

Holy Companion: 2025 Grant Report

Submitted to: High Plains Region of the Episcopal Church in Colorado

Grant Amount: \$40,000

Grant Period: January 1 – December 31, 2025

Overview

We are deeply grateful for the High Plains Region's support of Holy Companion, a Special Congregation of the Episcopal Church in Colorado. Your generous \$40,000 grant has enabled us to offer creative and consistent ministry centered on worship, formation, and outreach, while nurturing intergenerational belonging, interfaith partnerships, and lay leadership development in Douglas County. We hope you enjoy reading this report and seeing photos of the fruits of your generosity in the subsequent pages.

We continue to attract many people who have not been regular churchgoers as adults. In Holy Companion they find a community whose Episcopal ethos is welcoming of their questions and their commitment to social justice, and a place where they can heal from past religious hurts, while trusting that their children's innate spirituality will be celebrated and its development supported. Most of our members are millennials or young Gen-Xers with children, though we have gained some older Gen-Xers and a couple of Boomers as well.

14 households are regular attendees (defined as attending at least once a month for the last 6 months); 9 households are semi-regular attendees (defined as attending once a quarter for last 6 months); an additional 9 households have attended at least one worship service. We have also engaged with additional folks through community gatherings like our very successful Easter egg hunt (with around 12 non-regular Holy Companion families participating), and through our interfaith coalition-building efforts in Douglas County.

Worship & Community Life

This fiscal year, Holy Companion has deepened our rhythm of shared prayer and public witness through collaborative, creative liturgy:

- During Black History Month, we offered Black Light, an Evening Prayer gathering featuring music from the Black Spiritual tradition, readings from Black leaders, and a community story and candle-making workshop led by Holy Companions Devin and Ron Porch of Sunshine Farms.
- In March, we welcomed Mennonite pastor and author Hannah Martin, who preached and read from her new children's book *Sparking Peace*, inspired by the anti-violence work of RAW Tools. Her presence empowered Holy Companions of all ages to engage courageous conversations about transforming violence.
- Holy Week was marked by ecumenical worship with Christ's Church Castle Rock, St. Philip-in-the-Field, and St. Luke's UMC, including Maundy Thursday, Stations of the Cross, Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunrise Eucharist.

- Our Feast Day (Easter 3) centered on the Emmaus Road narrative that grounds our identity and name.

We have celebrated the Eucharist 15 times, gathered for Evening Prayer six times, celebrated one wedding (that of our new music minister!), and a baptism.

Children continue to make up a significant portion of our morning and early evening gatherings, averaging nine children per service (this number includes several late evening and early morning services where there have not been children — our Sunday morning Eucharists average 11 children). Our later evening gatherings offer a contemplative, peaceful space for adults. This balance across generations has led our leadership team to deepen our commitment to intergenerational ministry. We have entered a coaching relationship with Roots & Wings Intergenerational Formation Collaborative at Virginia Theological Seminary, and are engaging the Calvin Institute of Worship's Worshipping Communities Grant process to further develop practices of intergenerational liturgy and formation.

Formation & Leadership Development

Our formation offerings this quarter have centered on spiritual healing, Episcopal identity, and justice-rooted theology:

- A dozen Holy Companions read *God Didn't Make Us to Hate Us* by the Rev. Lizzie McManus-Dail (Jubilee Episcopal Church, Austin). The group opened space for rich theological reflection and healing from toxic theological teachings. Several participants preparing for confirmation.
- In May, three members were confirmed at the High Plains Regional Confirmations, following a retreat at Sacred Heart Retreat House focused on Episcopal tradition, common prayer, and faith sharing.
- We also launched a summer book study on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* in partnership with Grace Presbyterian, All People Intercultural Community, and Christ's Episcopal, with six participants engaging across congregations.
- We welcomed Kate Saunders, a postulant from the Diocese of Western Massachusetts and second-year seminarian at Iliff School of Theology. Kate discovered us through a Jubilee social media post. With a strong background in children and youth ministry, she has already made a wonderful impact on our intergenerational community.
- Over the last 6 months, we have participated in a local ecumenical cohort called Reimagine Church, which has been a vital community of discernment and support.
- I (Rev. Lauren) teamed up with the Rev. Carl Adair, church planter in Queens, NY, to convene a grassroots cohort of church planters and redevelopers in the absence of denominationally organized gatherings following the Presiding Bishop's staff realignment in January. This group has been pushing for clarity from TEC regarding the grants process for church plants, while supporting one another in monthly Zoom meetings. Lauren also built a Discord server to support asynchronous community-building and resourcing.

Outreach & Justice Ministry

Your support allows Holy Companion to live out our call to justice through direct service, mutual aid, and interfaith collaboration:

- In the first quarter of the year, we teamed up with a network of parishes supporting immigrant and refugee families, donating two carloads of food, baby gear, and postpartum supplies. This helped our community move from helplessness to action, embodying hope in tangible ways. Two members are helping us move toward a regular advocacy day on the fourth weekend of the month.
- Newcomer families continue to join Holy Companion. Many have named our intergenerational inclusivity, especially for children and youth with disabilities or neurodivergence, and our commitment to justice-focused liturgy and advocacy—including full LGBTQ+ celebration, racial equity, and immigrant solidarity—as reasons for making this community their spiritual home.

We are also leading an ambitious vision for interfaith organizing in Douglas County. In April, we convened the third meeting of the Interfaith Coalition of Douglas County, which now includes:

- 13 churches
- 2 mosques
- 1 synagogue

Together, the coalition is preparing for 501(c)(3) incorporation and planning Neighborhood Visioning Gatherings this fall in Sterling Ranch. As convener, I began conversations with key partners—Highlands Ranch Islamic Association, Grace Presbyterian, and St. Luke's UMC—about how they might support and resource this growing coalition. We hope that this network will be the foundation upon which to build an Interfaith Center in Sterling Ranch. Whether or not a building is a result of this organization, the relationships have already borne tremendous fruit. We have identified our Mission and Vision as follows:

- **MISSION:** Rooted in love, the Interfaith Coalition of Douglas County cultivates courageous solidarity in sacred space with our diverse neighbors, in pursuit of compassionate understanding across our distinct spiritual beliefs and religious traditions, advocating for human dignity and spiritual flourishing for all.
- **VISION:** The Interfaith Coalition of Douglas County envisions a regional community characterized by mutual respect across a diverse array of spiritual and religious backgrounds, and committed to the dignity and well-being of all our neighbors.

Outcomes & Impact (Q1 & Q2 2025)

Average attendance	19.5	21	Slight increase (+7.2%) despite summer travel
Average number of children	10 per service	8 per service	Children are a significant portion of attendance
Newcomers welcomed	19 individuals (8 households)	22 individuals (14 households)	41 new individuals welcomed, 22 households total
Individual donations received	\$1,030 (31.9% increase from Q4 2024)	\$2,455 (138% increase from Q1)	Total \$3,485 YTD; strong donor engagement growth
Eucharist celebrated	6	10	16 total Eucharists celebrated YTD
Evening Prayer gatherings	3	3	6 total gatherings
Joy in Creation Morning Prayer	0	2	First time liturgy led by lay leaders during vicar's absence
Other liturgies/events	Blessing of a Home, Ashes to Go	1 wedding	Various community liturgies offered
Formation group participants	12	6 (Life Together book study)	Total 18 participants in formation groups
Confirmations	0	3 confirmed in May	Including Confirmation retreat
Interfaith Coalition meetings	Numerous 1-1s	3	Growing regional collaboration
Partner congregations engaged	*Not specified*	7	Expanding partnerships across denominations

Holy Companion has maintained steady and growing participation across the first half of 2025. Attendance increased modestly by 7.2% from Q1 to Q2 despite typical summer travel, while individual donations grew significantly—rising 31.9% from Q4 2024 to Q1 2025, then an additional 138% in Q2. These increases demonstrate growing community engagement and generosity.

Newcomers continue to join our congregation, attracted by our commitment to intergenerational ministry and justice-rooted worship and outreach. Formation groups remain vibrant with 18 participants engaged in Lenten and summer book studies focusing on Episcopal theology and liberative Christian practices.

Our liturgical offerings remain varied and responsive to community needs, including Ashes to Go and home blessings in Q1 and a wedding, baptism, and Creation-care oriented outdoor

liturgies in Q2. The launch of the Interfaith Coalition of Douglas County in Q2 adds an exciting new dimension to our justice and outreach work.

Budget Overview (January–June 2025)

- *See attached spreadsheet for details.*
- We are continuing to do beautiful ministry on a shoestring budget. Giving from within our community is slowly but steadily going up as more folks decide to make Holy Companion their spiritual home.
- The biggest impact on our budget this year was the lack of denominational funding. We had anticipated ~\$30K in grants disbursed this summer. Unfortunately, the Presiding Bishop's staff realignment in early 2025 resulted in a severely delayed grant-making process which is only now getting underway with the assembly of a new task force for church planting. Grant applications are still not yet open, and it is unlikely at this point that grants will be made within the fiscal year. I have not been able to be paid the half-time rate which was budgeted to start in July, though I have been working half-time since then. The plan is that I will receive back pay once grants are eventually allocated.
- We will apply for additional regional grants in October from regions outside of our own (as High Plains has committed to \$40K/year through 2027). We are also in process of applying for additional project-based grants as well, including from Episcopal Church Women (\$1000 for a new Joyful Noise Community Choir project), Episcopal Evangelism Society (\$5000 for our seminarian to do a project), TEC's Becoming Beloved Community Grant (\$15,000, including covering five hours a week of my time going toward the Interfaith Coalition), and the Calvin Institute of Worship (\$25,000 for a project focused on lament and celebration, which will include a SoulShop suicide prevention and response workshop, and End of Life planning workshop, both of which we will be extending to our wider Episcopal and ecumenical networks, as well as our neighborhood).

Closing

Thanks to your partnership, Holy Companion continues to grow as a spiritual home, a justice-rooted worshipping community, and a leader in interfaith and intergenerational ministry. We are seeing lives transformed and new leaders equipped—across age, tradition, and identity. Your support is not just sustaining a congregation, but seeding a regional movement rooted in the love and liberating vision of Christ.

Giving thanks on the Way,

Lauren+

The Rev. Lauren Grubaugh Thomas

Vicar, Holy Companion

August 2025

Holy Companion 2025 Financials											
Actuals vs. Budget											
	Q1 March 31, 2025				Q2 June 30, 2025				YTD June 30, 2025		
	Q1 Actual	Q1 Budget	B (W) Budget	Q2 Actual	Q2 Budget	B (W) Budget	Q1-Q2 YTD Actual	Q1 + Q2	B (W) Budget	Annual Budget	% of Total
REVENUE	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q2	Q2	Q2	Q1 + Q2	Q1 + Q2	Q1 + Q2	TOTAL YEAR	% of Total
High Plains grant	10,000.00	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	10,000.00	-	20,000.00	20,000.00	-	40,000.00	46.51%
NorthWest grant	5,000.00	5,000.00	-	-	-	-	5,000.00	5,000.00	-	5,000.00	5.81%
New Episcopal Communities Grant			-		-	-	-	-	-	30,000.00	34.88%
Diocesan contribution			-		-	-	-	-	-	5,000.00	5.81%
Contributions	1,030.00	1,500.00	(470.00)	3,105.00	1,500.00	1,605.00	4,135.00	3,000.00	1,135.00	6,000.00	6.98%
TOTAL REVENUES	16,030.00	16,500.00	(470.00)	13,105.00	11,500.00	1,605.00	29,135.00	28,000.00	1,135.00	86,000.00	100.00%
EXPENSES											
Continuing Education		375.00	375.00	231.99	375.00	143.01	231.99	750.00	518.01	1,500.00	2.05%
Diocesan Events	320.00	500.00	180.00	10.00	500.00	490.00	330.00	1,000.00	670.00	2,000.00	2.74%
Discretionary		250.00	250.00		250.00	250.00	-	500.00	500.00	1,000.00	1.37%
Leadership Development	224.53	250.00	25.47	497.83	250.00	(247.83)	722.36	500.00	(222.36)	3,500.00	4.79%
Office/Admin	900.50	500.00	(400.50)	969.61	500.00	(469.61)	1,870.11	1,000.00	(870.11)	2,000.00	2.74%
Outreach	337.77	250.00	(87.77)	397.76	250.00	(147.76)	735.53	500.00	(235.53)	1,000.00	1.37%
Spiritual Formation	320.70	250.00	(70.70)	599.29	250.00	(349.29)	919.99	500.00	(419.99)	1,000.00	1.37%
Transportation (mileage)	461.79	250.00	(211.79)	845.18	250.00	(595.18)	1,306.97	500.00	(806.97)	1,000.00	1.37%
Worship	4,289.06	3,500.00	(789.06)	3,476.80	3,500.00	23.20	7,765.86	7,000.00	(765.86)	14,000.00	19.16%
Personnel (incl Housing)	6,000.00	6,000.00	-	6,000.00	6,000.00	-	12,000.00	12,000.00	-	36,000.00	49.27%
SECA (7.65% of wages)	459.00	459.00	-	459.00	459.00	-	918.00	918.00	-	2,754.00	3.77%
Pension	1,162.62	1,162.62	-	1,162.62	1,162.62	(0.00)	2,325.24	2,325.24	-	7,306.20	10.00%
TOTAL EXPENSES	14,475.97	13,746.62	(729.35)	14,650.08	13,746.62	(903.46)	29,126.05	27,493.24	(1,632.81)	73,060.20	100.00%
REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	1,554.03	2,753.38	(1,199.35)	(1,545.08)	(2,246.62)	701.54	8.95	506.76	(497.81)	12,939.80	
Plus 2024 Carry Forward	3,681.21										
2025 Running Fund Balance	5,235.24			3,690.16			3,690.16				



July baptism at
Chatfield State Park





Clockwise from top left: Mike and Hannah Martin pose with the altar that includes a cross Mike made out of a shotgun barrel (in the spirit of swords to plowshares); backpack tags are blessed during the Back to School liturgy; Mennonite pastor and children's book author Hannah Martin reads *Sparkling Peace*; seminarian Kate Saunders preaches at Joy in Creation





Top to bottom: Sunday morning worship at the Overlook Clubhouse; children in their royal finery for Epiphany; a full band leads the congregation in singing at the Great Easter Vigil