

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH  welcomes you

January, 2018



104 Thank You's...

by the Rev. Canon Heather L. Melton, Staff Officer for the United Thank Offering

A year ago, I made a New Year's resolution to write two thank you cards a week for 2017. One card would go to someone at work and the other to someone in my personal life simply to thank him or her for being in my life and in our community. I decided to participate in this spiritual discipline because I realized that I needed to deepen and expand my own spiritual discipline of gratitude and because I have come to realize that none of us are getting any younger and I would hate for someone to die without knowing what he or she meant to me. At first, I felt a little silly writing these cards, but then I got to experience the reactions that people had to being thanked simply for being themselves, and that's when I realized how important this work was each week. There were weeks when I didn't want to do it, when on Friday afternoon I was tired and ready to shut my brain off, so I carried the two cards with me all weekend until I was ready to write. There were other times when I had so many people I wanted to thank that I wrote extra cards. I was a little sad as I wrote the last two cards today, but also a little relieved to have completed my resolution and excited to ponder what new thing I could try for 2018 to deepen my faith through gratitude.

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Mission of Gratitude: UTO and the Good Book Club

by Sandra Squires, UTO Board President, and the Rev. Canon Heather L. Melton, Staff Officer for the United Thank Offering



UTO is grateful to be a part of the Forward Movement experience called the Good Book Club, which begins on February 11, the first Sunday of Lent. The Good Book Club is an invitation to all Episcopalians (and anyone interested) to read through the books of Luke and Acts in the Bible during Lent and Easter. Organizations from around the Church are creating materials to support individuals and groups in the process of reading through the Bible. We are pleased to announce that UTO is offering a free downloadable booklet, *Mission of Gratitude*, for you to use on this Lenten journey. Each week, the

booklet offers a short reflection on the readings, questions for contemplation or discussion, space to journal, and a story and a link to a video about a UTO grant site. We hope that this booklet not only will help you deepen your experience of reading scripture, but also will help you engage with journaling as a way to deepen your gratitude and scripture reading experience. For many of us (Heather especially) keeping a journal is a challenge, so Lent is a great time to try something new and see if it is a discipline you might like to keep doing.

To learn more about the Good Book Club or see what other resources are available, please visit <http://www.goodbookclub.org>.

To download the *Mission of Gratitude* booklet, please visit <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/uto-mission-of-gratitude-booklet.pdf>.

UTO Memorial Trust Fund



As we begin a new year, we wanted to take a moment to share with you a little bit about the Memorial Trust Fund. Many people wonder how UTO can give away 100 percent of what is collected in the Ingathering and still offer Blue Boxes and other materials for free, and some people assume it is because we receive funds from the churchwide budget, ECW, or other groups. The truth is that funding to support the work of UTO (staff, board expenses, materials) comes from a few places. We are grateful to receive funds from the churchwide budget and we do share a trust fund with ECW, but the majority of our funding comes from a trust created in 1982 so that UTO no longer needed to use Ingathering Funds to offset expenses. The Memorial Trust was created with the hopes that it would sustain and build up the work of UTO, and we are very grateful to everyone who has contributed to it over the years. Each year, we receive many donations to the Trust in thanksgiving, in memory, or in honor of someone, all of whom are listed in a book that is displayed at General Convention and on [our website](#). We also receive donations from individuals who have remembered UTO in their will, either for the

Trust or the Ingathering. In 2017, we received \$195,772.86 for the Memorial Trust. Thank you to everyone who gave and who remembered UTO in their will. If you would like more information on the Memorial Trust or the form to use when donating, [click here](#).

If you would like to include the Memorial Trust Fund in your will, please [download this PDF](#).

For stock donations, please [download this PDF](#).

UTO Crosses Now Available

At the last General Convention, many of you asked if UTO was going to create another cross for purchase. The UTO Board and staff wanted to make a cross that would be meaningful, reminding us of our deep roots and our wide reach through the grant process. After much discernment and much help along the way, we are pleased to announce that a new UTO cross is available for purchase at <https://shima-of-navajoland.myshopify.com/collections/united-thank-offering> beginning on January 9, the feast day of Julia Chester Emery. The cross comes in two sizes: 2 inches in length or 3 inches in length. The Celtic cross is a replica of the one that Ms. Emery chose to have in her home, in her office, and on her gravestone. Each cross is handmade in sterling silver by Lester James, a Navajo silversmith, honoring the decades of UTO grants (and countless UTO missionaries) in Navajoland. We currently have 15 of each cross available, and once those are sold, we will commission a second batch while continuing to take orders. We will also have the cross available for purchase or order at General Convention. These crosses make a wonderful gift to anyone who has led, supported, or organized UTO ministry and a wonderful keepsake for yourself, as well. Thank you for your support of this wonderful endeavor. We hope that you'll love the UTO cross as much as we do!



UTO Reads!



Epiphany with Episcopal Migration Ministries and Advent Challenge Update

Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) is offering an Epiphany Curriculum, which includes free resources to oversee a faithful and meaningful Epiphany 2018. "After the celebration and joy of Christmas, the Church turns its attention to the Epiphany of Christ, and a season when we remember time and again how God is made manifest in the world," noted the Rev. Canon E. Mark Stevenson, director of EMM. "In these important days, Episcopal Migration Ministries invites congregations and faith communities to reflect on the rich history of The Episcopal Church's work among refugees, as we have answered collectively the revealed Son of God's call to be his ministers in a hurting world."

Designed for adult Christian formation, the six-week Epiphany Curriculum is ideal for congregations, individuals, adult forums, discussion groups, and other church-based gatherings. "Participants will come away with a deeper understanding of Episcopal Migration Ministries, refugee resettlement, the stories of our new American neighbors, and how God is calling each of us into this work," Canon Stevenson said.

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Abundant Blessings

by Kathy Mank, UTO Board Financial Secretary, Diocese of Southern Ohio

At diocesan convention each year, one delegate always finds our UTO table to make a sizable donation to the Ingathering. This individual has lived in a few states where UTO has provided both life- and game-changing ministry grants. Every year, this person's blessings are intentionally collected and a return is given to God in thanksgiving and in gratitude – in the form of a contribution to the UTO Ingathering.

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Christ Church Cathedral, Diocese of Eau Claire

By the Rev. Canon Heather L. Melton, Staff Officer for the United Thank Offering

We're in the middle of granting season, which means that many of you are working on applications, helping folks with their applications, or eagerly awaiting applications to review and submit for your diocese. Each year, the UTO Board receives more eligible applications than they have funds from the Ingathering to award. And each year, really amazing sites do not receive funding simply because we don't have enough to give to them. For me (and I think the Board), this is the hardest part of our year. So, this past year, I asked a couple of applicants who were just below the funding line if I could share their stories with you. I know how powerful it is to hear about the sites that were funded, but I think that it's even more powerful to hear about the ones that weren't. Sites like the one I'm about to share often go on to work really hard to raise the money themselves, or they wait and apply again for grants from UTO or other programs because this work is really important and good and holy. Today, I want to tell you about an elevator for Christ Church Cathedral in the Diocese of Eau Claire, with thanks to Bishop Jay Lambert for permission to tell you about this great church. I hope you'll share this story with others so they might consider giving more to UTO, maybe a nickel instead of a penny each time they are grateful, or a year-end tax-deductible donation.



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Save the Date!

UTO Annual Grant Materials are now available! Please visit www.episcopalchurch.org/utogrants to download all of them. All applications are due on the first Friday of March, but please feel free to submit drafts early for review by the staff. We also invite you to attend a webinar: There will be **two webinars in January** –Tuesday, January 16 and Wednesday, January 17 – and **two in February** – Tuesday, February 6 and Wednesday, February 7. All webinars will be held at 7 p.m. Eastern Time. Join us online at <https://zoom.us/j/8140408194> or by telephone by dialing +1 408-638-0968 or +1 646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 814 040 8194. If you cannot attend the webinar, please email your questions to hmelton@episcopalchurch.org.

Young Adult and Seminarian Grants will be announced after they are approved by Executive Council, so on or around January 24, 2018. We'll include them in the February e-news, and there will be a press release in addition to our email notification to all of the applicants.

New UTO Materials Available!

Over the past few weeks, a lot of new materials have become available on our website and in the distribution center. We wanted to make you aware of a few of them.

[Click here to see the new brochures, prayers, and boxes >>](#)

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