

## WORSHIP WITH JOY, GROW IN FAITH, **ACT FOR JUSTICE**

St. Clare's ministries that are focused on Acting For Justice include St. Clare's Outreach Commission, Equity Education and Action Committee (EEAC), and the Green Team.

### **Outreach Commission**

St. Clare's Outreach Commission focuses on outreach initiatives at the local, national, and international level, allowing parishioner's concerns to be matched with opportunities to Act For Justice. Efforts are concentrated on hunger, homelessness, poverty, and refugee welcome.

The Back Door Food Pantry is an example of what St. Clare's is doing to help combat hunger in the local community. The Pantry began in 2005 as an outreach program of St. Clare's. Since then, Temple Beth Emeth and members of the Muslim community have joined in the effort. The Pantry is operated by dedicated volunteers who help with ordering food, unloading delivery trucks, stocking shelves, and distributing food every week of the year. Additional information about the Back Door Food Pantry can be found [here](#).



In addition to hands-on ministries, the Outreach Commission is also charged with distribution of financial resources to organizations that work with St. Clare's in Acting For Justice. Additional information about the Outreach Commission and its activities can be found [here](#).

Interested in learning more about St. Clare's Outreach Commission? Contact John Renehan ([johnrclan@outlook.com](mailto:johnrclan@outlook.com)) or Tom Rich ([rich.thomas.e@gmail.com](mailto:rich.thomas.e@gmail.com))

### **Equity Education and Action Committee (EEAC)**

In the summer of 2020, in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and amidst the protests against racial injustice that sprang up across the nation, a number of St. Clarians asked what was being done to ensure that racial justice was a focus of St. Clare's mission to Act For Justice. In response, [St. Clare's Equity Education and Action Committee](#) (EEAC) was formed.



Since its founding, the EEAC has been engaged in a number of activities. It brought Sacred Ground to St. Clare's - a powerful program on race and faith created by The Episcopal Church. Close to 40 folks in four circles participated in the first offering, and three more circles were offered after that. Sacred Ground directly inspired two other EEAC activities:

- ♦ St. Clare's land acknowledgement (formally incorporated into St. Clare's worship service in January 2023)

St. Clare's land acknowledgement was created through a process of close to two years that included input from members of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians, the

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, and the Pokagen Band of Potawatomi Indians. Representatives of the Nottawaseppi Band of Potawatomi reviewed a draft of the land acknowledgement and made suggestions to ensure that the acknowledgement felt authentic to their experience. The Land Acknowledgement can be found [here](#).

◆ A partnership with Perry Early Learning Center (begun in 2023)

Many of us believed that it was important to incorporate work with children into EEAC activities. Debra Stevens, a long-time member of St. Clare's, taught for decades at Perry and pointed out that additional classroom help would make a big difference to both the students and the teachers. Perry is in the Ypsilanti School District and has over 300 students in Pre-K through 1st grade. The school ranks in the top 20% of elementary schools in Michigan for

- Diversity of the student population
- The percentage of students who qualify for free lunches.

Volunteers from St. Clare's work with Title I teachers in helping 1<sup>st</sup> graders with reading or help out in individual classrooms. It is a way of showing teachers that we not only value what they do but also taking the time to provide extra support. For the students, there is an extra hand to hold and an extra voice to tell them "You are loved." Volunteers' reflections on their experience at Perry can be found [here](#).

A list of other EEAC activities can be found [here](#).

Interested in learning more about St. Clare's Equity Education and Action Committee (EEAC)? Contact Ann Putallaz at [annp1025@yahoo.com](mailto:annp1025@yahoo.com).

## **Green Team**

St. Clare's Environmental Committee – aka the "[Green Team](#)" – works to identify opportunities for the community to embrace creation care through faith-based, personal practices.

The Genesis Board also has a Green Team focused on the decarbonization of the physical building. While there is overlap between the two entities, St. Clare's Green Team focuses on human behavior and family systems.

Examples of projects by St. Clare's Green Team include:

- ◆ Single use plastics inventories and solutions, including a week-long "challenge" exercise
- ◆ Raising awareness of the circular economy (an economy designed to eliminate waste and keep resources in use for as long as possible) by highlighting activities such as the use of reusable gift wrap during the Christmas season
- ◆ Reducing the use of trash and recycling by encouraging the use of the kitchen resources – dishes, dishwasher, etc.

- ◆ Plant-forward lectures, learning sessions, and potlucks that join all three congregations (St. Clare's, Temple Beth Emeth, and Blue Ocean Faith) in events that highlight low-carbon, healthy, sustainable foods. These events are also tailored to reduce food waste and build community through shared learning, storytelling, and social connections. Pairing potlucks with the Genesis Grounds Committee also helps raise awareness of the landscaping practices that support a more sustainable future.



Environmental justice efforts intersect with other St. Clare's initiatives, including St. Clare's land acknowledgment, racial justice, outreach, the Back Door Food Pantry, and other service work.

Interested in learning more about St. Clare's Environmental Committee? Contact Jennifer Wolf at [jwolf2000@gmail.com](mailto:jwolf2000@gmail.com)