



In Like a Lion and Out Like a Lamb: Lent, Reconciliation, and Resurrection



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

Every fall, I like to plant garlic. I plant garlic because it tastes better fresh and is super easy to grow, preserve, and plant again. I also plant it because it is the first thing to show up in the spring. Tiny green shoots appear and can even withstand late spring snow. In February, I start to search for them. They give me more hope than the groundhogs do that spring is on the way. Garlic is probably tied to my lifelong love of the saying “in like a lion and out like a lamb” for the month of March. As a child, I imagined it meant a real lion, roaring that spring was on the way. Even though the saying bears no scientific reality on the weather, it still gives me hope, especially when the early March snow falls and hides any sign of spring, that even when the wind blows, it is a wind that signifies change is coming – it is the roar of the lion. I’ve begun my hunt for signs of spring in earnest this year. I love spring – it is a reminder that God can and will make all things new. Right about now, I am eager for the reminder that God is at work in the midst of us and even in spite of us. And so, as February comes to a close, I am out seeking the garlic shoots in my garden and looking for a lion while out walking in the world.

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UTO Trip to Navajoland

By Sandra Squires, UTO Board President

Recently, I was a part of a contingent of Team UTO that traveled to Navajoland. We journeyed there in two cars, with one car visiting a mission and UTO grant sites in Utah and the other car, the one I was in, visiting the old hospital in Farmington, New Mexico (built in 1922) and the UTO-funded Cheii’s Web Development Shop. The old hospital is being remodeled to serve a variety of purposes, and Cheii’s Shop brings together some technologically savvy people who are available for hire to do website development. Cheii’s Shop works with photographs, graphics, logo designs, and all things needed by organizations seeking a web presence. Check it out at <http://cheiiswebdev.com/>.

After some additional sightseeing, we drove our car across the land with its constantly changing landscape, breathtaking rock formations, and hardy foliage. We visited Good Shepherd Mission in Fort Defiance, Arizona, which dates to 1894 and is the oldest of the three Navajo medical missions built by The Episcopal Church. After a short stop there, we met up with the other car at a Navajo-run motel in Window Rock, Arizona, to share our different experiences. To my delight, I received a small packet of sage in my room that night.

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UTO Pre-Convention Packet Now Available!



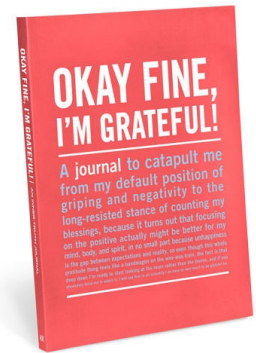
Over the past few months, we've received quite a bit of feedback that many of our UTO coordinators want to come to Austin, Texas, for the UTO events at General Convention, even if they are not a deputy or delegate. As always, we warmly welcome all our UTO members to our UTO events. This year, all UTO events are taking place within a condensed schedule so it is more convenient and easier to attend without having to be at Convention for its full duration. **All UTO events will take place between Thursday, July 5, and Sunday, July 8.** We recommend arriving in the evening of July 4 and leaving the morning of July 9. We've created a [pre-convention packet](#) with the schedule of UTO events, workshop offerings, and special events you won't want to miss. Additionally, we've included information on how to register as a visitor, which is the most cost-effective way to attend General Convention for the UTO events. Unfortunately, at this time, we are unable to assist anyone with housing requests, as it is always at a premium near the convention center during General Convention, nor do we offer any financial assistance for UTO members to attend. There's a form that we ask you to fill out (even if you are coming as a deputy or delegate) so we know whom to expect and to help us populate our new database. When you fill out the form, you'll automatically be entered into a raffle for a prize – it's our way to thank you for taking the time to help us update our records. Thank you for being a part of UTO and the UTO events at General Convention. We can't wait to see you!

UTO Reads!

Okay Fine, I'm Grateful!

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

A few weeks ago, Sandra Squires, UTO board president, gave me this book with a chuckle – a well-deserved laugh on several fronts – first, because the front of this book is funny and second, because it's a journal and, as much as I know journaling is good for you, I have never been able to keep one. The full quote on the cover says, "A journal to catapult me from my default position of griping and negativity to the long-resisted stance of counting my blessings, because it turns out that focusing on the positive actually might be better for my mind, body, and spirit, in no small part because unhappiness is the gap between expectations and reality, so even though this whole gratitude thing feels like a bandwagon on the woo-woo train, the fact is that deep down I'm ready to start looking at the roses rather than the thorns, and if you absolutely force me to admit it, I will say that in all actuality I do have so very much to be grateful for." So I laugh every time I see it, because that's basically what I keep trying to tell people: practicing gratitude will make for a better life. The journal opens with the science behind gratitude from the University of California, Berkeley. Then, each page offers you space to share why you're grateful today (more or less) and rate your gratitude level. But the best part might be all of the gratitude quotes in the book. Not quotes on why gratitude is important, but quotes from famous people expressing their gratitude. It's wonderful and uplifting to read. I especially love this quote from President John F. Kennedy: "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter the words but to live by them." It's a really lovely book and would make a great gift for anyone who wants to get started with journaling or gratitude as a discipline but has struggled keeping up with both. I also think this book could be a great resource for a group to use together. Imagine if a vestry meeting always started and ended by having someone share what that person is grateful for and then committing it to a book? I think this little book is great – it makes me smile and it makes me very thankful for Sandra and for all those that know me well and support me in my journey.



News from You!

This month we want to share with you a thank you note we received from the Colorado Haiti Project just moments after the 2018 Young Adult Grants were announced. It is always wonderful to hear about grants after they have finished their work, but it is especially great to hear the excitement of people at the beginning of their journey. Read more about the 2018 Young Adult and Seminarian Grants [here](#).

**Schneider Chancy, Environmental Agriculture Program for St. Paul's Students
Diocese of Haiti, \$2,411 in Petit Trou de Nippes, Haiti**



This project will reinforce and expand access and knowledge of environmentally friendly agricultural practices in rural Haiti. Leveraging the success of a UTO-funded existing agricultural education program at St. Paul's School, this project will launch a summer gardening and environmental awareness program for youth in Petit Trou de Nippes.

"I cannot begin to thank you and everyone at UTO for your support. You have helped us strengthen our support for so many young people in this rural part of Haiti. With every step we take together, you and all the supporters across the country, young adults have opportunity and hope for the future. It is an awesome feeling to know that as we work here, in Petit Trou de Nippes, Haiti, we represent so many people from the Episcopal communities in the U.S. through the generosity of the United Thank Offering. It is also a responsibility to know you have put your trust in us and we don't take that lightly. Mesi anpil (Thank you very much), we will keep you updated on the progress Schneider is able to make through this grant."

Teresa Henry, Colorado Haiti Project

Grant Site Update: St. Nicholas Natural Playground and Environmental Education Project

By Trinity Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, Diocese of Indianapolis

The playground was installed by The Adventurous Child in October of 2016. Prior to the installation, the Playground Committee worked together to compare two companies to determine which would be best to meet the goals set forth in the grant proposal. The work included site visits to where the two companies had built playgrounds, meetings with playground company representatives, equipment selection and placement plan, and then the October installation. The lead members of the committee were Dave Sandrick, executive director, and Abby Vincent, board program committee chair. After waiting for two weeks to let the sod and grass seed take hold, the children were finally able to access the equipment, and they now use the playground twice a day when the weather permits.

[Read more >>](#)



Save the Date!

The newsletter is coming to you a few days into March because we were hard at work completing the **2018 grant cycle!** Thank you to everyone who wrote an application, supported people in revising their applications, or helped to submit applications! All of the applications are now in the hands of the UTO Board for review. Because this is a General Convention year, the UTO grants will be announced at General Convention on Friday, July 6, and all applicants will be notified via email that morning. 2018 Grant brochures will be available starting on July 6 at the UTO Booth and by August 1 on the UTO website. All UTO grants will be paid by August 1, and final reports will be due August 1, 2019.

The **2017 Ingathering report** will be released as a part of the April E-Newsletter, so please stay tuned!

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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