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# INC-055 Ad-Hoc Committee on the Study of the United Thank Offering

## Membership

The Rev. Canon Mark Harris, <i>Chair</i>	Delaware, III
Mrs. Marjorie A. Burke	New Hampshire, I
The Rev. Sarah Fossati	Eastern Michigan, V
The Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas	Connecticut, I
Ms. Linda Hanick	New York, II
Ms. Sandra F. McPhee	Chicago, V
Ms. Abigail Nelson	
Ms. Sarita Redd	Oklahoma, VII
The Rt. Rev. Prince G. Singh	Rochester, II
The Rev. John Tampa	North Carolina, IV

## Summary of Work

The INC-055 Ad-Hoc Committee was authorized by INC-055, a resolution at the October 2008 Executive Council Meeting.

The charge of Executive Council to the Ad-Hoc Committee was “to undertake a serious and extensive study of the current and future of the United Thank Offering as to its roles, purposes, functions, operational procedures and vision for faithfulness to God’s mission in the 21st century. The Ad-Hoc Committee was to “begin this visioning exercise immediately and report to the 2012 General Convention with specific recommendations as to how the United Thank Offering can continue and expand its work in The Episcopal Church’s faithfulness to God’s mission...”

The Ad-Hoc Committee was chaired initially by Professor Ian T. Douglas. Following his ordination to the Episcopate and his resignation from Executive Council, Executive Council member The Reverend Canon Mark Harris was appointed as a member and chair. The Ad-Hoc Committee has met twice as a group and by telephone five times. Members of the Ad-Hoc Committee have met with the United Thank Offering Board and with the United Thank Offering Face To Face Training Program; observing how policies and procedures are implemented, with United Thank Offering Office Staff at the Episcopal Church Center and with their supervisors, and have consulted Legal Counsel of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society.

The Ad-Hoc Committee organized five (5) writing subgroups, and invited five (5) members of the United Thank Offering Board to join in the writing tasks. The five (5) United Thank Offering Board Members of the writing subgroups: Mrs. Martha Estes (resigned), Mrs. Anne Gordon Curran, Mrs. Lynn Headley, Mrs. Lois Johnson-Rodney, Mrs. Barbi Tinder and Mrs. Georgie White.

The five (5) writing groups and their membership are as follows:

- History and Story: Ian T. Douglas, John Tampa, and Lois Johnson-Rodney
- Theology of Thankfulness: Marge Burke, Sarah Carver, Anne Gordon Curran
- New Times and New Technology: Linda Hanick, Abigail Nelson, Barbie Tinder
- Anglican Communion Matters: Prince Singh, Sandi McPhee, Lynn Headley
- Organizational Structure and Relationships: Sarita Redd, Georgie White, Mark Harris

This report on the work of the INC-055 Ad-Hoc Committee incorporates the work of these sub-committees and the findings of our various interviews, research and common work related to the rather daunting task presented by the enabling resolution.

This work is meant primarily to be a visioning exercise, providing recommendations to the 2012 General Convention and to the United Thank Offering concerning United Thank Offering and its vision for the 21st century.

Our recommendations regarding the United Thank Offering and its vision highlight several common concerns: visibility, communication, autonomy and support. For United Thank Offering to be successful in the coming years each of these concerns must be addressed.

### **Areas of Interest**

In the course of our investigations of and engagement with United Thank Offering we believe our charge is expanded to include three quite distinct areas of interest:

#### **Matters Concerning Faithfulness to God's Mission.**

The United Thank Offering is committed to the larger vocation of The Episcopal Church in service to God's mission, and by extension to that same mission expressed in the vocation of Anglican Churches throughout the world. As the mission minded church increasingly sees mission as God's mission, the *missio dei*, United Thank Offering has asked itself where God, acting in the world to restore unity, is calling United Thank Offering to focus its efforts. The United Thank Offering Board establishes its guidelines in relation to its discernment of needs and its historical focus on ministry by and to women and its theology of thankfulness.

#### **Matters of Role, Purpose and Function**

The United Thank Offering has played an immensely important role in the missionary life of The Episcopal Church and richly deserves the recognition and support of The Episcopal Church. In the history of the past 122 years it has returned again and again to its purpose as a prayer and giving agent for mission "over and beyond" that provided for by the budget and program of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society. At times its efforts have been almost absorbed by the general program of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS), only to have those efforts reappear as an independent and vital force for new work and vision. The "Bricks and Mortar" grants of the United Thank Offering provide a visible reminder throughout the world of the thankful witness of United Thank Offering and its vision of thanksgiving made practical, local and incarnate.

The Ad-Hoc Committee believes that the tension between United Thank Offering as a prayerful ingathering source for mission that uses its resources as it decides (within the bounds of DFMS and General Convention regulations) and the program offices of The Episcopal Church, is a creative one.

The Ad-Hoc Committee believes that there is good reason to believe that the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society/The Executive Council of The Episcopal Church has become an increasingly regulatory corporation in its almost 100 year history. That is, it has moved from being a source of missionary vision to being a source of regulation of vision articulated elsewhere. The Ad-Hoc Committee believes that The United Thank Offering can be a source of vision and that accepting that call to prophetic ministry will open United Thank Offering to renewed vocation in the Twenty-first Century.

The United Thank Offering Committee/Board is a "grounds up" organization, whose foundational vision is the simple act of thanksgiving at the altar of daily life. The question of role, purpose and function of United Thank Offering is grounded in the activity of thankful giving, the function of ingathering and the purposes derived from the giving community, and at the same time is found in the relation United Thank Offering has to the corporate life of The Episcopal Church.

We believe that the United Thank Offering must continue to be autonomous but interdependent as regards the corporate entity that constitutes The Episcopal Church. The role, purpose and function of UTO is understood as an organizational vocation within the wider role, purpose and function of the corporate body. Our recommendations on these matters are directed to those bodies of General Convention and Executive Council concerned with the mission structure of the Church.

#### **Matters of Board Structure, By Laws, and Policies and Procedures**

The United Thank Offering Committee/Board understands itself, and is understood by the Executive Council, as an agency of The Episcopal Church. It therefore must order its work, understand its purpose, and develop policies and procedures in coherence with the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church and the organizational and fiduciary policies of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society.

## **Recommendations**

### **Bylaws**

The Ad-Hoc Committee working closely with the United Thank Offering Board President and United Thank Offering Board and has proposed to the United Thank Offering Board a set of Bylaws that follow closely the policies and procedures already in place in the United Thank Offering. Recommended by the Ad-Hoc Committee, those Bylaws have been put in place by resolution of the United Thank Offering Board and affirmed by resolution of Executive Council. (See Appendix 2).

### **Communications Strategy**

Included in this report are observations regarding new communications possibilities related to thankful giving and we recommend to the Board that it reflect on these observations and take such actions as may result in a communications strategy for the work of United Thank Offering.

### **Board Development**

This report stresses the need to encourage persons with special talents and abilities to offer themselves for service as board members and affirms the work of board development. The majority of members of the United Thank Offering Board are elected from within the Provinces and three Members-At-Large are elected by the Board, but the changes in the Bylaws now provide for three (3) Appointed Members. The United Thank Offering Board, by careful recruitment and encouragement can thus augment the talents of those elected with talents of those appointed.

### **UTO Staff**

The United Thank Offering Bylaws now require that there be a Letter of Agreement between the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, The Episcopal Church Center leadership and United Thank Offering Board and staff persons hired, concerning United Thank Offering expectations and obligations towards the staff hired.

### **A Memorandum of Understanding**

The United Thank Offering Bylaws requires a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the United Thank Offering Board and the Officers of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society regarding the relationship between the United Thank Offering Board and The Episcopal Church. The occasion of signing that MOU signals the commitment to a relationship of trust and cooperation.

### **The Report in Context**

This report is the third such study since the formation of the National (now Executive) Council. We are aware that each such study has been undertaken at a time of examination, by the Church, of its organizational structure as it relates to two factors: the forces that work for a unified corporate expression of The Episcopal Church and the forces that work to insure a place for women in the life of the Church.

Neither of these factors speak directly to the motivations of faithfulness and thanksgiving that is expressed in a Thank Offering, although it might be argued that the “United” character of the offering is both an expression of the corporate unity that is explicit in the development of a single Church Center and of the efforts of women united in mission.

The United Thank Offering has been in existence some 122 years. Begun in 1889 and it has understood its work as supportive of the efforts of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America – The Episcopal Church. It has supported prayer and action for the missionary work of the Church and through its granting mechanism has furthered that work by funding projects and persons it deemed appropriate, always within the general bounds of the work of The Episcopal Church.

The relationship between United Thank Offering, the Women’s Auxiliary, the Domestic and Foreign Mission Boards of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church and its primary officers – the Presiding Bishop, the Department heads of Church Center staff, and the Treasurer – has changed over time as its parent agency, the Women’s Auxiliary became The Episcopal Church Women and the National Council became Executive Council.

The INC-055 Working Group, augmented by members of the current United Thank Offering Board now thankfully bring before the 73rd general Convention this report heralding a new day and bright future for God’s missionary work through the United Thank Offering.

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## The United Thank Offering: Vocational Challenges for the Twenty-First Century

### Section 1: History of the United Thank Offering

The history of the United Thank Offering (UTO) reflects the role and place of women in the governance and outreach of The Episcopal Church in the 19th and 20th centuries. The history reveals that women were a prime source of missionary support and funding that undergirded the general church budget while at the same time women were consistently excluded from positions of authority and decision-making in the broader church. Reviewing this history gives insights to the emotional, financial and organizational challenges before the United Thank Offering as it heads into the 21st century.

Throughout the 19th century, Episcopal women organized, promoted, and funded much of the missionary outreach of the Episcopal Church. The voluntary affiliation of Episcopal women in the work of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS) was often the single most important source of support for the official missionary society of the church. Women were also well represented as missionaries in the domestic and foreign missions of The Episcopal Church. With the support of the Woman's Auxiliary to the DFMS more women than men would eventually serve The Episcopal Church as missionaries. For example, two of the first foreign missionaries sent to Greece were women. Frances Marion Hill taught young women of Greece from 1830-1884 and Emma Willard founded the Troy Society for the Advancement of Female Education in Greece.

At the founding of the DFMS by the General Convention in 1821 and throughout the 19th century and early 20th century women were excluded from serving on the Board of the Missionary Society or any of its Committees. This was consistent with the wider exclusion of women in the governance of The Episcopal Church, as women were not seated as Deputies to General Convention until 1970. Episcopalian women, however, were key to the local, national and worldwide outreach of the church through parish and diocesan women's "auxiliary bodies" that supported the official and exclusively male committees, commissions, agencies and boards. Recognizing the increasingly important role of women in the work of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, Bishop Horatio Potter of New York suggested in 1850 that the women of the church become more organized to support the work of the church's missions.

The General Convention of 1871 thus created the Woman's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society bringing together many of the parish and diocesan women's auxiliaries. Mary Abbott Emery served as the first National Secretary from 1872-76. She asked every rector of The Episcopal Church to appoint a secretary who would correspond with the National Secretary about the work of the women in each parish, perhaps creating the first centralized data base. During Emery's short tenure over three hundred and fifty local secretaries were appointed, and diocesan groups formed in nine dioceses. Julia Chester Emery then succeeded her older sister Mary as the National Secretary. Eventually two other sisters, Susan Lavinia Emery and Margaret Theresa Emery, joined Mary and Julia as staff of the Auxiliary. No other family contributed more to the Women's Auxiliary and the missionary work of the Episcopal Church than the Emerys.

By 1882, the Episcopal Church was supporting twenty-nine missionary bishops – seven foreign and twenty-two domestic. These missionary bishops increasingly looked to the Women's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society for support; and the women of The Episcopal Church responded generously. Through direct contributions called "specials," the Women's Auxiliary became a primary funder for the work of the missionary bishops. And through their missioner supply box program they provided lay resources for missionaries in the domestic and foreign field.

At the 1889 Triennial Meeting in New York, the Women's Auxiliary instituted the United Offering for the support of specific mission projects and individual missionaries with the first United Offering totaling \$2,188.64. The United Offering eventually became known as the United Thank Offering (UTO) collecting the prayers grateful offerings of the women of The Episcopal Church in thanksgiving for the many blessings of this life. Blue mite boxes, known affectionately as "The Blue Box" that collected the thanksgiving offerings of the women of The Episcopal Church would eventually achieve almost iconic status as the symbol of the UTO.

In time, the UTO through its Blue Boxes became the single most important extra-budgetary source for funding of specific missionary projects, growing from just over \$2,000.00 in 1889 to \$107,207.83 by the turn of the twentieth century. It was at the Triennial Meetings of the Woman's Auxiliary, which ran concurrently with the exclusively male

General Convention, where the women of The Episcopal Church came together to promote and extend the missionary outreach of the church, particularly women missionaries, through their United Thank Offering.

The General Convention of 1919 radically reorganized the missionary, educational and social service work of The Episcopal Church by combining the Board of Missions of the DFMS, the Board of Religious Education and the Commission on Social Service into one national body under the auspices of a National Council (later to become known as the Executive Council.) This National Council, along with canonical changes calling for an elected Presiding Bishop and a financial plan that provided funds from dioceses to support the church-wide program effectively created what would later be known as “The National Church.” Recognizing the key role that the Auxiliary played in supporting the church’s missionary outreach and not wanting to jeopardize the funding provided by the women of the church, especially through the UTO, the decision was made that the Woman’s Auxiliary would remain a separate organization and become “auxiliary” to the male-dominated National Council.

The work of the Woman’s Auxiliary and the United Thank Offering continued to grow in the early decades of the 20th century. Although seemingly “separate but equal” the work of the women of church on behalf of women, particularly women missionaries, expanded such that at the 1937 Triennial a United Thank Offering Committee was created to oversee the UTO. Under the auspices of the UTO Committee the United Thank Offering would continue to grow in influence and amount of money ingathered. Increasingly the National Council began to look to the Woman’s Auxiliary and the UTO to help underwrite the church-wide budget. This support for the work of the women for the work of the wider church provided by the women of the church called into question how “auxiliary” the Woman’s Auxiliary really was.

The growing role of women in the programs of the National Council in the mid-20th century resulted in a significant organizational change and in 1958 the Woman’s Auxiliary became the General Division of Women’s Work within the official general church structures. Ostensibly women would no longer be seen as auxiliary in the life of The Episcopal Church. With the creation of the General Division of Woman’s Work, a debate arose as to the nature and purpose of the United Thank Offering. At the same time, and much to the worry of many of the leaders of the former Woman’s Auxiliary, the Presiding Bishop and National Council would increasingly look to the women to help underwrite the program budget of the “National Church.” Particularly noteworthy was the UTO support for initial funding of the 1967 General Convention Special Program called for by Presiding Bishop John Hines to address the strife of urban unrest and civil rights in the United States. It was the same convention that passed a canonical change allowing for women to be seated as Deputies to General Convention beginning in 1970.

The 1960’s and 1970’s were times of significant challenge to the established programs and structures of mainline American Protestantism. In The Episcopal Church the role of women in the governance and sacramental leadership of the church was hotly debated. In 1970 women were seated for the first time as deputies to General Convention and in 1974 eleven women deacons were irregularly ordained priests in Philadelphia. Two years later the General Convention changed the church’s canons allowing for recognized ordination of women to all three holy orders. Responding to these changing circumstances, the Executive Council (successor to the National Council) in 1968 established a Standing Committee for Women to replace the General Division of Women’s Work. This change signaled the end of a distinct entity of the church charged to coordinate and direct the work of women in The Episcopal Church. In the politically charged atmosphere of the 1960’s and 1970’s the particular historic vocation of the Woman’s Auxiliary with its specific focus on the missionary work of and for women had gave way to the much more diffuse Episcopal Church Women.

With the loss of the Woman’s Auxiliary as well as the General Division of Women’s Work, a new UTO Committee was organized in 1971 as an entity unto itself to oversee and direct the work of the United Thank Offering. The new UTO Committee was made up of one representative from each of the church’s nine provinces, two members of the then new Committee for Women, one member of the Executive Council, and one member from a new Standing Committee on Lay Ministries. With staff provided at the Episcopal Church Center in New York City, the UTO Committee oversaw the ingathering and granting of funds raised by the United Thank Offering each year. While internal adjustments to the governance of the Episcopal Church in the last decades of the 20th century resulted in changes to both the Committee on Women and the Standing Committee on Lay Ministries, the structure of the UTO Committee continued to draw its membership from churchwomen from the nine Provinces of the Episcopal Church with Executive Council representation.

The United Thank Offering Committee has continued to function under its own set of policies and procedures as an associated agency of The Executive Council with staff provided at The Episcopal Church Center. The UTO Committee has met four times a year for an average of ten days each. It is during these meetings that decisions are made on grants from the United Thank Offering to dioceses in The Episcopal Church and other Anglican churches around the world. The UTO remains one of the largest funding sources of “bricks and mortar” projects in the Anglican Communion and anyone traveling to another Anglican province is bound to find a church building or vehicle provided by a grant from the United Thank Offering.

While there has always been a close working relationship between the offices of The Episcopal Church Center and the United Thank Offering Committee and its staff, the relationship between the UTO and The Executive Council has grown increasingly detached in the last decade. Initially the UTO Committee included a member from The Executive Council and then from 1983 to 2000 The Executive Council maintained a relationship with the UTO Committee through a liaison appointed by the Presiding Bishop. Since 2000, there has not been a liaison from the Executive Council to the UTO Committee ostensibly because the time commitment required to attend forty days of UTO Committee meetings each year became too onerous.

In 2007 the offices of The Presiding Bishop began a comprehensive study of all agencies of The Episcopal Church that fell under the auspices of The Executive Council as to their governance, fiscal and liability responsibilities. The policies and procedures of The United Thank Offering Committee were included in this broad based study of agencies related to The Executive Council. The study discovered the accountability gap that had developed with the loss of a liaison from The Executive Council and the UTO Committee. To address this governance question, an Advisory Committee on the United Thank Offering was appointed by Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori in 2008. At its October 2008 meeting the Executive Council received a preliminary report from the Presiding Bishop’s Advisory Committee on the United Thank Offering. Some of the recommendations of the preliminary report of the Advisory Council were not well received by the UTO Committee and so the Committee began to pursue other options.

The UTO Committee approached the Council’s Standing Committee on International Concerns seeking approval to incorporate The United Thank Offering as a wholly independent not-for-profit organization with separate tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status. Believing that such a momentous organizational change as this would seriously undercut the church’s connection to the United Thank Offering, the Executive Council responded by calling for “a serious and extensive study of the current and future of the United Thank Offering as to its roles, purposes, function, operational procedures and vision for faithfulness to God’s mission in the 21st century.” (See resolution INC-055, attached.) In response to resolution INC-055, The Presiding Bishop and President of the House of Deputies appointed a Working Group to make recommendations to the 2012 General Convention as to how the United Thank Offering can go forward in this new century as a dynamic and reinvigorated response of The Episcopal Church to God’s mission in the world.

## **Section 2: A Theology of Thankfulness**

“...let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in work or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus; giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Colossians 3:17).

The Letter to the Colossians, written in the Pauline tradition, admonishes community members to embrace thankfulness as part of the ethical code that is to shape their way of life together. It seems that in the author’s mind, living thankfully is not just a good thing to do, but it is in fact the right thing to do. Yet, thanksgiving is not simply something he asks his listeners to do, rather he approaches thanksgiving as a state of mind and heart that has been brought about by the experience of God’s grace through new life in Christ. According to the author, being a follower of Christ Jesus means that one is “rooted” in him, “built up in him” and thankful in all things by “abounding in thanksgiving.” New life in Jesus here seems to mean that thankfulness is now a part of one’s new character, having been raised with Christ. This understanding seems to expand upon Paul’s earlier exhortations in his letter to the Thessalonians that they “give thanks in all circumstances.”

Out of all of the New Testament writings, it is the letters from the Pauline tradition that most fully bring us an understanding of thankfulness that is appropriate for Christian communities. Indeed for Paul, thankfulness does appear to be an attitude and practice that he has taken on as part of his witness--most of his letters begin with him giving thanks to God for the community he is addressing. Yet as noted above, the Pauline tradition continually connects thanksgiving

to an understanding of proper living--a kind of orthopraxy (or right practice) that also serves to transcend differences in practice among the members of each community. Paul often came upon disputes around meals and the understanding of what could and could not be eaten. The argument against was usually on the grounds that the food was not kosher or it had been used in a ritual to an idol and so some felt that this food was improper to consume. Others, particularly Gentile believers, believed that in this new faith no such food was off-limits. This was apparently a dilemma for more than one community and we see Paul responding to such questions in his letters to the Romans and the Corinthians. In both writings Paul's answer to all parties, regardless of where they fell in the argument, was to do what they felt was right. Whatever they did, they were to do it with thankfulness for it is the thanksgiving that ultimately justifies the person's actions. This picture of thankfulness is especially supported in I Timothy where Paul rejects false teachers (whoever they were) who seem to be encouraging people to abstain from marriage and food. He writes that everything made by God is good, and should be received on the condition that it is received "with thanksgiving [recognizing] that it has already been sanctified by God."

Beyond the question of food and righteous living, Paul was connecting thanklessness to paganism or idol worship. In the first chapter of the letter to the Romans, Paul outlines the wickedness and guilt of humanity in its rejection of God. Among the list of wrong-doings committed was humanity's refusal to honor God or give him thanks. The reason for such evil, he argues, is humanity's desire to turn to idols. Likewise, in the Pauline Letter to the Ephesians, Paul urges the community to renounce idolatrous behavior by avoiding "...obscene, silly and vulgar talk; but instead let there be thanksgiving."

In light of these passages, and after all that has been written about thanksgiving, it appears safe to assume that thanksgiving in the Epistles is essential and central to a believer's life with, and worship of, God. There cannot be proper worship without sincere thanksgiving; nor can there be proper living without thanksgiving at the center of that life. The argument seen throughout the Pauline tradition indicates that at our center, Christians, having received God's grace and love are to be thankful people.

The work of the United Thank Offering emerges as an extension of that thankfulness; the kind of thankfulness that fills our hearts and sees its fullest expression in our worship. UTO, in its work to further the Church's faithfulness to God's mission in the world with its daily reminder to us to be thankful and to expand that thankfulness, echoes the Great Thanksgiving we offer each Sunday. In other words, being thankful is a eucharistic practice and is so by taking all its meaning from our regular practice of hearing scripture, the taking and blessing of the bread, and the going out into the world—the Eucharist.

We can make this connection between Eucharist and the UTO by looking closely at the shape of the United Thank Offering's own practice. It is a practice that centers on people: individuals and families making daily and prayerful offerings that go beyond simply putting coins into the UTO's Blue Box by transforming this simple receptacle into an icon of connection with God and God's mission. It is placing each coin in the box with intent and purpose, knowing that one is partaking in ministry around the church. This is done with prayer and thanksgiving, being mindful of all God has done for us and for those others who are also making their thanksgiving. Just as we do in worship, the UTO invites us to remember God's saving work in our lives and of our role as members of the Body of Christ to be the Body for the world. And there are particularly good connecting points to note.

One such connection is that this is an offering, just like we make during our worship when we present the bread, wine and money at the altar. There, we understand the offering to be a "...representative gift of the baptized and forgiven people of God...[where] the congregation offers itself and its world. Money represents the work of the congregation." In a gesture of thanksgiving, we present all that we have and are to God for his service. It is no different for the United Thank Offering because it is not asking people merely to take up a collection, it is asking us to continue what we've begun at the altar in the giving up of ourselves to "become his body in this world...", as the Body in the world. The UTO is inviting people to continue to offer themselves to the mission of the Church.

Another connecting point is found in the UTO's commitment to "Expand the circle of thankful people" through the ministry of the Church where, again, we find its grounding in the Eucharist. It is in the Eucharist that we are restored to unity with God, unity with each other, and then sent out to participate in God's work of reconciling with the world. In the experience of giving thanks through offering up our gifts and receiving Christ in the bread and wine, the Eucharist sends us out transformed to serve the world. The UTO practice, likewise, continues these same acts of thanksgiving through continuing our offering and hence, advancing the Church's participation in God's mission.

The act of giving thanks, whether one places a coin in the Blue Box or is lifting his or her heart to the Lord in worship, requires one to remember. Remembrance, or anamnesis, is at the heart of thankfulness. Yet, it is not merely a dwelling on the past. Jesus' command to "Do this in remembrance of me" not only calls to both mind and heart what God has done but also draws attention to what God is doing now and will continue to do. In the Great Thanksgiving, our act of remembering is followed immediately by the memorial acclamation which acknowledges that our thanksgiving encompasses the past, present and future and serves to shape our Christian life. As Melody Beattie writes: "Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow." Whenever we as Christians are asked to give thanks, we are asked to remember in this same manner—connecting the gifts with which God has blessed us with the present mission into which God is calling us. All of this is undertaken in joyful and expectant hope of Christ's final return to us. By virtue of asking us to give thanks, the United Thank Offering asks us to do just this.

And finally, there is something universal about the UTO's practice, meaning that it is not confined to one particular place but connects faith communities here in the United States, to others located across the globe in places like the Philippines. Just as the Eucharist is not confined to one particular place but is celebrated in many places and communities which are bound up in the Body of Christ, the UTO places acts of thankfulness back in the home where our own Eucharistic prayers originated. Reminiscent of early Jewish table prayers, which happened in the home and gave blessing and thanksgiving to God, the UTO with the Blue Box, creates a similar opportunity for domestic thanksgiving and blessing. With its emphasis on offering and mission, it is a thankfulness that does more than remember all that God has done for us, but in eucharistic fashion draws us into the very life and work of the church. Part of this perhaps comes from the relationship between blessing and thanksgiving. Thanksgiving automatically leads to blessing, and hence, once again, to mission. When we are thankful, we want to bless, to in some way return what we've been given. Elizabeth Bartlett writes this about thanksgiving:

"Yes, I have found that it is not enough for me to be thankful. I have a desire to do something in return. To do thanks. To give thanks. Give things. Give thoughts. Give love. So gratitude becomes the gift, creating a cycle of giving and receiving, the endless waterfall. Filling up and spilling over. To give from the fullness of my being. This comes not from a feeling of obligation, like a child's obligatory thank-you notes to grandmas and aunts and uncles after receiving presents. Rather, it is a spontaneous charitableness, perhaps not even to the giver but to someone else, to whoever crosses one's path. It is the simple passing on of the gift."

Thanksgiving doesn't stay with the one giving thanks. Like the Good News of Jesus Christ, it is passed along, shared freely with the world.

Thus, practicing daily thanksgiving this way is not simply a duty, but a means of connecting to our brothers and sisters in Christ and to the greater world that so needs to be connected in holiness. Sensitivity to others and to life experiences is an automatic process for all humans. We are formed by all inputs, whether relationships with others or, the experiences we gain through our senses. If we live in fear, our natural reactions have more to do with retreating, often resulting in isolation and depression. Intense hatred, likewise, alters our body chemistry pushing us to strike against, to express anger either through subtle words and actions or abusive behavior. Integrating more positive and gracious ways of relating to others and to the world around us in turn calms our bodies and affects our relationships in such a way as to engage and connect, resulting in a smile, eye-to-eye contact, recognition of what/who is present and a willingness to go forward and discover. Ultimately, being more open to each other and our world allows us to open ourselves to a more thoughtful and considerate life experience and to live more wholly into God's love. Thankfulness, when embodied, nourishes our being and in turn allows us to not only offer it to God but to incorporate it in our relationships in daily life. The United Thank Offering invites us to give thanks, that we give a coin as a tangible gift--an offering of ourselves, which is then given to the work that alters the course of peoples' lives...testimony to God's grace in the world.

In this sense UTO offer us not a mere opportunity to help, but a practice of faith. It is through our thankfulness, grounded in our shared experience of the life of Jesus, that our hearts, minds and spirits are directed toward God. Indeed, as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin says, "We are not human beings on a spiritual journey, we are spiritual beings on a human journey." We were created to open ourselves to God's grace, and reflect on the amazing things that God has done for us, both the little things that happen to us and the gift of Jesus Christ. Offering thanksgiving for things as simple as a baby's smile, the sun, the harvest, a college acceptance letter, the return of a loved one, or a note from a friend helps us recognize the things in our lives which we often take for granted. On the other hand, thanksgiving can emerge from experiences as deep and profound as finding our way back to God after a period of despair and spiritual wandering. There are countless

examples of thanksgiving, but none so timeless as our writing: humans are well invested in writing psalms and prayers of thanksgiving as constant reminders to ourselves and others of the importance of this practice. Hence, the Book of Common Prayer, which, besides being centered on thanksgiving, offers many specific references to giving thanks. And many more are also being written, to give thanks for God's grace and the gift of life to all humanity and all living things.

No matter how we do it, we can always give thanks, because we can always pray. We might sing or dance our prayers, we might kneel, sit, stand or lie down, but no matter how we do it we are called to pray always, anywhere and everywhere, silently or aloud. Our prayers, especially those of thanksgiving, become a way of life, a daily discipline of responding to God's abundance. The outward and visible sign of our thankfulness is the Blue Box into which coins are placed to accompany our prayers. The mission projects the UTO funds are the result of unnumbered prayers of thanksgiving offered daily by unnumbered people throughout our church. These are people who have opened their hearts to God and who are participating in the mission of the church by offering themselves to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. When we look at a mission project funded through a UTO grant, we should imagine all those invisible prayers and outreaching hands that have been offered from grateful hearts, providing yet another reason to give thanks--again.

### **Section 3: It's a New Day: Engaging New Audiences and Technology**

#### **Background**

A recent study\* by the Episcopal Church Center communications office reveals that growth in the EC is stagnate or declining except in a few key demographic areas—women in transition (empty nesters), young mothers and Latinas. A social media monitoring agency revealed there was virtually no on-line activity from these groups about UTO. However, they are engaging with the Episcopal Church on line and through membership. We believe this demographic—women in transition, young mothers and Latinas—are a ripe demographic for engagement with UTO.

#### **Opportunity**

This growing demographic of women indicated in the study that they want to be engaged in “purposeful mission”. They are drawn to the Episcopal Church for its inclusiveness, affirming community, personal recognition of self-worth, sense of home and community.

#### **Challenge**

The challenge at hand, for UTO, is how to engage these women? How do we communicate with them in a way that does not employ “in house” language and is not exclusionary? We know from surveys that they are on social media sites. Consider this: the fastest growing demographic on Face book are women 55-65. More than 96% of Gen Y (young mothers) is on Face book. These women also self-organize around topics and interest.

How can UTO transition from an organization that is membership based and tied to geographical locations to one that is highly participatory and is known virtually?

How can UTO utilize the new forms of communications to reach out to a receptive audience?

How can UTO move from a vertical flow of information to a horizontal web of message sharing?

The sustaining power of UTO over the years has been the sharing of stories of thankfulness and the relationships formed between UTO members and grantees and the telling of their stories of transformation.

We believe UTO has a unique opportunity to enhance its mission and recapture a new energy and commitment to mission in the world and that UTO would flourish in a social media environment.

Our challenge is to connect young mothers, empty nesters and Latinas to that energy. How do we engage this demographic with the transformation power of UTO?

#### **Current Status**

While donations to UTO and its grant making have maintained consistent levels over the past few years, UTO membership is aging and participation is stagnate. Methods for communication have not kept up with changing models or new technology. A review of inventory reveals that materials were last updated between 2002-2005, mainly due to budget and staffing constraints. Production and warehousing of resources also remains a challenge. The first beginnings of adopting new communication technologies has begun with the promotion of UTO activities through the ECW

network, the creation of holiday e-cards and a Face book group has emerged. Additional first steps have been taken in that the UTO board is reviewing an on-line training program for its Face to Face manual. Exploration has also begun for receiving on-line donations through the ECC website.

### **How to Grow UTO Membership and Enhance its Impact: The Power of Relationships and Storytelling Social Media and Emerging Technologies**

Talk to any member of UTO and they will tell you of their first encounter with giving through the Blue Box, the long-lasting relationships built with other women and the heart-warming stories of those who have received a grant. Go into the “field” and meet a UTO grant recipients and they will tell their story of how a UTO grant has transformed their ministry. If thankfulness is the core of UTO, relationships and stories are the dual engines.

We believe UTO is an ideal organization to embrace social media and the new technologies of communications. These new technologies are all about building relationships and telling stories, removing the barriers of centrally-controlled communications and putting the personal interaction and experience of transformation directly with the participants.

With the following paragraphs, we invite you into a visioning exercise:

Imagine: Every provincial region has a thriving UTO Face book page with thousands of UTO participants. Through a “virtual” blue box, contribution are received and a “live” twitter feed of prayers runs alongside, uploaded from a UTO app from a mobile device. Links connect to grantees (all over the world) who post pictures and stories of the work they are accomplishing from their grants. Relationships form around shared interests. Stories abound. Thankfulness multiplies. (See an example from [trinitywallstreet.org](http://www.trinitywallstreet.org/news/features/day-of-the-dead) of a “virtual day of the dead altar”. <http://www.trinitywallstreet.org/news/features/day-of-the-dead>) On that site People uploaded photographs of their loved ones to be remembered and wrote their own captions. A “live” twitter feed ran alongside during the All Souls Day vigil. Thousands of people, who never met one another in person, participated alongside one another and shared stories of their loved ones.

Imagine: Grantees connect to one-another, in all parts of the world. They share practical tips and stories that enhance their ministry and God’s work in the world. They upload photographs and videos from their mobile devices to FB or website. An UTO member can see the fruit of a grant she helped to fund. A woman in Tanzania can see how someone in Ghana is doing a similar ministry.

Imagine: The wall between “church” and “nonchurch” disappears as UTO participants extend the invitation to participate in this ministry to their Face book friends—elementary, high school, family. People who are not Episcopalian participate. UTO becomes a virtual community of thankfulness, with contributions coming wide and far.

Imagine: Technologies yet to be invented.

### **Developing Leaders Through Storytelling**

While social media and new technologies will expand and sustain the UTO community of relationships and storytelling, it takes intentional training and education to raise up the leadership that will continually refresh and grow UTO.

We imagine the development of a leadership curriculum that trains those who want to be more deeply engaged with the UTO mission and to “tell the UTO story”. This curriculum includes immersion in the history of UTO, the theology of thankfulness, an understanding of mission, the unique role of women and oral history as social mobilizing (Marshall Ganz). Everyone becomes a UTO storyteller. (Look at [www.actioncenter.org](http://www.actioncenter.org) as an example.) Grantees tell stories of thankfulness, transformative moments and successful field practices.

Call it UTO University, conducted in person and on-line. UTO-U trains women for mission. This curriculum has the cache of EFM and is intended to not only “spot” women for UTO leadership but is an agent of transformation and vocational training for women called to mission. If you’re a woman interested in mission, this is where you need to be.

Imagine: UTO-U has the cache of EFM and is attended by UTO participants and grantees alike.

Imagine: A generation of women in ministry, having a far-reaching impact, returning to the roots of UTO’s original founding vision.

### **Website Central**

While the social media tools enable the relationships and storytelling and UTO –U trains leaders for mission, the website is the centralized portal for resources, materials, multi-media tools, that all participants—givers and receivers—need to access in order to be effective. Here is where we find handbooks, self-generating cards, liturgical materials, UTO prayers, how to make a gift, news on events, grants, etc.

The website hosts a very robust on-line donation feature and central database applications to strengthen relationships. A simple content management system allows provincial leaders to oversee and upload their own content.

### **In Summary**

We are living in the midst of a seismic culture shift on how we engage with one another, how we do mission and how we communicate. There is no such thing as centralizing the direction of communications any longer. We cannot control the flow of information. All one can control is that everyone knows the “narrative” and is committed to the values.

In order for UTO to engage new audiences, emphasis need to be on ensuring that everyone knows the “narrative”, values the stories, is committed to thankfulness and transformation and knows how to use the new social media tools to engage in relationships and storytelling.

## **Section 4: The Relationship between the UTO and the Anglican Communion**

### **Background**

Anyone who has traveled on behalf of the Episcopal Church has seen the signs on everything from prayer books to motor vehicles: “Given by the United Thank Offering.” From its earliest years the UTO has focused on spreading the gospel throughout the world. Building schools and hospitals, supporting women missionaries, and contributing to the growth of the church in what we now know as the Anglican Communion is how the UTO and by extension, the women of the church, distinguished themselves as full partners in God’s mission.

Using the gift of gratitude, central to the United Thank Offering, as a tool to frame our understanding of mutual mission would further the cause of the UTO in renewed ways in a post-modern world. Focusing on thankfulness would enable us to move closer to one another as members of the Anglican Communion who share many similarities in faith and practice even if our contexts and challenges vary dramatically.

### **Intentionality in Fostering Relational Ties through UTO**

Over the years, UTO grants have made possible transformation in education, healthcare, and other hope-giving initiatives in the Anglican Communion. These much needed initiatives have focused on addressing needs through transactions that have been efficient and transparent. This is one of the strengths of the UTO process.

The UTO can share a more transcendent goal and that is to experience a sense of being a Communion, a family of God’s beloved sharing different roles while living into God’s mission. Given the need for building relational ties that are mutually beneficial, the UTO community would benefit greatly from engaging in education and formation. This could include engaging stories about the impact of colonialism, imperialism, and the place of multinationals in many parts of the Anglican Communion. Such an engagement could be further put in perspective by a theological construct of global companionship for a post-colonial world. This would help frame the UTO’s participation not merely as a grantor of funds, but as a companion seeking mutual transformation through these encounters. These engagements might leverage relational connections that help transform these encounters into sacramental expressions of our baptismal and Eucharistic identity in the Anglican Communion. Such attention to interaction in the global scene could become an attractive enrollment platform for United Thank Offering’s next generation of leaders through emerging avenues like Anglican/Episcopal Young Adult Service Corps.

UTO grants are an expression of the connectivity between The Episcopal Church and the other provinces of the Anglican Communion. They affirm the intentionality of our relationship one to the other. The UTO has the opportunity to foster a sense of thankfulness in the communion and leads to The Episcopal Church being perceived differently as a companion and friend, with a focus on transformation, transparency and accountability. This sense of companionship is demonstrated by the eagerness of the women of a province and a diocese, formerly part of The Episcopal Church to continue to support the work of the UTO by their own gifts to its efforts. The Province of the Philippines and the Diocese of Liberia both contribute regularly to the UTO and both have been recipients of grants through the years.

Because the UTO is truly about giving by thankful people and not about giving by “the Church” it can resonate with those who receive grants in service to God’s mission. The work of the UTO within the Anglican Communion affirms the work of The Episcopal Church within the Anglican Communion. Because the UTO represents giving by thankful people, it demonstrates that the people of The Episcopal Church are connected to the people of the Anglican Communion.

### **Current UTO Granting Procedures and the Anglican Communion**

Each year the UTO Board issues invitations to some but not all provinces of the Anglican Communion to encourage applications for UTO grants. In most years, invitations are sent to all of the provinces in Africa and Central and South America as well as Asia and the Caribbean. For the past three years, the UTO has allowed dioceses of the Episcopal Church to submit applications on behalf of dioceses with which they have companion relationships. This does not require a formal acknowledged companion relationship but can include informal relationships.

Applications are reviewed and investigated by the member of the UTO Board assigned to that geographic region. At its annual granting session, the UTO Board prioritizes grant applications and decides which ones will be funded and whether the full amount of the request will be met. Although there are criteria for determining which grants to fund, it appears that they are not applied consistently and that the decisions as to which grants to fund are part of a negotiating process between members of the UTO Board.

It is well known that bishops visiting the Church Center in New York from places outside of the United States are eager to meet with the UTO Coordinator and other representatives of the UTO. Those visiting bishops seek information on how the UTO sets its criteria and how to make their grant requests more likely to be approved.

Unfortunately, the bishops of The Episcopal Church demonstrate varying levels of enthusiasm in engagement as well as the sharing of information. A letter sent to bishops in November of 2010 resulted in 17 responses. Only 10 of those bishops indicated that they had been involved in requests to the UTO from other parts of the Anglican Communion.

### **A New Vision for Granting**

What would the UTO grant book look like if it solicited grants based on a focused vision for a particular year or triennium? Rather than distribute grants among a wide variety of regions and causes, what would it look like if all grants for a particular period were directed to one geographic region or one particular area of concern in the life of the church?

What would it look like if for a year or a triennium, all of the UTO grants went to Haiti, or the Sudan, or Central America? What would it look like if all of the grants for a particular year or triennium were focused on alleviating gender-based violence – currently a particular area of concern for the Anglican Communion, or were designed to assist migrant peoples?

For the Board of the UTO to adopt such a vision it would need to revamp the way that it operates the granting process. The Board would need to actively solicit grant requests that were in line with its annual or triennial vision. Perhaps a few Board members could travel to Haiti or the Sudan or elsewhere in the Anglican Communion and ask “what do you need?” Perhaps the Board could work more closely with Episcopal Relief and Development and the Anglican Alliance for Development, Relief and Advocacy to begin to meet needs that fall outside the parameters developed by those organizations. UTO is one of the few granting organizations within the Anglican Communion that supports bricks and mortar projects and provides vehicles. By working more closely with organizations that do not make grants for those purposes, the UTO could multiply its effectiveness.

### **Recommendations**

Criteria for making grants to projects outside the Episcopal Church must be clearly defined and transparent and should be applied equitably. Although beyond the scope of this report, it might be useful to identify the understanding of bishops and primates of the wider Anglican Communion about how granting decisions are made. It would also appear to be helpful for the UTO Board to develop and publicize firm guidelines for making grants and to commit to apply those guidelines consistently.

It appears that the bishops of the Episcopal Church are not well informed about the work of the UTO and specifically, what they can do to facilitate grant requests for their companions in mission both within their own dioceses and in the wider Communion. Since bishops are key to the effectiveness of the UTO, it would be helpful to invite all bishops in The Episcopal Church to designate a lay or clergy person as a Missioner for UTO and Global Companionship for their

Diocese. This Missioner could help track the global engagement with UTO and the particular diocese with the blessing of the bishop and keep the bishop informed about this vital mission ministry.

In the spirit of fostering greater companionship and enhancing the spirit of ubuntu, the UTO community could engage in a season of learning a theology and ethic of global companionship. Such a pedagogical experience would help form spiritually grounded ways to nurture relationships across the globe with saints in the Communion. It would also heighten our awareness about the residual and often subliminal assumptions lingering from colonialism, imperialism, and even multinational capitalism. This initiative would have ramifications for various bodies in their relationships ranging from congregations relating to other congregations across various differences to relating with global companions.

Using the gift of gratitude, central to the UTO, as a tool to frame our understanding of mutual mission would further the cause of the UTO in renewed ways in a post-modern world. Focusing on gratitude would enable us to move closer to one another as members who share so many similarities in faith and practice even if our contexts and challenges vary dramatically.

The UTO granting process could be encouraged to focus on a particular geographic area or issue of concern for a season. By changing its rules to permit multiple grant requests and by soliciting those grant requests from a specific province or for a specific issue, the UTO could have a major impact on building up the church in a time or place of crisis. This could be done while still honoring the UTO's emphasis on the needs of women and girls. Such efforts would enable the UTO to move beyond entrenched colonial or imperialistic models of doing global mission. Such equitable practices of global transformation would also make UTO more attractive to the next generations who watch with curiosity.

### **Conclusion**

The UTO has done monumental work in service to God's mission in the wider Anglican Communion. In order to continue that work in a viable and transparent way the UTO should consider transforming its granting vision to lead the way for The Episcopal Church as a companion within the Anglican Communion.

## **Section 5: The Governance and Organization of the United Thank Offering**

### **Preliminary Observations**

The history of the United Thank Offering (UTO), its theological and practical origins in the desire to serve the mission of The Episcopal Church (TEC), the ways in which it communicates its message and the way in which it relates to the Anglican Communion, all confirm the reality that the UTO is intimately related to The Episcopal Church as an affiliate to its primary missionary and Episcopal structure.

As an affiliated organization to The Episcopal Church it is accountable both to the official governing bodies – the General Convention, the Executive Council and the programmatic offices that grow from the work of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, and to the UTO community and the Triennial Meeting of The Episcopal Church Women. It is also autonomous in its work as an organization devoted to prayer, mission and giving.

The “both/and” character of the UTO provides considerable challenges regarding its governance and organization – challenges to The Episcopal Church officers and governance, to its historical connections outside the official organizational structures (the women of the Church, grass roots organizing, Anglican Communion partners) and to the way in which UTO officers and staff are elected or appointed and to the practices of UTO via policies, procedures and program.

The authors of this report are of the opinion that, while it may be difficult to do so, this “both – and” placement of UTO is immensely valuable and worth maintaining. In particular we believe that UTO ought...

- to continue as an autonomous grass roots focused activity of thanksgiving - passion for mission - response through giving;
- be responsible to and conforming to the policies and practices of the life of The Episcopal Church; and
- take guidance from the missionary strategy of Executive Council and the Church Center staff.

### **Recommendations Regarding the United Thank Offering Board**

We recommend the “both/and” status of the UTO be maintained. The UTO is an affiliate of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. At the same time it has its own Board, structures, members, officers and priorities by which it governs separately from the offices of the DFMS, while

conforming to DFMS Guidelines concerning financial accountability, travel, and to the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church.

We have recommended that a “Memorandum of Understanding” covering the relationship between UTO and the DFMS be effected, the presiding officers signing for the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and the officers of UTO signing for the United Thank Offering Board. This recommendation is stipulated in the revised bylaws.

Regarding the trademark, name, logo, etc., of UTO, we recommend that there should be a clearly stated understanding between UTO and The General Convention that the name, “United Thank Offering,” the brand “UTO,” the “UTO Blue Box” and all related UTO materials and brand affiliated artifacts are the property of The United Thank Offering and the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, The Episcopal Church. This understanding has been incorporated in the Bylaws of the United Thank Offering. Should the United Thank Offering ceased functioning or attempt to change its Bylaws or Memorandum of Understanding without approval of the General Convention, or should it wish to officially disengage as an organization related to the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society the brand and name will continue to reside with The Episcopal Church. This recommendation is stipulated in the United Thank Offering Bylaws.

We recommend that the United Thank Offering Board be constituted of members of The Episcopal Church and that the elected of members of the United Thank Offering Board are subject to confirmation by Executive Council. The United Thank Offering Bylaws reflect these recommendations.

We have recommended that the UTO Coordinator be a participant with voice but no vote at Meetings of the United Thank Offering Board, except on such occasions as matters pertaining to the evaluation of the work of her/his office are being discussed when the Coordinator shall be excused. Said recommendation is stated in the revised United Thank Offering Board Policies and Procedures.

The UTO Coordinator is a member of the United Thank Offering Board Grant Committee with voice and vote as stated in the revised United Thank Offering Board Policies and Procedures.

We have recommended that the UTO Coordinator have clear accountabilities to both United Thank Offering and the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society Officers; spelled out in detail in a “Letter of Agreement” signed by all parties. The United Thank Offering Bylaws reflect this recommendation.

### **The United Thank Offering Bylaws**

The United Thank Offering Bylaws have been submitted by the United Thank Offering Board to Executive Council and were ratified at its October 2011 Meeting and are attached to this report as Appendix 1.

### **Section 6: The Vision Forward - Recommendations for Board Action**

Our vision for the United Thank Offering is for the organization to continue to do what it does well and do it so well that it is attractive to the wider world providing an invitation for people from all walks of life to participate in the mission of God through thankfulness. We recognize the unique historical role of women in the church through the ministry of the United Thank Offering and envision this dynamic continuing forward, into the future, where the United Thank Offering invites individuals, families and whole faith communities into the story of God’s work in the world shared through common narratives that celebrate thankfulness, community, and ministry, particularly through the voices of women and their role in thanksgiving.

We understand that thankfulness is an expression all human beings share, and that this response to the divine transcends religious categories and human definitions to unite us in a common humanity with a common ministry to expand the circle of thankfulness. Being an expression means that thankfulness is not simply an emotional response, but an actual, tangible response to the blessings we have received in ways that seek to bless and be blessed by others around the world; actively seeking out places of need and connection in order to continue the cycle of thanksgiving that begins with blessings received and continues on in the breaking open and sharing of these same blessings for the benefit of others. This is a mutual, reflexive process in which all, giver and receiver, experience blessing and in turn, thankfulness.

We hope that this common experience of thanksgiving will strengthen the ties that bind us within the church, as well as forming thankful and holy relationships with those beyond the church walls. In ensuring such an extension of thankfulness, we seek to allow for the Holy Spirit to move among us, transforming both the church and the world.

Further, the United Thank Offering “UTO” has a special place in ministry in that it provides what some might call the “bones” of ministry: providing structures, practical solutions and the “bricks and mortar” necessary to engage in what God is calling us to do in the world. We honor the gift that United Thank Offering affords the people of the church in that each coin offered to the work of carrying out God’s mission becomes a real thing capable of undertaking God’s call and helping ensure that we remain a servant church.

Therefore we seek to provide the United Thank Offering support, visibility, autonomy and connection.

In an effort to do so, we offer the following recommendations for Board follow-up:

#### **Theology of Thankfulness**

- That thankfulness continues to be at the center of the United Thank Offering; and
- That the Theology of Thankfulness document should be published as a separate short piece (i.e. as a Forward Movement Pamphlet) for wide distribution.

#### **History of UTO**

- That The Board should find ways to honor and celebrate regularly as a church the history of the UTO and the accomplishment of women in ministry; and
- That the Historical Society be approached to consider publishing the History of UTO.

#### **Anglican Communion**

- That the Board approach granting in a proactive, strategic way—establishing strategic giving in line with missional priorities of the church; keeping in mind key leverage points in the communion; and
- That the College for Bishops offer training on the Theology and History of UTO.

#### **New Technology**

- That UTO embrace the horizontal message sharing, and new technologies;
- That Staff persons be fluent in digital media;
- That the United Thank Offering Board, Provincial and Diocesan Coordinators be trained in communication and social media;
- That the United Thank Offering develop a UTO University;
- That the United Thank Offering focus on expanding demographics in the Episcopal Church for growth; and
- That the United Thank Offering Board engage in a strategic planning process using recommendation of INC-055 as a starting point.

#### **Conclusion**

We, as members of the Ad-Hoc committee are excited and encouraged by the possibilities ahead of the United Thank Offering. And we would be willing, should the United Thank Offering Board invite us, to walk along side in support of the United Thank Offering, seeking, as it has been for years, to expand the circle of thankfulness.

## Appendix 1 – Resolution INC-055

*Resolved*, That the Executive Council meeting in Helena, Montana, October 20-23, 2008 express profound gratitude for the faithfulness of the United Thank Offering and its leadership in praying for and supporting the missionary work of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society for the past 120 years; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Executive Council, having oversight of the United Thank Offering and its trust funds, acknowledges current questions of insurance coverage, liability and operational procedures of the United Thank Offering in its ongoing support of the missionary work of The Episcopal Church; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Executive Council receive the report of the Presiding Bishop's Advisory Committee on the United Thank Offering as commended by INC048; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Executive Council, appreciating that additional work needs to be done, calls for a Ad Hoc Committee of ten persons, appointed by the Presiding Officers of the Executive Council to undertake a serious and extensive study of the current and future of the United Thank Offering as to its roles, purposes, function, operational procedures and vision for faithfulness to God's mission in the 21st century. This Ad Hoc Committee is to include, but not be limited to, members of the Executive Council, the United Thank Offering Committee, and diocesan representation of the UTO; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Ad Hoc Committee begin this visioning exercise immediately and report to the 2012 General Convention with specific recommendations as to how the United Thank Offering can continue and expand its work in The Episcopal Church's faithfulness to God's mission; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Executive Council defer further consideration of the current request by the United Thank Offering Committee to become a separate corporation with 501(c)(3) status until the report and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee is received and acted upon by the 2012 General Convention.

## Appendix 2 – The UTO Bylaws

Adopted by United Thank Offering Board, September 2011, approved by Executive Council, October 2011

### UNITED THANK OFFERING BYLAWS

#### ARTICLE I

##### Name

Section 1: The name of the organization shall be “United Thank Offering”.

#### ARTICLE II

##### Purpose

Section 1: The purpose and aim of United Thank Offering shall be benevolent and/or charitable, education, granting and social, offering through a daily ministry of prayer and gratitude for blessings tangible support for the work of the church throughout the world.

#### ARTICLE III

##### Membership

Section 1: The membership shall consist of one (1) Representative from each of the nine (9) Provinces of The Episcopal Church, three (3) Members-At-Large, two (2) Appointed Members and one (1) member of the Executive Council.

Section 2: All members shall be confirmed members of The Episcopal Church.

Section 3: The membership shall be elected as follows:

- a. The nine (9) Province Representatives shall be elected during the Provincial Meeting of each Province.
- b. Three (3) Members-At-Large shall be elected by ballot at the Spring Board Meeting in the second year of the triennium, by the members of the United Thank Offering Board.
- c. One (1) Executive Council member shall be appointed jointly by the President and Vice President of the Executive Council of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society.
- d. Two (2) Appointed Members shall be appointed jointly by the President and Vice President of the Executive Council of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and the President of United Thank Offering.

Section 4: All members shall be elected for a term of three (3) years and assume office immediately following the Triennial Meeting of the Episcopal Church Women.

Section 5: No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms, unless fulfilling an unexpired term of eighteen (18) months or less.

Section 6: A member filling an unexpired term of fewer than eighteen (18) months is eligible to serve two (2) additional terms.

Section 7: Members of the United Thank Offering shall constitute the United Thank Offering Board.

#### ARTICLE IV

##### Officers

Section 1: The Officers of the United Thank Offering Board shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary and Finance Officer.

Section 2: The Officers of the United Thank Offering Board shall be elected as follows:

- a. The President shall be elected at the last official United Thank Offering Board Meeting held in the Spring of the third year of the triennium by the current United Thank Offering Board.

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1. Nominees for the office of President shall be persons elected to serve the next triennium either as UTO Province Representatives or Members-At-Large. They must have served at least one year on the United Thank Offering Board prior to election.
2. Election shall be by a majority vote of the voting United Thank Offering Board Members present.
3. The President will assume office immediately following the Triennial Meeting.
- b. Election of Vice President, Secretary and Finance Officer shall be by ballot.
  1. Election shall occur at the first meeting of the United Thank Offering Board following the Triennial Meeting.
  2. All United Thank Offering Board members except the President may be considered nominees for these offices.
  3. Voting shall proceed with one (1) position at a time in the following order: Vice President, Secretary and Finance Officer.
  4. The first ballot shall have the position and names of those willing to serve. Any nominee receiving the majority of votes shall be elected. In any election of officers, following the second ballot, if there is no election, the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes will be removed from the list of candidates and the remaining candidates will be placed on the next ballot, and in like manner following each successive vote required the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes will be removed from the list of candidates on the next ballot. In the case of a tie between two candidates, unresolved after the next ballot, the President shall cast a single vote for one of the two candidates. Those persons elected shall assume office immediately.

Section 3: All Officers shall be elected for a term of three (3) years or until their successor(s) is/are elected.

Section 4: Duties of the Officers shall include (but not limited to):

- a. The President shall be the Chief Executive Officer and shall be responsible for the administration of Board Bylaws and Policies and Procedures.

The President shall preside at all meetings of the United Thank Offering Board including Special Meeting(s), Executive Committee Meeting(s) and United Thank Offering meetings held during the Triennial Meeting. The President may delegate his or her authority to preside at such meetings to any other Executive Committee Member of the United Thank Offering Board.

The President shall be responsible for the functioning of the organization and duties shall include (but not limited to):

1. Appoint all committees and chairpersons after consultation with the Executive Committee;
2. Prepare meeting agendas in cooperation with the other Executive Committee members;
3. Submit an Annual Report of the organization to the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church;
4. Publicly represent United Thank Offering when called upon to do so or appoint a Board member as a representative;
5. Serve as a member of the Joint Committee for United Thank Offering and National Episcopal Church Women Boards;
6. Communicate with other organizations within The Episcopal Church and with ecumenical and other groups; and

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7. Perform such other duties as may be required by the Bylaws, and other rules of the organization as requested by the United Thank Offering Board.
  - b. The Vice President shall preside at all meetings of the organization in the absence of the President, or at the request of the President. Duties shall include:
    1. Arrange United Thank Offering Board and Executive Committee Meeting locations and site preparations in consultation with the Executive Committee;
    2. Make provisions for devotions at all meetings and see that spiritual focus is maintained;
    3. Assist in preparation of meeting agendas; and
    4. Perform such other duties as may be required by the Bylaws, other rules of the organization or as requested by the President or Board.
  - c. The Secretary shall keep complete, recorded (taped), typed and accurate records of minutes of all meetings of the Board, shall give and serve notices of meetings, and have charge of the Minutes book, and shall perform such other duties and have such other powers as may from time to time be delegated to her by the President or Board.
  - d. The Finance Officer shall be charged with the management of the financial affairs of the organization, acting under the supervision or direction of the President. The Finance Officer shall in general perform all the duties incident to that office and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to her by the President or the Board. The Finance Officer shall not be authorized to open a checking, savings or any other account(s) with any banking and/or financial institution on behalf of United Thank Offering. The Finance Officer shall render at stated periods as the Board shall determine a written account of the finances of the organization and such report shall be physically affixed to the minutes of the Board of such meeting. All accounting ledgers shall be available for review by the Board at all times. The Finance Officer shall:
    1. Assure United Thank Offering operates in accordance with the financial practices and guidelines of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS);
    2. Have thorough understanding of the “accounting practices and procedures” used by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS);
    3. Serve as Chairman of the Finance Committee;
    4. Collect, process, approve and retain a file copy of all reimbursement documentation before forwarding to the United Thank Offering Coordinator for delivery to the Chief Financial Officer of The Episcopal Church for distribution of payment.
    5. Educate United Thank Offering Board Members on financial and budgetary matters.
    6. Assist in preparation of Board Meeting Agendas;
    7. Be responsible for providing records for an annual audit of United Thank Offerings finances as required by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS);
    8. Present a Triennium Budget for approval by the United Thank Offering Board;
    9. Perform other duties as required in the Bylaws, other rules of the organization, or as requested by the President or the United Thank Offering Board.
- Section 5: Vacancies shall be handled as follows: The office of President shall be filled by the Vice President and the positions of Vice President, Secretary and Finance Officer shall be elected by the members of the United Thank Offering Board.

Section 6: Any officer, assistant officer and/or agent elected by the United Thank Offering Board will be removed from the United Thank Offering Board by a majority vote of the United Thank Offering Board, whenever in its judgment the best interests of United Thank Offering will be served thereby.

Section 7: The other officers, if any, shall perform such duties as are generally performed by officers with equivalent restrictions on title, if any, and shall perform such other duties and exercise such other powers as the President or majority of the Board shall request and/or delegate.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Meetings**

Section 1: There shall be at least two (2) meetings per year of the United Thank Offering Board. All meetings of the United Thank Offering Board are mandatory.

Section 2: The first scheduled United Thank Offering Board Meeting after the Triennial Meeting shall include orientation and training.

Section 3: Special Meetings of the United Thank Offering Board may be called at any time by the President or by five (5) members of the Board. All members shall be given at least twenty-one (21) days' notice of Annual Meeting and at least seven (7) days' notice of Special Meeting.

Notice of meetings may be given personally or by first class mail, email, telegram, cablegram, telex or facsimile transmission and shall be deemed given when mailed or when the telegram, cablegram, telex or facsimile transmission is sent, addressed to the member at his or her business or residence. No other business but that specified in the notice may be transacted at such Special Meeting without consent of at least seventy-five percent (75%) of Board members present at such meeting, except Business associated with removal of Board member or Officer of the Board or election of Officer(s). The removal of Board member(s), Officer(s) of the Board or amendments to the Bylaws shall be transacted only in notice. Notice of any such meeting or of the purpose of a Special Meeting may be waived by an instrument in writing. Attendance of a Board Member at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting and waiver of any and all objections to the place of the meeting, the time of the meeting, the manner in which it has been called or convened, and of notice of the purpose of the meeting, except when a Member states, at the beginning of the meeting, any such objections or objections to the transactions of the business. Any meeting of the United Thank Offering Board may be held within or outside these United States of America, such place as may be determined by the President and/or Vice President.

Section 4: Members of the United Thank Offering Board or any committee thereof may participate in any meeting of the United Thank Offering Board or any committee thereof by means of conference telephone or similar communication equipment of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other and such participation in a meeting shall constitute presence in person at such meeting.

Section 5: Each voting Member of the United Thank Offering Board shall be allowed to vote either in person or by signed and notarized proxy. Proxies shall be accepted ONLY in the case of medical or family emergencies.

Section 6: Regular business presented at United Thank Offering Board Meetings shall be decided by a majority vote of those Members present.

Section 7: A quorum for the transaction of any business shall be seventy-five percent (75%) of the United Thank Offering Board. If a quorum is present and except otherwise specifically provided in these Bylaws, the United Thank Offering Board may act upon a majority vote of the United Thank Offering Board members present at the meeting. Every member of the United Thank Offering Board shall have one vote.

**ARTICLE VI**

**Business**

- Section 1: These Bylaws shall become effective upon their approval by a majority of the members of the United Thank Offering Board and subsequent approval by the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church.
- Section 2: The affairs of United Thank Offering shall be controlled and administered by the United Thank Offering Board, consisting of fifteen (15) members as set forth in Articles II and III.
- Section 3: The United Thank Offerings shall conduct all business within accordance to The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, policies of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, Memorandum(s) of Understanding(s)/Letter(s) of Agreement(s) between the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and United Thank Offering and the Bylaws and Policies and Procedures of the United Thank Offering; shall be accountable to the Executive Council and General Convention regarding the business of United Thank Offering and submit a written report(s) concerning said business.
- Section 4: The United Thank Offering shall present the names of those elected to the United Thank Offering Board to the first meeting of the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church following General Convention for confirmation.
- Section 5: The United Thank Offering Board shall (but is not limited to):
- a. develop and implement strategic plans, policies and criteria;
  - b. provide education for the United Thank Offering network;
  - c. plan communication strategy;
  - d. provide tools and materials;
  - e. attend all Board meetings and any special meetings or training for the organization;
  - f. serve as Triennial Meeting delegates;
  - g. award United Thank Offering grants; and
  - h. publish Annual Reports of United Thank Offering Board activities.
- Section 6: Any and all Ingatherings contributions and interest earned thereon shall belong to United Thank Offering and will be distributed through awarded grants only.
- Section 7: The President, Vice President and Finance Officer of the United Thank Offering Board shall review contract(s) for vendors at the approval and direction of said Board, in the name of and on behalf of United Thank Offering and such authority may be general or defined in specific instances as authorized by these Bylaws. Document(s) shall be submitted after review of the Legal Department of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and approval of the United Thank Offering Board to the appropriate signatory for the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and United Thank Offering Board.
- Section 8: The United Thank Offering Board shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and also shall keep minutes of all United Thank Offering proceedings, to include committees having any of the authority of the United Thank Offering Board and shall keep at its principal office a record giving names, addresses and telephone numbers of current United Thank Offering Board Members.
- Section 9: The United Thank Offering Board by resolution adopted by the entire Board may designate one or more committees, including an Executive Committee which shall have the full power and authority of the Board except as limited in these Bylaws. Each such committee shall consist of at least three (3) United Thank Offering Board members. Each such committee, to the extent provided herein or in such

## The Executive Council

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resolution, shall have the authority of the United Thank Offering Board. However, no such committee shall have authority as to any of the following matters.

- a. The dissolution, merger or consolidation of the organization;
- b. the designation of any such committee or changing the number of members of the United Thank Offering Board or the filling of vacancies in any committee;
- c. the amendment or repeal of these Bylaws or the adoption of new Bylaws;
- d. the amendment or repeal of an resolution of the United Thank Offering Board that by its terms cannot be amended or repealed except by the action of the United Thank Offering Board.

Section 10: The United Thank Offering Board shall interpret the United Thank Offering Bylaws. The United Thank Offering Board's decision being final except in the matters affected by the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church and the Bylaws and Policies of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

Section 11: Members of the United Thank Offering shall not be entitled to compensation for their services as members. By resolution of the Board, either specific and limited or general and continuing, reasonable travel, hotel and other expenses may be allowed for attending and returning from any meeting of the United Thank Offering Board or for attending and returning from any meeting of the Executive or any other Committees or in connection with the affairs of the United Thank Offering as provided in the Policies and Procedures. A member shall be barred from serving United Thank Offering in any other capacity and receiving reasonable compensation for such other services.

Section 12: Vacancies created by the death, resignation, incapacity of any Board member, shall be filled by the Province the person represents or by the United Thank Offering Board in the case of a Member-At-Large or by the Presiding Bishop in the case of the Executive Council member and by the Presiding Bishop, President of the House of Deputies and United Thank Offering President in case of an Appointed Member.

- a. When a Member-At-Large is replaced, the person must be from a Province that does not currently have a Member-At-Large and the vacancy caused by moving a Province Representative to a Member-At-Large slot will necessitate following procedure for Province to select a new Province Representative.

Section 13: Upon liquidation or cessation of the activities of United Thank Offering, the assets (physical, financial and intellectual), will revert to the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and shall be used first to satisfy all debts and other encumbrances against United Thank Offering.

- a. To the extent not used as indicated above, all Ingathering contributions and interest earned therein shall be used for missionary work; and
- b. Trust Funds will be resolved in accordance with the trust and fiduciary responsibilities of the Trustees.

Section 14: Any action required to be taken at a meeting of the United Thank Offering Board, or any action that may be taken at a meeting of the United Thank Offering Board, may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, shall be signed by all the Board members and be filed with the minutes of the proceedings.

## ARTICLE VII

### Executive Committee

Section 1: The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Finance Officer.

Section 2: Meetings shall be called by the President or by the written request of two (2) members of the committee. The Secretary shall keep minutes of all Executive Committee Meetings.

Section 3: The Executive Committee shall act for the United Thank Offering Board between meetings. It shall have the authority to handle policy pertaining to the operations, structure and finances of United

Thank Offering. It shall have authority to designate expenditures pertaining to previously awarded grants. The Executive Committee shall not modify any action taken by the United Thank Offering Board.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Committees**

- Section 1: Communications - The Communications Committee shall be responsible for communicating United Thank Offerings purpose and work to varied publics through its printed inspirational materials, electronic means, audiovisual productions and publications.
- Section 2: Continuing Review - The Continuing Review Committee shall monitor and provide continuing evaluation of the work in all areas of United Thank Offering.
- Section 3: Covenant Network - The Covenant Network Committee shall be responsible for communications between all autonomous provinces formerly of The Episcopal Church, those who are emerging as autonomous.
- Section 4: Diocesan Network - The Diocesan Network Committee shall be responsible for the expansion of support at every level of leadership throughout The Episcopal Church, including but not limited to the UTO Diocesan Coordinator network.
- Section 5: Face To Face – The Face To Face Committee shall be responsible for developing, organizing and implementing training for United Thank Offering Diocesan Coordinators and others.
- Section 6: Finance - The Finance Committee shall be responsible for reviewing and accounting for all United Thank Offering finances, as well as preparing a budget for each triennium.
- Section 7: Grant - The Grant Committee shall be responsible for reviewing applications, printing educational materials, providing training and the preparation and distribution of Granting materials.
- Section 8: Memorial and Gift Trust Fund - The Memorial and Gift Trust Fund Committee shall be responsible for the promotion of the Memorial and Gift Trust Fund and maintenance of appropriate records.
- Section 9: Triennial Meeting - The Triennial Meeting Subcommittees shall oversee the planning and implementation of the various presentations and activities of United Thank Offering related functions held at the Triennial Meeting.
- Section 10: Special committees shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the United Thank Offering Executive and/or United Thank Offering Board.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Staff**

- Section 1: The United Thank Offering Board President will from time to time meet with the Officers of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS) and the person who shall be designated the United Thank Offering Coordinator.
- Section 2: United Thank Offering shall have an office at the principle location of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society.
- Section 3: The United Thank Offering Coordinator shall be responsible to the United Thank Offering Board and the Officers of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS) for work undertaken on the basis of a Letter of Agreement at the time of appointment or renewal of appointment and in concert with a Memorandum of Understanding between the United Thank Offering Board and the Officers of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS) concerning the responsibilities of the Coordinator as a member of the Staff of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and as the United Thank Offering Coordinator.

Section 4: The United Thank Offering Coordinator serves at the will of the United Thank Offering Board and the Officers of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, subject to the personnel policies and procedures of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and applicable state laws.

#### **ARTICLE X**

##### **Conflict of Interest**

Section 1: In all business relationship established on behalf of United Thank Offering no member of the United Thank Offering Board shall or will inappropriately benefit or accept personal gain per the United Thank Offering.

Section 2: All in authority shall protect the interest of United Thank Offering and its reputation against actual or potential conflicting interests of outside parties, as well as any participants.

Section 3: All in authority shall avoid personal transactions or situations in which conflicts or situations might be construed as conflicting with United Thank Offering.

Section 4: All business of the United Thank Offering Board requires prior approval. No business is to be transacted on behalf of United Thank Offering without the knowledge of the United Thank Offering Board President and/or the United Thank Offering Board Executive Committee. Should a United Thank Offering Board Member deliberately disregard these rules and/or regulations of the United Thank Offering, legal action will be taken.

#### **ARTICLE XI**

##### **Disciplinary Action**

Section 1: Disciplinary action shall be enforced for the following reasons:

- a. Failure or refusal to adhere to the United Thank Offering Bylaws, United Thank Offering Policies and Procedures, United Thank Offering Oath of Confidentiality and the Policies of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society.
- b. Consistently failing or refusing to perform the duties assigned by the President, Executive Committee and Committee(s) Convener(s);
- c. Exhibiting combative, obstructive and unethical behavior; and
- d. Failing to meet United Thank Offering Board member qualifications.

Section 2: Strongly felt disagreements or unpopular viewpoints are not grounds for Board dismissal however, if the Board member continuously disrupt meetings, that Board member shall be removed from the United Thank Offering Board.

Section 3: A United Thank Offering Board member shall be removed by a majority vote of the United Thank Offering Board at a Regular Board Meeting.

#### **ARTICLE XII**

##### **Amendment**

Section 1: The United Thank Offering Board may propose amendments to the Bylaws, with such amendments to be adopted by the United Thank Offering Board, if there is a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of approval by the United Thank Offering Board and subsequent approval by the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church; provided, however, that the Bylaws at no time shall contain any provision, inconsistent with law, the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church or policies of the Domestic and Foreign Society.

**ARTICLE XIII**

**Intellectual Properties**

Section 1: All official pins, trademarks, copyrighted works, and other intellectual properties used or distributed by United Thank Offering shall be approved by the United Thank Offering Board.

**ARTICLE XIV**

**Parliamentary Authority**

Section 1: The current editions of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be the Parliamentary Authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by the Bylaws or special rules of order adopted by the United Thank Offering