

In response to the overwhelming impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Thank Offering (UTO) has decided to postpone the previously approved grant focus on Creation Care until 2022. [Click here for details.](#)

Instead, the focus of grants awarded in 2021 will be supporting congregational and diocesan efforts to meet the needs of individuals and communities that are coping with the results of the pandemic.

UTO grants will support existing ministries, such as food pantries, job training, and after-school programs, especially those that will be forced to close without additional funding. UTO will also award grants for new and innovative ministries that support communities impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

This may come as a disappointment to those who anticipated submitting grants with an environmental focus. Please know that UTO remains committed to the goals of Creation Care and will happily return to this focus in 2022.

The Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918 prompted a similar decision. During and shortly after the Spanish flu, UTO funds were used to increase the number of women missionaries serving around the world, most of whom worked as nurses and teachers. Other grants built or supported hospitals and churches with schools or helped keep essential ministries open, particularly those started by UTO.

Many parishes in your diocese may have postponed a Spring In-Gathering for UTO until in-person worship could be resumed. If so, please encourage them to hold a virtual UTO in-gathering instead. UTO grants will be a critical source of funding as we confront the results of COVID-19 in our province and beyond.