



Episcopal Church Women and United Thank Offering 2009 Report



A Little Episcopal Church Women's History . . .

2009 marked a 120 year collaboration in ministry between the *United Thanks Offering* and the *Episcopal Church Women*. Early in the history of the Episcopal Church Women and their calling to move forward in mission, came the recognition that thankful prayer and thankful giving are interlinked; thus the United Thank Offering was born. The United Thank Offering is lead by a women's board made up of nine members elected from their Province ECW, along with 2 members-at-large elected from the outgoing board. A National Church UTO Program Officer from the Partnerships Center also sits on the board. The UTO Board reads and award grants yearly, except in the triennial year when grants are voted by the ECW Triennial Meeting delegates. Every penny placed in a blue box is granted; this triennium the total was 6.7 million dollars!

Our diocesan Episcopal Church Women's board meets regularly throughout the year. We provide a place of prayer and support for women's ministry leaders around the diocese: *Daughters of the King, Church Periodical Club, Altar Guild, Girl's Friendly, and The Episcopal Church Women's Quilt Project*. We meet to share information, and are available to provide information and resources about these ministries to parishes; we also co-sponsor an annual *Advent Quiet Day* with the *Order of the Daughters of the King*.

In addition to overseeing the United Thank Offering in our diocese, we represent the women of the diocese on the Province 1 ECW Board and at the National ECW Triennial Meeting held concurrently with The Episcopal Church General Convention. On behalf of the women in the diocese we pay Province 1 and National ECW dues, and contribute to National ECW ministries; we also seek out opportunities for mission and outreach from our own diocesan ECW. Some of the ministries we have supported over the last 10 years are: Sister's of St. Margaret's Convent in Haiti. Food for the Poor, Woman to Women, support for the Liberian and Ghanaian ministries, the National Conference for Community and Justice, in support of the citywide program *Community Conversations on Race*, Relief for Hurricane Katrina, Missionary support for Sonja Hoekstra-Foss, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, the Western Massachusetts Food Bank, and Episcopal Relief and Development in response to the earthquake in Peru, for a total of \$7,500. On behalf of the diocese of Western Massachusetts, the ECW and Daughters of the King sent a stole to Lovia Priscilla Asiedu, the first woman priest ordained in the diocese of Kumasi, Ghana.

The United Thank Offering Mission "To expand the Circle of Thankful People"

The United Thank Offering is a ministry of "Thankful Pennies" with *The Mission "To expand the Circle of Thankful People"*. The fruits of this thankfulness to God can be seen all over the world as grant money is used to build up Christ's Kingdom. The National United Thank Offering Committee focuses on projects that implement significant change toward alleviating profound human suffering addressed by the *Millennium Development Goals*.

And in Our Diocese

The Diocesan Episcopal Church Women's board oversees the United Thank Offering. Our combined 2008 United Thank Offering was **\$14,091.61** with **41 churches** participating. Our combined 2009 Spring ingathering was **\$4,048.57** with **16 churches** participating.

This year *St. John's Episcopal Church, Northampton applied for a UTO grant for the conversion of an existing lavatory into handicapped accessible lavatory*. During the Triennial Meeting of the Episcopal Church Women in Anaheim the **\$12,000.00** grant was awarded to St. John's, Northampton.



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Every diocese is invited to submit one grant applications yearly, and may submit one additional grant application on behalf of their companion diocese. Grant applications are available October 1st by calling Sandi Hills, Executive Assistant to the Bishop, 413-737-4786, extension 23, or if you would like to receive an electronic copy send your request to ecw.wma@gmail.com with UTO in the subject line. **The completed application must be returned to the Bishop's office by December 1, 2009.**

We would like to remind everyone that there are two ingatherings yearly:

→ **The Fall ingathering will be Saturday, October 24, 2009.** At the beginning of Noonday Prayers, those bringing UTO offerings will gather at the back of the meeting room; while prayers are for the parishes in the diocese the offering will be brought forward. Make check to: The Episcopal Diocese of W. MA, with UTO in the memo; this offering my also be mailed as below.

→ The **Spring UTO ingathering** will be **MAIL IN**. The UTO committee *suggests* the Sunday after the Ascension, this coming Spring, **May 16, 2010**, as an ingathering date for parishes. Make check to: The Episcopal Diocese of WMA, with UTO in the memo, and mail by **June 15, 2010** to: The Episcopal Diocese of W MA, ATTN: Esther Barker, Diocesan Accounting Manager, 37 Chestnut St., Springfield, MA 01103.

If you have questions or need information/advice about the United Thank Offering or Episcopal Church Women contact the ECW board at: ECW.wma@gmail.com or check: www.diocesewma.org/aboutus/ecw. or call Susan Howland at: 508-248-6112.

Sincerely in Christ,
Susan Howland, Diocesan ECW President
September, 2009