

**UNITED
CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

Communitas
PENNSYLVANIA SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE

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Ariel Royer, Global Ministries Intern - January to March 2016

Congratulations to Ariel Royer, Global Ministries intern, as she connects with UCC churches during her assignment to compile a living database of local congregations that are housing, welcoming or supporting refugees in the US in any way, or have done so in the past.



The global media coverage on the Syrian refugee crisis over the past 6 months has prompted many congregations to reach out to the national office (and doubtlessly to many of you) with interest connecting or re-connecting with the UCC's refugee ministries. This would include refugees resettling in the United States from Syria as well as from many parts of the world that receive little news coverage.

In response, we have invited **Ariel Royer** to serve for 3 months (January-March 2016) with Wider Church Ministries through the Partners in Service program. This is part of Ariel's home assignment at the conclusion of her service as a Global Mission Intern with partner churches in the Middle East. She will be compiling information of UCC congregations already welcoming and supporting refugees in a variety of ways— through sponsorship of families, holding fundraising efforts, involvement in advocacy and awareness raising. We hope that this information will better position us to:

1. facilitate increased collaboration between congregations welcoming refugees now or in the future;
2. share best practices with congregations;
3. tell the stories of local ministries welcoming refugees;
4. strengthen UCC refugee ministries through Church World Service and its affiliates.

Visit ucc.org and type "refugee-welcoming" in the search box to see a UC News article about this [New Project to Help Connect and Resource Refugee-welcoming UCC Congregations](#).

Thank you for your help and encouragement in this project. We believe this will be a valuable resource for local congregations searching for ways to welcome refugees to the United States.

Jim Moos, Executive Minister
Wider Church Ministries Co-Executive, Global Ministries

Message from Rev. William P. Worley, PSEC Conference Minister

Armondo Tamargo is my best friend. He came to America from Cuba with his mother after Fidel Castro took power. He and millions of people hoped for the day when Cuba would be opened again and the broken relationships between friends and families could be restored. PSEC brothers and sisters worked to restore some of that brokenness before the Cuban-America reconnection began last year. Our partnership with The Fellowship of Baptist Churches of Cuba formed in 2007 when a group of Conference representatives, led by members of Old First Reformed United Church of Christ in Philadelphia, visited Cuba. Since then several groups have exchanged visits to make connections with Cuban Christians who share a passion for the gospel and a commitment to the church.



The Fellowship of Baptist Churches of Cuba, an organization of 39 congregations founded in 1989, traces its roots to the 17th century. Its "Seven Commitments" mirror the values we prize in the United Church of Christ:

- To defend the independence of each of its 39 churches.
- To be unwavering in its defense of the historic belief of freedom of conscience and diversity.
- To work to empower lay people at every level of leadership.
- To preserve the principle of separation of church and state.
- To recognize the important role of women in the life of the church.
- To participate in the coming together, understanding and collaboration between different denominations of Christianity so that they may all be one.
- To renew and deepen its study of the Bible, and to incorporate elements of the local culture and traditions into its worship.

We have let time and distance diminish our partnership but PSEC Ecumenical Relations Team has seized this moment in history to reconnect with fellow Christians as the citizens of our two nations reestablish "normal diplomatic relations." As you read this, Rev. Darryl Cruz and I are in Cuba to attend the Annual Meeting of The Fellowship of Baptist Churches, worship with local congregations, revive old friendships and make new ones. We will share the news of our travels in a future edition of Communitas. In the meantime, please keep us and The Fellowship churches of Cuba in your prayers.

Blessing,
Rev. Bill Worley, PSEC Conference Minister



Prayers are requested for Trinity UCC in Tamaqua and Rev. Darryl E. Kensinger.