



St. Clare's Episcopal Church

Worship with Joy · Grow in Faith · Act for Justice

At St. Clare's, we meet children and youth where they are. Through play and prayer, books and music, community and service, we notice where God is in the world, explore what Jesus's life, death, and resurrection can teach us about God, and develop tools to understand and express God's great big love.

Our programs are directed by Children and Youth Program Director Eliza Nuxoll, in close collaboration with Rev. Anne and Music Director John Goodell, as well as many, many wonderful volunteers. Our programs are supported on Sunday morning by a paid Children and Youth Ministry Assistant.

The children and youth programs have experienced tremendous growth as more families join the St. Clare's community. In just three years, attendance has grown 400%, while our costs for these activities has increased just 61%. It is worth noting that the cost of the Children and Youth Program Director and Children's Ministry assistant in 2025 is only 5% of our annual budget. This cost is supplemented, as Rev. Anne and John Goodell devote some of their salaried time to this area of ministry. Including 20% of Rev. Anne and John's salaries into this calculation, we potentially devote 22% of our annual budget to programs for children and youth.

Creating a welcoming space for all ages is an important, named value for our congregants. Children and youth are invited into all areas of worship and church life. Watching them step up, engage, and thrive at St. Clare's has been a gift to the heart.

On these next few pages, we hope you enjoy reading more about each area of programming. If you have questions about St. Clare's Children and Youth programs, please reach out to Eliza Nuxoll (eliza@saintclareschurch.org) or Rev Anne Clarke (anne@saintclareschurch.org).

St. Clare's weekly programs: Sundays and Wednesdays



Children's Chapel and Church School on Sunday mornings

Beginning in Fall 2025, we will have two classrooms using the Montessori-based Godly Play curriculum; one classroom for ages 2-4, and another classroom for Young 5s through 1st grade. Our team of 10 volunteers and staff share the beautiful work of telling our sacred stories through their words and with the tactile materials that Godly Play uses, and inviting the children into wondering and speaking together: play that teaches us about God.

Our Church School, for grades 2-5, uses a combination of curriculum to engage older children in biblical stories and reflection. We often use legos, theater, creative storytelling, and, of course, snacks, to engage these conversations about God. Church school is led by Kim Dolan and Eliza Nuxoll.



Youth Group on Sunday evenings

Youth group is a time for middle and high schoolers to come together for dinner, learning, conversation, service and community-building activities, and prayer. When we're onsite at church, we eat dinner, talk together about the bible, current issues, spirituality, and the church, and then pray together to close the evening in the chapel. Once or twice a month we meet offsite for another kind of activity, or participate in a wider congregational event (Sometimes the youth group invites the congregation to participate in their events, like kayaking or blessing of the animals!)

Our youth group has just completed its first post-pandemic summer trip, with a creation care learning journey to Cincinnati with other leaders and participants around the diocese. Our older youth, especially, have worked hard and carefully discerned about building this part of our program back up over the past couple of years, and we will continue to build up a cycle of these trips for future years. Our congregation showed great support through our annual chili cookoff, and along with support from the diocese, we were able to defray most of the cost of the trip for families.

Youth Group is led by Rev. Anne, with co-leaders Linda Smith, Cathy Stone, Myles Clarke, and occasional additional volunteers, along with logistical support from Eliza Nuxoll.



Wednesday Evenings

On Wednesday evenings, many of our families gather for music and a meal together. Younger children join in Wonder Buds, a program for ages 0-6 led by Eliza Nuxoll. Older children and youth (1st to 8th grade) sing in the Cantabile choir, led by John Goodell and Barb Kilbourn. Cantabile presents a full musical each spring that is shared with the congregation on a Sunday morning.

After programs, families gather in the social hall for a simple dinner and a lovely time of play and conversation.



Intergenerational Celebrations and Life Together

While it's good to have programs that meet children and youth at their developmental stages, a church is ultimately about life together, and much of its beauty comes from the chances we have to build relationships across generations. Luckily, St. Clarians of all ages embrace the lovely chaos and bumps that can go along with that beauty.

We have many formal and informal opportunities to connect:

- at our lively coffee hours (sometimes hosted by youth group!),
- at intergenerational celebrations or learning experiences, like the Advent Festival and Ruby Bridges event,
- or during opportunities for service, like packing lunches for Food Gatherers.

This part of our life together is harder to quantify but it is often the area that people describe when they talk about what they love about St. Clare's. It is the fruit of a culture of collaboration, warmth, flexibility, and joy, and is sustained by good communication and imagination on the part of our leaders.