

To: ECW Province VIII Board
From: UTO Representative, Tammy Smecker-Hane (tsmecker@cox.net)
Re: UTO News
Date: August 8, 2026



UTO NEWS

United Thank Offering (UTO) is a discipline of The Episcopal Church focused on ministry and mission where every penny that parishioners donate goes out as grants to Episcopal groups in the USA and the wider world through the Anglican Communion to solve pressing community problems.

2025 UTO Grants

This year's 2025 UTO grants went to improving access to reliable & clean water for drinking, bathing, washing, irrigating, etc. A total of \$1.08 million was awarded. Grants include projects for rainwater harvesting for landscaping use at a California church, for constructing showers and laundry facilities for unhoused people in Maine and Massachusetts and for disadvantaged school children and their families in Pennsylvania, for obtaining first-time water access and indoor bathrooms at the Church of the Mediator on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, and the construction of solar-powered boreholes to provide reliable and safe drinking water for entire communities in the Dioceses of Gambia, Libera, Mpwapwa (Tanzania), Mumias (Kenya), and Northern Luzon (Philippines). For a complete list of the 2025 grants, see <https://unitedthankoffering.com>.



Congratulations go out the successful 2025 grant recipients from Province VII, and we pray for God's help in seeing your projects to fruition! These include:

- "Ripples of Opportunity" (\$11,230) to Padadise Point Camp, McCall, ID – Diocese of Idaho
- "Rainwater Harvesting Project" (\$16,290) to St. Matthews Church, San Andreas, CA - Diocese of San Joaquin

Applying for a 2026 UTO Grant

The **2026 UTO grants** will focus on the theme of **justice and bridging divides**. If you are interested in applying, please consult the grant proposal guidelines at <https://unitedthankoffering.com/apply> as soon as possible. In addition, plan to attend at least one of the on-line webinars that UTO offers to help you prepare a successful grant. Remember that grants are for new mission and ministry projects, not simply expanding your current activities to serve more people or for doing church renovation projects that solely benefit your parishioners. In addition, this year is somewhat different than in previous years because successful projects must be undertaken in concert with at least one group with which you do not traditionally work. Please carefully read the criteria on-line at the website above for a thorough explanation. Feel free to email me (tsmecker@cox.net) with questions and I will be happy to help you navigate the process.

Order UTO Materials for Fall by Sep 1

Many excellent UTO grant applications are not funded solely because UTO runs out of grant money before they run out of great proposals. If your church has never had a UTO Ingathering to raise funds to donate to UTO, please consider doing one this year because communities at home and abroad are in the midst of some very challenging

times! You can order resources totally free of charge at <https://unitedthankoffering.com/shop>. Please **order by Sep 1 to receive materials for Fall** parish UTO Ingathering. We are featuring a new downloadable Gratitude Journal for families or individuals (see the Gratitude/Resources page) that promises to be a well-loved resource in addition to traditional UTO boxes.

Diocesan & Parish UTO Coordinators Needed

One way to ensure your diocese knows about applying for UTO grants and is successful in doing so is to make sure your diocese has a **UTO Coordinator**. A requirement for each UTO grant is a recommendation from the diocesan bishop, and each bishop can only recommend one UTO grant each year so the UTO coordinator usually is in charge of coordinating that internal diocesan process. Ask your bishop if he/she has one. If not, volunteer to do it! Its easy because UTO provides coordinators with all the resources you need from their website. Talk with your bishop then register using the link at the bottom of the UTO website at <https://unitedthankoffering.com>.

One way to ensure UTO can fund more excellent grants is if more parishes donate to UTO by having an annual UTO Ingathering. If your parish has not had one in a few years, consider volunteering to be your **parish UTO coordinator**! A UTO Ingathering is easy for just a single person in a parish to organize because UTO gives you step-by-instructions (see <https://unitedthankoffering.com/ingathering>) and all the materials you need for free. You can download and print out Gratitude resources and order materials free of charge such as a entire parish kit or envelopes and UTO boxes at our new on-line shop. Register as a parish UTO Coordinator on bottom the UTO website homepage and you can watch the recording of our annual training event that happens on a Saturday in June each year and you will be up to speed for the Fall.

With sincerest wishes for God's blessings on you & your ministries,

Tammy Smecker-Hane

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