

## About the United Thank Offering (UTO)

In the late 1800s the women of The Episcopal Church learned that the need for new ministries was great but that there was no funding for innovative ideas. The women prayed and then took up a thank offering. The money collected was then given away to support these important projects. Our mission remains the same today. We encourage every Episcopalian to notice the good things that happen each day, give thanks to God for your blessings, and make an offering for those blessings. Your blessing goes on to bless others, as 100% of all donations received by UTO are granted the following year to support innovative mission and ministry. To learn more about UTO visit: [www.unitedthankoffering.org](http://www.unitedthankoffering.org)

## Make A Thank Offering

To donate to support the work of the United Thank Offering's grant process please:

1. Text INGATHER to 41444
2. Donate online: [www.unitedthankoffering.org/give](http://www.unitedthankoffering.org/give)
3. Or mail a check to:  
UTO, DFMS - Protestant Episcopal Church US  
P.O. Box 958983  
St. Louis, MO 63195-8983

## Contact Us

For more information about the United Thank Offering or the spiritual discipline of gratitude, including formation resources, please contact: Heather Melton, Staff Officer for the United Thank Offering, at [hmelton@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:hmelton@episcopalchurch.org)

## Follow us on social media:

Facebook: @UnitedThankOffering  
Twitter: @ThankOffering  
Instagram: @UnitedThankOffering

# November 2021 Gratitude Challenge



*Four weeks of practices online and at home  
to grow a more grateful heart by  
responding to God's Gift of Creation.*



[www.unitedthankoffering.org](http://www.unitedthankoffering.org)  
[www.episcopalchurch.org/uto](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/uto)

# About the Gratitude Challenge

Each November, the United Thank Offering invites Episcopalians to spend thirty days intentionally practicing gratitude. This year we encourage you to focus on creation. Activities will encourage you to engage with actions that not only give thanks for creation but seek to embed practices around conservation into your daily life as ways of giving thanks to God for the gifts that creation brings. Each week we will introduce a new theme, invite you to engage on social media, and offer an idea on how to give thanks for areas within the theme at home. You can participate as much as you want during the week. You may want to do some of the at-home activities as a small group at church. Finally, we hope you jot down a few words of gratitude at the end of the week so that at the end of the month you can reflect on all of the blessings you wrote down and then make a thank offering to support [www.unitedthankoffering.org.give](http://www.unitedthankoffering.org.give).

**Jesus says we are to love God, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. What if we could see all of creation as our neighbor? How would that change our prayers and our actions? Anytime we use the toil of our hands to bring newness and restoration to the world, cultivating gratitude and love alongside clean water and healthy soil, we become part of God's healing process in creation. How better to love all our neighbors?**  
Jerusalem Greer, Staff Officer for Evangelism

## Tag Your Gratitude Posts on Social Media

If you choose to share photos, images, quotes or stories on social media, please use #UTOChallenge in your posts.

## Encourage Others to Join You

We hope you'll share this resource with others and encourage them to join you in intentionally practicing gratitude for creation during the month of November.

# Keep it Going in Advent.

*If you've enjoyed this weekly challenge, you can keep it going throughout Advent with the suggestions below.*

## Hope



The first week of Advent we are encouraged to focus on hope. What hope do you have for creation? Is there an area near you where a community clean-up day would make a difference? How would changing this place bring hope?

## Peace



The second week of Advent focuses on peace. What places in creation bring you peace? If you can, visit one this week and take time to journal or reflect on why this area brings you peace and why you are grateful for this place. (If you can't, look at photos you've taken on past visits.)

## Joy



The third week of Advent is about joy. Consider what aspects of nature bring you joy. It can be as simple as giving thanks for the sunlight that marks our days. Spend time this week giving thanks for these moments of joy experienced in creation.

## Love

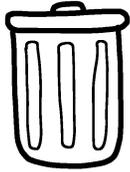


We end Advent with the focus on love. Gratitude acknowledges love that we have received and cannot repay. This week we encourage you to think about all of the ways you experience love through creation.

## Week Four: November 22-30

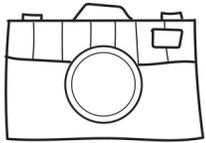
*This week we give thanks for creation by making a commitment to reduce waste during the holidays.*

### Overview



One of the best ways we can give thanks for creation is by reducing the amount of waste we create. The holidays are a time when many of us reluctantly increase the amount of trash we create. This week, we invite you to consider the ways that you can reduce holiday waste as a sign of gratitude.

### Online



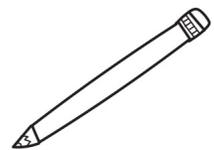
Share photos this week of the small changes you can make to reduce waste. The kitchen is a great place to start. Can you use reusable bags instead of plastic bags? How about real towels instead of paper towels? Share with us a photo of something you've swapped that is more environmentally friendly that you are grateful for.

### At Home



Are there ways you can give thanks for creation by reducing the amount of waste that the holiday will create? Can you make sure to find a place that will turn your live tree into mulch after the holiday? Can you repurpose paper you already have as wrapping paper? What acts of preparation for the holiday can you engage in that will reduce waste as an act of gratitude?

### Give Thanks



As the week comes to a close, share a word or phrase to help you remember those things you gave thanks for this week.

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## Week One: November 1-7

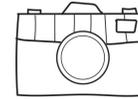
*This week we give thanks for water, for the ways it sustains life and presents opportunities for peace or reflection.*

### Overview



This week we invite you to pay attention to and give thanks for water. Water sustains all life on our planet and can bring peace and joy to us when we get to experience it in nature. From an unexpected storm to the beauty of a river, water is a powerful force of nature that brings peace and calm while it sustains life. We give thanks for the gift of water, at home and in nature.

### Online



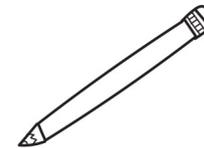
This week we encourage you to post photos online of water in nature. Share with us a bit about these places and why you are thankful for them.

### At Home



One of the ways we can give thanks for a gift is to treat it with care so that it lasts as long as possible. This week, we invite you to reflect on your water usage at home. Are there ways you could better conserve this valuable resource? Some ideas include: installing a low-flow toilet, turning the water off while you brush your teeth, decreasing your shower time by a few minutes, or using the remaining water in a glass to water a plant instead of just emptying it down the drain.

### Give Thanks



As the week comes to a close, share a word or phrase to help you remember those things you gave thanks for this week.

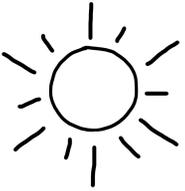
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# Week Two: November 8-14

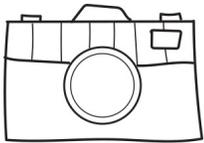
*This week we give thanks for clean air and the beauty found in a clear sky.*

## Overview



Perhaps the most important part of creation, the air we breathe, is often overlooked as an opportunity for gratitude. And yet, we all have smells from creation that can fill our heart with joy. This week, go outside, maybe at twilight, breathe in the air, notice the colors and the stars, and give thanks for the air and sky.

## Online



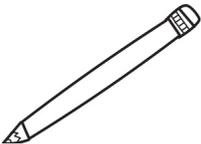
This week we encourage you to take a picture of a smell that you are grateful for and share photos with us on social media. This could be as simple as a fire, crisp night sky, or rain falling. Share with us the parts of creation that you are grateful for that you can smell when you breathe deeply.

## At Home



One of the best ways we can celebrate creation and give thanks for it is by adding to it. This week we invite you to plant something. For most of us this will mean adopting a house plant or planting something that can grow inside, but plants are great at cleaning the air in our homes and offices. Be sure to share a photo online.

## Give Thanks



As the week comes to a close, share a word or phrase to help you remember those things you gave thanks for this week.

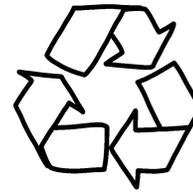
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# Week Three: November 15-21

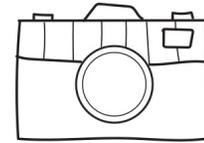
*This week we notice things that we might throw away and find ways to give them new life as an act of gratitude.*

## Overview



One of the most important ways we can care for the environment is to find ways to repurpose items for use in our home. This week, we encourage you to find an item that you might have thrown out and give it new life. Reusing something instead of throwing it away helps care for creation.

## Online



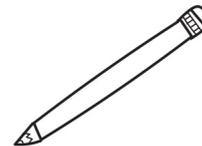
This week we hope that you will share with us some of the things that you have reused around your home as a way of inspiring others to do the same.

## At Home



This week we encourage you to find something you can repurpose in your home. Brown packing paper can be flattened and painted to use as wrapping paper, clear jars make awesome candle holders for a centerpiece. As you reuse something, take a moment and give thanks for its multiple purposes in your life.

## Give Thanks



As the week comes to a close, share a word or phrase to help you remember those things you gave thanks for this week.

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