



*Artist Stephen Proctor uses video projection technology to create "visual liturgy" -- one of the multimedia tools that will be used in the *BODY and LAND* presentations to raise awareness of environmental issues and eco-justice.*

Holy Trinity \$22K 'Care for Creation' Grant to Fund Multimedia Road Show with Ekklesia

With \$22,000 in funding from a grant by the national church, Holy Trinity and Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet will stage a series of nine multimedia presentations throughout the diocese over the next year, culminating in a week-long event at the newly renovated Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford next June. Entitled *BODY and LAND*, the presentations are modeled on Ekklesia's *Dance & Dialogue* series, which combines a dance performance with panel discussions on such issues as racial justice, mental health and the environment.

"Dance, like all art, provides a bridge to discuss divisive issues," the grant proposal notes. The presentations will combine choreography, film, poetry and a re-imagined score of Vivaldi's "Four Seasons." The score incorporates sounds — along with images — of seasonal climate change (glaciers melting, forest fires, hurricanes, etc.) These will highlight the impact of climate change on bodies, on communities, and on the planet.

Each event will have a panel discussion with four speakers: a local community advocate, a member of clergy, Ekklesia's theologian in residence and the work's choreographer, as well as the dancers and poets of color whose poetry reveals the connection between climate change and justice.

The program will culminate during the week of June 6-11, 2022 with a statewide eco-justice festival at Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford, where the presentation will be

augmented by the work of a nationally known video projection artist, Stephen Proctor, along with theologians Ellen Davis and Willie Jennings.

Immersive video projection technology will be used within the cathedral's renovated space to bring the expanse of God's creation indoors. The grant proposal notes that "while all of Creation is declaring the glory of the Lord, we consistently find ourselves praying & communing indoors, cut off from the divine, natural beauty that surrounds us."

The *BODY and LAND* project is one of 10 nationwide awarded grants in 2021 by the Episcopal Church's Task Force on the Care of Creation and Environmental Racism. Holy Trinity and Ekklesia will receive \$22,000, which includes administrative costs. The task force funded projects totaling \$118,300 this year.

"We have been given a huge vote of confidence by the national episcopal church," commented the Rev. Mary Barnett. "This is one of only ten grants across the entire United States, and the second largest award overall."

The grant proposal envisions the project becoming a model that could be adopted across the church for using the arts to bridge conventional political divides and to enter into deeper conversations on critical issues. Ekklesia's mission in particular has been to use dance as an entry point "for engaging local communities in long overdue dialogues regarding the Kingdom of God and its reality 'among us' — in the here and now." Similarly, Holy Trinity has been seeking to find innovative ways to reach out to Middletown and surrounding communities.

#