

LITURGY BOOKLET

The United Thank Offering Prayer
Resources On Gratitude and Thanksgiving



**UNITED
THANK
OFFERING**

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WELCOME

Welcome to the United Thank Offering Liturgy Booklet. Over 130 years ago, the United Thank Offering (UTO) was founded to build up the practice of gratitude throughout The Episcopal Church, and then to grant the funds raised through annual thank offerings to support innovative mission and ministry in The Episcopal Church.

While the Book of Common Prayer is full of wonderful prayers of gratitude, we wanted to offer additional liturgical options to highlight the importance of gratitude. Enclosed in this guide, you will find prayers of the people for the liturgical seasons, devotional prayers for use throughout the day, options to use for a UTO Ingathering service, and resources for home or church around the Thanksgiving holiday. We hope that you will find a resource for every opportunity where you might want to encourage people to practice and pray from a place of gratitude.

Please feel free to adapt the prayers for your local context as they are open for your use as you see fit. If a prayer speaks to you, it is our hope that you will bring it into your prayer life so it calls you to gratitude no matter what you might face. We also encourage you to share these prayers. Prayer is always one way we can gift others with our care and remind them that they receive the wellspring of God's love. You are invited to let these prayers call you into creativity and to share with us other ideas that we could include on our website (www.unitedthankoffering.org). In the spirit of this resource, we thank you for spending time with these prayers and for your support of United Thank Offering.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE FOR LITURGICAL SEASONS

ORDINARY TIME

May we not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let our requests be made known to God, saying, “Lord, hear our prayer.”

For the Body of Christ, the mind, body, and soul of God in the world today, that we may with grateful hearts follow the commandments of God as we love and serve one another, we pray:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For our nation and all the nations of the world, and for every place where power is held outside the hand of God, that those in authority may lead out of a spirit of abundance and gratitude, with a heart to love and care for all of God’s creation, we pray:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the welfare of the whole world, that a spirit of thankfulness will call us into compassion, so that we may be burdened for the care of the world, not out of a spirit of negativity, but out of a spirit of boundless love for everything you have called good, we pray:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the concerns that feel closest to us, the challenges that sit at our doorsteps, the aching that walks past us each day, that you may bring our awareness to how we can offer hope amidst hopelessness, through gratitude for the faithfulness of God, we pray:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who are grieved in body and spirit, and for those who suffer

from injustice, that in the pain of their lives they may be comforted by the presence of God, the witness in Scripture of God’s justice taking reign, and the ways God has been made known to us as the great healer of humankind, we pray:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who have died (especially _____) and all those we love and see no longer, that you may give consolation to the brokenhearted, compassion as a presence in grief, and profound gratitude for those who now behold you fully, we pray:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the abundance offered to us, the thanksgivings we cannot number, especially the thanksgivings we now name, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.... (silence is kept) In our gratitude, we pray:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the United Thank Offering, that you would continually nourish the church through this ministry’s call to prayer, spirituality, and supporting the many callings in the church that are brought to fruition through UTO’s spirit of love, generosity, gratitude, and thanksgiving, we pray:

Lord, hear our prayer.

Gracious God, in your mercy we seek you, in your power we find you, in your presence we are loved. May we remember that through your wisdom we have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need, which is that we can trust in your love and provision with grateful hearts, knowing we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Bless us in each of our days, that our awareness may be drawn to you, so that in all the gifts and challenges of our lives, we may have the capacity to thank you for your goodness and love for us. **Amen.**

LENT

Let us pray, remembering that our penitence is never disconnected from our gratitude, and that in fasting and denial we create a space for the abundant presence of God, responding to the cry of prayer with “Kyrie eleison.”

For the church, that it may welcome those with heavy hearts, offer the prayers of thanksgiving that become our daily bread, forgive all those who enter, and repent of its own injustices, we pray:

Kyrie eleison.

For all those in authority and all the nations of the world, that our lust for power may be left at the foot of the cross, rendering our own plans as ash in light of the abundant God who showers joy and thanksgiving on all of creation, we pray:

Kyrie eleison.

For the good of the whole world, for the flourishing of those in need, for the wealthy to give away more and live with less, for generosity of love to be present in all of God’s people, that the whole world would turn toward gratitude and away from scarcity, we pray:

Kyrie eleison.

For those around us, that in this season of dying to ourselves, we might also die to one another, loving those around us more fervently, loving friend and stranger out of the heart of thanksgiving we find in our confession, we pray:

Kyrie eleison.

For all suffering, for humankind and all of creation, for illness and for the sin-sickness from which only God can give us rest, that we may be called during this season of devotion into caring for the suffering

around us and inside of ourselves, with gratitude that God is with us in all of it, we pray:

Kyrie eleison.

For all who have died in hope of the resurrection, who join with us as we wait for resurrection this season, and for all the saints who have modeled perseverance for us as we become pilgrims in the wilderness, journeying toward the cross with gratitude as the light for our path, we pray:

Kyrie eleison.

For the reminder of your steadfastness that we receive when we are thankful, when we survey the riches of your grace, when we count the blessings we now name, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts. . . . (silence is kept) In our gratitude, we pray:

Kyrie eleison.

For the United Thank Offering, that you would continually nourish the church through this ministry’s call to prayer, spirituality, and supporting the many callings in the church that are brought to fruition through UTO’s spirit of love, generosity, gratitude, and thanksgiving, we pray:

Kyrie eleison.

God of all mercy, we thank you that you hear our cries for forgiveness, for abundant life, for comfort in death, for resurrection into eternal life. May we bless the Lord, not forgetting all his benefits, his forgiveness of our iniquities, his healing all our diseases, the God who redeems us from the pit, who crowns us with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies us with good. Send us, we pray, into the world to love others out of gratitude for God’s love for us, that we may follow in Christ’s commandment to love God and love one another. **Amen.**

EASTER

In celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which has bestowed upon us the gift of everlasting life and the riches of abundant love, let us offer to God our thanksgiving and praise, saying, “Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia!”

For the church you have created and the church you have redeemed through life, death, and resurrection, that you would guide the church in its varied life, its grievous deaths, and in its experiences of gratitude born out of the power of the resurrection, we pray:

Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia!

For the many nations of the world, and all who are in authority, that you would by the power and beauty of your resurrection give us an infectious joy, an impenetrable hope, and the willingness to make decisions out of this hope that creates hearts of gratitude, we pray:

Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia!

For the welfare of the world, that we may be comforted by the vanquishing of death through Jesus Christ, that we may be emboldened by the gospel to share love and thanksgiving with others, that we may be called by the full living witness of Jesus to live as witnesses to the presence of God that makes numb hearts grateful, we pray:

Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia!

For those around us in our communities, that we may see in them the image of God given to them as their birthright, and that we may love them with the fervor of a people who are full of gratitude, knowing they will dwell with God in eternity, we pray:

Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia!

For those who plead for the resurrection of God amidst grave

suffering, whether they are assailed in mind, body, soul, or relationship, that in this time of renewal, they may feel the healing power of your Spirit and receive reasons to give thanks, we pray:

Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia!

For those who in death experienced a life changed, but not ended, that we may sing their favorite hymns in our worship, pray in thanksgiving for their lives, and remember them as faithful witnesses to the truth that we will be ransomed from all that threatens to separate us from God, even death, we pray:

Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia!

For all the gifts of our lives and the profound gift of our common life, this body of Christ joined together by the resurrected Christ, and especially for those thanksgivings we now name, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts...(silence is kept) In our gratitude, we pray:

Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia!

For the United Thank Offering, that you would continually nourish the church through this ministry's call to prayer, spirituality, and supporting the many callings in the church that are brought to fruition through UTO's spirit of love, generosity, gratitude, and thanksgiving, we pray:

Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Resurrecting God, we thank you that you have removed all separation between ourselves and your love, including even death. Thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. As we bask in the incomprehensible joy of your grace which precedes and follows us, call us ever and always into prayers of thanksgiving for the gift of each day you have given to us, the hope of eternal life that we dwell in and wait for, and the forgiveness of sins that frees us each day to worship you. **Amen.**

ADVENT

In this season of waiting, let us pray together in thanksgiving as we gather in holy patience, saying, "God, be with us."

For the church and all its people, the gathering of those called to wait in anticipation of your revelation, that we may be alert so when the time comes for us to behold you among us, we see you and receive you with prayers and praises of gratitude and thanksgiving, we pray:

God, be with us.

For all the nations of the world and those who bear the authority of leadership, that the powers of this world may entrust our futures not to their own understanding, but to your ever unfolding wisdom, charity, and generosity, as you are made known to us again and again in new ways that call us to give thanks, we pray:

God, be with us.

For the whole world, that in this season of hearing proclamations of the power of God, we would begin to see the song of Mary taking on flesh in our world, calling us to give of ourselves out of our spirit of gratitude, we pray:

God, be with us.

For our neighbors and our communities, that our hearts may be sensitive to the needs of the people in our midst and overcome with gratitude for them, so that we, as one people bound to each other, may wait together for the unfolding kingdom of God, we pray:

God, be with us.

For all human suffering of all kinds and conditions, that we may be comforted by the almost here presence of a God who took on flesh to know our suffering, to bear our suffering, and to give us - even in our suffering - a grace that calls us to give thanks, we pray:

God, be with us.

For all who have died, those who have removed the veil and seen you face to face, that we may be inspired by the lives they lived on this earth, as they are now reminders that you will call us into a heavenly home, where our praises and our thanksgivings are brought into your nearer presence, we pray:

God, be with us.

For the ways in which you are waiting with us, sitting beside us as we celebrate the joys of this life, giving thanks especially for those joys we now name, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts...(silence is kept) In our gratitude, we pray:

God, be with us.

For the United Thank Offering, that you would continually nourish the church through this ministry's call to prayer, spirituality, and supporting the many callings in the church that are brought to fruition through UTO's spirit of love, generosity, gratitude, and thanksgiving, we pray:

God, be with us.

God of wisdom, bring us into awareness of your presence, as we wait to become so close to you that we may touch even the hem of your cloak. Give us a patience only you can give, slow our hurried hearts, give peace to our anxious minds, and draw us into such a heart of gratitude that we may be caught serving one another when you arrive.

Amen.

CHRISTMAS

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! In thanksgiving for Emmanuel, the God who is with us, let us pray to the Lord saying, “Lord, by your love, you are here.”

For the church, that body of Christ born into the world in the infant body of Jesus, that we may shower this child and those we encounter with gratitude, care, and adoration, we pray:

Lord, by your love, you are here.

For this nation and all the nations and powers of the world, that we would give thanks for the young, the new, and those different from us, trusting the power of wisdom and revelation and gifts, trusting that the gospel of Jesus Christ can be made known to us in children as well as in elders, we pray:

Lord, by your love, you are here.

For our whole world and those who want within it, that all people would work to create the manglers, safe havens, and strong towers needed to shield beloved children of God from violence, so that we may take on their burdens and struggles with hearts grateful for your gifts and chances, we pray:

Lord, by your love, you are here.

For our communities and the people most close to us, in whom we see the face of Jesus so frequently, make us always as overwhelmed with thankfulness for them as we are when we behold the mystery of you choosing to be with us, we pray:

Lord, by your love, you are here.

For those in any trouble, needing any escape, struggling to find a glimmer of blessing, that you would be ever mindful to reveal to

them that your being in the world as Jesus is the presence of freedom from all shackles, all binding, and that we would be called to transform our hearts of gratitude into hearts that serve them, we pray:

Lord, by your love, you are here.

For those who have died, we give thanks for the sure and certain hope that they are held in the very heart of God by the same loving power that brought Jesus into the world and then gathered him back up into the heavens, we pray:

Lord, by your love, you are here.

For the warmth of God incarnate among us, and how the body of Christ gifted to us reminds us of the many gifts of our lives, especially for those gifts we now name, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.... (silence is kept) In our gratitude, we pray:

Lord, by your love, you are here.

For the United Thank Offering, that you would continually nourish the church through this ministry's call to prayer, spirituality, and supporting the many callings in the church that are brought to fruition through UTO's spirit of love, generosity, gratitude, and thanksgiving, we pray:

Lord, by your love, you are here.

Incarnate God, we thank you for the promise of compassion you have given us in Jesus Christ, a reminder that you know us in our sufferings, that our prayers are heard by you, that there is no situation we can offer to you that you have not seen and healed. Give us your Spirit, that we may simply worship the gift of you with thankfulness, knowing that we owe every instance of our lives in this world and the next to your will. **Amen.**

EPIPHANY

TO BE USED ON THE FEAST OF EPIPHANY AND
THE WEEKS LEADING UP TO LENT I

Through Jesus let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name, saying, “Guide us, good Lord.”

For the church, the sacred ground that offers us a space at the altar where we can find rest after all our journeys, that it may continue to be a reminder to give thanks for you, and a space to land for all those who travel in mind, body, and spirit toward the gift of your presence, we pray:

Guide us, good Lord.

For this nation and all the nations and powers of the world, that we would forsake the violence and jealousy that have governed us, surrendering ourselves to a God who calls us not into power, but into abundance and gratitude, we pray:

Guide us, good Lord.

For the world and all that is in it, all trails, seas, dirt, greenery, and mountains, that we may listen to your will for us, be obedient to your call to be stewards of the earth, and let our gratitude for this earth govern our actions toward it, we pray:

Guide us, good Lord.

For the people we pass day by day, those in our midst we neglect to notice, everyone we call neighbor without knowing their names, that the wonder, hope, and epiphanies of God may call us into thanksgiving for them that becomes generosity of heart to all, we pray:

Guide us, good Lord.

For all who are battling illness of any sort, brokenheartedness, loneliness, addiction, or any grief, that you would remind them in their darkness that you have given us the light of Christ, which guides us not into pain but into the gifts that give our hearts cause to be grateful, we pray:

Guide us, good Lord.

For the departed, those who receive the light of Christ in perpetuity, whose memory calls us into deep gratitude for their witness among us and into thanksgiving that we could know and love them here and in eternity, we pray:

Guide us, good Lord.

For the bright epiphanies of our lives, and the reasons we have to celebrate stars and wonders, especially those wonders and thanksgivings we now name, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.... (silence is kept) In our gratitude, we pray:

Guide us, good Lord.

For the United Thank Offering, that you would continually nourish the church through this ministry’s call to prayer, spirituality, and supporting the many callings in the church that are brought to fruition through UTO’s spirit of love, generosity, gratitude, and thanksgiving, we pray:

Guide us, good Lord.

God of light, you illumine the path before us when we do not know the way, leading us into the plans you have for us, plans to never leave us or forsake us. Give us an awareness of your calling in our lives, that we, by the light of your Spirit, may without fear and full of gratitude follow the way of the incarnate Lord. Guard our hearts and our callings with the reminder that you are with us, now and forevermore. **Amen.**

PENTECOST

TO BE USED ON THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

Let us be thankful that our God is a consuming fire, and worship God with reverence and awe, saying, “Spirit, revive us.”

For the church, set ablaze on this most holy day, that it may breathe fire into the souls of those who are burned out, give energy to those who are tired, and offer a spark of gratitude in the hearts of those who feel dull in spirit, we pray:

Spirit, revive us.

For all in authority, in this nation and in all nations and forms of governance, that they would do their work out of gratitude for the calling, and that through their work the justice we hope for would become not just a thought and a prayer, but a policy that brings about God’s kingdom to the world we know now, we pray:

Spirit, revive us.

For the goodness, challenges, and welfare of the whole world, that you would enlighten us with your wisdom, call us to act in accordance with your plan for salvation, and provide for us reasons to give thanks that become our sustenance, we pray:

Spirit, revive us.

For our neighborhoods, our homes, our communities, that your Spirit would purify our conversations, judgments, and resentments, so we may see each other not for our differences, but through the lens of thanksgiving, as partners in building a world that helps bring to fruition God’s promise of abundant life in Jesus Christ, we pray:

Spirit, revive us.

For any who suffer injustice, illness, pain, depression, addiction, or any other assaults on the children of God, that we would all labor

to fight against the systems that perpetuate suffering, surrender our own lives to the mud and spit of Christ’s healing, and be delivered through the power of gratitude out of judgment and into care for all the creatures of God, we pray:

Spirit, revive us.

For those who have died, the saints of our lives and the saints of our church, that you would help us to see in every candle lit a reminder to give thanks for their witness to us, a reminder of the power that illuminated their lives and the power that illuminates the lives of the faithful to this day, we pray:

Spirit, revive us.

For the ways in which we are inspired by the fire of God to see our blessings and give thanks for them, especially those inspirations and thanksgivings we now name, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts... (silence is kept) In our gratitude, we pray:

Spirit, revive us.

For the United Thank Offering, that you would continually nourish the church through this ministry’s call to prayer, spirituality, and supporting the many callings in the church that are brought to fruition through UTO’s spirit of love, generosity, gratitude, and thanksgiving, we pray:

Spirit, revive us.

God of revival, you brought fire and worship to the earliest of believers and it was out of this that you created the church we now call our spiritual home. Give us that same fire, that same worship, a spirit of thanksgiving and revival in our hearts and in our congregations, that we may be made ambassadors of your gospel of sacrificial love. **Amen.**

LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

Officiant: Lord, have mercy.

People: Christ, have mercy.

Officiant: Lord, have mercy.

Officiant: God of abundance,

People: we give thanks to you.

Officiant: God the Father, giver of all good things,

People: we give thanks to you.

Officiant: God the Son, redeemer of the world,

People: we give thanks to you.

Officiant: God, the Holy Spirit, reviver of our hearts,

People: we give thanks to you.

Officiant: Give us grace out of your riches,

And awareness to give thanks.

Be patient with us in our sins,

And quick to bring us into your presence.

People: grant us grace, good Lord.

Officiant: From every moment of ambivalence,

from every hardness of heart,

from every thought of greed,

from every desire to hoard our blessings,

from every negligence of a need before us,

People: deliver us, good Lord.

Officiant: For the abundance of grace given,

by the gift of the incarnation,

by the waters of baptism,

by the giving of your life,

by the faithfulness of your resurrection,

by the fire of Pentecost,

in all times of want,

in all times of blessing,

in each hope of our hearts,

People: we give thanks to you.

Officiant: God of abundance,

People: we give thanks to you.

Officiant: God the Father, giver of all good things,

People: we give thanks to you.

Officiant: God the Son, redeemer of the world,

People: we give thanks to you.

Officiant: God, the Holy Spirit, reviver of our hearts,

People: we give thanks to you.

Officiant: Jesus Christ, Son of God, you showed us a life of giving;
Holy Spirit, breath of God, you give us hearts of gratitude to be of
service; Heavenly Father, ruler of all, you brought into order all that
is so we may have this life and the next;

**People: give us your grace and let our hearts be ever grateful for
your blessing. Amen.**

LITANY OF THANKSGIVING FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

This service includes optional reflection points, which can be done through talking about the question in community with the people present, through dedicating journaling time for each question, or through artistic expression. All are invited to think about their preferred mode of reflection and have tools present for that expression before the service begins.

Allow 5-10 minutes per reflection.

God, creator of your children,

We give you thanks.

God, parent to Jesus Christ,

We give you thanks.

God, joy-giving Spirit,

We give you thanks.

Reflection: What do you wonder about God?

Give us grace out of your heart,

And remind us to be thankful.

Be patient with us in our mistakes,

And quick to bring us into your love.

Reflection: What are God's gifts to you?

From every time we are unkind,

from when we forget to help,

from the times we do not share,

from our feelings of anger,

from when we say things that hurt,

Set us free, good Lord.

Reflection: What mistakes can you give to God?

For the grace of God,

for the gift of God with us in Jesus,

for the waters of baptism,

for the giving of life,

for the love of the resurrection,

for the fire of Pentecost,

in all times of wanting,

in all times of blessing,

in each hope of our hearts,

We give thanks to you, good Lord.

Reflection: How does God love you?

God of our greatest wonder,

We give you thanks.

God of our greatest care,

We give you thanks.

God of our blessings,

We give you thanks.

Reflection: How is God asking you to give to others?

Jesus Christ, Son of God, you showed us a life of giving;

We give thanks, good Lord.

Holy Spirit, breath of God, you give us the hearts of gratitude to be of service;

Send us out to give to others, good Lord.

Heavenly Father, ruler of all, you guide us in this life and the next;

Make our hearts ever grateful. Amen.

Go in peace with a heart set free to serve others and receive the gifts of God.

Thanks be to God.

Participants are invited to spend time following the service exploring the different artistic expressions, if that medium is used and the artist wants to share. Art can be displayed around the home, as a reminder of the gift of abundant love from God and God's calling to us to give to others.

OTHER PRAYERS OF GRATITUDE

Gratitude Prayer Upon Waking

Gracious God, I have been invited into a new day by your will and mercy. Make my heart grateful for the breaths given, the day that waits for me, and the peace received through remembering your love, regardless of what the day holds. Hold my mind's awareness of your gift, your love, and your faithfulness. May it be for me the preparation I need to begin this new day. Amen.

Gratitude Prayer at Noonday

Gracious God, I come to you at this halfway point of this day, remembering to entrust myself to you not just in beginnings and in endings, but also in life's in-betweens. In anxiety rustled up by the hours that have passed by and in fear of what the hours coming up may hold, may my awareness of your presence and gratitude for the gift of your Son be the agents of strength I need to persevere and see this day's end. Hold my mind's awareness of your gift, your love, and your faithfulness. May it be the nourishment I need to see this day to its end. Amen.

Gratitude Prayer Before Sleeping

Gracious God, I come to you at this close of day to return to the heart of gratitude that set this day into motion. My heart is full, my cup has run over, my day finishes inside of the grace you've shown to me in giving me another day. In each day's uncertainties, pains, joys, and celebrations, I return again and again to my soul's gratitude for your care. Hold my mind's awareness of your gift, your love, and your faithfulness. May it be the calming presence that ushers me into rest. Amen.

UTO INGATHERING SERVICE TO BE USED AS LITURGY OF THE WORD

This service is offered after the Nicene Creed.

Prayers of the People for Ingathering

On this Ingathering celebration, marked by thanksgiving and offering, let us give thanks to God for the gifts of this life, and ask for God's blessing of abundance in the areas where we seek to offer service in the world, saying, "Lord, we give thanks to you."

For the gift of the church, that it may always be growing in generosity through offering and prayer, so that its members and its mission transform the world to have hearts of gratitude,

Lord, we give thanks to you.

For our nation, for all nations in the world, and for all those in authority and governance, that you may transform these powers and principalities so they would be stewards of gratitude, beacons of justice, and participants in the work of restoration throughout the world,

Lord, we give thanks to you.

For the care of all of creation, the earth and all that is in it, that we would receive the offerings of this day with hearts abounding in thanksgiving, remembering that in giving out of what we have we always return to God what comes out of God,

Lord, we give thanks to you.

For the peace which passes all understanding that accompanies all the causes and concerns that have no advocate, the blessedness that extends to the margins that feel mostly lonely, and the love that reaches all who suffer and are in any trouble,

Lord, we give thanks to you.

For the forgiveness we receive when we are not good stewards of our gifts, the grace offered during seasons when we have cared more for self-preservation than the common good, the compassion bestowed when we let hardness of heart take over our desire to follow Christ,

Lord, we give thanks to you.

For the gift of eternal life poured out upon all who put their trust in you, for those who are known to you in creation and prayer, and for the saints and angels who accompany us interceding on our behalf (especially those we now name: _____), and for those we love but see no longer (especially _____ and those we now name: _____),

Lord, we give our thanks to you.

For the specific concerns of this church community, and all the causes that will be served through the ministry of the United Thank Offering, both locally and abroad, which we now name....

The people are invited to name:

the ministries supported by this community

the causes for which they give thanks

any challenges weighing on their hearts

the ministries supported by the United Thank Offering

We offer these concerns and causes to God, entrusting their work and flourishing to God alone,

Lord, we give thanks to you.

For the blessings of our lives, the joys we receive that remind us of God's love for us, especially the thanksgivings we now name either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.... (silence is kept) In our gratitude, we pray:

Lord, we give thanks to you.

For the United Thank Offering, that you would continually nourish the church through this ministry's call to prayer, spirituality, and supporting the many callings in the church that are brought to fruition through UTO's spirit of love, generosity, gratitude, and thanksgiving, we pray:

Lord, we give thanks to you.

God, we thank you that you have called us today into a spirit of generosity, both in prayer and in action. Bestow upon us the remembrance that you gave of yourself so that we could know you, be nourished by your wisdom, and so that we would follow you into self-sacrifice. In this time of our giving, fill our hearts with not the memory of our loss, but the awareness of what we have gained through giving some of what we have away. Send us out with hearts of gratitude that encourage others to join with UTO to love and serve others, both in our communities and throughout the world. We ask all this in the sure and certain hope of your son, Jesus Christ our Lord, whose presence is worth our thanksgiving alone. **Amen.**

THE INGATHERING

The officiant begins

Each year, we celebrate the abundance of God by giving out of our resources to the United Thank Offering. This act of generosity is an act of trust and a participation in the gift of the wider church, as we give toward the innovation and growth of the church we love. UTO also supports the church by nourishing us with prayer, and we gather today's harvest out of the soil we have nourished through the prayers that God's will would be done on this earth as it is in heaven. Today, as we take up our offering for UTO, may we be reminded that this is a way we participate in being the Body of Christ, that through this we participate in God's calling to be stewards of the treasures of this world, and may we leave this place with hearts overflowing with gratitude for the riches of God lavished on this church and the broader Christian church that exists to worship God and care for God's people through ministry.

The church will now take an offering to be designated for the ministries chosen by the United Thank Offering.

Suggested Hymns:

Not here for high and holy things (9)

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord (178)

Come, ye thankful people, come (290)

Father, we thank thee (303)

And now, O Father (337)

Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness (339)

Go forth for God (347)

Lord, we have come at your own invitation (348)

It is well with my soul (LEVAS 188)

Lord of all hopefulness (482)

O Jesus I have promised (655)

All who hunger gather gladly (WLP 761)

Give thanks for life (WLP 775)

O praise ye the Lord (432)

Glory to you O Lord (WLP 886)

Give praise and glory unto God (375)

All people that on earth do dwell (377, 378)

O worship the King (388)

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty (390)

Now thank we all our God (396, 397)

Once the offering has been gathered, the officiant now prays

Gracious God, source of all creation, all love, all true joy: accept, we pray, these outward signs of our profound and continuing thankfulness for all of life. Bless those who will benefit from these gifts through the outreach of the United Thank Offering; and keep each of us ever thankful for all the blessings of joy and challenge that come our way; through Him who is the greatest gift and blessing of all, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. **Amen.**

Once gathered and prayed over, offerings can be placed on the altar, to be blessed alongside the other offerings gathered during the service, or placed on a table to be seen as congregants leave the church following the service. This allows churches to see the gifts they have given as a reminder of their support of UTO's mission to serve the church and the world.

The service continues with the Confession of Sin and Peace.

SERVICE FOR THANKSGIVING DAY

This service may be used at any time during the year, though it is especially appropriate for use on Thanksgiving Day. This liturgy begins from a place of acknowledging how the language of “thanksgiving” has been associated with acts of trauma to Indigenous people, as well as the white supremacy that draws the church away from the heart of God. This is offered as a way to acknowledge the challenges of the day, name lamentations, and turn our heart toward gratitude and true thanksgiving through prayer.

This liturgy is designed to be a long-form blessing before a meal, whether you are alone or in community. This is not the Eucharist, and it is made to be used without the necessity of a priest present. There are roles for the officiant, which can change person to person for more communal participation, or be offered by one person. It can be used by yourself, in spiritual communities, with relatives, among chosen family, and in many other contexts.

To prepare for the celebration, explore <https://native-land.ca/> to discover whose Indigenous land you are on. This liturgy incorporates a practice known as land acknowledgement, which requires reflecting on the history of the space you inhabit, naming the communities on the land that were harmed by colonization, and a recognition that those people continue to be our neighbors. Consider using this liturgy as a starting point for building relationships with Indigenous people, coming to know their true needs and how best to show gratitude for them.

This liturgy takes the shape of Evening Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer, but with readings focused on gratitude, additional prayers, and the invitation to place your meal within the liturgy.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On this feast of gratitude, I/we begin by giving thanks for the people whose land I/we stand on: [*one designated participant names the Indigenous communities*]. May I/we be ever aware of the history of this place, the people who have loved its earth, their toil, and how we are bound to one another through our creation and belovedness. In our thankfulness for this current day, may we be aware of the truth of our history, the injustices that have occurred on this earth against those who first loved it, and the pains of the past that remain to this day. In this awareness, may our gratitude for Indigenous people make us committed to repentance and not repeating this history. **Amen.**

Officiant

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! (Psalm 107)

CONFESSION OF SIN

The Officiant says

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor. This is an invitation to think specifically about the ways I/we have hindered other people receiving the gifts of this life and how I/we have, in thought, word, and deed, been a barrier to reconciliation.

Silence is kept.

Those present pray

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

The officiant then says

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins
through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all
goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in
eternal life. Amen.

The Invitatory and Psalter

Officiant

O God, make speed to save us.

People

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as
it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Except in Lent, add **Alleluia**.

THE PSALMS

PSALM 66

- 1 Be joyful in God, all you lands; *
sing the glory of his Name;
sing the glory of his praise.
- 2 Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! *
because of your great strength your enemies cringe
before you.
- 3 All the earth bows down before you, *
sings to you, sings out your Name."
- 4 Come now and see the works of God, *
how wonderful he is in his doing toward all people.
- 5 He turned the sea into dry land,
so that they went through the water on foot, *
and there we rejoiced in him.
- 6 In his might he rules for ever;
his eyes keep watch over the nations; *
let no rebel rise up against him.

7 Bless our God, you peoples; *
make the voice of his praise to be heard;

8 Who holds our souls in life, *
and will not allow our feet to slip.

9 For you, O God, have proved us; *
you have tried us just as silver is tried.

10 You brought us into the snare; *
you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.

11 You let enemies ride over our heads;
we went through fire and water; *
but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.

12 I will enter your house with burnt-offerings
and will pay you my vows, *
which I promised with my lips
and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble.

13 I will offer you sacrifices of fat beasts
with the smoke of rams; *
I will give you oxen and goats.

14 Come and listen, all you who fear God, *
and I will tell you what he has done for me.

15 I called out to him with my mouth, *
and his praise was on my tongue.

16 If I had found evil in my heart, *
the Lord would not have heard me;

17 But in truth God has heard me; *
he has attended to the voice of my prayer.

18 Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, *
nor withheld his love from me.

PSALM 100

1 Be joyful in the LORD, all you lands; *
serve the LORD with gladness
and come before his presence with a song.

2 Know this: The LORD himself is God; *
he himself has made us, and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

3 Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise; *
give thanks to him and call upon his Name.

4 For the LORD is good;
his mercy is everlasting; *
and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

At the end of the Psalms is sung or said

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

THE LESSONS

One or two lessons, as appointed, are read, the Reader first saying

A Reading (Lesson) from Philippians.

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.”

After each Lesson the Reader may say

The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

12 A SONG OF CREATION

Glorify the Lord, all you works of the Lord, *

praise him and highly exalt him for ever.

In the firmament of his power, glorify the Lord, *

praise him and highly exalt him for ever.

Let the earth glorify the Lord, *

praise him and highly exalt him for ever.

Glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills,

and all that grows upon the earth, *

praise him and highly exalt him for ever.

Glorify the Lord, O springs of water, seas, and streams, *

O whales and all that move in the waters.

All birds of the air, glorify the Lord, *

praise him and highly exalt him for ever.

Glorify the Lord, O beasts of the wild, *

and all you flocks and herds.

O men and women everywhere, glorify the Lord, *

praise him and highly exalt him for ever.

Let us glorify the Lord: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; *

praise him and highly exalt him for ever.

In the firmament of his power, glorify the Lord, *

praise him and highly exalt him for ever.

A Reading from Matthew.

"When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!' Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this. A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But he said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.'"

After each Lesson the Reader may say

The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

19 THE SONG OF THE REDEEMED

O ruler of the universe, Lord God,
great deeds are they that you have done, *

surpassing human understanding.

Your ways are ways of righteousness and truth, *

O King of all the ages.

Who can fail to do you homage, Lord,

and sing the praises of your Name? *

for you only are the Holy One.

All nations will draw near and fall down before you, *

because your just and holy works have been revealed.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

Officiant and People together, all standing

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE PRAYERS

Officiant The Lord be with you.
***People* And also with you.**

Officiant Let us pray.

Officiant and People

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

The following can be read back and forth between an officiant and people, line by line alone, or line by line divided amongst participants.

Show us your mercy, O Lord;
And grant us your salvation.
Clothe your ministers with righteousness;
Let your people sing with joy.
Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
For only in you can we live in safety.
Lord, keep this nation under your care;
And guide us in the way of justice and truth.
Let your way be known upon earth;

Your saving health among all nations.
Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.
Create in us clean hearts, O God;
And sustain us by your Holy Spirit.

All or some of the following collects may be prayed

Collect of the Day

For Agriculture

Almighty God, we thank you for making the earth fruitful, so that it might produce what is needed for life: Bless those who work in the fields; give us seasonable weather; and grant that we may all share the fruits of the earth, rejoicing in your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the Right Use of God's Gifts

Almighty God, whose loving hand has given us all that we possess: Grant us grace that we may honor you with our substance, and, remembering the account which we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For stewardship of creation

O merciful Creator, your hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: Make us, we beseech you, ever thankful for your loving providence; and grant that we, remembering the account that we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your good gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

For fruitful seasons

Almighty God, Lord of heaven and earth: We humbly pray that your gracious providence may give and preserve to our use the harvests of the land and of the seas, and may prosper all who labor to gather them, that we, who constantly receive good things from your hand, may always give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

For Those Who Live Alone

Almighty God, whose Son had nowhere to lay his head: Grant that those who live alone may not be lonely in their solitude, but that, following in his steps, they may find fulfillment in loving you and their neighbors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For those we Love

Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to your never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that you are doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Joy in God's Creation

O heavenly Father, who has filled the world with beauty: Open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works; that, rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn to serve you with gladness; for the sake of him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Today we especially offer prayers for the unique gifts and challenges of this day:

Silence is kept after each petition and people are invited to name their specific prayers either silently in their hearts or aloud.

For the past year, with its causes to be grateful and its hardships
For us as we try to help others
For us as we receive help from others
For those who labor while others rest
For the specific thanksgivings and hardships we now name silently or aloud...*(silence)*

For those who are unable to be with family though they wish to be
For our chosen family
For all the sacrifices made so this meal could be possible
For this gathering, whether surrounded by people or alone
For those who feel abandoned from their families, biological or chosen
For families who face conflict at this time
For the specific concerns of people we love, which we now name silently or aloud *(silence)*

For the meal we have prepared and the cleaning up that awaits us
For poverty and an end to hunger
For justice, that we may seek it in this world and then in the next
For an end to waste and deeper gratitude for this earth
For our lamentations of this day and the lamentations of our histories
For repentance of our racism, colonization, and all the phobias that distance us from God and one another
For deliverance from the specific sins and grievances of this world, which we now name silently or aloud *(silence)*

For the offerings given on this day
For all the blessings we are thankful for
For the gift of laughter

For rest and joy
For gratitude that warms our hearts and homes
For the abundant and saving love of God made known to us today and every day
For the specific realities of this day that we give thanks for, which we now name silently or aloud *(silence)*

Lord Jesus Christ, we offer these requests to you, the true thanksgivings and challenges of our hearts.
We pray that your grace may extend to more and more people, in the certain hope that we will increase in thanksgiving, to the glory of God.
Offering ourselves and our prayers to you, we do not lose heart; though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.
Amen.
(2 Corinthians 4)

INTRODUCTION TO THE FEAST

Officiant: We are all invited to share in a feast of thanksgiving. Here we are joined as one, bearing witness to the body of Christ that gathers us today. Receive the many gifts given to us by our gracious God.

Each participant can receive gifts of food and drink, passed among each other or honored alone. Once everyone has something to enjoy, but before they have begun eating and drinking, the service continues.

As I/we prepare to enjoy this feast, I/we thank you, God, that you are my/our daily bread. Thank you for being the nourishment of bodies and souls. Thank you for bringing us to this day when we may worship you. Amen.

Participants are invited to feast for however long they like. Please conclude the service before anyone leaves the gathering.

When everyone has had their fill, the service continues with The General Thanksgiving.

People together

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.**

Officiant Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body, and be thankful. (*Colossians 3*)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



The Rev. Erin Jean Warde is a priest, writer, recovery coach, and spiritual director in Austin, Texas. Erin Jean is creating Discerning Sobriety, a course and community exploring the intersection of sobriety and spirituality through incarnational theology. She serves as an editor-at-large for Earth & Altar. Erin Jean received her bachelors in English and Creative Writing from Troy University in Troy, AL and her Master of Divinity from Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, TX. Erin shares sermons and other reflections on her website (www.erinjeanwarde.com) and talks about sobriety and spirituality with humor on **Instagram** and **Twitter** (@erinjeanwarde).

ABOUT THE UNITED THANK OFFERING

In 1889, two Episcopal women envisioned a way to collect small thank offerings in homes as a personal expression of gratitude, and from this, our modern day United Thank Offering (UTO) was born. Today, UTO members, through their daily personal spiritual discipline of gratitude, continue to make thank offerings, and every penny given in thanksgiving is then given away in grant funding to missions and ministries seeking to live Jesus' way of love. UTO is a ministry of The Episcopal Church for the mission of the whole church. More than 5,300 grants have been awarded thus far by UTO (for a total of \$140 million) to support innovative mission and ministry throughout The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

NOTES

THE
Episcopal
CHURCH



THE UNITED THANK OFFERING

The Episcopal Church Center
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