

## Introducing Church World Service

When you hear the term “**Church World Service**,” what do you think of? You may well think of our annual CROP walks, which raise funds for Church World Service, 25% of which is returned to the communities where the funds were raised. What more do you know about Church World Service? What does it do with those funds?

Presently comprised of 37 Christian denominations, including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Church World Service has a presence on every continent except Antarctica. It emphasizes disaster relief, care for migrants, and community development, especially in isolated rural areas and large refugee camps, in which many refugees have lived more than 20 years and more. Increasingly, it is also incorporating advocacy on behalf of powerless individuals and communities. Born in 1946 in the wake of WW II, it started as the collaborative effort of seventeen denominations which came together “to do in partnership what none of us could hope to do as well alone.” Here are a few examples of its work:

In **Africa**, an emphasis is on helping refugees in large camps in Kenya and Tanzania, working to improve food security, stable incomes, and educational opportunities. In **Asia and Indonesia**, much work focuses on rural community development: helping families find new means of support, improving access to clean water, encouraging dietary diversification, and supporting the use of improved toilet facilities. Our former pastor, the Rev. Dr. Aart Van Beek and his wife Carolyn, served as country co-directors for Indonesia and East Timor (Timor Leste) from 1995 to 1996.

In **Europe, the Middle East, and Egypt**, the emphasis is on stabilizing the lives of migrants, helping ensure that basic needs of the hundreds of thousands of refugees in enormous camps are met. In **Israel and the Occupied Territories**, advocacy is important. CWS sends mission volunteers to live in the West Bank for three months, observing life there, then, upon their return to the US, bear witness to what they have experienced.

A central focus in much of **Latin America** is on ensuring safety for impoverished indigenous communities, helping them stabilize their lives, provide assistance to migrants and asylees fleeing violence, and advocating on their behalf. In Central America, three South American countries, and Haiti, CWS works with local communities to address difficulties caused by climate change, such as helping protect water supplies and switch to drought-resistant crops. CWS also assists and advocates on behalf of children and families with incarcerated members.

In the **United States**, much effort goes to helping refugees, asylees and asylum seekers, and other migrants, addressing basic material support, offering free or low cost legal services, specialized services for unaccompanied minors, and housing services for migrants. It is also active in disaster relief efforts; it was one of the first responders when fires broke out in the Los Angeles area in January.

In 2022, CWS reported an income of \$220,437,580, of which 84.6% was from the US government. Its expenses that year were \$218,996,780. The largest single expense, \$170,998,164, 78.1%, was for services for displaced people. It reported a 9.7% indirect cost, \$21,258,479.

Because of its commitment to collaboration, whenever possible Church World Service works together with other agencies. In Sacramento, the primary collaborating agency is **Opening Doors Inc.**, which welcomes refugees, defends immigrants through its Immigration Legal Services Program, supports survivors of human trafficking, uplifts physical and mental wellbeing, and expands economic opportunity through career pathways development and microenterprise business consulting services and microloans. Parkview member Maurine Huang founded Opening Doors in 2002.