



sharing resources, changing lives

# One Great Hour of Sharing

The Lenten Offering of the United Church of Christ

## 2008 Mission Report

### Where Is Your Treasure?

Get personally involved. Offer your treasure. Multiply the resources that change lives.

When seventeen-year-old Jeff Galasyn from Saco, Maine signed up for his third disaster recovery mission trip in New Orleans, he wasn't thinking about how your gifts to *One Great Hour of Sharing*<sup>®</sup> helped create the program that facilitated his hands-on service. His heart was in the wallboards of the home he was repairing so the family could move back in and get a new start in life. When Chris Rose, a columnist for the Times-Picayune newspaper in New Orleans drove by that house one day and stopped to interview Jeff, Chris wasn't thinking about how your gifts to *OGHS* made it possible for volunteers from all over the country to stay involved in the lives of neighbors recovering from disaster. His heart was in the story Jeff told of paying more attention to the world around him, of asking hard questions, of listening more to people's stories. Chris began to look around again with new eyes and make his own life-changing commitments. When Roma T. Lambourne, an 84-year old resident of New Orleans, read Chris' newspaper column and wrote a thank you addressed simply to "The High School in Saco, Maine," she wasn't thinking directly about your *OGHS* gifts. Her heart was in the gratitude she experienced in the presence of God through the commitment of these volunteers to accompany those affected by disaster. As Rene Menard, the assistant headmaster of the high school in Saco, Maine, read Mrs. Lambourne's note in the school assembly and wrote back to her his own thanks, he wasn't thinking about how your gifts to *OGHS* were more than "just checks." His heart connected with the real lives that had been touched and changed.

Today, as Jeff is more aware of the world globally and more aware of people in his own community with different stories to tell, his heart continues to be touched and changed – as are the people around him.

You are part of this multi-layered story. You are personally involved in disaster recovery through your gifts to *OGHS*. Your treasure puts into motion these heart-wrapped connections that make God's love real in the world.



Jeff Galasyn cleaning during mission trip to New Orleans  
Photo used with permission

### Dear Reader:

You are God's treasured possession.  
(Deut. 14:2)

Together we are all, at times, called to be "treasure tenders" for God. We tend God's treasure in our congregations with the love and care we show each other and our communities. We are also invited to tend God's treasures beyond our congregations and communities by our participation in *One Great Hour of Sharing*<sup>®</sup>.

Through *One Great Hour of Sharing*, we gently, persistently, and strongly care for God's treasures. By sharing some of our earthly treasure — our money, our time, our energy — decisive aid is sent when disaster strikes. Refugees receive help in the long term as they rebuild their lives. We help people help themselves through education, health care, small scale agriculture, micro-finance and peace building initiatives.

When we care for people, we can be transformed by experiencing the presence of God.

This 2008 *OGHS* Mission report is offered so you may know of the impact of your treasure tending.

Thank you for your past and future gifts to *One Great Hour of Sharing*.

Susan M. Sanders  
Minister for Global Sharing of Resources

## Thank you!

# OGHS LIVE!

Live, 45 minute interactive sessions featuring persons engaged in *OGHS* supported ministries will be offered on five Wednesdays during Lent. Join one or participate in all five.

### Announcing Audio/Web Conferencing during Lent

- Talk to a refugee from Sudan, resettled by UCC congregations.
- Explore health care for the poor with an *OGHS* supported Missionary in India.
- Engage Disaster Recovery mission workers along the Gulf Coast.

and more...

Details at [www.ucc.org/oghs](http://www.ucc.org/oghs)  
Inquiries to [oghs@ucc.org](mailto:oghs@ucc.org)

**DATES:** March 4, 11, 18, 25, & April 1, 2009

**TIME:** 7:15–8:00pm EST & 7:30–8:15pm PST

Downloadable web-based resources for each session will include:

- Opening and closing prayers written by mission partners
- Stories & photos of *OGHS* mission work
- Soup recipes from featured mission areas, and more...

## Time Treasured

In May 2008, members of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ in Grand Rapids, Michigan found their treasure in time—the time invested in helping a refugee family from Iraq resettle in their town. Here is their story.

One week before the Habib family arrived in the United States, the Rev. Doug Van Doren received a visit from Elizabeth Smith from PARA (Programs Assisting Refugee Acculturation). Elizabeth told of a refugee family coming to Grand Rapids and shared their need for a co-sponsor. Knowing the giving nature of Plymouth UCC, Van Doren was confident the congregation would respond positively.

He immediately began emailing to see who would like to be involved. With a positive response from a number of people they agreed to help the family of five.

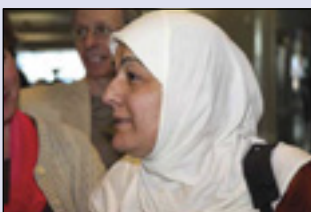
On May 22, fifteen members of the church gathered at the airport to welcome the Habib Family. Kamal and Thoraya Habib and their three children fled Iraq in September 2006 to Syria, after years of unrest. In Syria, the family continued to live in fear.



Since their arrival in Grand Rapids, people from Plymouth Church have been very generous with their time, both sharing and learning. Stacy Grossman and other church members assisted with practical day to day issues; finding a doctor, enrolling in school, learning the public transportation system, etc. Alan Headbloom conducted a two hour seminar for the congregation on cross-cultural communications. "Cultural work is important. We all need it," said Van Doren. "Plymouth seeks to be open to and sensitive to diversity."

In relation to this resettlement experience, Van Doren uplifts the "treasure of time...the more time that passes, the more you learn to appreciate what this family has been through. We all have the same amount of time. Time is precious. But when you visit the Habib's or drop them off, they invite you in for tea and goodies. In their culture, building relationships takes time, and is often measured by the cups of tea you share."

Stacy says that spending time with the family has been an eye-opening experience. "They had to start their lives over twice." Stacy also recognizes that she and Mrs. Habib have a lot in common. They are the same age and their children are close in age. "We are becoming friends, and we laugh about many things," reflected Stacy.



*Refugee and Immigration Ministries is fully supported by your gifts to the One Great Hour of Sharing® offering. Plymouth Congregational UCC in Grand Rapids is a top per capita giver to OGHS.*

## Underwater Treasures

*Story shared by Indiana-Kentucky Conference Minister, the Rev. Stephen Gray*

Spring 2008 brought high winds, tornadoes and flooding which left homes, farms, churches and businesses severely damaged or destroyed across mid-America. Flood waters covered many cities across Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri and Wisconsin.

Salem UCC in Westphalia, Indiana was built on the highest hill in town. The Rev. Ken D. Kramer, Interim Pastor, explained that the founding members wanted "God's House" to be a place of help for its members and the wider community. And the Church has been a help to many over the years through its local ministry and regular support of the *One Great Hour of Sharing*® offering.

Two families of Salem UCC experienced severe damage to their homes from the spring floods. When Rev. Ken arrived at Wendell and Delores Anderson's home with a check from OGHS to help with their repairs, Wendell could not believe it. He said, "You know, over the years, my wife and I have given to OGHS to help people in the midst of their emergencies, but this is the first time we are recipients." Wendell paused and then continued, "You know, it is sometimes harder to receive than to give. Thank you ever so much."

Linda and Earl Meek also had severe damage to their home. They were so grateful, when Rev. Ken arrived with a check to assist them, all they could say was, "Oh, Thank God, Thank God!"

Gifts to *One Great Hour of Sharing* assist many individuals, families, and communities across the US and around the world to rebuild their lives after disasters. UCC/OGHS responds to disaster on the average of once every 2.5 days.



*2006 Midwest flooding  
Photo used with permission*



*If you want to walk fast, walk alone. But if you want to go far, walk together with others.*

*Kenyan proverb attributed to the Rev. Sam Kobia,  
General Secretary, World Council of Churches*

## Redwood City Church Donates \$100,000 to One Great Hour of Sharing®

When First Congregational UCC, Redwood City, California sold its building in 2007, the congregation voted to tithe (give 10 percent) from the proceeds to various agencies that share their mission values. In May, 2008 they sent a \$100,000 donation to *One Great Hour of Sharing*.

Patti Bury, who was church moderator at the time of the sale, said the decision was like everything else in their church, a total group effort. Our congregation is over 140 years old. We wanted to use the money to honor the commitment of all the generations that built and invested and worshipped before us and to honor their legacy.

The congregation voted to sell their building after a long discernment process (See June 2008 and October 2006 Conference Newsletters [www.ncnuc.org/pacific/pacificindex.html](http://www.ncnuc.org/pacific/pacificindex.html)) in order to birth a new progressive ministry on the Peninsula.

Bury credits a faithful group of women, the Good Hope Colony, who urged the congregation and the church council to make its first gift, a large donation that could have greater impact. When the annual *One Great Hour of Sharing* materials arrived, the church leaders recalled the congregation's history of support for the offering and thought it was an obvious choice. They agreed, OGHS speaks to our mission, it extends our church out into the world, and it feeds the need for us to feed other people in the global community.

Pastor Carol Barringer said, "for us, ministry means not only reinventing and transforming our church, but also making a real difference in the community and world."

In June 2008, Susan Sanders, the UCC Minister for Global Sharing of Resources had the privilege of honoring First Congregational UCC Redwood City with a special OGHS Ambassador's Award for their significant contribution. Sanders remarked that the congregation was being honored for their steadfast commitment and creative contribution to make real the love of Christ and equip families around the world with resources they need to build futures of health, hope and dignity.



*First Congregational UCC members receive thanks from UCC President John Thomas*

# Happy Anniversary!

## One Great Hour of Sharing®

### Sharing Resources and Changing Lives for 60 years! 1949–2009

## Getting the Aid in!

On May 2, 2008, a massive cyclone hit Myanmar, causing extensive damage and the deaths of 140,000 people. Concerned UCC members were eager to know how their *One Great Hour of Sharing*® gifts would make it into Myanmar.

Getting relief aid and personnel into Myanmar was challenging. A great gift of being part of the wider church is the ability to work with and through world-wide partners when disasters strike. The UCC, as a member of Church World Service (CWS) and Action by Churches Together (ACT), worked with partners to assess the situation and plan a common effort to support local Myanmar partners to provide early relief and long-term rehabilitation.

Asian ACT partners quickly entered Myanmar to assist our local partners. CWS used its U.S. Treasury permit to transfer funds and relief items including water, water purification and shelter materials.

UCC members and friends generously donated over \$220,000.

ACT members continue to be active in the huge rehabilitation efforts required to support the people of Myanmar. Plans for 2009 include construction of permanent housing, schools and community cyclone shelters, agricultural livelihood recovery, and improved access to potable water. Once again, the church stays for the long haul of recovery.



Aid distribution  
Photo: ACT International

## OGHS Support through CWS Changes lives!

**Serbia**—Forty ethnic Roma families—some 265 people—in the Zemun district of Belgrade are improving their lives through participation in a Church World Service program to jumpstart small businesses.

Though Serbia is one of eight European countries to sign onto an agreement to fight poverty and exclusion among the Roma, many Roma in Belgrade live in cardboard houses, without addresses, and often without electricity, water or sewage service.

Through the CWS project, the families are working to move from poverty and isolation to self-reliance. Budding micro-entrepreneurs are developing business plans and receiving seed money to purchase needed tools and materials. And, through the program's motivational workshops they are improving their self-confidence and self-respect.

Severfdjan Beria's family has traditionally collected discarded footwear and repaired them by hand. Beria and his wife provided a subsistence living for their family repairing tennis shoes that are still in good condition and selling them at the secondhand market.

With the help of CWS, Beria has bought a shoe-repair machine and materials to enable him and his wife to increase their volume. They have also made contact with a shoemaking center in Belgrade, where they can get all the raw materials needed for their business. With the increased income, the family hopes to purchase a lot to build a house.



Severfdjan Beria at his  
shoe-repair machine  
Photo: CWS

## Top Giving Churches in 2007

We are honored to highlight the following 12 churches for having the highest per capita giving to the One Great Hour of Sharing® in 2007 offering with total giving of at least \$2,000. Thank you all for your generosity, leadership, and faithfulness. Sharing Resources, Changing Lives!

### **Kingsbury Community United Church of Christ Vernal, Utah**

Rocky Mountain Conference  
34 Members with Per Capita of \$79.26

### **United Church of Christ in University Place Tacoma, Washington**

Pacific Northwest Conference  
96 Members with Per Capita of \$70.72

### **First Congregational United Church of Christ Baraboo, Wisconsin**

Wisconsin Conference  
129 Members with Per Capita of \$50.86

### **Bethesda United Church of Christ Bethesda, Maryland**

Central Atlantic Conference  
141 Members with Per Capita of \$50.26

### **United Church of Christ**

**Lake Oswego, Oregon**  
Central Pacific Conference  
93 Members with Per Capita of \$35.82

### **Ladera Community Church**

**Portola Valley, California**  
Northern California Nevada Conference  
153 Members with Per Capita of \$35.79

### **First Congregational**

**Indianapolis, Indiana**  
Indiana-Kentucky Conference  
216 Members with Per Capita of \$35.20

### **First United Church of Arvada**

**Arvada, Colorado**  
Rocky Mountain Conference  
153 Members with Per Capita of \$34.00

### **Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ Grand Rapids, Michigan**

Michigan Conference  
298 Members with Per Capita of \$32.73

### **Irvine United Congregational Church**

**Irvine, California**  
Southern California Nevada Conference  
246 Members with Per Capita of \$30.73

### **United Church of Christ at Valley Forge**

**Wayne, Pennsylvania**  
Pennsylvania Southeast Conference  
291 Members with Per Capita of \$30.64

### **Community Church of Altadena**

**Altadena, California**  
Southern California Nevada Conference  
88 Members with Per Capita of \$27.77

### **Ambassador's Award**

### **First Congregational Church**

**Redwood City, California**  
Northern California Nevada Conference  
Gift of \$100,000 to *One Great Hour of Sharing*®

## Working Together: Sharing Resources, Changing Lives

Since 1949, North American churches have joined together in support of One Great Hour of Sharing®. Collectively over \$20 million is raised annually. Our churches work cooperatively with Church World Service and each other on many mission projects.

American Baptist Churches USA  
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Church of the Brethren  
Cumberland Presbyterian Church  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Reformed Church in America  
United Church of Christ  
The United Methodist Church

## How to Promote OGHS

Follow the four steps below and watch your offering grow:

- **Prepare!**  
Review promotion resources. Order additional quantities. Share the resources with others in your church who will also be involved in promoting the offering.
- **Educate and Proclaim!**  
Mail letters from the pastor along with offering envelopes to members and friends. Print announcements. Use bulletin inserts. Plan a skit. Share stories. Many ideas are available online at [www.ucc.org/oghs/resources](http://www.ucc.org/oghs/resources).
- **Worship!**  
Use one of the adult or children's sermons, your congregation will enjoy learning something new about the offering. Multiple resources are available including sample sermons, maps, stories, skits, and even a music DVD. Make the offering the high point of the service on Dedication Day (the suggested date is March 22, 2009).
- **Celebrate!**  
Share the good news...because of their generosity, your congregation was able to reach its goal. Let people know they can still give. Then send your Congregation's gift to your UCC Conference Office noting OGHS.

**Thank you for your support**

## One Great Hour of Sharing United Church of Christ

### Wider Church Ministries

**The Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte**

Executive Minister  
[rogersc@ucc.org](mailto:rogersc@ucc.org)

### Global Sharing of Resources Staff

**Susan M. Sanders**

Minister and Team Leader  
[sanderss@ucc.org](mailto:sanderss@ucc.org)

**Phyllis Y. Richards**

Program Associate  
[richardp@ucc.org](mailto:richardp@ucc.org)

**Rita O. Jackson**

Administrative Assistant  
[jacksonr@ucc.org](mailto:jacksonr@ucc.org)

**Tonya J. Pettigrew**

Administrative Assistant  
[pettigrewt@ucc.org](mailto:pettigrewt@ucc.org)

**Florence A. Coppola**

Executive, National Disaster Ministries  
[coppolaf@ucc.org](mailto:coppolaf@ucc.org)

**Mary Kuening Gross**

Executive, Refugee Ministries  
[grossm@ucc.org](mailto:grossm@ucc.org)

**The Rev. Mary Schaller Blaufuss**

Executive, Volunteer Ministries  
[blaufusm@ucc.org](mailto:blaufusm@ucc.org)

### Global Ministries Mission Personnel

Supported by *One Great Hour of Sharing*

**Bruce Hanson**

Health Worker, Honduras

**Anil Henry**

Medical Superintendent and Surgeon, India

**Teresa Henry**

Teacher and Administrator, India

**Kathleen Kamphoefner**

Refugee Coordinator, Egypt

**Bethsaba Nafziger**

Community Health Worker, Nepal

**Paul Pierce**

Refugee Coordinator, Egypt



## A Look at Tents of Hope, and Beyond

In November 2008 thousands gathered on the National Mall in Washington, DC for the **Tents of Hope** "Gathering of the Tents" where hundreds of brightly painted tents were set-up in front of the US Capitol. The three-day rally was the culmination of a year-long campaign supported by *One Great Hour of Sharing*® and Global Ministries (the United Church of Christ and Christian Church Disciples of Christ). It was designed to attract churches and community members not typically engaged in advocacy. Tents of Hope was started by Dr. Tim Nonn, a UCC minister from Petaluma, California. He said "we thought the idea of painting tents would work because it could bring communities together in a creative and fun way while raising awareness to the critical situation in Sudan", a situation the US has called a genocide.

The effort was a success, with schools, churches, and community groups of all kinds in almost 400 cities in 48 states and 8 countries joining in the effort. Tim Nonn summed up what he learned about the power of this grassroots effort. "The only thing that will keep us going in this movement to end genocide in Darfur is the strength that we get from one another."

Derek Duncan, Associate for Global Advocacy and Education with Global Ministries hopes the inspiration for church and community groups to learn about and get involved in advocacy for peace doesn't stop with Tents of Hope and concern for the people of Sudan. He said "Other tragedies also need our attention. Right next door in the Congo a devastating civil war has been raging for decades and it is getting worse." Nearly 5 million people have been killed by ethnic militias in Democratic Republic of the Congo and innocent civilians are fleeing for safety. "We hope more people in the faith community will respond to the needs of the Congo. Increased awareness and activism by the international community can do more to stop the violence, so that displaced people in the Sudan and the Congo can return home to a civil and safe environment."

While the Campaign for Tents of Hope has ended, the continued need for action has not. Thanks to all who participated in and supported Tents of Hope. The journey to end the violence, presses on.

OGHS increasingly supports people and communities devastated by conflict and violence and are committed to work toward ending genocide and violence.



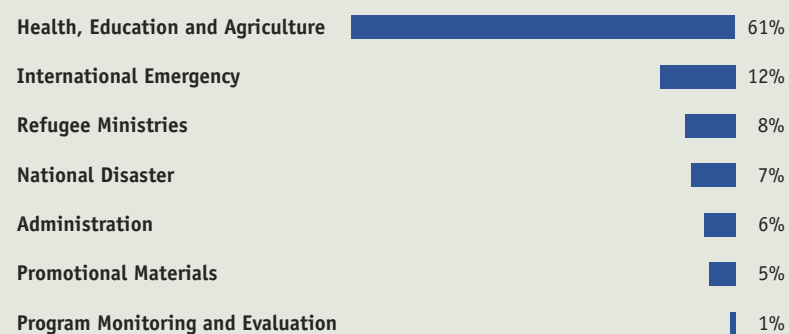
*Children fleeing the Congo  
Photo used with permission*

### The chart shows how OGHS dollars were spent in 2007.

In 2007, the United Church of Christ received \$2,890,358 for the *OGHS* offering. In addition, our churches and members gave over \$259,000\* to UCC special appeals for domestic and international emergencies.

Find stories on how the offering has transformed lives at: [www.ucc.org/oghs/stories](http://www.ucc.org/oghs/stories)

\* not included in graph



Sharing Resources, Changing Lives!



One Great Hour of Sharing  
United Church of Christ  
Wider Church Ministries

700 Prospect Ave. East  
Cleveland, OH 44115

1.866.822.8224 Ext. 3215

[www.ucc.org/oghs](http://www.ucc.org/oghs)