

CATHOLIC  
ECOLOGY  
CENTER



# 2025 IMPACT REPORT





### FROM OUR FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2025 was certainly a year filled with the Holy Spirit! It's so exciting to see the lives of thousands impacted by our mission, drawing people closer to Christ through encountering creation. Our impact is record breaking with over 8,000 people taking part in programming in 2025 alone. Since we opened our doors in March of 2021, over 30,000 people have experienced our hope filled message, with our reach now extending beyond the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and even out of state. I am so very grateful to all the donors, members, volunteers and prayers that make the Catholic Ecology Center possible.

It is fun seeing the property come alive in different ways during all four seasons. In addition to our diverse and faith-filled programming, we love being able to create a great visitor experience, keeping our building and trails open everyday for those wanting to explore, pray, relax and enjoy. I continue to be humbled by all the amazing things God is doing through our ministry.

With a grateful heart and trust in our Lord, I look forward to a blessed 2026!

JOE MEYER

# CONNECTING TO CHRIST AND HIS CREATION



### BY THE NUMBERS: OUR IMPACT IN 2025

**Connecting** WITH OVER 8,000 YOUTH, FAMILIES AND ADULTS

**Serving** THROUGH 2,700 VOLUNTEER HOURS OF STEWARDSHIP BY

**675 DIFFERENT VOLUNTEERS**

**Educating** THROUGH 1,025 HOURS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND RETREATS;

**WORKING WITH OVER 70 PARISHES, SCHOOLS AND ORGANIZATIONS**



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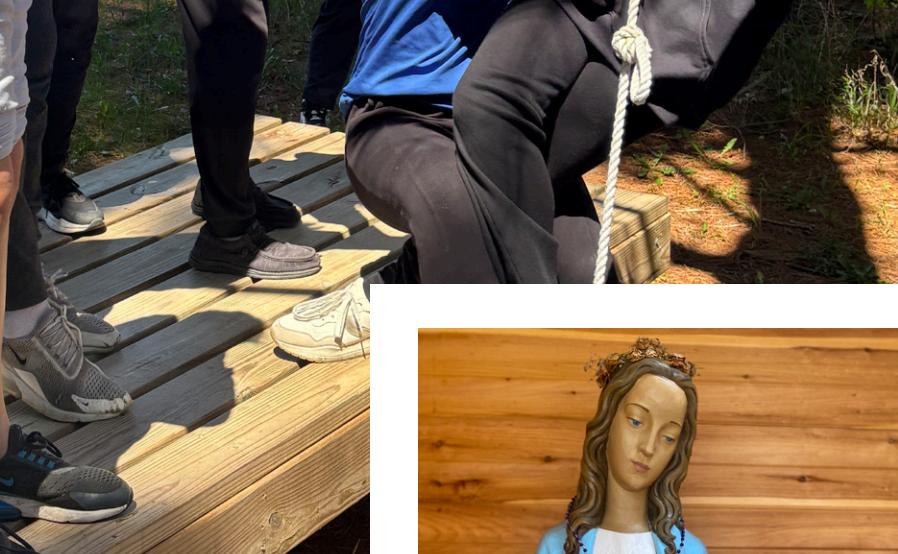


### OUR MISSION

To deepen faith and foster a stewardship ethic through hands-on encounters with the natural world.

The Catholic Ecology Center began in 2021 and is a ministry of Laudato Si' Project, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization our founder began in 2016.

# FAITH & RETREATS



## MEET OUR NEW CHAPLAIN

Father Andrew Linn, the local pastor at St. John in Rubicon, St. Matthew in Neosho and St. Kilian in Hartford, agreed to be our new chaplain moving forward into 2026. We are so grateful to now have adoration and Mass on the third Monday of each month.

*"Rejoicing in all that God has revealed of Himself through the Church, the Catholic Ecology Center invites the faithful and all who seek God to discover how he has also revealed Himself in creation. I am always moved by the beauty I discover at the CEC and am delighted to serve as chaplain."*

FR. ANDREW LINN



We had record numbers of people this year visit the CEC to connect with God through the beauty of creation. Surrounded by life, beauty and simplicity, we can hear and see God in new and deeper ways. Our beautiful Holy Family Chapel has allowed many school and parish retreats to include Mass and adoration and we now reserve the Blessed Sacrament permanently. Our year-round overnight accommodations provide groups the chance to extend their retreat over multiple days. We were privileged to journey with a multitude of students, families and staff from dozens of parishes, schools and organizations throughout 2025. Quiet time for prayer and reflection, learning to work as a team and putting our faith into action through service projects has worked to create rejuvenating, grace-filled retreats.

The Catholic Ecology Center provides a magnificent place for people of all ages to encounter our Lord and grow in relationship with Him!

# ECOLOGY PROGRAMS

Our ecology programming in 2025 helped foster awe and wonder for the beauty of creation and especially the marvelous Creator behind it all! As St. Augustine said, "If you love what He has made, love still more He who has made it." In our summer camps and through hands-on field sciences, we explore the intricacies and interconnectedness of the ecosystems around us. Through water-quality testing and monitoring wildlife, we seek to know how to be the best stewards possible in caring for the great diversity of species found here: 29 mammal species, 138 bird species and 44 butterfly species! Whether in the forest, pond or prairie the heavens proclaim the greatness of the Lord!



*Every creature is a glittering, glistening mirror of divinity.*

ST. HILDEGARD OF BINGEN



## FROM OUR PROGRAM COORDINATOR

I am struck this year by the revelation of beauty throughout the CEC. Most obviously in God's creation that surrounds us—the colorful flowers, towering trees, meandering waterways and fantastic array of insects, birds, and other wildlife, all constantly and quietly changing through each season. Nature sure puts on a show. But, look carefully, and beauty will reveal itself in other ways, too: In the artist's work, a child's spark of wonder, friendships forming, silent prayers, students overcoming fear and challenge, peace descending upon retreatants of all ages, uninhibited imaginations and unbridled joy. There is so much beauty to behold here. Where will you encounter it next? Come on out and see!

JACKIE LESPERANCE

Thanks to our interns for their help this summer!

*Help us to be faithful stewards of what the Lord has entrusted to us,  
administering it with justice and responsibility.*

POPE LEO XIV

# STEWARDSHIP



## FROM OUR VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

*We are extremely grateful to have volunteer help at the CEC! Some of the 2025 projects included trail work, bluebird house monitoring, assisting with events, cleaning and keeping our gardens weeded and property looking great!*

KIM KREIMANN



*Lend a hand!*

We always need help! If you are interested in helping our mission, visit our website: [CatholicEcologyCenter.org/volunteer](http://CatholicEcologyCenter.org/volunteer) or email: [kreimann@catholicecologycenter.org](mailto:kreimann@catholicecologycenter.org)



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

We would like to especially thank Therese Cieslewicz, Maureen Mitchell and Denise Murre for volunteering to run our welcome desk. We are so grateful for their smiling faces and warm welcome greeting visitors as they arrive.

Interested in helping at the front welcome desk?

262-419-8558  
[info@catholicecologycenter.org](mailto:info@catholicecologycenter.org)



## OUR NEW SOLAR ARRAY

The CEC got a new look! Our additional 24kW solar array (now 36kW total) will take us off grid for our electrical needs most of the year. Over the course of our arrays lifespan, it will offset the CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent of planting over 21,000 trees or driving a gas vehicle 1.8 million miles.

We are grateful for this gift in memory of Devin Wyatt!

*Inspired by Saint Francis, may we experience our interdependence with all creatures who are loved by God and worthy of love and respect.*

POPE LEO XIV

# WORKSHOPS



The CEC workshops this year were as varied as our property and seasons. Whether searching for wild edibles, painting with foraged inks, learning to sew or tasting delicious chocolate there is fun for everyone. It has been inspiring for our staff to see people engage in learning and wonder through these workshops.

Some of the highlights included sharing in the laughter during the advent wreath making class, seeing delight from kids as sap dripped from a maple tree and witnessing everything sparkle during a morning class of cross country skiing. God's goodness and creativity have certainly been on display!

Stay up to date by following us on social media and our website:  
[CatholicEcologyCenter.org/events](http://CatholicEcologyCenter.org/events)



## MEET OUR NEW EDUCATORS

Garrett grew up on a farm in central Wisconsin and earned a degree in Biology from the UW-La Crosse. For the past several summers, he has served at Camp Tekakwitha in a variety of roles. Whether on the farm, at camp or out in nature, Garrett has always found that God reveals Himself most clearly through the beauty of creation.

MaryGrace grew up in Birmingham, Alabama and attended Benedictine College where she studied Biology with minors in Theology and Environmental Studies. In college, she became very passionate about the relationship between faith and science and loves to help people understand our world through both of these lenses.

Both Garrett and MaryGrace are looking forward to bringing their deep faith and love for learning to the Catholic Ecology Center's team!

*The center is a very special place for me and my family.  
I feel closer to God when I am there.*

CEC MEMBER

# EVENTS

There was so much joy throughout the year as the Catholic Ecology Center hosted many fantastic events including maple syruping, candlelight hike, owl prowl and more! With our partner organizations, we hosted events like the Church & the Land, Beer & Brats for Babies with Bishop Hying and the Pilgrimage of Hope for Creation. The annual family campout was a big success, with dozens of families spending quality time outside, in prayer and in fellowship. The highlight of fall 2025 was celebrating Mass with Archbishop Grob and our former chaplain Father John LoCoco (see following page).

Stay up to date by following us on social media and our website:

[CatholicEcologyCenter.org/events](http://CatholicEcologyCenter.org/events)



*Standing awestruck before a mountain, he or she cannot separate this experience from God, and perceives that the interior awe being lived has to be entrusted to the Lord.*

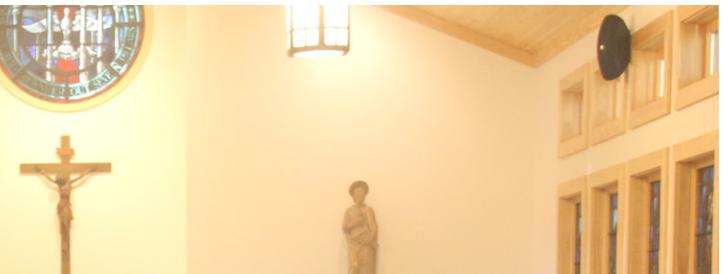
ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS



*Jesus, make yourself at home! Live within me as if it were your own dwelling!*

CARLO ACUTIS

# ARCHBISHOP GROB AT THE CEC



*Through his artistic creativity man appears more than ever in the image of God.*

POPE JOHN PAUL II

# ART: FINDING GOD IN BEAUTY

## MEMBERS ART SHOW

This year we held our first annual Members Art Show. The CEC was abuzz with creative juices as members of all ages shared their talent.

Samuel Bates, a 3rd generation stone carver, was our keynote speaker. He shared his process and the philosophy behind his work *Ex Nihilo*. This stone triptych, 12 ft x 6 ft, was donated to the CEC by Mark and Emily Koczela.



## ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

The CEC Artist-in-Residence invites artists to combine their passion for faith, creativity and love for the outdoors to create an unique body of work inspired by their stay on our property.

Tori Tasch created paper from invasive species she collected during her stay at the CEC. Bonnie Schetski created a collection of collages inspired by our prairie and the birds that live there. Both artists held workshops to share their process.

Learn more at [CatholicEcologyCenter.org/art](http://CatholicEcologyCenter.org/art)



*Everything growing on earth, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt Him above all forever.*  
DANIEL 3:76

# CLARE GARDENS



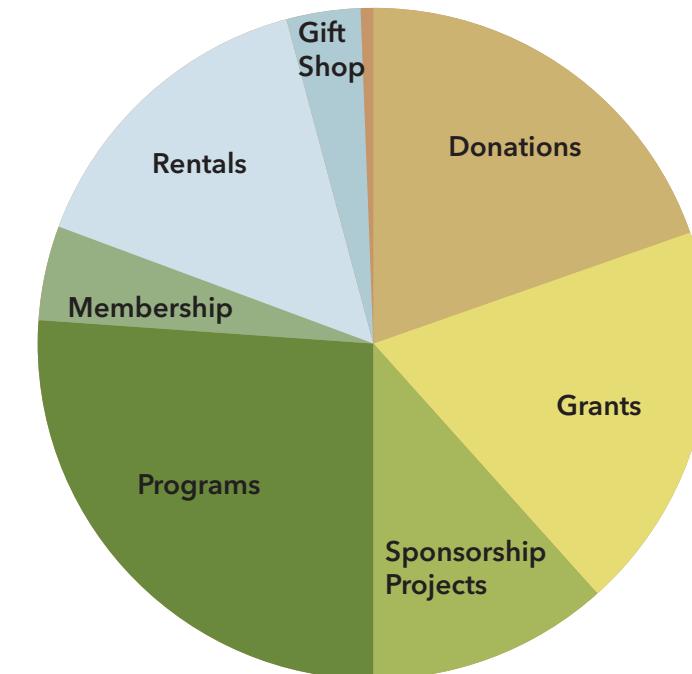
Clare Gardens provides farm fresh produce through a subscription share service to long-term care institutions in the Milwaukee area. These care facilities also come to visit the farm on regular field trips, seeing first-hand where and how their food is grown. Clare Gardens uses regenerative and organic growing methods and aims to provide consistent, nutritious, high-quality produce to kitchens while striving to be good land stewards.

In 2025, Clare Gardens completed its fourth full growing season at the CEC with over 18,000 pounds of vegetable produce made up of 42 crops! The farm works to close the nutrient loop with the resident homes by composting 5,800 pounds of kitchen scraps this year alone. This year, in addition to our honey bees and laying hens, we welcomed to our farmyard Peter and Paul, the Nigerian dwarf goats, and Larry, the kunekune pig.

The fall farmstand makes this amazing organic produce available to all of our visitors and neighbors.



# CEC FINANCES



## 2025 REVENUES

Membership	\$18,187
Donations	\$79,426
Grants	\$75,299
Program Fees	\$106,053
Sponsorships Projects	\$45,832
Rentals	\$61,566
Gift Shop	\$14,261
Other	\$12,256
<b>Total Operational Revenue</b>	<b>\$402,880</b>

Building Addition Campaign	
Restricted Revenue '25	(\$182,354)

## 2025 EXPENSES

Programs	\$212,640
Operational and Administrative	\$91,425
Supplies and Office	\$4,483
Marketing and Advertising	\$16,439
Sponsorship Projects	\$50,532
Gift Shop	\$5,502
<b>Total Operational Expenses</b>	<b>\$381,121</b>

Building Addition Loan Expenses '25	(\$147,724)
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86% of building addition funded from previous donations and pledges. Please donate today!



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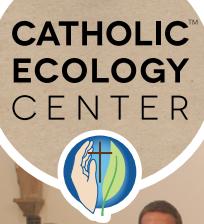
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