

## THE UNITED THANK OFFERING BOARD

### Membership

Dr. Sandra Squires, <i>President</i>	Nebraska, VI	2018
Dr. Marcie Cherau, <i>Vice-President</i>	Georgia, IV	2018
Ms. Birdie Blake-Reid, <i>Secretary</i>	Long Island, II	2018
Mrs. Kathy Mank, <i>Financial Secretary</i>	Southern Ohio, V	2018
Ms. Sherri Dietrich	Maine, I	2021
Ms. Vernese Smith	Long Island, II	2021
The Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry, <i>Ex-Officio</i>	North Carolina, IV	2018
The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, <i>Ex-Officio</i>	Ohio, V	2018
Ms. Joyce Haines	Southern Virginia, III	2018
Ms. Joyce Landers	Central Gulf Coast, IV	2021
Ms. Margaret Cooper	Missouri, V	2018
Ms. Elizabeth Campbell	South Dakota, VI	2021
Ms. Valinda Jackson	Kansas, VII	2021
Ms. Barbara Schafer	Nevada, VIII	2018
Ms. Reina Lopez	Honduras, IX	2021
The Rev. Sarah Carver, <i>Appointed Member</i>	North Carolina, IV	2018
Ms. Caitlyn Darnell, <i>Young Adult Representative</i>	North Carolina, IV	2021
The Rev. Marion Luckey, <i>Executive Council Liaison</i>	Northern Michigan, V	2021
The Rev. Canon Heather Melton, <i>Staff Officer, Staff Liaison</i>	Long Island, II	

### Mandate

To 1) promote an attitude and culture of thankfulness within The Episcopal Church, 2) assist in raising awareness of UTO, 3) encourage ingathering offerings to support mission throughout the world, 4) recommend priorities and criteria for current-year grants, 5) solicit and evaluate grant applications based on said criteria, 6) recommend approval of said grants to the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church through The Episcopal Church Finance and Mission Departments, and 7) establish and nurture relationships with those who are awarded grants through activities including, but not limited to, periodic site visits.

The United Thank Offering [UTO] Board, rooted in prayer and guided by the principles of the *Theology of Thankfulness* and INC-055, gave priority to the following areas during the 2015-2018 triennium:

- Granting the Annual Ingathering
- Increasing Participation in the Spiritual Discipline of Gratitude
- Creating a Donor/Membership Database

## Summary of Work

The Board met in person five (5) times: 2015 in Maryland, 2016 in Tennessee and North Dakota, in 2017 in Puerto Rico and Maryland/Washington, D.C. During each meeting, the Board conducted business, visited/learned about grant sites and met with local Episcopal Church Women and United Thank Offering volunteers.

Members of the Board also met online to address the work set before the Board between meetings.

### **GRANTING THE ANNUAL UNITED THANK OFFERING INGATHERING**

During this triennium, the Board continued to evaluate the granting process annually to increase transparency, ease of the application process and support grant applicants, dioceses and Provinces. After the success of the 125<sup>th</sup> Special Anniversary Grants to Young Adults, the Board continued and expanded this program to include seminarians. UTO awarded fourteen (14) grants to young adults and twelve (12) to seminarians in 2016 and 2017. These grants included projects ranging from designing sustainable spaces on unused church property to helping start a new congregation in a community center in an inner city. The Board continued the annual granting process utilizing the focus of Mark 5 and then embraced The Jesus Movement, following the leadership of the Presiding Bishop, for grants for 2017 and beyond. We awarded forty-two (42) grants in 2016 and thirty-five (35) in 2017. Grant projects ranged from hiring a community organizer in Northern Indiana to supporting a mill project with the New York Haiti project. (The 2018 grants were not awarded yet at the time this report was due.)

Each year the Board receives requests for more money than has been collected to distribute through grants, and it is our hope to strengthen and increase the Ingathering so we can support more ministry initiatives throughout The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

### **THE JULIA CHESTER EMERY, UNITED THANK OFFERING INTERNSHIP**

Each year, part of the Ingathering is used to support missionaries of The Episcopal Church. This annual grant is an important reminder of one of the first grants given by the Ingathering to send a missionary to Japan. In 2014, the Board determined that it would like to have a deeper relationship with Young Adults as well as with the missionaries the Ingathering is supporting. In a cooperative effort with Global Partnerships and General Theological Seminary, The Board created the first internship, naming it the Julia Chester Emery United Thank Offering Internship. The first year focused on educational programs at the seminary and ways to increase participation among younger people in UTO. The program was a wonderful success for all involved and so the Board voted to continue to offer the internship. The second year, UTO partnered with the Diocese of North Dakota. Our intern served in Bismarck and arrived shortly after the North Dakota Access Pipe Line protests began in Standing Rock so her work shifted to support the congregation in their ministry at the protectors' camp. For the third

year, the Board is partnering with Missional Voices and the Diocese of Texas. The Board chose to further refine the program and now the internship intentionally seeks out young women who wish to serve the church as lay leaders. This internship year will focus on marketing for both organizations as well as supporting intentional support groups for recent UTO grant sites and Hurricane Harvey recovery projects. It is our hope that this new partnership will help strengthen ties in Province VII, deepen and broaden participation in the United Thank Offering and open up new opportunities for greater partnerships.

#### **INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF GRATITUDE**

During the Triennium the Board has dedicated funding and time to increasing participation in the spiritual discipline of gratitude. We've created new materials, videos and resources for congregations, but perhaps the most important is our new Blue Box app for smart phones which will be launched at General Convention 2018. The Board recognizes that many people no longer carry change or forget to make a thank offering when they are going about their daily lives, so the new app allows individuals to have a Blue Box in their phone that includes a gratitude journal and shares a new story each day of where UTO grant funds have gone to support innovative mission and ministry throughout the church. It is our hope that this will increase gratitude, giving and make UTO more accessible.

During this triennium we looked for partnerships to support the work of the church in new ways and to raise the profile of UTO. In 2015, we partnered with Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) to raise money around Christmas time to support the work of EMM as it resettles refugees during a time when the refugee crisis was getting a great deal of attention. Then in a major shift in 2016, UTO moved our distribution center to The Episcopal Church in Navajoland. This move has been mutually beneficial to UTO and Navajoland, and we are grateful to continue to support Navajoland and their ministries which are leading towards self-sustainability. Additionally, our staff visited the Diocese of California to produce a series of videos on the importance of practicing gratitude in cooperation with Bishop Marc Andrus. In 2017, we celebrated the 165<sup>th</sup> birthday of our great advocate, Julia Chester Emery, by inviting congregations to spend the month of September learning about gratitude, UTO and Ms. Emery's life and ministry.

#### **DONOR DATABASE/MEMBERSHIP**

One of the great challenges that the UTO Board faced this triennium was to collect the names of individuals and parishes that participate in the United Thank Offering to better recognize their contributions. The staff began collecting information from donors to populate a database while the Board began reaching out to Diocesan staff for help in identifying UTO leaders and parishes. Additionally, we partnered with the Asset Map to begin listing congregations who participate in UTO and to allow congregations to select UTO as a ministry they participate in. We hope that in being able to define how many congregations are participating in UTO, we might be able to better support them and reach out to others to encourage participation.

### **COURTESY RESOLUTION FOR THE UNITED THANK OFFERING**

Be it *resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, that the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church recognizes and commends the work of the United Thank Offering volunteers, committee/Board members and staff for their ministry and spiritual discipline of gratitude as demonstrated in daily life through gifts given to Blue Boxes which have combined to give **\$135,760,167.33** in the last one hundred and twenty-eight (128) years to support mission and ministry throughout the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. As the United Thank Offering commences its next century of ministry, The Episcopal Church commends UTO's significant contribution to teaching us to live a life of gratitude, and granting innovative ministries of young adults, seminarians, parishes and dioceses to the Episcopal branch of The Jesus movement, by encouraging all Episcopalians to participate in the United Thank Offering and its Ingathering.

## **Continuance Recommendation**

### **UTO Board PRIORITIES FOR THE 2018-2021 TRIENNIUM:**

#### **SUPPORTING THE GRASSROOTS NETWORK**

The Board will begin holding regional training meetings in conjunction with other events throughout the church to teach, encourage and empower participants, organizers and leaders in the spiritual discipline of gratitude. Additionally, the Board and staff will develop an online training program for individuals interested in learning about UTO or ways to create their own spiritual discipline of gratitude. As we continue to develop our membership database we will be better equipped to find out how to provide support for our leaders, members and ways to encourage others to participate in UTO for the first time. UTO will also design a pilgrimage to visit UTO grant sites in Navajoland for all interested persons to engage on the ground with the important work of UTO grants.

#### **INCREASING THE ANNUAL INGATHERING**

Recognizing the long term decline of the annual Ingathering, the Board will continue to monitor the amounts received and seek ways to increase participation in the United Thank Offering which will increase the Ingathering. It is the goal of the Board to increase the Ingathering over this triennium, thus ending almost two (2) decades of decline. We will continue to update and upgrade our new Blue Box app in order to appeal to new participation in a digital age.

#### **GRANTING THE ANNUAL INGATHERING**

The Board will follow the leadership of the Presiding Bishop and Executive Council in funding projects that embrace The Jesus Movement and Beloved Communities. The Board will continue to review the annual granting process, understanding the importance of finding ways to have clearer criteria and expectations as well as a more accessible application process. Our goal is to ensure that those who are in most need of UTO funds to support innovative ministries have the opportunity and ability to

apply for those funds. We will continue to work with Executive Council and the DFMS on being a transparent and accountable granting process.

**BOARD EFFORTS TO ADDRESS DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM OF ITS MEMBERS:**

- The Board has a policy that all Board members receive Safeguarding God's Children and some form of Racial Reconciliation training before or early in their Board service, except in one instance where it was not possible due to geography;
- At least one (1) member of the Board should be from each province of The Episcopal Church to reflect diversity in keeping with the By-laws of the United Thank Offering Board;
- The Board meets once in one of the countries/territories where it has granted funds outside the North American borders of the United States,
- if needed, translators will be provided to ensure the full participation of all non-English speaking members; and
- affirm the Church in its decision to have diversity represented on the Interim Bodies in accordance with General Convention 2006-A092.

## Budget

**PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE 2018-2021 TRIENNium**

The UTO Board will meet three (3) times during the triennium, including one (1) meeting outside the United States. To accomplish its programmatic and grant-making responsibilities, the UTO Board will utilize projected income from the dedicated trust funds (Based on the DFMS trust fund projected dividend) of \$973,152 for the triennium in addition to \$200,977 from the General Convention budget.