

Continuing Testament

What does Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) support?

In the national setting of the United Church of Christ there are four Covenanted Ministry partners who are supported by gifts Our Church's Wider Mission. We work together to change lives!

The Office of General Ministries houses the President and General Minister who serves in many ways. One strategic role of the President is convening leaders in conversations on what it means to be a faithful, vital, and healthy church. These conversations take place in many and various settings of conference boards, local churches, seminary trustees and Mission Planning Council. The aim is to collaboratively develop new forms of cross setting resourcing, engagement and sharing.

The Office of General Ministries manages biennial convening of General Synod. In 2013 for [General Synod 29](#) delegates representing conferences and local churches from across the UCC will gather in Long Beach, California to vote on proposed resolutions presented before the body of the church.

Office of General Ministries also houses the Publishing, Identity and Communications office. One responsibility they have is establishing and maintaining a web and social media presence. [UCC.org](#) has over 4,500,000 visitors to the UCC website each year and these visitors view over 7,500,000 UCC web pages. The largest number of visitors comes for any of three reasons: to [find a church](#), [worship resources](#), or [preaching resources](#).

Outgoing communication keeps us connected. Every week over 60,000 subscribers open [Keeping You Posted](#) E-zine (KYeP). Our social media presence is growing. Those new to the UCC and those responding to postings by UCC members increase our fan base on Facebook which is over 61,000. And each day we email over 35,000 [Daily Devotional](#) messages to inspire and offer messages for reflection.

Local Church Ministries supports the local church in many ways. The [Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization Ministry Team](#) (MESA) team is designed to support Authorized Ministers (Ordained, Licensed and Commissioned) in our denomination from the first inklings of their calling through a healthy retirement. MESA's ministry is a collaborative effort intertwined with Conferences, Associations, and Committees on Ministry.

When a person is moved from silence into exploration of a potential call to ministry they become a Member in Discernment and the MESA ministry team provides the guidelines and procedures for their formation. Conference Committees on Ministry mentor Members in Discernment. When that individual is authorized and called into service as a pastor of a local church, MESA is again there to provide support for continuing education and oversight.

If God's voice lingers yet again in the silence and that pastor feels drawn to explore a new ministry setting, MESA is there to support the search and call process of the denomination. As well as to offer support to those ministers serving in specialized settings such as hospital and college chaplaincy.

This holy work is never completed in isolation. It is dependent on God's presence moving through the church and calling forth leaders. Together we work across the church to form, equip and support faithful and effective authorized ministers for God's mission in the world.

The [Congregational Vitality and Discipleship Team](#) support on-the-ground church operations and growth for pastors and lay leaders. We helped launch the [Center for Progressive Renewal](#) (CPR), a training center for UCC pastors and lay leaders and a growing number of ecumenical participants. CPR educates leaders toward implementing a "compelling vision, effective communication strategy, data management, community development, external mission and transformational worship." Recently partnered with two UCC Seminaries, the Center offers accredited courses and is "providing a complementary offering, allowing seminaries to offer the theological grounding, while CPR offers the technical training". There are two tracks: one for new church pastors and one for pastors looking to renew congregations (large and small). These course offerings are in response to the complex and ever-changing landscape of what it means to be church today.

Congregations large and small are nurtured by Local Church Ministries resources like scholarly reflections for pastors found in [Sermon Seeds](#) and [Weekly Seeds](#) bible studies for church members, as well as worship materials of [Worship Ways](#). Last year online readers of *Sermon Seeds* and *Worship Ways* exceeded 88,000. Churches are enriched by music found in books produced like [Sing, Prayer and Praise](#) and the UCC's [New Century Hymnal](#). Local Church Ministries nurtures vital worship and theological reflection.

Extravagant Welcome

Wider Church Ministries is most widely known for the mission outreach work of the UCC because of our [disaster ministries](#). This arm of the church also serves congregations and other settings of the church who strive to be inclusive whether it is multicultural/multiracial, open and affirming, global or accessible to all.

In partnership with the Disciples of Christ, Common [Global Ministries](#) is the ecumenical global sharing of resources and prophetic vision of a just and peaceful world order, joining with God's concern for the poor and oppressed.

All of this work – being long-term mission – is accomplished through over 70 trusting partnerships, 90 full-time deployed [volunteer](#) staff, 88 educational mission trip host sites, and shared resources for supporting those in need. We also gather mission reports from 164 UCC groups with over 5,500 members. We provide programmatic presence in disaster recovery, immersion training centers and service and learning sites to offer leverage and systemic support for wider ecumenical host sites, grassroots initiatives and mission trip participants.

The vision of **Justice and Witness Ministries** is of a more just, peaceful and compassionate world that honors all of God's creation but leaders are needed throughout our churches and communities to help share, pursue and achieve this vision.

[Justice Leaders Engaging and Developing](#) (Justice LED) training program for church members, teaches leadership skills to support justice work in local churches and UCC Conferences. Very exciting work!

[Justice and Peace Action Network](#) is a UCC grassroots advocacy effort to educate and engage church members and friends to shape public policy. Last year we've emailed over 600,000 "Action Alerts"! And over 35,000 letters, emails and faxes went to Congress and the President. [Public Policy Briefing Books](#) are also made available at UCC.org to download.

Immersion centers like [Centro Romero](#), [Franklinton Center at Bricks](#), [UCC Environmental Justice Center](#) facilitate educational, transformational issue based seminars on issue of globalization, environmental justice, economic policies, immigration and community empowerment.

The work of Justice and Witness Ministries is guided by the pronouncements and resolutions approved by the UCC at General Synod.

Changing Lives

that's Our Church's Wider Mission