

Holy Companion Episcopal Church

2026 Grant Report

Submitted to the High Plains Region (\$40,000) and Northwest Region (\$2,500)

Dear friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you, and thank you for your faithful investment in Holy Companion Episcopal Church. Your generosity has done far more than fund a budget—it has made possible a growing Episcopal community where people are discovering belonging, deepening their faith, and finding hope.

As the only church worshipping in Sterling Ranch—one of Colorado’s fastest-growing communities—Holy Companion is cultivating a new expression of Episcopal ministry: rooted in the richness of our tradition while welcoming people seeking a more inclusive and life-giving expression of faith. Together, we are nurturing an intentionally intergenerational community centered on worship, justice, and relationships of genuine care with one another and our neighbors.

The High Plains and Northwest Regions have been indispensable partners in this work.



Your grants supported the core ministry that allows Holy Companion to flourish. Most significantly, they enabled the Rev. Lauren Grubaugh Thomas to serve as our half-time vicar, providing the consistent pastoral leadership necessary to nurture a young congregation through its formative years. Regional funding also allowed us to rent worship space and sustain the regular rhythms of worship, formation, hospitality, and outreach that are helping Holy Companion become an enduring presence in Sterling Ranch.

Because your investment provided stability, it also created capacity. Rather than focusing solely on sustaining the congregation, Rev. Lauren was able to pursue additional funding that strengthened ministry throughout Douglas County. During this grant period, Holy Companion secured multiple grants for both the congregation and the Interfaith Coalition of Douglas County, for which Holy Companion serves as fiscal sponsor. Among

these was a \$40,000 United Thank Offering grant that made the inaugural Friendship Camp possible. Your investment therefore multiplied its impact by leveraging significant additional resources for ministry.

A Partner in the Ecosystem of God's Work in Douglas County

From the beginning, Holy Companion has been committed to understanding ourselves not as a church plant in competition with existing congregations, but as a partner within the larger ecosystem of God's work in Douglas County and beyond. We believe the Church's future depends on collaboration, generosity, and shared imagination.

This commitment has shaped our relationships across Christian traditions and beyond. Within The Episcopal Church, we continue to learn from and collaborate with other New Episcopal Communities, parishes in our region, and ministries throughout our diocese. Locally, we have invested deeply in ecumenical and interfaith partnerships, seeking to embody a model of ministry rooted in relationship rather than competition.

One of our most significant partnerships has been the founding of the Interfaith Coalition of Douglas County, which Holy Companion helped launch one year ago. The Coalition has quickly flourished as a space where Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Brahma Kumaris, and other faith communities build relationships, learn from one another, and imagine new possibilities for shared life. Core partnerships with communities such as Highlands Ranch Islamic Association, Grace Presbyterian Church, and St. Matthew's in Parker have created a foundation of trust and collaboration.



Together, the Coalition has created opportunities for neighbors to encounter one another across religious difference. Monthly Sacred Neighbors dialogue gatherings have built a strong relational foundation of trust and friendship. We also screened a film exploring the possibility of shared physical space for interfaith community; the event drew more than 100 people and revealed a deep community hunger for connection, understanding, and collaboration across faith traditions. This shared vision has taken concrete shape through Friendship Camp, a weeklong interfaith day camp where children from multiple faith traditions learn, play, and grow together.



Our partnership with Grace Presbyterian Church has been a meaningful expression of Christian unity within this broader ecosystem. Together, we have shared worship, celebrated Ash Wednesday and Pentecost, offered Ashes to Go in Sterling Ranch, and built friendships between our congregations. This fall, we will launch a monthly Theology on Tap in Sterling Ranch, creating a welcoming space for neighbors to explore questions of faith, meaning, and community beyond traditional church settings. We will also continue developing shared formation opportunities, including Joyful Noise community choir.



Through these partnerships, Holy Companion is helping cultivate a new model of ministry—one rooted in mutuality, hospitality, and the belief that God is already at work among us, calling us to join together for the flourishing of our neighbors and communities.

A Season of Growth and Deepening Roots

This year has been one of joyful congregational growth. We continue to welcome new faces at nearly every gathering as people discover the kind of authentic, justice-centered Christian community they have long been seeking.

During the second quarter of the year, four new households decided to make Holy Companion their spiritual home. These new members span generations and faith backgrounds, including cradle Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, evangelicals, and people returning to church after years away. They have quickly become active participants in worship, generosity, and leadership, bringing gifts in teaching, administration, stewardship, and pastoral care.

One of the highlights of the summer was our congregational picnic, where fifty-five people gathered for worship, food, laughter, and friendship. Watching children play together while longtime members welcomed newcomers embodied exactly the kind of intergenerational community we have been praying God would help us build.



Our leadership has matured alongside our congregation. Four lay leaders now oversee Outreach, Liturgy, Hospitality, and Stewardship, creating a healthier and more sustainable model of shared ministry. We were also delighted to welcome the Rev. Anna Horen as Priest Associate, expanding our capacity for preaching, pastoral care, and adult formation while enriching the life of the congregation.

Worship, Formation, and Community Life

Holy Companion's worship life has continued to grow in creativity and depth. We celebrated Holy Week and Easter, gathered for Joy in Creation outdoor worship, shared monthly Evening Prayer and community meals, and cultivated meaningful relationships through prayer, formation, and fellowship.



One especially memorable Easter Vigil moment featured Samba Colorado, whose dancers interpreted the Creation story through movement, reminding us that the Gospel can be proclaimed through many forms of artistic expression.



Friendship Camp and Community Outreach

Your support also helped Holy Companion continue living into our vocation as a bridge-builder across our wider community.

In June, Holy Companion partnered with the Highlands Ranch Islamic Association and the Interfaith Coalition of Douglas County to launch the inaugural Friendship Camp, an interfaith day camp for children. The camp welcomed thirty-five children representing six religious traditions and engaged thirty-two volunteers from across numerous faith communities. Eleven Holy Companion households participated as campers, volunteers, or both.



Through shared meals, STEAM activities, worship, play, and storytelling, children learned compassion, curiosity, and friendship across religious difference. Friendship Camp demonstrated Holy Companion's unique vocation of creating spaces where people can encounter one another with joy and openness.

This ministry also received significant recognition. Friendship Camp was featured by both the Douglas County Lantern and Episcopal News Service, sharing the story of this innovative interfaith partnership with a wider audience.

Beyond Friendship Camp, Holy Companion continued monthly food drives supporting immigrant families, participated in Douglas County PrideFest alongside other affirming congregations, and remained deeply engaged in the leadership of the Interfaith Coalition of Douglas County.

A Growing Voice for Church Renewal

Your investment has enabled Holy Companion to become an increasingly recognized leader within the New Episcopal Community movement and wider conversations about church renewal.

Although we are only three years old, other dioceses, church leaders, and emerging communities are beginning to look to Holy Companion as a model for joyful, justice-centered, intergenerational ministry. Rev. Lauren continues to support emerging church planters and will serve this fall as a Companion to a Roots & Wings Fellow through Virginia Theological Seminary.

Holy Companion has also been invited to participate in a Lilly Endowment-funded ecumenical initiative highlighting stories of church renewal and innovation. These opportunities reflect growing recognition that the ministry taking shape in Sterling Ranch has wisdom to offer the wider Church.

Your investment is not only nurturing one congregation—it is helping shape the future of Episcopal ministry.

Financial Sustainability

Our financial picture continues to strengthen.

One of the clearest signs of a maturing congregation has been the growth of recurring generosity. Over the last quarter, seven households began recurring monthly giving, while three existing households increased their recurring gifts. Direct congregational giving exceeded budget expectations, and careful stewardship has allowed us to remain financially healthy while expanding ministry.

As a young congregation, we are beginning to see what studies of new faith communities predict: developing a culture of sustained generosity takes time. For many people—especially those entering church for the first time or returning after experiences of church hurt—building trust and belonging must come before long-term commitments of leadership and financial giving. Studies suggest this process can take five years or more, though we are encouraged by the ways Holy Companion is already seeing people step into deeper commitment.

Your support has helped carry us to this important stage of development, and continued grant support remains essential as we nurture this emerging culture of generosity and move toward long-term sustainability.

Looking Ahead

As we look ahead, we are excited to welcome Bishop Kym Lucas for confirmations and our Vicar's Celebration of New Ministry in September. We will continue expanding discipleship and small-group formation, deepening lay leadership, growing our ecumenical and interfaith partnerships, building on the success of Friendship Camp, and discerning new opportunities to serve the rapidly growing Sterling Ranch community.

None of this would be possible without your partnership.

Because of your generosity, Holy Companion is not simply surviving—we are growing. We are welcoming new households, raising new leaders, strengthening stewardship, cultivating interfaith friendships, partnering with neighboring congregations, and helping imagine what the future of Episcopal ministry can look like.

Thank you for believing in this ministry during these formative years and for investing not only in Holy Companion, but in the future of our Church.

With gratitude,

The Rev. Lauren Grubaugh Thomas
Founding Vicar
Holy Companion Episcopal Church