

Sunday, April 23, 2023



Dear Clergy and UTO Coordinators,

The Easter season is upon us which brings thoughts of hope, resurrection, and new life. For some of us it also reminds us that the Spring Ingathering for UTO is not far away.

Traditionally the Spring Ingathering is held on the Sunday closest to Ascension Day, which is on Thursday May 18<sup>th</sup> this year. The closest Sundays to consider are Mother's Day, May 14<sup>th</sup> or our Companion Diocese Sunday, May 21, but if you want to highlight your Ingathering, it is perfectly acceptable to pick a Sunday that will work best for your congregation. Please send your Spring Ingathering donations to Diocesan Office by June 9<sup>th</sup>. Here's the address:

UTO

c/o Diocese of Fond du Lac

1051 N. Lynndale Drive, Ste. 1B

Appleton, WI 54914

In 1889, two Episcopal women envisioned a way to collect small thank offerings in homes as a personal expression of gratitude, and from this, our modern day United Thank Offering (UTO) was born. Today, UTO members, through their daily personal spiritual discipline of gratitude, continue to make thank offerings, and every penny given in thanksgiving is then given away in grant funding to missions and ministries seeking to live Jesus' way of love. UTO is a ministry of The Episcopal Church for the mission of the whole church. More than 5,300 grants have been awarded thus far by UTO (for a total of \$140 million) to support innovative mission and ministry throughout The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. 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.

If you are Episcopalian, you are 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 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. Think of UTO as a 'pay-it-forward ministry' – we help others who in turn help others. UTO also is a good way to teach children about the Christian way of giving thanks and helping others.

If your parish already participates in UTO, keep up the good work and THANK YOU! If your parish does not participate, it is never too late to start. It is easy, and anyone can do it. My contact information is at the end of this letter. Please feel free to contact me and we can get you going in no time!

I am enclosing information on the 2024 Grant Focus and Criteria. The UTO Board has put this out a little earlier to allow time for you to develop a plan, and to see if you need to apply for a grant for your focus. In a recent UTO newsletter they emphasized the following:

*“the UTO grant focus for 2024 will be on ‘the stranger’ Jesus mentions, offering welcome and inclusivity. This includes funding innovative mission and ministry projects that:*

- *Welcome people with differences that cause isolation (culture, life experience, disability, mental health, etc.) in new ways that are meaningful and deemed necessary by that community.*
- *Encourage truth telling, acknowledging historic trauma, and establishing a pathway towards healing.”*

As I said in the beginning, Spring is a time of hope, resurrection, and new life. It is my hope that more of our parishes will participate in UTO. It is my hope that if you did once, but it has been a while, we can resurrect UTO in your parish. Let the spirit of our living God breathe new life into UTO in the diocese, so we in turn can help others in our communities, our country, and the world!

If you would like more information about UTO, or if you would like to set up a time for me to visit, please contact me. Email is the best way to reach me.

With blessings,

Cheryl Dobrzynski

UTO Coordinator for the Diocese of Fond du Lac

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