



On May 1st and 2nd the Reverend Mary Johnson, Solveigh Barney, and Ashley Hubbard attended the 2nd annual Episcopal Grasslands Network gathering in Amarillo, Texas. This 2-day gathering included landowners and creation trustees throughout our Eco-Region Network from the dioceses of Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Navajoland, Nebraska, North Dakota, Northwest Texas, the Rio Grande, South Dakota, Western Kansas, and Wyoming. What is an Eco-Region Network? Legislative action of the 81st General Convention (Resolution 2024-B002) identified “Eco-Region Creation Networks” as groups of Episcopalians that share an ecosystem and/or watershed. For example, the Episcopal Grasslands Network is a group of Episcopalians that share the Great Plains grassland ecosystem - consisting of northern mixed prairie, tall grass prairie, and short grass prairie - and many depend on the Ogallala Aquifer as a water resource. Another Eco-Region Network announced at the 2025 inaugural Episcopal Grasslands Network Gathering is the East Coast Network and includes the dioceses of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Western Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire. Eco-Region Networks “link people, projects, and properties dedicated to nature-based solutions to slow climate change through preserving and restoring plant communities appropriate to their bioregion; modeling transformative agriculture and food systems; and tackling issues of water quality and supply.”¹

¹ https://digitalarchives.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2024-B002

Eco-Region Networks commit to gathering in efforts to exchange best practices, share encouragement and resources, maintain accountability, pray regularly for each other and specific areas of creation care and justice, and support one another in the event of extreme climate events.

The theme for this year's Episcopal Grasslands Network gathering was "Let Justice Roll Down Like Water," focusing on the sacred responsibility of water stewardship throughout the Great Plains region. Workshops and presentations explored a wide range of topics including "Water That Bears Fruit: Food Forests & Gardens on Campus and Church Lands," "Hope for Nature: Livestock & People on the High Plains," "Justice Through Organic Mentoring: Kansas Black Farmers Association & Historic Nicodemus," and "Communal Care & The High Plains Aquifer System." Participants also engaged in a thoughtful panel discussion on "AI and Water: Local Impact and Issues of Justice," examining the growing environmental demands of emerging technologies and their impact on vulnerable ecosystems and communities. Gathering sites included St. Peter's and St. Andrew's in Amarillo, and field trips to the Ogallala Commons Playa Classroom and Wildcat Bluff Nature Center provided opportunities for hands-on learning and deeper appreciation for the prairie ecosystem we share.

Throughout the two-day gathering, participants worshiped together, exchanged ideas and best practices, and formed affinity groups to encourage ongoing collaboration and accountability in creation care ministries. The event concluded with a joyful Low Country boil and bluegrass concert celebrating fellowship, community, and the beauty of the grasslands region. The Episcopal Grasslands Network continues to serve as a pilot program for the Episcopal Church's broader Eco-Region Creation Networks initiative, linking people, projects, and properties dedicated to nature-based solutions, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, food justice, and outdoor ministries. The goals of the Episcopal Grasslands Network include growing in relationship and prayer, preserving prairie and rangeland ecosystems, pursuing biodiversity on church and private lands, and modeling sustainable food and livestock practices. Anyone interested in learning more about becoming a Creation Trustee or participating in creation care ministries within the diocese is encouraged to contact Missioner Ashley at missioner.ednd@gmail.com.