



EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF THE GREAT LAKES

holy ground for whole communities

dr. jess kidder,

program manager, holy ground for whole communities:

[voice over] Coming into the diocese was, like, unexpected and yet so right. And every step forward into my role has been, like, such a, a soft, welcoming into a group of people that I didn't know I was missing.

Hi, I'm Dr. Jess Kidder, Program Manager for Holy Ground for Whole Communities. I'm so excited to tell you about this opportunity and to invite you to apply.

I want to work together with worshipping communities to understand the depth of the connection that has existed historically, and the consistency of the connection that exists now, and how we continue that, how we expand that into a future that's taking shape. Because the spiritual side of environmental sustainability is that it's really not just what we do. We can make a church building more energy efficient, absolutely. And we should and we will! But we also need to become that spiritual being or that disciple that fully embodies the connection of the ground we walk on, the work we do, and the unique gifts we apply to making the world a more just and loving place.

And how we do that is honestly the most exciting part about Holy Ground for Whole Communities because we don't know. We have a wonderful community of people to work with. We have an amazing grant funding all of this work, and we have the time and space to bring us together through a training program, where we bring in a national nonprofit, partners for Sacred Places, which are just experts at working with congregations across denominations and revisioning their properties and expanding their usefulness and their sustainability and their vitality. And we're also bringing in Plainsong Farm - which is like such an exemplar of this ministry of creation care - in connecting with the Earth as the source of the good we bring into the world. And building this training program to create a sense of buoyancy within our diocese.

And we'll do that through a four-part training series online through zoom. hour and a half, February through March. And then we'll come together and in-person gathering at where we get to share in person and share space and collaborate and connect. and then Partners for

Sacred Places comes and does a site visit where they do this thorough building analysis. They look at all the spaces, the corners, the walls, the buildings, all of it, and this amazing facilitative conversation that brings in not just the congregation and everybody there, but other people in the community to really understand, you know, the potential and the opportunity of that building. And we work with Plainsong Farm Episcopal Service Corps members to really understand what's under your feet, what's growing there, what can we do here with this actual living entity of ecology under our feet, supporting our building?

And then it's up to all of us to decide what inspires us, what call do we hear to do with the opportunity we have in these spaces and across this land? And the grant then provides \ \$7,000 of seed money to get that project started. And there are no bounds to the creativity to apply those funds. And for me, as the Program Manager, that is so exciting to see what inspired practical applications are going to come from this, because I really see it as just the first sprouts of something much larger starting to grow.

The only expectation is for an openness to change and to meet community needs and to create a future that we can all share.

We are the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes and with that comes a really great responsibility. The largest body of fresh water on the entire planet is our border. What can we do together to take care of that incredible gift?

You can apply for Holy Ground for Whole Communities through our application. Seven questions. And applications close November 30th. We're asking this for this cohort to take kind of this leap of faith with us. Something is stirring. Join us! This work will extend throughout our lives. It's just it's an honor to be able to articulate it and to invite you all in to find your holy ground and to create your whole communities.