refugees, and how you can remain open to ways that others might minister to you.

Let us give joyously and generously at this time.

Prayer for the Offering

Leader: For your divine providence, we thank you, ever-generous Creator. In responsive humility, we have rendered unto you these gifts of our material possessions. We entrust them to you so that through them, your Church may live out its call of solidarity and accompaniment. May the witness and work made possible by our tithes and offerings comfort and empower those seeking refuge, that they may be able to sing with peace and joy "the Lord's song in a foreign land" (Psalm 137:4).

Invitation to Communion

Leader: In the time of Ruth, the Holiness Code of the Law required that farmers not harvest the corners of their fields or recover produce that was dropped during harvest. That food was left to be collected by the marginalized, the poor, the stranger, the refugee—for people like Ruth and Naomi. This Law was for the sake of the less fortunate so that no one—no one—would hunger in the land.

Christ declared, "I am the true vine" (John 10:10). As the vine, Christ provides life and livelihood to us who are attached to him, and

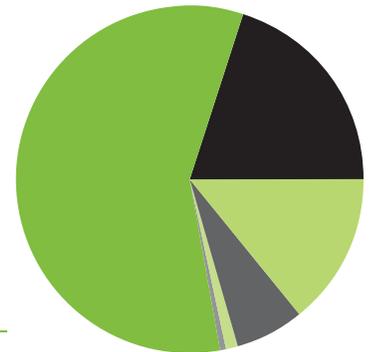
there is plenty of suspense for all to draw on him. At His Table we find a gleaning field where all are fed and no one is turned away. There is plenty for all, including the Ruths and Naomis of this world.

We are nourished at this Table of Abundance so that in turn we may live abundantly a life of neighborly love—a life lived for the other. In the Incarnation, God goes where we go and stays where we stay, assuring us as God's people. In response, we stand in solidarity with refugees and those deemed "outsiders," assuring them with words and acts, that in Christ they always have refuge.

Benediction/Charge

Through song, prayer, word and fellowship, we have been challenged to stand in solidarity with the stranger, the foreigner, the refugee—to accompany the most vulnerable as an expression of love for God. We have been nourished by the Word, both proclaimed and served at the Table. Therefore, my sisters and brothers, go into the world as God's agents of reconciliation. Have the courage of Christ to lay down your life for others. Hold on to what is good and just. Return to no one evil for evil, but instead help the suffering. Honor all people. Love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

HOW 2014 OGHS DOLLARS WERE USED:



■ Development	
<i>Health, Education and Agriculture</i>	58%
■ Disaster.....	20%
■ Refugee.....	14%
■ Promotional Resources.....	6.5%
■ Education and Monitoring.....	5%
■ Administration.....	1%

THEME: Walk the Extra Mile (Where you go, I will go. . .)

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE: Ruth 1:1–22

OTHER SCRIPTURES

Psalter—Psalm 146

Epistle—2 Corinthians 5:16–2

Gospel—John 15:1–17 (or 12–17); Or, Matthew 5:38–48

The One Great Hour of Sharing offering this year focuses on refugees and displaced persons. There is no better biblical story to accompany this work than that of Ruth and Naomi.

Brief yet profound, in the opening passage of Ruth we encounter the resilience of two women who have been widowed, as well as ravaged by the natural disaster of famine. These ecological and socio-political events rendered Naomi and Ruth the most vulnerable in their society. Just like refugees today, Ruth and Naomi did not have the privilege of choosing to stay in their homes, but were forced to relocate.

The Book of Ruth can be read as both a human story and a God story, the former “incarnating” the latter. As a human story, we read about *the spirituality of solidarity*, which is richly encapsulated in verses 16 and 17. In the divine realm, we read of God’s redemption, which is mirrored or reciprocated in the human act of solidarity.

Redemption means that God stands in solidarity with us. Many times when we hear the story of Ruth, the human archetype for God is Boaz, the “kinsman redeemer” who “redeems” Ruth, securing a life for her. But the divine act of redemption can also be seen in the sacrificial commitment Ruth makes to Naomi to go where she goes and stay where she stays. The mutuality of their relationship is good news for a globalizing world that so often separates people into groups “them” and “us”.

Hymn/Song Suggestions

Lead Me, Guide Me

I Want Jesus To Walk With Me

Guide My Feet

Help Us To Help Each Other

In Christ There Is No East And West

Will You Let Me Be Your Servant

Healer Of Our Every Ill

For The Beauty Of The Earth

God of Justice—Tim Hughes

Until all are Fed—Bryan McFarland

All Who Are Thirsty—Brenton Brown

I Will Follow—Chris Tomlin

We Are One Body—Dana Scallon

There Are Many Gifts—Patricia Shelly

—Assembled by Amanda Garcia

Applying the words of the theologian Roberto Goizueta to Ruth, to operate out of a mindset of community and mutual encouragement is to apply “a theology of *acompañamiento* [accompaniment].” In other words, the God who abides in the Ruth story is revealed in the very act of accompanying the most vulnerable in society—both then and now.

Similarly, God is revealed to us in our accompanying of the refugee. As God walks with those who have been displaced, we may see God as we walk together with them as well. Consequently, we, like the refugee, come face-to-face with our own need and vulnerability; seeing God in the midst of all that is. This is an opportunity for Christians to reignite faith and reframe our humanity in our encounter with the faith and humanity of the other. We are able to recognize the transforming power of solidarity, not just for “them” but for “us.” After all, through the eyes of *acompañamiento*, there is only a united “us”!

The passage in Ruth can be approached in many ways. Here are three ways (not mutually exclusive) of entering the story of Ruth and proclaiming its implications for the Church’s ministry with and for refugees:

- A. The Ruth/Naomi covenant personifies the Church’s call to justice for refugees. Reading about their journey through the lens of our globalizing world (and the refugee phenomenon it engenders), and viewing our globalizing world through the lens of Ruth and Naomi’s journey, we can hear our call to stand with refugees as a *mutual act of vulnerability and hope*. *Solidarity is a spiritual discipline because by engaging in it, we encounter God.*
- B. Each stanza of line in verses 16 and 17 can serve as a structuring device to explore dimensions of solidarity. For example, “Where you go, I will go,” asserts that incarnational presence is foundational for solidarity; and “your people shall be my people” calls for identifying with “the other.” The spiritual depth of solidarity can be highlighted by the stanza “your God my God”. In a world where the power of words is depleting, this in-depth “word study” centeredness in verses 16 and 17 might help recover the substance of the word “solidarity”.
- C. There are two planes (one explicit and the other implicit) on which the Ruth narrative operates: the human and the divine. The act of solidarity is the human corollary of the divine act of redemption. A good approach to the two planes might highlight the relationship between our theology and our ethics. In other words, our vision of God should inform our way of being in the world. In Ruth, the portrait of God is painted by two women choosing solidarity. God is therefore one who chose to stand in solidarity with us, whether we are from Judah or Moab. There are various theological traditions from which to draw, including liberation (God accompanying those who suffer), and Eastern Orthodox (incarnation as God taking on flesh to be in “solidarity” with all flesh).



THEME: Helping Others (Offering food and safety)

SUGGESTED PROPS

Wear a hat, use a walking stick, carry a backpack and a water bottle.

After greeting the children, announce that you're getting ready to take a trip, and ask, "Who has ever left their home to go on a trip like me?"

Wait for a show of hands, and then ask a few of them where they went, and why they went. Was it vacation? To visit family?

Then ask how long the trip was. Two days, three? Maybe even a whole week? Ask the children who they traveled with. Did they go alone? Or did they have someone to help them on their journey?

Then make the connection to the story of Ruth

"In our Bible story today, a woman named Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi went on a trip, too. But they didn't leave their homes for fun. Ruth and Naomi lived in a country with very little food, and they were hungry all the time. So they had to leave their home to find a new place to live where they wouldn't be hungry anymore."

Then make the connection between Ruth and Naomi and refugees in the world today.

First ask, "When you went on your trip, were you ever afraid? Maybe to leave your home, or to fly on an airplane, or see things or people you've never seen before?" (Wait for a few responses.)

"Did you know that there are millions of people in our world today who are afraid, but not when they leave home—when they ARE home. More than half of those people are younger than 18 years old—close to your age! These boys and girls live in dangerous places, and just like Ruth and Naomi, they often don't have enough food to eat. So they have to do exactly what Ruth and Naomi did: find a new home where they will have food and water, and finally be safe from danger."

Tie in the One Great Hour of Sharing offering

"Here's the good news: Just like you didn't have to go on a trip to someplace new all by yourself, people who are trying to find new, safe homes today don't have to be alone, either. Today in church we are taking up a special offering called

One Great Hour of Sharing. The money we collect from this offering will help refugees around the world as they look for food and for safety. Giving our money to help is our way of walking together with them, even though we're far away—hand in hand, just like Ruth and Naomi."

Finally, make sure to emphasize that we are all equally loved by God

"But do you know what the very best part of all this is? No matter where we go, and no matter where we are, we are never alone because God is always with us. God is with us right here, right now, and God is with our brothers and sisters who are hungry, thirsty, or in danger around the world, too. God loves all of us the same and walks with all of us—especially when we're afraid. So in the same way, we should walk with each other, too."

Close with a prayer

"Dear God, Thank you for always being with us, and thank you for walking with refugees all over the world. We pray that you would watch over our brothers and sisters who are afraid and in danger. Please use our offerings to bless those who need a safe home, and help us to walk together with them, just like Ruth and Naomi. Amen."

—Amanda Garcia

Order Additional FREE Materials

Bulletin Inserts
Coin Banks
Offering Envelopes

OGHS Annual Mission Reports
Planning and Resource Guide
Poster (in English or Spanish)

Remember to visit the One Great Hour of Sharing website at www.ucc.org/oghs for electronic resources, videos, and stories.



"Like Us" on Facebook:
facebook.com/onegreathourofsharingucc



Follow us on Twitter: twitter.com/OGHS_at_UCC



Activities

Children

Supplies: Blank puzzle with large pieces from a craft store, OR, a very large piece of thick paper. (Size of puzzle/paper depends on size of classroom.) Washable markers, colored pencils, or crayons.

Preparation: On the blank puzzle or paper, write in large letters with a black permanent marker, “We walk together.” Using the black marker, add the outline of a footprint (or several) to represent refugees and displaced people around the world. Then take the puzzle apart/cut the paper into large pieces of different shapes.

After reading the story of Ruth and Naomi, distribute one piece to each child and place them in pairs. Explain to the class that, just like Ruth and Naomi, they will have to work together in order to complete the task. Tell the class that their job is to trace their partner’s footprint onto their paper piece, and that they will need to be a team in order for it to work. Explain that in helping their partner, they are being an example of what it is to be a servant: helping with their friend’s need. (Note: be sure to use WASHABLE marker for this exercise.) After everyone’s foot has been traced, ask them to color it in with their favorite colors, however they’d like. Ask them to make it their own—the best expression of their unique selves.

While the class is coloring, take this opportunity to expand the lesson. Ask the students if the activity would have been more difficult if they had to do it alone. Ask how having a partner changed the activity, and why it was important to “walk” with someone to complete the task.

Now is also a great time to tie the Scripture lesson in with the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. Ask if anyone knows what it means to be a “refugee,” and explain the word and concept to the students. If the class is old enough, mention that there are nearly 60 million refugees world wide, and more than half of them are under 18 years old. Share that refugees are persons who cannot return to their home country because of fear of persecution. You might also share that Internally

Displaced People (IDPs) are those who have been forced to leave their homes as a result of conflict, but are still living in their country of origin.) Tell the students that giving money to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering is our way of walking with refugees and IDPs from far away. Be sure to help the students understand that Ruth and Naomi were refugees, too, and had to walk together to leave their home and find food and safety.

Explain to the students that their footprint represents the journey of Ruth and Naomi, as well as the journey that all refugees must take to escape danger and start a new life. Explain that just as it was easier and better for Ruth and Naomi to journey together, and just as it was better for each child to create a footprint with a friend, so it is also easier for a refugee when they have help in their time of need. (Suggested additional reading: Ecclesiastes 4:9–10.)

Now for the fun part. Ask the students to put all of their unique, individual pieces together as a group. Explain that every person has an important piece that is needed to complete the picture. Be sure to emphasize that every little boy and girl around the world—no matter where they are, or if they’re hungry or thirsty or in danger—each one of them has a unique footprint/piece of the puzzle as well. Explain that, as God’s children, we need to walk life’s journey together, helping each other, just as Ruth and Naomi did.

Intergenerational

This activity will require a coordinator and a few weeks of preparation.

Walk an extra mile. Literally.

In the weeks leading to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering, promote the offering by encouraging the congregation to participate in a community walk to raise awareness for refugees. Consider calling the event the “Extra Mile Walk,” or “Solidarity Stride”.

Map out one (or several) one-mile routes through your church’s neighborhood or downtown. After worship on One Great Hour of Sharing Sunday, as a congregation (in one group or several), walk the route once and then again, literally going an extra mile together. As you go, plan to offer some kind of service to the community: pick up trash along the road, pass out information about refugee relief, distribute water bottles or popsicles or hot chocolate to every person you meet on the way, or give blankets, hats or gloves to the homeless. Get creative with ways that you can impact your community.

If you can, wear matching shirts, bracelets, or bandanas to demonstrate your solidarity. When people ask what you’re doing say, “We are going the extra mile in solidarity with the 60 million displaced persons around the world, because Jesus asked us to love our neighbors near and far.” (An alternative option is to ask parishioners to do the same thing on their own time during the week as small groups or families, with the addition of inviting folks to come to church on Sunday.)

At the end of the walk, host a simple meal at the church to celebrate. Invite the community to attend. Use the time to raise awareness of displaced people around the world, and what we can do to “walk the extra mile” with them. Make sure to talk about the things we can learn from those we serve, and how in walking with others, we are blessed by the joy of giving. Consider showing one of the new OGHS videos on refugees found at www.ucc.org/oghs/videos.



Souad and Rahaf: Syrian Refugees



Help for Those Who Need It



Souad and Rahaf: Syrian Refugees

Souad Kasem Issa combs the hair of her daughter Rahaf, 9. She is a Syrian refugee in Amman, Jordan. She and her husband and six children fled the city of Homs as fighting there worsened in 2012. Their home in Syria has since been destroyed by bombing, and they are struggling to survive in Jordan's capital city, where they now live.

Our faith calls us to respond to people in crisis. Unfortunately, crisis such as war, disaster, changing climate or a devastated economy have forced millions of people over the years to seek safety as refugees.

Today, our world is facing a refugee crisis beyond anything we have seen in recent generations. At this moment, there are more refugees in the world than at any time since World War II. Millions of people are alive today only because they have escaped perilous situations.

The One Great Hour of Sharing offering is rooted in responding to Christ's call to welcome the stranger. The offering provides assistance beyond emergency food, water and shelter.

The United Church of Christ has stepped forward to serve as co-sponsors, mentors and friends to newly arrived refugees on behalf of the Church, helping people in need begin a new life free from violence, persecution, or a shifting climate. The offering provides financial support to help refugees, such as the Issa family, who are living in a country that's not their home. We are helping families begin a new life with hope for a better future.

As we respond generously, may we recognize that in giving, we are on a personal journey to live in Christ's image!

Help for Those Who Need It

2 year old Adi went to Christian Hospital Mungeli (CHM), India after suffering seizures and severe spasticity, symptoms of hydrocephalus resulting from tubercular meningitis. Before his parents took him to CHM, they tried to take the small boy for treatment closer to their home, to no avail.

The CHM surgeons placed a shunt in the small boy to drain the excess fluid buildup in his brain. He then began physical therapy and has improved significantly.

3 months after the initial surgery, Adi went back to see the doctors. Today he is bursting with a 2-year-old's energy. The shunt is working, and he is responding well to anti-tuberculosis drugs. With his ongoing work in the physiotherapy department, Adi is expected to have continued improvement.

One Great Hour of Sharing supports three Mission Personal at the Christian Hospital Mungeli, India. Anil and Theresa Henry are long-term physicians who helped turn the hospital around after it had been closed for many years, and Kahala Cannon, a Mission Intern working at the hospital has been there for a short time. They and the other hospital staff are providing critical care to their community. People from both near and far utilize Christian Hospital Mungeli whenever they need emergency medical care.

—Kahala Cannon



2016 Sharing Calendar

Both joy and compassionate urgency infuse God's great love for this world, and should likewise infuse our love for others shown through One Great Hour of Sharing. This special Sharing Calendar reminds us of the abundant blessings we have received, as well as the suffering in the world that we can help address through this offering. Each day suggests a donation of units. Choose an amount for these units that is most appropriate for your household.

"Sometimes you and I are the channels of God's love and grace to the world in need." —Mark Pickett, OGHs contributor

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Church World Service helps make schools in Kenya safer through their "School Safe Zones" program. Give one unit for every safe school your family members attend.</p>	<p>Because of foreign assistance, deaths of children under age 5 have dropped from 12.6 million to 6.6 million since 1990. Give two units to make that number even smaller.</p>	<p>Girls are often severely excluded from education systems, yet educated girls are key to reaching many other developmental goals. Give two units in honor of significant women in your life.</p>	<p>Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me...for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs." —Mark 10:14</p> <p>Walk the extra mile with children around the world by giving two units today.</p>	<p>Millions of youth are illiterate in the world's poorest countries, yet education is critical to developing better job skills, health, and future. Give one unit if you can read these words.</p>	<p>More than 60,000 Syrian babies have been born in exile and are in danger of being categorized as stateless. Give one unit if you enjoy the benefits of citizenship.</p>	<p>Since 2014, over 57,000 unaccompanied children have fled violence to the U.S. Give one unit for children you care for, and one for those who cared for you as a child.</p>
<p>It is estimated that over 1.5 million persons have been internally displaced in Nigeria, many because of religious persecution. Give two units if you are free to attend church without fear.</p>	<p>About 45% of the world's refugees reside in countries with per capita incomes below \$3,000—countries least able to afford them. Please help! Contribute one unit.</p>	<p>Church World Service helps provide shelter for thousands of displaced persons at a refugee camp in Tanzania. Give one unit for every time you've been to camp and had a safe place to sleep.</p>	<p>Give counsel, grant justice... hide the outcasts; do not betray the fugitive... be a refuge to them." —Isaiah 16:3-4a</p> <p>Give one unit on behalf of displaced persons around the world today.</p>	<p>It is estimated that 9 million Syrians have been forcibly displaced since 2011. Write at least one letter to congress on their behalf (examples can be found at enrl.org) and contribute one unit for each letter.</p>	<p>Church World Service works with many congregations to welcome more than 7,000 refugees to the U.S. every year. Give two units to celebrate the last time you were hospitable to others.</p>	<p>Conflict in South Sudan has forced more than 2 million people from their homes since 2013. Contribute one unit for every time your family has moved.</p>
<p>46.2 million U.S. Americans live in poverty. Help address poverty/issues worldwide by giving two units.</p>	<p>One quarter of all humans live without electricity (approximately 1.6 billion people). Give one unit for every item you have plugged into an outlet at your house.</p>	<p>Nearly half the world's population (3 billion) live on less than \$2 per day, and over 1.3 billion on less than \$1.25 per day. Give two units if you will spend more than \$2 today.</p>	<p>Children, let us not love in word or speech, but in truth and action. —1 John 3:18</p> <p>Take action today. Say a prayer and give as many units as you feel led.</p>	<p>Church World Service's Innovative Energy Technologies program has helped create self-sustaining communities that are now less susceptible to poverty. Give one unit for every energy-efficient appliance in your home.</p>	<p>More than 1 billion children live in poverty around the world, and 22,000 children die every day because of it. Give one unit for every regular paycheck that your household collects.</p>	<p>Signs of poverty include inadequate income, housing, food, fresh water, opportunity, power over one's life and prospects, human dignity. Stand up to poverty by contributing three units.</p>
<p>Acute malnutrition affects 34 million children worldwide and often overlaps with conflict and war. Give one unit for every nutritious meal you will eat today.</p>	<p>More than five years after the earthquake in Haiti, Church World Service still supports agricultural production and food security programs for over 5,000 people there. Give one unit per variety of fresh produce in your kitchen.</p>	<p>49 million Americans struggle to put food on the table, and one in five children are at risk of hunger (among African Americans and Latinos, that number is one in three). Give two units if your family had enough to eat today.</p>	<p>"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." —Matthew 25: 35a</p> <p>Give a unit to feed the hungry today.</p>	<p>Hunger causes cognitive and physical stunting, and a variety of other health problems. It constrains economic growth and perpetuates poverty. Contribute one unit for every kind of canned food in your pantry, and consider donating a few to a local shelter.</p>	<p>Hunger is the number one cause of death in the world. Consider skipping a meal today and praying for the hungry in our world. Then give three units to feed others.</p>	<p>Your generous gifts given through this special offering will make a difference in the lives of hungry, hurting, and impoverished persons around the world. Give five final units in solidarity and celebration.</p>

Sources: www.SyrianRefugees.eu, [Refugees International \(www.refintl.org\)](http://RefugeesInternational.org), Church World Service, International Displacement Monitoring Center, UNICEF, Action Against Hunger, United Church of Christ, Poverty USA, DoSomething.org, [OXFAM International](http://OXFAMInternational.org), and The World Bank.

Daily Giving Devotion

- At a time appropriate for your household, read the theme scripture for One Great Hour of Sharing, 2016: Ruth 1:1-22
 - Invite each member of the household to describe one instance of how they have shared with someone else since the last daily giving devotion.
 - Read the day's entry in the sharing calendar. Discuss the situation described and its relationship to your household.
 - Consider your contribution for the day and add it to your offering box.
 - Pray for the people and situations highlighted in the sharing calendar, and for the people you will meet in the coming hours:
- Dear God,
 Thank you for your love and mercy, your compassion and grace. Thank you for the many blessings you have given to us. [Each member of the household names at least two each day]. We pray that you would show us ways that we might share with others, and walk the extra mile in your name. Give us generous hearts that overflow with gratitude and joy.
- Today we pray especially for [the day's highlighted group]. May our One Great Hour of Sharing gifts be a blessing to them, and remind us all of the ways that you are working in our world and in our lives. In Jesus' name we pray.
 Amen.
- Remember to take your offering box to church on the day when the One Great Hour of Sharing offering will be received.



Contact Information



United Church of Christ Special Mission Offerings (SMOs) exist to allow congregations and individuals to meet people at points of critical need in their lives. Though many options exist for direct, individual support of these needs, the SMOs allow a common witness and make a collective positive impact. Our church has identified four areas where these critical human needs exist:

- in places lacking health and educational resources and where disaster has struck;
- within systems of injustice which oppress daily life and opportunity;
- in the lives of church leaders without sufficient resources to live with dignity;
- in the nurture of youth and congregations just beginning their lives of faith.

We believe these SMOs collectively serve to lift people closer to the abundance and wholeness to which Jesus Christ has called us to work together to bring about.

Please give generously to support the basic and special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ: Our Church's Wider Mission (basic support), One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors In Need, and the Christmas Fund. For more information or to make a gift, visit: www.ucc.org/ocwm_is-your-church-five-for-five.



Please send your donation to your UCC Conference Office, clearly marked for One Great Hour of Sharing. The Conference will forward it with gifts from other congregations to our office at: 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland Ohio 44115-1100

For more resources or order additional OGHS materials, please visit ucc.org/oghs or email uccorders@ucc.org

"Like Us" on Facebook—facebook.com/onegreathourofsharingucc

Follow us on Twitter—twitter.com/OGHS_at_UCC

Contact our office—216-736-3215

Order additional resources—800-325-7061

