



# *Diocese of Western Massachusetts Episcopal Church Women and United Thank Offering 2011 Report*



And The Times They Are A-Changin' .....

During 2011 our Diocesan ECW met primarily by phone and email. Due to distance, time, and finances we are keeping face to face meeting to a minimum. As far as the structure of the organization goes, we have three officers: president, secretary, and treasurer, and the president of the diocesan Daughters of the King works closely with us. We provide support for the Church Periodical Club, the Girls' Friendly Society and the Altar Guild as needed. There is no leadership "in the wings" to replace the current leadership.

Within this small group, we are able to host a program or Quiet Day, as topics or needs arise and energy is available. In December 2010 we hosted, along with the diocesan Daughters of the King and St. Marks East Longmeadow, an Advent Quiet Day. About 25 people came to hear meditations on the theme, **"YEARNING FOR THE GOD WHO COMES TO US,"** led by The Right Reverend Chilton Knudson, retired bishop of Maine. A free will offering of \$216.00 was sent to support Bishop Knudsen's mission efforts in Haiti.

The Daughters of the King and ECW will co-host an Advent Quiet Day again on Saturday, December 3, 2011, at St. Andrews Episcopal Church Longmeadow, MA

All of our money at this point comes from endowment income. Since we do have endowment funds, we need to look after, and be good stewards of the funds, and honor the donors. Some of the endowment income is restricted as to its use and some is not.

In 2011 we gave:

\$500, to help young women go on a diocesan mission to trip to the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

\$300, for Episcopal camp scholarships for girls.

\$200, for the Behwalay Water Project, a mission of Christ Church, Rochdale, MA, to help build a well in the village of Behwalay in Liberia.

On recommendation of Peter Prewandowski, our missionary serving in Dodoma, Tanzania, we will sponsor a woman named Christina to help with her educational expenses. Christina sounds like an amazing woman, and we will send \$300 a year for 3 years starting in 2011. We also made the decision to collaborate with the Diocese of MA ECW and give a 3-year commitment to adopt a girl at Our Little Roses Orphanage in Honduras. This coming year we will invite others to help with this mission.

Other funds are used to pay Province and National ECW dues and to send the president, or her representative, to Triennial Meeting.

We communicate women's ministry information to parishes by email and through an ECW page on the diocesan website. We post information, calendar items, and answer all emails from the contact page for ECW/UTO. We also function as a link to Province 1 ECW and the National ECW and communicate regularly with the National ECW and the Province 1 ECW Representative to the National Board. As president, I have been a contributor to the National ECW publication, *Communiqué*; the spring issue of *Communiqué* focused on the environment, and I wrote an article that highlighted the pastoral letter from the Episcopal Bishops of New England, **"To Serve Christ in All Creation"**. I continue to be quite active on the Province 1 ECW board, and serve as vice president and communication/information liaison.



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**Episcopal Church Women and United Thank Offering**  
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The United Thank Offering is administered by the ECW in our diocese, but the president keeps track of the details of this diocesan ministry. I am personally excited about the ways that we can be useful. With the help of The Rev. Annie Ryder and her Kumasi team, Jane Greisbach and Trudy Weaver-Miller, I am looking forward to possibly submitting a UTO grant on behalf of our companion diocese in Kumasi, Ghana for the Mampong Babies Hospital to install back up solar electricity.

I would like to remind everyone that The United Thank Offering is a ministry of the whole Episcopal Church whose Mission is “*To expand the Circle of Thankful People.*” The fruits of these “Thankful Pennies” can be seen all over the world as grant money is used to build up Christ’s Kingdom. The United Thank Offering focuses on approving grants that will implement significant change to alleviate profound human suffering and address the Millennium Development Goals.

- ✘ Our Combined 2010 United Thank Offering was \$15,330.84 with 38 Churches participating
- ✘ Our combined 2011 mail in Spring ingathering was \$2,449.51 with 9 churches participating

**Thanks be to God!**

**Grant applications are available October 1<sup>st</sup>.** Please email Susan Howland at: [ecw.wma@gmail.com](mailto:ecw.wma@gmail.com) with UTO in the subject line, or call 508-248-6112 to discuss how to apply. **The diocesan deadline for the completed application is December 1, 2011.**

There are two ingatherings yearly:

→ **The Fall ingathering will be during the diocesan convention, this year Saturday, October 29, 2011.**

Make check to: The Episcopal Diocese of WMA, with UTO in the memo; this offering may also be mailed as below. Please check: [www.diocesewma.org](http://www.diocesewma.org); Episcopal Church Women tab on the left, for updated information as the ingathering date gets closer, or email: [ecw.wma@gmail.com](mailto:ecw.wma@gmail.com).

→ **The Spring UTO ingathering will be MAIL IN.** The UTO Board suggests the Sunday after the Ascension, this coming Spring, **May 17th, 2012**, as an ingathering date for parishes. Make check to: The Episcopal Diocese of WMA, with UTO in the memo, and mail by June 4, 2012 to: The Episcopal Diocese of WMA, 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](mailto:ECW.wma@gmail.com) or check: [www.diocesewma.org/aboutus/ecw](http://www.diocesewma.org/aboutus/ecw) or call Susan Howland at: 508-248-6112.

In closing, I have been thinking and praying about where to go from here, but I am not quite sure where God is leading women’s ministries at this time. As we know our bishop has announced his retirement at the end of 2012, and we can anticipate a certain amount change. I would like to see the ECW hold firm and solid through this transition neither giving up nor trying to expand our ministry. Once we have a new bishop we can see where women's ministries are headed and trust that God will point us in the way of His promised and preferred future.

Blessings,

*Susan Howland*, Diocese of Western Massachusetts ECW President

September, 2011, for diocesan convention 2011