



**Handbook for  
Diocesan and Parish  
Coordinators/Organizers  
2018-2020**

*Approved May 22, 2018*

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# Message from the United Thank Offering Board

The United Thank Offering (UTO) Board gives thanks for the opportunity to work together to support gratitude, prayer, giving, and mission in The Episcopal Church. Thank you for your willingness to serve and participate in the mission and ministry of the United Thank Offering. As a United Thank Offering Coordinator/Organizer, you are among the most important leaders of the ministry. In your daily life, you show gratitude for personal blessings each time you put a coin in a Blue Box, and by reminding and teaching others to do the same, you enrich the lives of so many. In addition to promoting thank offerings, Coordinators/Organizers are entrusted to receive the offerings through Ingatherings in parishes or dioceses and then turn these designated gifts into the United Thank Offering Office in time to be counted with the annual Ingathering.

## **For more information, please use the following links:**

- For free, up-to-date downloadable resources (such as bulletin announcement templates, grant lists, and so forth), be sure to visit our blog: [www.unitedthankoffering.org](http://www.unitedthankoffering.org)
- Like our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/United-Thank-Offering/>
- Check out our website for videos and other information: [www.episcopalchurch.org/uto](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/uto)
- To order free resources (pay only shipping and handling) such as Blue Boxes, offering envelopes, and brochures, visit: <https://shimaofnavajoland.com/collections/united-thank-offering>

This handbook is intended to provide you with the tools necessary to assist you in the ministry of the United Thank Offering, if you still have questions that the handbook hasn't addressed, please let us know. The Board and Staff are here to support you in your ministry.

Thank you again for your willingness to lead UTO in your parish or diocese. We hope that you'll find this ministry rewarding, life-giving and gratifying. We know that it can be challenging to ask people to start a spiritual discipline, but we know from our members that UTO, a daily spiritual discipline of gratitude, changes our lives and the lives of those who are affected by UTO Grants.

With sincere gratitude,

The United Thank Offering Board & Staff

*Questions? Contact UTO Staff Officer, The Rev. Canon Heather Melton:*  
[hmelton@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:hmelton@episcopalchurch.org) .

# Roles in the United Thank Offering Structure

The United Thank Offering was founded as a grassroots network to teach the practice of using thank offerings to deepen our individual awareness of the blessings that God bestows on us each day and to fund innovative ministries throughout the church. Our mission and structure remain the same as when first founded, and we are grateful to have you be a part of this wonderful spiritual discipline and mission-funding ministry.

## The Blue Box

The Blue Box was created as a receptacle for coins to remind the user to give thanks daily and for all things. A Blue Box placed anywhere can serve as a visual reminder to offer blessings large and small. It represents the heart of the United Thank Offering ministry and is a pathway between our prayers and the mission of The Episcopal Church. It is a symbol that allows us, during the week, to be linked to our Christian tradition of praying, recognizing that blessings come from God (and in this case making a thank offering when we encounter those blessings), and being present to Christ in the world by helping others in need.

Blue Boxes hold individuals' gifts of coins and dollars, which are then collected and blessed at an Ingathering in the parish or diocese. For many, the size of the box is a reminder that all blessings, big or small, are gifts from God and that all offerings, big or small, are used for the glory of God and the building of God's Kingdom.

## Every Episcopalian Is a Member of the United Thank Offering

The United Thank Offering gives an opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way to mission through daily prayers of thanks for all the good things that we have and can recognize in our lives. In giving thanks with a coin, not only do we offer a gift to someone else, but we also honor the blessing that we are remembering. Giving in small ways teaches us to give in larger ways as we grow. The Blue Box is a reminder that coins and bills can go a long way toward helping someone else in great need. As people benefit from those gifts, they in turn can help others. The United Thank Offering could be described as a pay-it-forward ministry - we help others who in turn help others, most often in life-changing ways. It is a ministry that is particularly instrumental in teaching children about the Christian way of giving thanks and helping someone else. (Please see our blog for resources for teaching children about gratitude, including a United Thank Offering Godly Play lesson plan.)

## Parish Coordinators/Organizers

The goal of the grassroots network is to have one United Thank Offering Coordinator, or Organizer in every congregation of in The Episcopal Church. Parish Coordinators/Organizers are essential to our network, as they organize, educate and excite the people in the pews to participate in the spiritual discipline of gratitude, the foundation of our ministry. The most important task for Parish Coordinators/Organizers is to regularly convey the message of UTO in ways that are meaningful to both priests and parishioners. One way of conveying UTO's message is to show some of the videos available on our webpage. Parish Coordinators/Organizers are also responsible for ensuring that the Ingathering (or collection of the Blue Boxes) takes place and that everything collected is turned in to the diocese or the United Thank Offering in a timely fashion. Please note that every coin placed in a Blue Box is considered a designated gift to the United Thank Offering and must be used for UTO grants only. See *Financial Practices* for more information.

Suggestions and resources to help UTO Parish Coordinators/Organizers encourage each household in the congregation to daily recognize and thank God for their blessings and - as an outward and visible sign of their gratitude - drop coins or bills in a Blue Box include:

- Encourage each household in the congregation to drop coins or bills in the Blue Box daily as an outward and visible sign of thanks to God.
- Order and distribute printed materials from: <https://shimaofnavajoland.com/collections/united-thank-offering> (The only charge is for postage).
- Go to [www.episcopalchurch.org/uto](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/uto), scroll down and to on "Videos" for free United Thank Offering videos you can download and show. Many give the story of a ministry that received a UTO grant or a person who was served by the ministry. Seeing the actual ministry in action and hearing the stories can be very powerful. The United Thank Offering 2014 Blue Box video is also available and continues to be popular.
- Speak to your congregation, ECW, vestry, etc., utilizing resources from our blog - [www.UnitedThankOffering.org](http://www.UnitedThankOffering.org) - to help explain that participating in the United Thank Offering will teach a ministry of gratitude.
- Because people want to know where the money goes, create a display with information on grants awarded each year. Maybe invite recipients of a grant to speak, or take a field trip to visit a grant site near you. For additional information regarding grants, contact the United Thank Offering staff at [hmelton@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:hmelton@episcopalchurch.org) or [kmassey@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:kmassey@episcopalchurch.org) for a list of grant sites in your diocese. UTO's Facebook page also has a wealth of photos and information about grant sites.
- Host a United Thank Offering coffee hour using a blue theme: serve blueberry muffins, blue carrots, blue corn chips, and so forth. This is a fun activity on Ingathering Sundays. Create activities that allow people to share their blessings with each other.
- Introduce the United Thank Offering to children through children's sermons, Sunday School, Godly Play, and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Sample lessons and sermons are available on our blog: [www.unitedthankoffering.org](http://www.unitedthankoffering.org). Children love to fold the flat boxes themselves.

- Coordinate the Spring and/or Fall Ingatherings for maximum effect. The most important part of the Ingathering is teaching about giving in gratitude, then gathering the Blue Boxes and envelopes together. Ingatherings are generally held in the spring to represent new growth, and in the fall to represent harvest times. The suggested day for the Spring Ingathering is the Sunday closest to Ascension, and the suggested day for the Fall Ingathering is the Sunday closest to All Saints' Day.
- Check with your diocese to see where the Ingathering funds are sent. Some dioceses have an Ingathering at Convention, others at a special worship service, and others prefer to send in funds to the diocese, as they are collected. In some dioceses, parishes are expected to send their UTO collections directly to the following address: United Thank Offering, DFMS—Protestant Episcopal Church US, P.O. Box 958983, St. Louis, MO 63195-8983. **Mark your check: Ingathering.** We encourage you to follow the process that your diocese recommends.
  - Schedule Ingathering dates with the clergy and the worship committee.
  - Use the sample prayers, songs, scripture references, and service materials provided online and in this handbook to tell the story of the United Thank Offering and to make the Ingathering special. (Remember, you are celebrating prayers and blessings so this is a big deal!)
  - Some congregations provide United Thank Offering envelopes for paper money and checks. Then Blue Boxes can be reused. If you are using envelopes, make them readily available in the pews, inserted in bulletins, or handed out at the door the day of the Ingathering.
  - Combine monies received from Blue Boxes and envelopes and turn in the funds as directed by your diocese.
  - Keep records of Ingathering amounts and the dates. Note amounts of checks and who has given those for the purpose of thanking them. Follow the procedure for handling Ingathering funds in your diocese.
  - Keep a separate accounting of expenses incurred for reimbursement by your congregation with prior approval. Money to cover your expenses and supplies should be secured from your congregation or Women's Group. **NONE of the Ingathering money may be used for expenses.** Ingathering money is a designated gift to fund United Thank Offering grants. Remember that you are entrusted in good faith by people in your church to send all money given to the United Thank Offering in a timely fashion. Follow your parish guidelines for counting and depositing money.
  - Thank people for participating! Write a thank you note in the parish newsletter, say something at the announcements, or send personal letters. Some people would like a letter for tax purposes - see the section on *Best Financial Practices* in this handbook or on our blog for more information and a sample letter. Remember, thankfulness generates thankfulness.

- Notify the Diocesan Coordinator/Organizer when leaving the Parish Coordinators/Organizers position, and send the name, address, phone number, and email address of the next person to fill the position in your parish.
- Explain the importance of the **Memorial Trust Fund** to the congregation and encourage gifts to honor or remember someone. See the *Finances* section to learn more about the trust fund. The same address can be used for Memorial Trust Funds, but indicate the funds are for a memorial.
- Encourage your congregation to submit grant applications for funding and explain how it works. Help them with applications or seek help from your Diocesan Coordinator/Organizer, if requested.

## Diocesan Coordinators/Organizers

Diocesan Coordinators/Organizers are the link between the Parish Coordinators and the diocese, as well as between the diocesan network and the Province Representative to the United Thank Offering Board. Often, they are on the front lines regarding the grant application process and fiduciary processes within the diocese. Listed below are the tasks that will assist you in your important work.

- Sign up for the monthly UTO e-newsletter. This is a great way to get timely information about UTO, ideas for promoting gratitude, and updates on grant sites.
- Your Province Representative will communicate with you regularly to share information regarding periodic webinars, good news (such as grant awards), and educational resources. Please share this information with your Diocesan Communications Officer and your Parish Coordinators/Organizers.
- Participate in trainings and/or webinars to the extent you are able, or ask your Province Representative for the notes after the webinar so you are up to date on the latest United Thank Offering processes.
- Let us know about the great work you are doing to promote UTO by submitting information with pictures or videos, for the UTO Facebook page or the monthly e-Newsletter.
- Meet with the diocesan bishop to ensure that United Thank Offering is an integral part of the life of the diocese. We encourage you to discuss the following with your bishop if any are not in place or haven't been revisited recently:
  - Is the Ingathering held at a prominent time and place within the life of the diocese? If your diocese does not have an Ingathering, this would be a good goal for your diocese and help is available from the UTO staff.
  - Does the bishop take Blue Boxes with him when he visits parishes? Is he or she familiar with the spiritual discipline of gratitude?
  - Is your diocese following best financial practices for handling the Ingathering funds?

- Does the diocese send all offerings received at least 3 full weeks before the close of the calendar year, December 31, so they can be counted in that year's Ingathering total? (Remember that you are entrusted in good faith to send to DFMS any money given to the United Thank Offering by people in your diocese. Money should not be held, since it is a designated gift.)
  - Does the diocese acknowledge each gift directly upon receipt?
    - Since the Bishop has the final authority on endorsing the UTO applications to submit to the Board for review, we recommend that you ask the bishop to appoint a United Thank Offering Grant Screening Committee if there isn't one currently. (See the section on *Granting* in this handbook for more information.)
- Work to recruit a Parish Coordinator/Organizer in every parish in your diocese. Ask your bishop and local clergy to help.
- Create a United Thank Offering packet of information and materials to present as a welcoming gift to new clergy (deacons, priests, bishops) in the diocese. There is a special overview on how to start the United Thank Offering on our blog: [www.UnitedThankOffering.org](http://www.UnitedThankOffering.org).
- Write articles about the United Thank Offering for diocesan newspaper(s) and other publications. Share sample articles and announcements that are available on our blog with your Parish Coordinators.
- Organize visits to United Thank Offering grant sites for your Parish Coordinators/Organizers.
- Provide the staff ([hmelton@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:hmelton@episcopalchurch.org) or [kmassey@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:kmassey@episcopalchurch.org)) with any changes to your name, address, telephone number, or email address. When leaving the Diocesan Coordinator/Organizer position, please send this same information for your replacement to keep records and communications current. We also use this information so we can send you our thanks for your leadership, so please keep us updated.

## **The United Thank Offering Board**

The United Thank Offering Board is comprised of 17 members plus one appointed liaison member from the Executive Council. Nine members are elected by the Provincial Episcopal Church Women (ECW) or the Province Synod or Province Board to serve a term of three years concurrent with General Convention. Province Representatives may be elected for a second term of three years. Three officers are elected from the ranks of the Board. The other members are appointed: one financial secretary, two young adult Board members are appointed by the Board President, two members are appointed at-large by a consensus of the Presiding Bishop, the President of the House of Deputies, and the President of the United Thank Offering Board. The 17th person is an appointee of the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies. One person is appointed as a liaison between the United Thank Offering Board and the Executive Council of the Domestic Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS), the governing body of the church. This person has voice but no vote on the United Thank Offering Board. She reports regularly to Executive Council about Board activities.

Members of the Board are responsible for reading, evaluating, and rating grant applications with recommendations annually to the Executive Council for funding approval.

### **The United Thank Offering Staff**

The United Thank Offering is served by two DFMS staff members. The first, the Staff Officer for the United Thank Offering, supports the work of the Board while also promoting participation in the United Thank Offering. She is available to help anyone making inquiries or needing support to carry out the ministry of the United Thank Offering. The second, Associate Staff Officer for the United Thank Offering, oversees the reporting, filing, archiving, and payment of all United Thank Offering awards; she is responsible for supporting the Young Adult and Seminarian Grant process in addition to helping promote UTO throughout the Church.

The United Thank Offering also shares an intern with a rotating host ministry each year. The Julia Chester Emery United Thank Offering Intern is appointed each year. The intern is responsible for helping the staff and Board engage with a younger generation through participation at Board meetings and by representing the United Thank Offering at speaking engagements.

### **Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS)**

Early English settlers established the Church of England in the original colonies of the United States. In 1789, after the American Revolution, an assembly met in Philadelphia to unify all Anglicans in the United States into a single national church. The full legal name of The Episcopal Church is the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. (When the church was incorporated, it was located only in the United States, but today it is an international church.) When Diocesan Coordinators/Organizers or individuals send their offerings to DFMS, they are submitting designated funds to The Episcopal Church to be held in the United Thank Offering account. The Ingathering money earns thousands of dollars in interest each year and is granted for approved projects by the United Thank Offering Board the following year. The United Thank Offering Board is an interim body and has worked in and with the Mission Department of the Presiding Bishop's Staff (or its equivalent) for over 125 years.

# Granting

## Diocesan Coordinator/Organizer Responsibilities for the Granting Process

Annually, the call for United Thank Offering grant applications is released by the Public Affairs Office of DFMS. There are two grant cycles: **Young Adult and Seminarian Grant** Application materials and resources are available on the first Friday of August and are due the First Friday of November. Application materials and resources for the **Regular Annual Grants** are available on the first Friday of December and due the first Friday of March. It is the Diocesan Coordinator's responsibility to let people in the diocese know well in advance when the process is open and what the deadlines are.

Some dioceses have a deadline for grant applications to be submitted so they can be reviewed by a Screening Committee or Bishop before the deadline for grant applications. Every congregation must be informed of this date. We recommend not only notifying the Parish Coordinators/Organizers but also asking the Diocesan Communications Officer to send out an email specifically about the grant process (with a reminder that the funding for these grants comes from Blue Boxes) to every clergy person and to the contact list the diocese regularly utilizes. It also is a good idea to ask the Diocesan Communications Officer to put this information on the diocesan Facebook page and Twitter feed. The more places that people can hear about the UTO application, the better.

The United Thank Offering grant process requires every application to be endorsed by the diocesan bishop, and only one application from the diocese and one for a partner diocese can be submitted per year. Each diocese has a different system for reviewing grant applications. The United Thank Offering Board recommends having a Diocesan Grant Screening Committee to fairly determine which application(s) to submit to the Board. Once the criteria and the application for grants are released, the Board hosts a webinar to answer questions people might have about the grant writing process. We strongly suggest that applicants review the criteria and application prior to attending the webinar, so they can ask pertinent questions. The Board offers a second webinar prior to the deadline for members of Diocesan Grant Screening Committees, to answer questions about the review process. During the entire grant process, the staff and Board are available to answer questions and provide technical assistance however, during the full week prior to grant submission, the staff will only check to see that applications are complete. It is our goal to help dioceses submit applications that are eligible for funding, so please do not hesitate to ask for help.

The Diocesan Grant Screening Committee reviews applications to ensure that they are complete, are presented on the current year's application form, and meet the criteria. At the close of the screening process, the committee chair sends a report and recommendations to the bishop (if the bishop is not an active committee member). Grant requests, with all required attachments, must be submitted electronically to the United Thank Offering Office by the stated deadline. Any questions on the submission process should be directed to our staff.

## Example of a Diocesan Grant Screening Committee

*Used with Permission from the Diocese of Virginia*

Members of the Diocesan Grant Screening Committee:

- Serve three (3) year terms (staggered to preserve experience;)
- Receive all the information as soon as it is available;
- Know the dates of the meetings well in advance; and
- Are made aware of the granting deadlines

When planning how many to invite to serve on the committee, consider the following:

- Number of convocations or deaneries in your diocese;
- Number of churches in your diocese; and
- Diversity of the committee: age groups, ethnicity, clergy/lay

Grant applicants should be invited to the Diocesan Grant Screening Committee meetings to present their application and to answer questions.

# Finances

## United Thank Offering Ingathering Funds: Best Practices

- Funds are ingathered on behalf of the United Thank Offering, a ministry of The Episcopal Church.
- Episcopal Church organizations fall under both IRS regulations and Episcopal Church canons.
- Once the United Thank Offering Ingathering is announced, all of the ingathered funds are considered designated and then transferred to the United Thank Offering account with the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (The Episcopal Church):
  - **DFMS Lockbox, P.O. Box 958983 St. Louis, MO 63195-8983**
  - **Enter Ingathering in the memo line.**
- No administrative expense can be taken from the Ingathering; administrative expenses are to be paid by Episcopal Church Women (ECW), the local parish, or diocese, and are budgeted separately.

United Thank Offering Ingathering funds are handled differently from diocese to diocese. The most common practices:

- The United Thank Offering Diocesan Coordinator has a checking account; funds are deposited, recorded, accounted for, and sent to the DFMS lockbox.
- The Diocesan Coordinator uses the ECW checking account to deposit Ingathering funds, which are held in a restricted fund and then sent to the DFMS lockbox.
- The Ingathering funds are sent directly to the diocese and held there in a restricted fund for UTO; then, the diocesan treasurer sends the funds to the DFMS lockbox.
- Individual Checks are sent directly to UTO and the UTO staff provides a report of giving to the Diocese/Diocesan Coordinator/Organizer quarterly.

Regardless of how Ingathering funds arrive, **UTO Staff sends an acknowledgement for all donations.**

No matter who is overseeing the Ingathering, the following practices should be put in place.

1. Counting: Once the offering is taken up, it should be counted by two unrelated persons.
2. Recording/Reporting: The money is recorded, listing checks and cash separately by donor. If anonymous cash is given, it is recorded as one total figure.
  - a. For cash of any amount, when the donor is known, a receipt is given generally, and always when requested.
  - b. For personal checks, the check is enough for tax purposes unless the check is for \$250.00 or more, in which case the donor will need a letter to substantiate the contribution for tax purposes; this can be issued routinely as part of a "thank you" or issued upon request. Specific wording is required. (See IRS Publication 177:

*Charitable Contributions Substantiation and Disclosure Requirements*; relevant sections highlighted.)

- i. Parish Coordinators/Organizers may suggest to parishioners that they include their name and/or pledge number for the gift to be acknowledged on a pledge/giving statement; the procedure should be worked out with the parish's treasurer/vestry so everyone is on the same page.
- ii. Diocesan Coordinators usually send acknowledgements for United Thank Offering gifts. Churches only need a "thank you"; any personal checks should be acknowledged using a standard acknowledgement letter. (See IRS Publication 1771: *Charitable Contributions Substantiation and Disclosure Requirements*.)
- iii. Records should be kept that report the number of individual offerings and the amount of each, along with the total amount sent to the diocese or to the DFMS lockbox.
- iv. Although not required, photocopying checks is an option, but if this done, the copies need to be secured and then shredded when no longer needed, usually at year-end or after acknowledgement letters are mailed.

### 3. Deposit Accounts

- a. Tax ID Numbers: What tax ID number is the account opened under? The entity that holds the tax ID number will have oversight of the funds and will be responsible for best practice and for audits. The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society is a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation in the state of New York and holds a group ruling for all "approved" subordinate organizations, which normally includes all parishes, missions, affiliated organizations, and integrated auxiliaries. (See IRS Publication: *Tax Guide for Churches and Religious Organizations*.)
- b. Accounts: The funds should be deposited immediately into an authorized account of the parish, the diocese, the diocesan ECW/UTO, the province, or the province ECW/UTO. A check is then cut from that account and sent to the diocese or the DFMS lockbox, whichever practice the diocese uses. (See *Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs* Chapter III: Bookkeeping pp. 2-3.)
- c. Parish Coordinators/Organizers:
  - i. If the account is a separate account, like a United Thank Offering account or an ECW account, it should use the parish tax ID number and be listed as an account of the parish; then, the treasurer will account for the funds on the parish parochial report and the account will be included in the parish audit. (See *Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs* Chapter III: Bookkeeping p. 11 and Chapter VI: Audit Guidelines for Congregations p. 8.)
  - ii. If the funds go directly into the parish checking account, the treasurer should set up a restricted "fund" for the United Thank Offering; all Ingathering

monies received are then sent to the diocese or DFMS, as the diocese recommends. (See *Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs* Chapter II: Internal Controls p. 15 and Chapter III: Bookkeeping p. 3.)

- d. Diocesan Coordinators/Organizers: Some dioceses have a separate United Thank Offering account, some deposit the funds with a diocesan ECW, and some deposit directly with the diocese. Whatever method is used, the funds are to be held in a restricted account and paid out to the DFMS lockbox on a regular basis, at least twice a year if there are funds to disburse. Best practice is to ensure that the account is listed under the group ruling and the account is audited annually.
- e. Existing Accounts: If your parish or diocese has an existing system that works, there is no reason to change it. However, check to be sure best practice is in place. Unless the bank requests additional information, existing accounts are not a problem. When changes are made to accounts, for instance to the officers or signers, many banks require supporting documentation about the tax entity if it is not on file or if it is in question.
- If a United Thank Offering Coordinator/Organizer in the parish or diocese wants to set up a new account, the account must carry the tax ID number of the related organization. This is something the coordinator/organizer will need to work out with the parish or the diocese, as United Thank Offering accounts must be an account of the parish, the diocese, or in some cases the diocesan/provincial ECW. The United Thank Offering Board does not have a transferable tax ID number.

## Memorial Trust Fund

The United Thank Offering Memorial Trust Fund was established in 1982 as a permanent trust. Gifts to this trust fund may be made at any time. A special tribute of thanksgiving is encouraged "in honor of" a friend or family member for leadership, ministry, and faithful service, or for special events such as birthdays, anniversaries, or graduations. Gifts also may be made "in memory of" a cherished relative, friend, or church leader as a special remembrance. The names of those who are honored or memorialized are permanently recorded in a book that is kept in the United Thank Offering Office at the Episcopal Church Center and displayed at each Triennial Meeting of the Women of the Church. It is also available online here: <https://uto2014.wordpress.com/history-of-uto/memorial-and-gift-trust-fund/> Earnings from investment of this fund assure income to support the autonomous, elected volunteer Board, as well as staffing and materials for the extensive diocesan and parish volunteer network to help increase awareness of the United Thank Offering and encourage more thankful prayers and offerings in the Blue Box.

United Thank Offering gifts are tax-deductible. For more information or questions, please call 800-334-7626.

The Memorial Trust Fund Brochure is available here:

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/document/united-thank-offering-memorial-trust-fund-brochure>

Make checks payable to The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS). Please write **United Thank Offering TRUST FUND #852 in the memo line** and mail checks to: Memorial Trust Fund checks to:

United Thank Offering DFMS - Protestant Episcopal Church  
815 Second Avenue  
New York, NY 10017

# Resources for Worship

Please visit <https://shimaofnavajoland.com/collections/united-thank-offering> to order our free prayer booklet, (while supplies last) which features prayers written by people from around the church for the United Thank Offering Board every three years.

## Litanies

### Thanksgiving

**LEADER:** When we are free of fear and worry,

**PEOPLE: O God, accept our offering.**

**LEADER:** When our children return home safely,

**PEOPLE: O God, accept our offering.**

**LEADER:** When a new baby is born,

**PEOPLE: O God, accept our offering.**

**LEADER:** When we receive your gifts of food, clothing, and shelter,

**PEOPLE: O God, accept our offering.**

**LEADER:** When we see your creative hand in the beauty of nature,

**PEOPLE: O God, accept our offering.**

**LEADER:** When our loved ones return to you,

**PEOPLE: O God, accept our offering.**

**LEADER:** When the sick and suffering are healed,

**PEOPLE: O God, accept our offering.**

**LEADER:** When the right solution comes to some serious problem,

**PEOPLE: O God, accept our offering.**

**LEADER:** When we find the peace of God in pain and sorrow,

**PEOPLE: O God, accept our offering.**

**LEADER:** When we find through faith that death is a gateway into eternal life with Christ,

**PEOPLE: O God, accept our offering.**

**LEADER:** When we have enjoyed good fellowship and friends,

**PEOPLE: O God, accept our offering.**

**LEADER AND PEOPLE: O God, we ask that we may ever be united in our response to your love, thankful for our many blessings, and happy to give our offerings; that by your Holy Spirit all nations and peoples may know the power of the love of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

## Mission

Let us pray for the world that it may be transformed through our many individual prayers of thanksgiving and gifts of blessings.

Jesus was transfigured on the high mountain when a voice from heaven said, "This is my son, the Beloved, listen to him!"

**His face shone like the sun.**

He gave us the great commission to heal the sick, feed the hungry, house the homeless, visit those in prison, welcome the stranger.

**Help our faces to shine, God of transformation.**

Mission is local; mission is global.

**Empower us, God of love.**

Mission is reaching out to those who are disenfranchised, those whose voices are silenced, those who live on the margins of society.

**Guide us, God of justice.**

Mission is communicating our faith to a hurting world, taking time to build a vision of a better world.

**Shape us, God of patience.**

Mission is reaching out to touch and be touched by others that we all become one.

**Use us, God of mercy.**

Mission is encountering differences of race, culture, class, and age, not being afraid of them but embracing them.

**Draw us into community, God of compassion.**

Mission is responding to natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, tornados, or human disasters such as wars and school shootings, with more than shelter and food. It is mending broken hearts.

**Help us, God of Grace.**

Mission is developing partnerships as we "seek and serve Christ in all persons."

**Transform us, God of our hearts.**

We are your hands and feet in this world, the conduit through which mission happens. Keep our eyes heavenward, our minds focused on the tasks you have set before us. Refresh us when we are tired, renew us when we falter, reawaken us daily to hear the cries of your people.

**Hear our prayer, Triune God.**

### Concluding Collect

We thank you, Lord, for the material resources which support the life and witness of your Church, for those in many places who have given them, and for those who help to use them responsibly in our service to you. May we use your gifts creatively, faithfully, wisely, and boldly, and may our constant aim be the furtherance of your Kingdom. **Amen.**

## Suggested Hymns for Ingathering Sundays

### From **Voices Found:**

- #85 *Circle the Table*, by Mary Nelson Keithahn
- #101 *Imela*, traditional Nigerian Song of Thankfulness (Iona Community)
- #113 *We Sing a New Song*, by Luiza Cruz (lyrics in Spanish & English)
- #118 *What Gift Can We Bring*, by Jane Marshall
- #124 *Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You*, by Richard Gillard, arr. by Betty Pulkingham

### From **Wonder, Love and Praise:**

- #752 *There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit in This Place*, by Doris Akers
- #775 *Give Thanks for Life*, by Shirley Erena Murray
- #802 *When the Poor One Who Has Nothing, Cuando el Pobre Nada Tiene*, by JA Oliver & Miguel Manzano (lyrics in Spanish & English)

### From **Flor y Canto (all Spanish lyrics):**

- #642 *Te Den Gracias*, by Mary Francis Reza
- #644 *Demos Gracias al Señor*, by Cesáreo Gabaráin
- #645 *Te Damos Gracias*, Psalm 137, arr. by Juan A. Espinosa

### From **Lift Every Voice and Sing:**

- #135 *Is Your All on the Altar*, by Elisha A. Hoffman
- #154 *Taste and See*, by James E. Moore, Jr.
- #158 *Make Me a Blessing*, by Ira B. Wilson
- #216 *In My Life, Lord, Be Glorified*, by Bob Kilpatrick

### From **1982 Hymnal:**

- #9 *Not Here for High and Holy Things*, by Geoffrey Anketel Studdert-Kennedy
- #178 *Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks to the Risen Lord*, by Donald Fishel
- #233 *The Eternal Gifts of Christ the King*, by St. Ambrose of Milan
- #290 *Come Ye Thankful People Come*, by Henry Alford
- #366 *Holy God We Praise Thy Name*, by Ignaz Franz
- #376 *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee*, by Henry Van Dyke
- #385 *Many and Great*, by Joseph R. Renville

- #396 *Now Thank We All Our God*, by Martin Rinckart
- #411 *O Bless The Lord My Soul*, by James Montgomery
- #412 *Earth and All Stars*, by Herbert F. Brokering
- #416 *For the Beauty of the Lord*, by Follinot Standford Pierpoint
- #433 *We Gather Together*, by anon.
- #437 *Tell Out My Soul*, by Timothy Dudley-Smith
- #445 *Praise to the Holiest*, by John Henry Newman
- #537 *Christ for the World We Sing*, by Samuel Wolcott
- #581 *Where Charity and Love Prevail There God Is Ever Found*, tr. by J. Clifford Evers
- #686 *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*, by Robert Robinson

From **Taize: Songs for Prayer:**

*In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful*

*Bless the Lord*

*Laudate Dominum/Sing, Praise, and Bless the Lord*

*Bendigo Al Senor/I Bless You, Lord, My God, Christe Lux Mundi*

# UTO Prayers

## 2018 United Thank Offering Prayer

Gracious God, we come before you in the knowledge that although we are varied in our gifts, we are united as laborers of your harvest. With grateful hearts, we give thanks for the blessings and challenges that inspire the work of the United Thank Offering. May the offerings given to UTO as an expression of gratitude go on to address the needs of our ever-changing world. All this we ask through Jesus Christ, whose life is a blueprint we strive to follow. Amen.

## 2018 United Thank Offering Blue Box Prayer

Almighty God, I give you praise

for blessing me in many ways.

Create in me a grateful heart

and with this gift a blessing start. Amen.

# Sample United Thank Offering Letters and Talks for Diocesan Coordinators/Organizers

*As one writes letters and prepares talks on the United Thank Offering ministry, please consider telling stories about grants given to your diocese – both domestic and foreign – and about people and the importance of the United Thank Offering ministry to them.*

## Sample Fall Letter for Parish Coordinators/Organizers

(DATE)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Fall has always been a time of new beginnings and is a great time to launch a United Thank Offering Ingathering in your parish. UTO works well because of the secular holiday, Thanksgiving, which fits right in with the theme of United Thank Offering, a spiritual discipline of gratitude. For those of you who do two Ingatherings per year, this is an important time to teach about gratitude. The other time is in the spring. Teaching people to express gratitude is not a small ministry for adults or for children.

### **For children:**

- Take the flat UTO Blue Box into the Sunday school classes, show them how to fold their Blue Boxes, and ask them what they are thankful for.
- Give each child a few pennies to drop in their Blue Boxes thanking God for people, animals and things in their lives.
- You might be surprised at what they are thankful for, and it is okay to ask their teachers to help you explain things at their level.
- Find ideas for teaching children about UTO, but especially check out that Thanksgiving turkey made from a Blue Box. <https://uto2014.wordpress.com/faith-formation-leadersmusic-ministers/childrens-formation-materials/>

### **Clergy**

Clergy may need information about UTO. This link can be useful with a sample sermon, information on combining stewardship with UTO, and other resources priests might find useful: <https://uto2014.wordpress.com/clergy/> . Scroll down under resources to find the clergy resources. Make sure you as UTO organizer share specific information about grants awarded, especially in your diocese.

### **For adults:**

- Ask your clergy to talk about United Thank Offering and being thankful during announcement time.
- Get something in the bulletin. You can write something yourself, or find resources at this UTO web page: <https://uto2014.wordpress.com/about/sample-newsletter-articles/> .

- Stand at the door or near the coffee hour line and hand out Blue Boxes for a couple of Sundays.
- Display UTO materials in the fellowship area, especially brochures showing the last couple of years' grant awards. People want to know how UTO has awarded their grants.
- If you have a grant award in your diocese, ask your priest to talk about it. Remind people that every penny given helps people through UTO grants world-wide.

### **Ingathering Sunday:**

- Have a real celebration at coffee hour!! Blue food—cakes decorated in blue, blue berries and dark colored grapes, blue Hawaiian punch or Kool Aide, the famous blueberry cheese ball served with blue corn chips, etc. We even wear UTO blue clothes!
- Have a UTO display, if you can, use a big Blue Box for the collection. Share UTO information on the tables in the fellowship hall.
- Show UTO videos on a loop in your fellowship area.
- Report the Ingathering amount in the bulletin the following week.
- Thank individual donors who have written checks for their donation and put a general thank you in the bulletin acknowledging the amount given as a parish.

### **Counting and Handling Ingathering Collections**

- Follow procedures established by your parish treasurer in counting (at least 2 people, not related to count the money.)
- **USE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS DEPENDING ON YOUR DIOCESAN INGATHERING PROCEDURES.**
- **Have your parish treasurer submit the Ingathering collection as soon as possible to your diocesan financial officer at: \_\_\_\_\_**

### **OR**

- **Have your parish treasurer submit the Ingathering immediately after collection to: United Thank Offering, DFMS - Protestant Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 958983, St. Louis, MO 63195-8983. Please remember to **enter "Ingathering: in the memo line.****

### **Blue Box App**

After July 2018, there will be a Blue Box App which people can add to their phones to make a UTO donation. That will be perfect for people who don't normally carry cash but want to give thanks on the go. It's a ministry of gratitude and people give to UTO in many different ways.

Thank you for serving as a Parish Organizer for UTO. Without your attention to this important ministry of gratitude, many people around the world would not benefit from this ministry of almost 130 years.

In gratitude,

Diocesan UTO Coordinator/Organizer

## Fall Sample Letter Option Two

(Date)

Dear Parish Coordinator,

I don't know about you, but I am so very grateful for how autumn is unfolding around us. The air is crisp, the leaves are changing, and the light is lovely. All of these seasonal changes also remind me that it is time to start planning for the United Thank Offering Fall Ingathering. Depending on the activities at your church, the date for this Ingathering Sunday can be scheduled anytime from mid-October to the end of November.

Please encourage every member in your church to have and to use a Blue Box daily. It is a prayer ministry of thankfulness/gratitude for every man, woman, and child. Everyone can drop in a nickel or dime a day for all the blessings bestowed on us by a wonderful God, and those coins in the Blue Box make possible many blessings for others.

It is important to include reminders of this date in the weekly bulletin and to explain to your parish that United Thank Offering is a ministry thanksgiving by dropping coins in a Blue Box and then sending those to be gathered together and given in grants in parishes and dioceses in the United States and throughout the world. This small token of thanksgiving does not negatively affect stewardship giving. In fact, there is clear evidence that it has a positive effect on stewardship because thankful people are generous people.

If parishioners use their Blue Boxes correctly - dropping in coins in conjunction with thankful prayers - then you will have lots of coins at the Ingathering. Encourage parishioners to count the coins at home and to write a check for the amount, using a United Thank Offering Envelope for their gift in the offering plate.

Order Blue Boxes for every member of your parish. You can order online at <https://shimaofnavajoland.com/collections/united-thank-offering> . Just a reminder that all UTO materials are free, you'll just have to pay postage.

Please send the Ingathering check from your church soon after the Ingathering to your Diocesan Coordinator/Organizer or the person designated in the diocese to collect United Thank Offering monies. All Ingathering funds must be received by December 1<sup>st</sup> so we can send them to the UTO Office in time for the deadline for the year.

I am thankful for every one of you and that God will bless you for helping coordinate and encourage this wonderful ministry of gratitude. Your prayers and giving provide grants that change lives throughout the world. If you have any questions please email me at \_\_\_\_\_ or call at \_\_\_\_\_.

Blessings,

(Signature)

United Thank Offering Coordinator/Organizer

Diocese of \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Spring Letter to Parish Coordinators/Organizers

DATE

Dear Parish UTO Organizer,

Spring is of new beginnings and the coming resurrection. It is also a great time to launch a United Thank Offering Ingathering in your parish. A UTO Ingathering fits well with emphasis self-examination of Lent and giving thanksgiving, culminating with the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. For those of you who do two Ingatherings per year, this is another important time to teach about gratitude. The other time is in the fall. Teaching people to express gratitude is not a small ministry for adults or for children.

### **For children:**

- Take the flat UTO Blue Box into the Sunday school classes, show them how to fold their Blue Boxes, and ask them what they are thankful for.
- Give each child a few pennies to drop in their Blue Boxes thanking God for people, animals and things in their lives.
- You might be surprised at what they are thankful for, and it is okay to ask their teachers to help you explain things at their level.
- Find ideas for teaching children about UTO at this link: <https://uto2014.wordpress.com/faith-formation-leadersmusic-ministers/childrens-formation-materials/>

### **Clergy**

Clergy may need information about UTO. This link can be useful with a sample sermon, information on combining stewardship with UTO, and other resources priests might find useful: <https://uto2014.wordpress.com/clergy/> . Scroll down under resources to find the clergy resources. Make sure you as UTO organizer share specific information about grants awarded, especially in your diocese.

### **For adults:**

- Ask your clergy to talk about United Thank Offering and being thankful during announcement time.
- Get something in the bulletin. You can write something yourself, or find resources at this UTO web page: <https://uto2014.wordpress.com/about/sample-newsletter-articles/> .
- Stand at the door or near the coffee hour line and hand out Blue Boxes for a couple of Sundays.
- Display UTO materials in the fellowship area, especially brochures showing the last couple of years' grant awards. People want to know how UTO has awarded their grants.
- If you have a grant award in your diocese, ask your priest to talk about it. Remind people that every penny given helps people through UTO grants worldwide.

### **Ingathering Sunday:**

Have a real celebration at coffee hour!! Blue food—cakes decorated in blue, blue berries and dark

colored grapes, blue Hawaiian punch or Kool Aide, the famous blueberry cheese ball served with blue corn chips, etc. Here is the recipe for that cheese ball:  
<https://uto2014.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/blueberryblue-cheese-ball.pdf>

- Ask parishioners to wear clothes that are UTO blue.
- Have a UTO display, if you can, use a big Blue Box for the collection. Share UTO information on the tables in the fellowship hall.
- Show UTO videos on a loop in your fellowship area.
- Report the Ingathering amount in the bulletin the following week.
- Thank individual donors who have written checks for their donation and put a general thank you in the bulletin acknowledging the amount given as a parish.

### **Counting and Handling Ingathering Collections**

- Follow procedures established by your parish treasurer in counting (at least 2 people, not related to count the money.)
- **USE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS DEPENDING ON YOUR DIOCESAN INGATHERING PROCEDURES.**
- **Have your parish treasurer submit the Ingathering collection as soon as possible to your diocesan financial officer at: \_\_\_\_\_**

### **OR**

- **Have your parish treasurer submit the Ingathering immediately after collection to: United Thank Offering, DFMS – Protestant Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 958983, St. Louis, MO 63195-8983. Please remember to **enter “Ingathering” in the memo line.****

### **Blue Box App**

After July 2018, there will be a Blue Box App which people can add to their phones to make a UTO donation. That will be perfect for people who don't normally carry cash but want to give thanks on the go. It's a ministry of gratitude and people give to UTO in many different ways.

Thank you for serving as a Parish Organizer for UTO. Without your attention to this important ministry of gratitude, many people around the world would not benefit from this ministry of almost 130 years.

In gratitude,

Diocesan UTO Coordinator/Organizer

## Sample Spring Letter Option Two

(Date)

Dear Parish Coordinator/Organizer,

I think Spring is perhaps the season that brings the most coins into my Blue Box. I love winter, but am always ready for longer days, spring breezes, flowers blooming, Easter and warmer weather. There is so much to be thankful for as new life abounds around us. The coins that go into my box are combined with the coins from the Blue Boxes of Episcopal households throughout the diocese, the nation, and the world to fund an amazing amount of ministries.

Because I know that the United Thank Offering coins fund ministries that meet compelling human needs, I continue to be excited to serve as your Diocesan Coordinator/Organizer for the United Thank Offering. I am here to lend support while you further this vital ministry in mission by doing your part for the whole church. If, at any time, you want me to speak to a group at your church about the United Thank Offering, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The United Thank Offering Board has designated the Spring Ingathering to be any Sunday in the month of \_\_\_\_\_ ( May.) Be sure to schedule with your rector the most convenient Sunday, and then alert your congregation about the Spring Ingathering with weekly reminders in the bulletin. Please collect and count the Spring United Thank Offering Ingathering monies and write one check to \_\_\_\_\_ at this address: \_\_\_\_\_ (the Diocesan Coordinator or to the person in the diocese charged with handling these monies.) Put a notation on the memo line that it is for the United Thank Offering.

It is important that the monies from the Ingathering be sent in as soon as possible so that it can be added to the total Ingathering account and start gaining interest. The UTO Ingathering Accounts receives a much higher percentage of interest earnings, and it truly makes a difference for granting purposes each year. It increases our granting potential by thousands of dollars.

Again, my purpose as Diocesan Coordinator/Organizer is to serve you, as you are a vital part of the success of this prayerful ministry in mission. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can assist you in any way. In thanksgiving for your willingness to serve the United Thank Offering, I offer a prayer and a coin in your honor.

Blessings,

(Signature)

United Thank Offering Coordinator/Organizer

Diocese of

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## Suggested United Thank Offering Talks

### Outline for Use in Parishes

Many people ask why they should participate in UTO. The answer is twofold. First and foremost, UTO is a **THANK** offering. Practicing thankfulness is vitally important to our spiritual lives. Imagine what relationships would be like if we didn't thank one another. The same is true with our relationship with God. Practicing gratitude helps overcome the temptations of greed and envy. We live in a very commercialized society which makes those temptations even more seductive. A painful reminder of that is our November holiday which is dedicated to giving thanks, and we have turned it into a shopping weekend. We've become programmed to think that the more our neighbors have, the more we think we need. Let's reprogram ourselves, by taking time each day to focus on what we have rather than what we don't have. To be grateful for what we have. That cycle of needing more, more, more, can then be broken. This cycle causes us to be unsatisfied with our lives and leads us to take what we have for granted. This includes our possessions, our health and our relationships. Gratitude takes everything and makes it enough. We don't embrace that word, *enough*. Instead, we tend to think in terms of *scarcity* and *abundance*. If we do not want to live in scarcity, then we have to be living in abundance. What if we reprogrammed our minds to think in terms of scarcity and enough? That would change our whole perspective.

Practicing thankfulness helps overcome stress and anxiety. Think about the times you have been really stressed. For example, have you ever been stuck behind someone who was driving about 15 miles an hour? You probably began to tense up and maybe even started to yell a bit to that person. "Why are you driving so slow?" That actually might be one of the nicer things you yelled. Instead of the tension and the anger, what if you took a deep breath and offered a prayer to God: "Dear God, I am so grateful that I enjoy the freedom and independence of owning my own car. So many people do not have that luxury." Suddenly the tension in your body eases and your blood pressure drops. Practicing thankfulness helps us adjust our mindset, it is a self-reprogramming that focuses on gratitude, and it brings us closer to God.

The second reason why UTO is unique is that 100% of all collected money goes towards the funding of grants. UTO has a Memorial Trust Fund, which is used to pay for all overhead costs. Because of that, the money that you put into that little Blue Box, out of thankfulness, goes towards ministry. Of course, the Memorial Trust Fund is more than willing to accept your donations as well, but those funds are kept separate from the Blue Box money. Your Blue Box donations are used to fund grants all over the world to provide seed money to new ministries or existing ministries that are going in a new direction. UTO funds ministries of the church that the budget has not yet expanded to include.

So how does all this work? First, identify your blessings. Then, offer prayers of thanksgiving to God and place a coin, or a bill, into your Blue Box. Something really special occurs when you do this. The Blue Box becomes a sacramental gift. A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. When your thankfulness leads to money being put into that little box, the Blue Box becomes a physical manifestation of your prayers of thanksgiving. And then those Blue Boxes become grants. And those grants fund new ministries that you are now part of, through your generosity and thankfulness.

UTO has been in existence for about 130 years and has funded over 5,000 grants. Many of those

ministries are still ongoing. That translates to millions of people whose lives have been touched by a UTO grant. Each grant represents not only a new way that our church has become the hands and feet of Christ, but each grant also represents people just like us that have had the faith and courage to say yes to God. Those Blue Boxes are small but mighty, like a mustard seed.

How do you get involved in this ministry of thankfulness? It's easy. Supplies can be ordered free of charge from Shima of Navajoland. You will be asked to pay for shipping. Ingatherings, or dates designated by your church for box collection, are usually held twice a year. UTO has a website, [episcopalchurch.org/united-thank-offering](http://episcopalchurch.org/united-thank-offering), and a blog site, [www.uto2014.wordpress.com](http://www.uto2014.wordpress.com), where you can find a number of resources and assistance. Most dioceses prefer that you send your Ingathering money to their office, so they can monitor what has been raised. The address for Ingathering money can also be found on the boxes and on the website. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact your UTO Diocesan Coordinator or the UTO Staff Officer Heather Melton at [hmelton@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:hmelton@episcopalchurch.org).

## Outline for Use at a Diocesan Convention

Many times, when we are asked to speak at a diocesan convention, we are only given a few minutes. Here are some of the things we recommend highlighting if you have 5 minutes or less.

1. Introduce UTO: share how UTO was founded over 125 years ago as a thank offering to support innovative mission and ministry for which the budget of the church did not yet fund. UTO continues this important work today. Every penny that is given to UTO is given away the following year through the grant process.
2. Share about the grants your diocese has received.
3. Share the Ingathering amount from the previous year, recognize if that increased over the previous year, and encourage everyone to join you in participating in UTO by adopting a personal spiritual discipline of gratitude.
4. Share a grant story, preferably from your diocese. Quickly share how receiving this grant impacted the life of the community and share photos or a video if possible.
5. Have some helpers hand out Blue Boxes as you give one last final encouragement for participating in UTO. You can share that people who practice gratitude have been shown to have lower blood pressure and other positive health benefits.
6. Finally, thank everyone for listening, for participating and for being willing to start participating in UTO.

## Outline for Use at a Convocations/Deaneries or Dioceses

How many of you know what this is? (Hold up a Blue Box.)

How many of you have your own Blue Box?

I want to talk to you today about this special ministry and explain why it is important to have your own personal Blue Box. (At this point, you can insert some of the information used in the previous presentation.)

The United Thank Offering is a daily spiritual discipline of gratitude for every Episcopalian. That is why each person needs his or her own Blue Box, which is emptied and offered at church gatherings twice a year. Those coins are then collected from participating Episcopal churches and every cent goes to fund grants for compelling human needs. This diocese has benefitted from those coins. (Describe some of the grants your diocese has received, both domestic and companion/partnership. You can obtain a list of grants from the United Thank Offering Office in the Church Center for use.) The United Thank Offering is a circle of thankful people and prayers. From the daily prayers of thankfulness of individuals dropping coins in their Blue Boxes to the prayers of thankfulness by the recipients of those grants, all people involved benefit. It is important, therefore, that each church in this convocation/diocese have a United Thank Offering Parish Coordinator/Organizer who informs the congregation about this ministry and provides Blue Boxes and information on how to apply for a United Thank Offering grant. There are churches in this convocation (or deanery/diocese) that do not have a coordinator/organizer. If your church is one of those, please urge your vestry or rector to appoint someone. Or volunteer to be that person!

The United Thank Offering does not ask for a lot, just a nickel or dime a day. What the United Thank Offering is asking for is that everyone participates because many coins make great sums when joined together with a simple effort and because everyone benefits. This is the "United" in the Thank Offering. It is a ministry that expands the community of The Episcopal Church, as grants for mission go throughout the Anglican Communion. If every Episcopalian gave two cents a day, there would be over \$5 million each year available for grants. The United Thank Offering Board has far more requests for grant funds than it has money to grant, so worthy programs and people are always not granted. This makes the Board's job very difficult when it has to choose among so many worthy opportunities.

Most importantly, there is evidence that churches that participate in United Thank Offering have very successful stewardship drives. Thankfulness begets thankfulness, and thankful people are generous people.

Thank you.

# UTO Membership Brochure and Contact Form

Below is a brochure that is available online at

[https://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/uto\\_membership\\_brochure.pdf](https://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/uto_membership_brochure.pdf)

or from the distribution center. We're including it here, because if you haven't updated us with your contact information, we hope you'll take a moment and fill out and return the form. Please let us know if you have any other questions or if we can help in any other way.

## WHAT DOES THE UNITED THANK OFFERING BOARD DO?

The United Thank Offering Board is comprised of 16 volunteer members – four officers, one representative from each of the Church's nine provinces, two young adult members, two appointed members, and an Executive Council liaison. The Board is governed by its own bylaws, policies and procedures, and a Memorandum of Understanding, all approved by the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church. The UTO Board works with a vast committed volunteer network and with staff to promote the spiritual discipline of gratitude and to award grants. Board members communicate with diocesan and local parish coordinators, along with staff, to develop educational and promotional materials for UTO. Additionally, the Board and staff members travel to speak at church events, host webinars, and through an extensive review process, award United Thank Offering grants.

## WHAT DOES THE UNITED THANK OFFERING COORDINATOR / ORGANIZER DO?

United Thank Offering Coordinators/Organizers are primarily lay leaders within a parish or diocese. Each leader is unique, and his/her commitment will vary based on availability, skills, and talents. Coordinator/Organizers work with their parish priests

to organize up to two Ingatherings per year at the parish level. Diocesan Coordinator/Organizers need to have good communication skills, including use of technology, and will most likely dedicate a portion of each week to building relationships with clergy and other leaders in the diocese by telling the UTO story, encouraging active parish and diocesan participation in UTO, and teaching how to celebrate an Ingathering service of gratitude. We encourage participation in training sessions offered at the diocesan and Churchwide levels in person or via webinars.

## HOW DO I BECOME A UNITED THANK OFFERING COORDINATOR / ORGANIZER?

If you are interested in becoming a Coordinator/Organizer, please contact the Rev. Canon Heather Melton at the Office of the United Thank Offering by emailing [hmelton@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:hmelton@episcopalchurch.org) or calling (212) 922-5130 and providing your name, contact information, parish name, and location. Please leave a message, if necessary, and you will be provided information and directed to others who can offer additional information. To obtain more information about the United Thank Offering, visit our website at [www.unitedthankoffering.org](http://www.unitedthankoffering.org) or [www.episcopalchurch.org/uto](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/uto).



## UNITED THANK OFFERING

**JOIN THE UNITED THANK OFFERING  
A MINISTRY OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

Connecting people to a life-changing relationship  
with Christ to transform the world



## WHAT IS THE UNITED THANK OFFERING?

The United Thank Offering (UTO) is a ministry of The Episcopal Church created to fund innovative mission and ministry projects. From its initial collection in 1889 led by Ida Soule and Julia Chester Emery, the ministry has focused on gratitude and the importance of making a thank offering to remember that all good things come from God. Since its inception, the ministry has grown exponentially through the grassroots efforts of dedicated coordinators/organizers and faithful participation by all Episcopalians. Thank offerings are collected in parishes, dioceses, and provinces, as well as at The Triennial meeting and General Convention. These funds are then awarded by the UTO Board annually as grants for loving, liberating, and life-giving work through innovative parish and diocesan ministries that help people live more fully in the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement. The United Thank Offering has become synonymous with the Blue Box, a tangible reminder that encourages individuals to pray daily, give thanks to God, and make a thank offerings into the Blue Box.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE UNITED THANK OFFERING?

The purpose of the United Thank Offering is twofold: First, it is meant to foster a personal spiritual discipline of thankfulness through individual intentional prayer and gratitude for all that God has done and continues to do by placing coins in the Blue

Box. Then, through the combined collection of United Thank Offering Blue Box coins, bills, and checks at parish, diocesan, and Churchwide Ingatherings, the UTO Board awards grants to young adults, seminarians, parishes, and dioceses (and their companions) in The Episcopal Church, as well as to provinces in the Anglican Communion. The grants are for one-year projects designed to support transforming and innovative ministries.

## WHO DOES THE UNITED THANK OFFERING IMPACT?

The historical work of the United Thank Offering continues to evolve to meet the ever-changing global needs of The Church and to grant funds for innovative mission and ministry projects throughout The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. In recent years, grants have been awarded to support refugees; women and children; garden projects; intercultural growth and outreach; congregations in their offering of social services, ministries, and support for their communities. Ultimately, UTO impacts everyone who participates in it. Practicing a discipline of gratitude changes the lives of all participants and those with whom they share their gratitude.

## APPLICATION OF INTEREST TO BECOME A UNITED THANK OFFERING COORDINATOR/ ORGANIZER

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Parish Name & City \_\_\_\_\_

Province (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

### I am interested in becoming a:

- Parish UTO Coordinator/Organizer
- Diocesan UTO Coordinator/Organizer
- UTO Board Member

### Mail to:

United Thank Offering  
The Episcopal Church Center  
815 Second Avenue  
New York, New York 10017

**2015-18 UNITED THANK OFFERING BOARD:**  
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MARION LUCKEY, EXECUTIVE  
COUNCIL LIAISON  
**UNITED THANK OFFERING STAFF:**  
HEATHER MELTON, STAFF OFFICER  
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