**Jim’s July 2021 Newsletter Article**

**(Jan. 2022 note: the term “OCWM” is supplanted by the new term, “Proportional Giving.”)**

People in individual UCC churches often ask, “What is OCWM?” OCWM (“Our Churches Wider Mission”) is the name we give to our congregational gifts that support wider UCC ministry in Associations, Conferences and in the national and global church. We also call it “basic support” for the ministries of the wider UCC church. It is voluntary. However, without out it, the ministries and benefits of the wider church would not be possible.

People also ask, “What do we get for it? Aren’t we self-sustaining?” Some of the programs supported by our giving to OCWM include benefits for our youth: camps, youth events and scholarships. They include benefits for clergy: continuing education, clergy gatherings, scholarships, and support for retired clergy. OCWM funds support benefits for individual churches such as leadership training, pastoral support, church development and assistance when congregations are in transition. CCEH has been receiving much OCWM-funded support during our interim period, especially now that our Pastoral Search Committee is actively searching for CCEH’s next settled pastor. The entire structure – the backdrop that is often invisible that supports the search and call process – is entirely funded by OCWM dollars. We are more interdependent than we realize. OCWM dollars also support UCC national and global ministries including missionaries, disaster recovery and justice advocacy.

Lastly, in isolation, no single UCC congregation can be the church the world needs today. To be that world-changing life-giving church, we work together through Our Church’s Wider Mission to support and inspire each other. Accordingly, the various settings of the UCC are in voluntary covenant with one another. CCEH is in covenant not only with the other UCC churches throughout our local area, but also the 5,000 other local UCC congregations and agencies across the country. We are also in covenant with our Conference.

Being in covenant – a biblical concept - means that we agree to give up some of our autonomy so as to support one another; it means to acknowledge that God teaches and guides us through our sister UCC settings. Our covenant with one another means learning to be United even when we disagree; it means to be Church together even when we worship in different ways, and to see Christ revealed in beloved community.

Our Church’s Wider Mission Basic Support funds all the ways we strive together to be the Church the world needs. To learn more, visit **UCC.org/OCWM.**

Yours in Christlove,

Rev. Jim