One Great Hour of Sharing

2015 ANNUAL MISSION REPORT

photo by Paul Jeffrey
We live in the midst of the largest refugee crisis since World War II.

Violent political actions all over the world—Syria, Iraq, Burundi, and Guatemala—have created waves of refugees and displaced people, unable to return home for fear of their lives. Natural disasters have disrupted communities too, displacing people from their homes and livelihoods and exposing human-caused injustices that make a “new normal” difficult. Lack of access to health care and the empowerment of women create conditions that prevent communities from thriving. Chronic hunger, exaggerated by climate change, forces the migration of families for the sake of survival. Life in a refugee camp or as a refugee in an urban setting is a permanent temporariness that defies the wholeness of individuals or communities. These statistics and realities of our world may lie beyond our comprehension, but the people who live them are not beyond our collective hearts. The stories in this annual report of the United Church of Christ’s One Great Hour of Sharing Offering, Special Funds and Endowment (OGHS) personalize these 2015 events.

OGHS donations fund UCC sustainable development, refugee and disaster ministries. The combination of stories that follow in this report, demonstrate how these situations are intertwined in the forcible displacement of so many. We go the extra mile to respond, to stay for the long term, and to work on root causes because we are walking with those who are forced to go many extra miles simply to survive and, along the way, to thrive.

Thank you for your support of One Great Hour of Sharing (UCC). Without you, none of this work would be possible. It all starts with your decision to give.

One Great Hour of Sharing and the Middle East and Europe Office

Announce a Fall 2016 Middle East trip


We will be visiting partners in Israel/Palestine, Lebanon, and Egypt

$3,750 pp/dbl. occupancy

Spots will fill quickly!

Join the delegation.

Visit ucc.org/oghs for more information.
You Can Help

There are a variety of ways in which you can be part of assisting refugees.

Prayers are always needed and appreciated. The current refugee crisis is the worst since World War II, with more than 60 million refugees worldwide.

Get involved in the Co-Sponsorship and Welcoming Congregations efforts of the United Church of Christ as a member of Church World Service. Refugees from many parts of the world will benefit from your welcoming actions. Currently, there are many families who need assistance, and they have been in the resettlement system for several years. Contact Church World Service at cwsglobal.org/our-work/refugee-services/irp-affiliates.html to get started.

Be prepared to wait if your desire is to assist Syrian Refugees. In 2015 and 2016, only a few number of Syrian Refugees are expected to arrive to the U.S. It is likely the process will take 2–3 years from now before the U.S. receives Syrian Refugees.

Take Action. You can get immediately involved with Syrian Refugees and other important justice concerns of the United Church of Christ by signing up at: www.ucc.org/join_the_network and encouraging the U.S. Government to modify its policies to allow more refugees into the U.S.

Make a Gift. Donations are critically needed. Through the UCC’s One Great Hour of Sharing offering, you are responding continually to the refugee crisis. This year the offering highlights the plight of refugees, but only about 14% of the offering is dedicated to Refugee concerns. In addition to participating in the OGHS offering, designate an additional contribution to the “Syrian Humanitarian Crisis”. Your special gifts will be used to more deeply and critically support the immediate and ongoing needs of Syrian Refugees even before they arrive in the U.S.

Stay Connected by visiting ucc.org/refugees_index and following the UCC on Facebook: One Great Hour of Sharing (UCC), and on Twitter: @OGHS_at_UCC, regularly. When you stay up-to-date with what’s happening worldwide, you can respond to issues that you care about.

Recent global media coverage of refugees has sparked the encouraging commitment among churches and groups to assist in resettlement in the United States.
Crossing Borders for Survival

“Now I know we are in Guatemala,” exclaimed Gloria Vicente Canú, Global Ministries’ missionary serving with the Ecumenical Christian Council of Guatemala (CEGG), as she arrived in the city of Tecum Uman to attend the “Bi-national (Guatemalan-Mexican) Conference on Migration, Children and Border.” The sounds of a Marimba band playing nearby were distinctively Guatemalan while the city itself hosts people from many parts of the region who find themselves as migrants.

The Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) organized the Conference with religious and ecumenical organizations working in Mexico and Central America as a response to the critical situation of Central America. Men, women and children leave their countries in search of peace, a safe place to live and, for many, lost family members. Participants in the Conference practiced the “See-Judge-Act” experience of Liberation Theology as they walked through the city to the Migrant House where many stay while in transition. There they witnessed the everyday lives of people along the Suchiate River transporting goods across the border.

In a real sense, however, the people themselves are the biggest commerce of the region as migrants are forced to scratch out a livelihood in the shadows of these borders that offer only despair and distress. It is not unlike the uncertainty faced by many new immigrants in the United States context who are forced to migrate in order to escape what Sister Dee of the organization Proyecto Vida, calls the “national nightmare of violence in Central America”. Sister Dee sees its victims daily as she works through this faith-based youth organization responding to HIV in Guatemala. One of the challenges addressed at the Conference was that in the national Guatemalan sphere, churches have not demonstrated a unified solidarity; nor have they pronounced themselves institutionally related to immigration. Gloria reminds us that churches in the United States face the same challenges.

Outcomes of the Bi-National Conference include a pledge to work better together, a public declaration by a group of Latin American churches calling for a more dignified response to Central American nationals escaping the great level of violence in their countries, and sustainable dignity efforts in Central America grew stronger. These efforts continue as migrants continue to find themselves needing to criss-cross borders in order to survive.


Koh Hey
17 Years a Refugee

Koy Hey is 45 years old. He has been living in the Tham Hin Refugee Camp along the borders of Thailand and Burma since 1998. He works hard and says he is proud of what he is doing.

In 2010, Koh became a bamboo worker with The Border Consortium (TBC). He started planting bamboo up in the mountain on 30 acres of land. In 2013, he planted bananas, bamboo, eucalyptus and many other trees on an additional ten acres of land.

Sometimes people laugh at Koh because he is small. When he introduces himself as a bamboo worker people laugh even harder. But nonetheless, he has taken on the management of bamboo planting during the last five years.

Every morning Koh and five co-workers go to the plantation area for cutting grass. One time a bee stung him, another time a snake almost bit him, and he has been bit by plenty of mosquitos. He really commits to his work and does not care about the challenges. Today, Koh Hey is even more proud of his work because the bamboo is growing well and the area will soon turn into a forest. He believes this will benefit the camp population and is good for the earth.
Mothers with young children are the most vulnerable group of refugees seen by the Istanbul Interparish Migrants Program (IIMP), a Global Ministries’ partner in Turkey. Women often become targets of abuse, leaving them and their children in distress. IIMP opens its arms and its doors to all people, and especially to those who have been on a very difficult path.

One such person, a young woman from Mali was frightened and distracted when she first arrived at IIMP. Her turmoil started with the death of her parents, and continued with an abusive uncle victimizing her in their family home, taking her inheritance, and leaving this young woman and her small son in despair.

Without much hope where she was, this young woman set out to find work in Algeria. Finding none there, she went on to Turkey to try to make a good living.

By the time she arrived in Istanbul, she found that she was pregnant, had developed tuberculosis and was HIV positive. The IIMP and the Turkish public health system assisted her during this distress. They purchased antiviral medications, which are very expensive in Turkey, but made it possible for her to give birth to a healthy baby girl.

The Moms and Tots program of the Turkish Church also assisted in supporting her. They provided formula, baby needs, food and did critical education reinforcing the importance of taking the antivirals to continue to protect her own life.

As she continued to want more for her life, she pursued a third country resettlement with the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR). She and her little girl were resettled in Boise, Idaho in the United States. Today, she is settling in, has found a community and is pursuing the hope of a better life.

---

Wanted! One Great Hour of Sharing Ambassadors

Learn about...

- The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering and help spread the good news
- Connect with other UCC Youth from around the US
- Be willing to share your voice to share what the offering does
- Provide your National Staff Representative with feedback on the program.

Seeking UCC Congregations willing to host OGHS Youth Ambassadors.

Once the youth Ambassadors are trained, they will want to share the good news in their own congregations and in nearby congregations. Please be open to the opportunity when we call on you!

For more information contact Rev. Phyllis Richards at oghs@ucc.org or call 216-736-3215.
Imelda (pictured) had always been quiet in class. She never stood out academically. But this once shy student has been transformed into a young woman able to assert herself, ask pertinent questions, and share thoughtful reflections. Imelda’s field education mentor, a young female pastor, has helped water Imelda’s seeds of leadership potential. Field Education is an important part of the curriculum, and is one of my favorite aspects of teaching trauma counseling at the Theological Faculty of Artha Wacana University, where my husband, John, and I work. Students learn to handle challenges impacting local congregations. Dealing with armed soldiers near the school, the impact of migrant labor, and local politics that exacerbate religious tensions in the predominantly Catholic region of West Timor, are a few of the local issues.

One student spoke of a rift in a congregation and how he successfully managed to resolve the conflict. And Imelda? She spoke of Mama Jermi, an older woman with whom she lives and whose prayer discipline inspires her.

When I have opportunity to experience the energy of students learning valuable lessons of faith and practical ministry from humble pastors, wise congregants, and from each other...well, my faith is lifted up and my heart filled. The transformations I have observed in students may be small, but they are seeds bearing fruit. Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you.” (Gen. 1.29)

John and Karen Campbell Nelson serve as Global Ministries’ missionaries in Timor. Karen is supported by OGHS. 📸

—Karen Campbell-Nelson, Evangelical Christian Church of West Timor, Indonesia

**Hope & Dreams**

“**I tried many times to follow a weight-loss program, but none of them were long term**, said Tamam, a 42 year-old female participant in a health education workshop on obesity offered in 2014. “Most weight-loss programs focus on a rigid regimen for a short period of time utilizing a list of allowed and forbidden foods. The 2014 workshop was different and I lost 15 pounds.”

Tamam later completed the physical education program at the YWCA of Palestine. She decided to start a weight loss program for women. Her husband supported her decision because she told him she would be able to contribute to their family financially.

Tamam joined forces with another woman from the class, Futoun, age 30. This mother of four was determined to work hard to make their dreams of starting a gym come true. Together they rented the third floor of the Women’s Center at the Jalazoune Refugee Camp which was already equipped with workout machines and tools. They named their workout space **Eve Gym for Women**. It was wildly successful because the women of the camp were eager to have a safe place to go and work out.

The YWCA of Palestine supports women’s rights to economic justice through its vocational training programs offered by local associations. The YWCA has been providing training and educational programs to refugee women and children at the Jalazoune Refugee Camp and Aqbet Jaber Camp for over 50 years. One Great Hour of Sharing supports YWCA and its life skills, and training opportunities for women. 📸
What do you say to a nine-year-old who asks, “If God made the Typhoon, why didn’t God stop the rain and the wind?”

Rev. Mylen Sale-Kadusale and her husband, Emmanuel, were asked this question by their son, Ison. They lived as a family in the Northeast Leyte Conference of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP). Their home was destroyed by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, on what is now locally known as 3-11.

Mylen recalls her story. It had been raining for a few hours, and the storm started getting worse about 5:00 in the morning. By 7:00 a.m. the roof had blown off our home. Emmanuel and I heard there was a storm surge, but unfortunately, like many others, we did not know what that meant. We stayed in our home, tied up the cabinets, the bookshelves, and secured all the items we could, and then took cover in a corner of the room.

About 9:00 a.m., Emmanuel looked out and saw that our gate was open. He insisted on going out to close it. It was raining hard, but in the distance, Emmanuel noticed water rolling and rushing in. He ran back to the front door that he shut behind him when he went out, but the door would not open. Water started to get high inside our home. We both ran to the back door. Instead of Emmanuel coming in, our son, Ison, and I ran out. We all ran to Bethany Hospital which was located just behind our home. Bethany is also where I work. We quickly ran inside seeking shelter.

After the storm, we returned to our home, but nothing was left. Nothing, that is, but a huge pile of debris. Our story is also the story of many others in our community. The biggest difference is that after the storm, we had no place to go. We have no other family in the area, but thank God for the administration at the Bethany hospital. They allowed us to stay there for two months. After that, we stayed in the UCCP bishop’s office.

Despite all the things that happened, we have seen how God manifested love. Our lives were made better because many people showed us love and support. Bethany Hospital and UCCP gave us a place to stay.

We responded to our nine-year-old, Ison’s question by reminding him that God also made people both near and far who have expressed prayer and solidarity, and who have helped us rebuild our lives.

The United Church of Christ (USA) has assisted the UCCP in rebuilding 50 homes destroyed by Typhoon Haiyan in the community of Leyte. The churches are working together to build at least an additional 100 homes in other parts of the country for typhoon survivors. In Leyte, only 4 of the 50 home recipients were members of the UCCP. The disaster response ministry is for the whole community.

—Phyllis Richards, United Church of Christ
In Nyarugusu Refugee Camp, located in Northwestern Tanzania, Martin, a 5-year-old boy in a dusty green t-shirt took the hand of Davide Prata to lead him to his house. Davide, a Church World Service (CWS) worker was in the camp to help improve it. While walking to Martin’s house, sounds of life and hope were evident, even in the midst of extreme despair.

Every day Martin goes to a makeshift school made of plastic sheets (tarps) and poles, similar to the (temporary) mass shelter where he and his family live.

Nyarugusu Camp was designed to host no more than 50,000 people, but the camp is currently three times over capacity with 50,000 people still living in mass shelters.

Life in the refugee camp is difficult. There is limited movement, few opportunities for work, and in some parts of the camp, refugees had access to too little water per person per day, lower than even the ‘minimum’ standard for emergency contexts. The latrines in the camps were also full with little to no space available nearby to dig new latrines.

Today, many aid agencies are working hard to keep pace with the needs. The UCC through CWS and other partner agencies are working to build new latrines, provide storage capacity for clean water, and other services to keep the camp safe.

Today, we too can hold Martin’s hand, and walk with him on the journey to improve the refugee camp where he lives. Two new refugee sites are almost ready to open, and they will improve the quality of life at all three camps.

Soon refugees will have a more permanent dwelling place, reliable water sources and sanitation facilities. But the best improvement will be more space per person, which will allow for privacy and dignity for individuals and families.

Together we can help provide more hope and alleviate despair. ✨

—Story adapted from Church World Service Staff: Davide Prata and Jason Knapp
Leila’s Story

Violence has enveloped Aleppo, Syria, forcing thousands of Families to flee their homes for safer areas. Tarek and Leila’s family is among them.

Tarek (age 42) and Leila (age 37) were married for thirteen years. On February 17, 2014, Tarek was on his way home from work as a school teacher when he was struck in the head by mortar shrapnel. He died instantly. The couple’s two sons, Fadi and Hadi were not yet teenagers when their father was killed. Leila and her sons were immobilized by shock and lived in sorrow and despair for some time. Their neighborhood continued to be targeted for violence so Leila decided, with a group of neighbors, to flee their home to keep the children safe. Their destination was the town of Mashat el Holou in Northwest Syria, 130 miles away from their home.

At first, Leila and her sons stayed with three other families in a rented apartment in Mashat. Later, they moved to a room of their own on the roof of an old building. Concrete blocks designed for storage created the room, but it was affordable. Leila sold her wedding ring and bracelet to pay the rent and buy food.

The young widow desperately, but unsuccessfully, searched for a job. Leila had no choice but to let Fadi, at the age of 12, work as a bicycle delivery boy for the small corner market near their home. Fadi’s wages and tips were the family’s only source of income.

Winter came with its harsh cold, and Fadi had to leave his job. At home, their concrete-block room on the roof became cold and damp. Leila and her sons had no way to warm themselves except one old blanket. To stay warm, they burned branches in a metal drum. As temperatures plummeted, the family was terrified. Leila had no money to buy fuel or a stove and, soon, her youngest son, Hadi, fell sick from the cold, mold and unhealthy heating.

A neighbor, Layal, heard about Leila’s situation. Layal happened to know Bashar, a worker at the Fellowship of the Middle East Evangelical Church (FMEEC). She related Leila’s story to Basher. The next day Basher and Layal visited Leila and her children. When Leila opened the door, the visitors could barely breathe from the charcoal smoke that poured from the room. The whole family looked ill.

At once, Bashar went back to the FMEEC storage facility to get a winterization kit, two blankets, a stove and cash for fuel. He called someone to install the stove right way. Leila was overwhelmed with relief for FMEEC’s immediate help.

In a country wounded by war and terror, good deeds and the solidarity of neighbors is often the only glimpse of hope available. The war continues, but with partners like the United Church of Christ and others, FMEEC is easing the suffering of vulnerable families and giving them opportunities to survive the ordeal. The FMEEC provides food, hygiene and school kits, cash for rent and fuel, clothing, and winterization kits. The staff and those receiving help thank God for the goodness and help of friends. FMEEC has reached tens of thousands of families in areas in and around Syria!
OGHS Top 100 Churches, United Church of Christ

(Based on 2014 per capita giving, and a minimum of $2,000 total dollars.)

California, Nevada Northern Conference
First Congregational UCC
Berkeley, CA
Danville Congregational Church
Danville, CA
Skyland Community UCC
Los Gatos, CA
Ladera Community Church
Portola Valley, CA
Community UCC
Sebastopol, CA
Village UCC
Woodside, CA

California, Nevada Southern Conference
Community Church UCC
Altadena, CA
Irvine United Congregational Church
Irvine, CA
United Church of Lake San Marcos
Lake San Marcos, CA
First Congregational UCC
Long Beach, CA
neighborhood Church UCC
Palos Verdes Estates, CA
Mission Hills UCC
San Diego, CA
University City United Church UCC
San Diego, CA
Community UCC
San Dimas, CA

Central Atlantic Conference
First Congregational UCC
Washington, DC
New Ark Church UCC
Newark, DE
Westmoreland Congregational UCC
Bethesda, MD
Evangelical Reformed Church
Frederick, MD
Community UCC
Greenbelt, MD
Christ Congregational UCC
Silver Spring, MD
Union Congregational UCC
Montclair, NJ
Little River UCC
Annandale, VA
Rock Spring Congregational UCC
Arlington, VA
United Christian Parish
Reston, VA

Central Pacific Conference
First Congregational UCC
Salem, OR

Connecticut Conference
First Congregational UCC
Branford, CT
First Congregational Church of Old Lyme
Old Lyme, CT
Union Memorial UCC
Stamford, CT
Saugatuck Congregational UCC
Westport, CT
The First Church UCC
Windsor, CT

Florida Conference
Congregational UCC
Fort Myers, FL
Sanibel Congregational UCC
Sanibel, FL

Hawaii Conference
First Chinese Church of Christ
Honolulu, HI

Illinois Conference
Congregational UCC
Arlington Heights, IL
First Congregational
Crystal Lake, IL
First Congregational
Elgin, IL
First Congregational Church UCC
West Chicago, IL

Indiana-Kentucky Conference
First Congregational UCC
Indianapolis, IN
Saint John’s UCC
Vincennes, IN
Saint Andrew UCC
Louisville, KY

Iowa Conference
United Church of Christ Congregational
Ames, IA
First Congregational UCC
De Witt, IA
United Church of Christ Congregational
Grinnell, IA
Congregational UCC
Iowa City, IA
Union Memorial Church
Milford, IA

Maine Conference
First Congregational UCC
Camden, ME

Massachusetts Conference
The United Parish in Brookline UCC
Brookline, MA
Congregational Church of Harvard UCC
Harvard, MA
Hingham Congregational Church UCC
Hingham, MA
Pilgrim Congregational Church UCC
Lexington, MA

New Hampshire Conference
Community Church of Durham, UCC
Durham, NH
The Congregational Church in Exeter UCC
Exeter, NH

New Hampshire Conference
Church of Christ At Dartmouth UCC
Hanover, NH
Mountain Rise United Church of Christ
Fairport, NY
Plymouth Congregational UCC
Syracuse, NY

Ohio Conference
United Church of Christ of Kent
Kent, OH
David’s UCC
Kettering, OH
The First Church in Oberlin UCC
Oberlin, OH

Pacific Northwest Conference
First Congregational UCC
Bellingham, WA
Shalom UCC, Richland
Richland, WA
United Church in University Place
University Place, WA

Penn Central Conference
Trinity UCC
East Petersburg, PA
Hamilton Park UCC
Lancaster, PA

United Church of Christ
Meyersdale, PA

Pennsylvania Southeast Conference
Heidelberg UCC
Schwenksville, PA
Brownback’s UCC
Spring City, PA

United Church of Christ at Valley Forge
Wayne, PA

Rocky Mountain Conference
First United Church of Arvada UCC
Arvada, CO
Plymouth Congregational UCC
Fort Collins, CO

Lakewood United Church of Christ
Lakewood, CO

Southeast Conference
Central Congregational UCC
Atlanta, GA
Pleasant Hill Community Church UCC
Pleasant Hill, TN

Southern Conference
Holy Covenant UCC
Charlotte, NC
Community UCC
Raleigh, NC

Congregational Church UCC
Troy, NC

Southwest Conference
The Good Shepherd UCC
Salina, AZ
Sierra Vista Community UCC
Sierra Vista, AZ

Church of the Palms UCC
Sun City, AZ
Church of the Good Shepherd UCC
Albuquerque, NM

United Church of Santa Fe UCC
Santa Fe, NM

Vermont Conference
Second Congregational UCC
Bennington, VT
College Street Congregational UCC
Burlington, VT
Community Church UCC
Guilford, VT
Bethany UCC
Randolph, VT

Wisconsin Conference
First Congregational UCC
Baraboo, WI
First Congregational UCC
Eau Claire, WI
First Congregational UCC
Oconomowoc, WI

Congregational UCC
Whitewater, WI

Thank you for your support
Find stories to learn or share how OGHS dollars are making a difference in the lives of people who find themselves in the midst of situations within our control to help. These stories help us illuminate places and programs where we are working throughout the year.

Watch the Latest One Great Hour of Sharing Videos
These 1–5 minute features define One Great Hour of Sharing and the mission that’s made possible through the United Church of Christ. Videos can be fun and educational. They are easy to share with friends, groups, during worship, or on your Social Media page.

Make a Gift to the OGHS Offering
Financial donations make a difference in the lives of people today through a generous gift to the OGHS offering. Donations support a variety of actions all geared at improving life for people and communities, in the US and internationally. Be part of a movement to change the world. Together, there is enough for all.

Make a Legacy Gift to the OGHS Endowment Fund
Download a copy of the brochure from our website at ucc.org/oghs_endowment or make a gift to continue our legacy of being there when we are needed most.

Stretch Your Gift by Completing the Matching Gifts Process with Your Employer
Did you know that many employers contribute to their employee and board members’ favorite charities? Matching gift programs are a great way to double or triple the impact of your personal donation. Find out if you work for a matching gift company today. Visit our website at ucc.org/matching-gifts for a quick check.

Connect with us through Social Media
One Great Hour of Sharing has its own Facebook page. We make regular posts, sharing the mission of the United Church of Christ through the OGHS offering in real time.

If you haven’t yet, please like us on Facebook at facebook.com/onegreathourofsharingucc and follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/OGHS_at_UCC!
OGHS Staff
The Rev. Dr. Jim Moos
Executive Minister, Wider Church Ministries and
Co-Executive, Global Ministries
The Rev Dr. Mary Schaller Blaufuss
Team Leader, Global Sharing of Resources
blaufusm@ucc.org
Ms. Rebekah Choate
Administrative Assistant, Communications
choater@ucc.org
Ms. Diane Dicken
Administrative Assistant, Finance
dickend@ucc.org
The Rev. Phyllis Y. Richards
Program Associate
richardp@ucc.org
Mr. Zachary Wolgemuth
Executive, UCC Disaster Ministries
wolgemuthz@ucc.org

OGHS Supported
Global Ministries
Mission Personnel
Karen Campbell-Nelson
Professor, Trauma Counseling Work with Women
Indonesia
Kahala Cannon
Mungeli Hospital, India
Anil Henry, M.D.
Medical Superintendent and Surgeon
Mungeli Hospital, India
Teresa Henry, M.D.
Teacher, Administrator and Medical Doctor
Mungeli Hospital, India
Don Westra
Micro-Enterprise Planning/Management
Zimbabwe

One Great Hour of Sharing | United Church of Christ
700 Prospect Avenue | Cleveland, OH 44115-1100
216-736-3215
ucc.org/oghs

facebook.com/onegreathourofsharingucc
twitter.com/OGHS_at_UCC

Rev. Phyllis Y. Richards, Publisher
Dale J. Bryant, Graphic Design