



Necessity of Gratitude

by Heather Melton, Staff Officer, United Thank Offering

Over the past few months, more and more people have mentioned to me how important they think teaching and practicing gratitude is, and I couldn't agree more. I've spent a lot of time thinking about this and wondering what has changed or broken down in our communities that the response to gratitude often is surprise. I think there's an answer to be found in President Kennedy's words: "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." What if we were to live by our words of gratitude and be changed by the experiences we are thankful for?

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UTO needs your help

by Joyce Landers, Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast, Province IV UTO Representative

At a recent ECW meeting, someone asked me why we should support UTO. Her church has a budget for outreach and she believed they were doing enough. I explained that UTO is both outreach and inreach. It was established to support the ministry and mission work of the church, has helped establish a number of new churches all around the world as well as helped existing congregations to grow, it gives men and women the opportunity and privilege to serve, and it encourages the spiritual practice of gratitude. Spending time thanking God for our blessings enriches our relationship with God. So, the real question should be why wouldn't we support UTO?

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UTO Women Missionaries List

Before General Convention in Utah, we worked diligently to prepare a list of all the grants ever awarded through UTO. That list can be found here: [LINK](#). As we looked at the list, many of us lamented that the big categories simply listed "UTO Workers" or "Women Missionaries," and we wondered if their names or stories would ever be found. After General Convention, our staff began to dig through and digitize old UTO materials. We're still working on the larger project, which we hope to launch at General Convention, but in the meantime, [we have tracked down the names of the women missionaries](#) and some information about them.

If you know of any that we've missed, please email Kayla at kmassey@episcopalchurch.org.

UTO is headed to EYE!

Keep an eye out this month on [our Facebook page](#) – Board President Sandra Squires and Julia Chester Emery Intern Rachel McDaniel will be



Open Hands Garden

by Dennis Spatafora, St. John's Episcopal Church, Royal Oak, Michigan

Open Hands Garden, housed on the grounds of St. John's Episcopal Church in Royal Oak, Michigan, was established in the spring of 2015. The garden's primary goal is to supply fresh produce to the guests of the Open Hands Food Pantry, which provides hunger relief through emergency food to 14,000 Oakland County residents annually. Most food pantries, understandably, distribute prepackaged, nonperishable food. Our goal was to add fresh, nutritious produce to the food we provide to our hungry neighbors. In addition, the Open Hands Garden offers opportunities for church members, as well as the surrounding community, to work and learn together on a variety of garden activities, rain harvesting, composting, and cultivation. The garden currently consists of eight raised bed plots, each four feet by eight feet and one foot deep, that were constructed through the efforts of many church members and community volunteers. The garden utilizes a rainwater harvesting system that catches rainwater, which is used to irrigate the crops. In the next 12 months, with a grant from the United Thank Offering, the Open Hands Garden will expand to include energy-efficient hoop house structure/s, which will double the size of the garden and lengthen the growing season to nine months per year. No experience is required to work in the garden. Regular volunteer times led by a member of the Garden Steering Committee are Thursday evenings 6:30-8 p.m. and Saturday mornings 9-10:30 a.m. Most of these times are used to harvest and prepare produce for distribution at the food pantry. Other activities include garden maintenance such as planting, weeding, and irrigation. All are welcome!



representing UTO at the [Episcopal Youth Event](#) in Oklahoma this month. Sandra and Rachel will have a booth (if you're there, be sure to stop by and say hello) and a workshop on UTO Young Adult Grants. We've got super-exciting giveaways planned for the teenagers, and we can't wait to talk with them about gratitude and share updates on [Facebook](#). Stay tuned!

Support UTO Grant Sites!

Many of our UTO Grant Sites are beginning to establish small businesses, and we hope you'll consider supporting them. Click the images below to go to their websites.

If you are a UTO Grant Site producing something that folks could purchase, please let Heather know (hmelton@episcopalchurch.org) so we can include you in this list.

[LEARN MORE](#) ABOUT OPEN HANDS GARDEN AND WATCH A SHORT VIDEO ON THEIR CURRENT PROGRESS.

United Thank Offering – Why It Matters to Me

by V.V. Massey, Grace Episcopal Church, Anderson, South Carolina, Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina



I grew up Baptist. We didn't have the UTO or mite boxes like other churches had; we had the penny march. Every Sunday, the children would get up and march down the aisle of the church gathering pennies for mission. Fast-forward several years to a marriage and confirmation into the Episcopal Church, where I was introduced to the United Thank Offering (UTO). Twice a year, there were announcements made about a Blue Box, coins, and a date to turn in the money collected. A check was written and dropped in the offering plate, and well, that was it until the next announcement and the process was repeated.

Fast-forward a few more years. We have one daughter. Her name is Kayla. Kayla is a cradle Episcopalian and has been very involved in the church since she was big enough to carry a candle. Kayla was the first Young Adult Service Corps (YASC) member from the Diocese of Upper South Carolina, during which she served in the Philippines. She also was chosen to serve as the first-ever Julia Chester Emery UTO/YASC intern. This is how I

really came to know what the UTO mission is.

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