



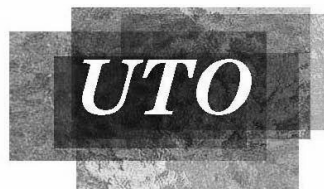
DECEMBER 6, 2015— SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C)

ADVENT CHALLENGE: JOURNEY FROM GRATITUDE TO HOPE

Advent is a time of waiting and watching. We pray and sing, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” reliving the beginning of our sacred story, entering into that liminal and holy space of hope. Each year, we are secure in our knowledge of the story’s resolution. The Christ child will be born. God will come among us. Mary and Joseph will flee with the infant Jesus as refugees, escaping the murderous King Herod, fleeing to Egypt in a reversal of the Exodus. The child who would become the Savior of the world will begin his life as a refugee.

This Advent season, our world faces the largest refugee crisis ever known – 60 million displaced, nearly 20 million of whom are refugees, half of whom are children. Four million Syrian refugees have fled civil war and terrorism in their country, and the number continues to grow. Here in the United States, refugees, especially Syrian refugees, have received increasing attention in the media. Programs funding refugees are in jeopardy of being cut or severely limited, which would result in this most vulnerable population of new Americans having limited access to food, housing, health care and the other basic needs they need to get on their feet during their first few months in the United States.

In response, the United Thank Offering board is challenging Episcopalians to take part in an important part of refugee welcome in the United States through its 2015 Ingathering Challenge, which will support Episcopal Migration Ministries, the refugee resettlement service of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society. Deemed the 2015 Advent Challenge: Journey from Gratitude to Hope, United Thank Offering will match the first \$30,000 given by December 31, 2015 that is marked “EMM-UTO.” The challenge will continue throughout December 2015.



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Known worldwide as UTO, the United Thank Offering grants are awarded for projects that address human needs and help alleviate poverty, both domestically and internationally in The Episcopal Church.

The Rev. Heather Melton, the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society's Missioner for United Thank Offering, noted, "Episcopalians are encouraged to begin using their United Thank Offering Blue Box as an expression of gratitude this Thanksgiving and to continue the journey with United Thank Offering and Episcopal Migration Ministries through Advent toward the hope Episcopalians embrace through the birth of the Christ child."

### To Donate

Checks or online donations should have UTO-EMM in the memo line/comments section.

Donations are also accepted online at

<https://episcopalchurch.thankyou4caring.org/> just select UTO from the drop down menu and then put EMM in the comments.

Submit checks to:  
United Thank Offering  
The Episcopal Church  
815 Second Avenue  
New York City, New York 10017

**Check notation: UTO-EMM**

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