

Prairiewoods

A CATHOLIC, FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

Evolutionary Consciousness—Becoming One in Love

We're moving! Gail Worcelo, speaker at Prairiewoods' 2015 *Spirituality in the 21st Century* conference, uses the words "We're moving!" to remind us that we are in an evolving universe. And it is in the nature of evolution to move us to a new frontier, toward greater complexity and fuller union.

The idea of evolutionary progress—that "we're moving"—comes out of a belief that this progressive movement is happening on a deeply interior level. It happens when we are able to, as the 13th-century mystic Meister Eckhart says, sink into the hidden ground of our being, to that sacred space where Divine and human merge.

The late Passionist priest Thomas Berry, a cultural historian and man of great spiritual depth, points out that "*not only are we moving, but moving towards deeper expressions of wholeness, unity, relationality and love.*"

It is part of the evolutionary process, which Berry calls "an internal as well as external event" (Berry, *The Sacred Universe*, 74). To him, evolution is not just out there somewhere, it is in us, and it is moving us toward greater communion in the human community and with God, a God who works from within us rather than from without.

Contemplative monk Thomas Merton felt this oneness within the human community as he once stood at a crowded corner of Fourth and Walnut in Louisville. In an oft-cited epiphany describing a moment of mystical insight, he writes: "I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers ... the whole illusion of a separate holy existence is a dream. I saw the secret beauty of

their hearts" (Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*).

Teilhard de Chardin, a Jesuit paleontologist and pioneering evolutionary thinker, tells us that the process of evolution has always been a movement toward greater complexity, interconnection and a deepening of consciousness. In his *Mass on the World*, he envisioned the universe as having a spiritual as well as a physical dimension, one that faces into the future. It is love that guides this evolution of the world—*love, the "most tremendous, and most mysterious of the cosmic energies."*

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This means that as more and more of us practice contemplation, live in mindfulness of Christ's presence within us and love unconditionally, we are moving the world into what Teilhard terms "creative transformation," or "Christogenesis."

In his book, *15 Days of Prayer with Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*, André Dupleix writes, "Today, something is happening to the whole structure of human consciousness. A fresh kind of life is starting. Driven by the forces of love, the fragments of the world are seeking each other, so that the world may come into being."

The new consciousness that is emerging is one that involves all of creation, it is an evolutionary consciousness.

Its hallmark is oneness, an embodied communion that encompasses all creation in its most magnificent and bewildering diversity.

Pope Francis recognizes this in his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, when he says "Everything is related and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth" (93).

We are indeed moving, urged forward by the God of love who comes to us from the future and who constantly calls us to listen to the deepest yearnings of our hearts, an evolutionary impetus beckoning us toward communion and fullness of life.

by Betty Daugherty, FSPA

This image, taken this fall by NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, shows a spiral galaxy in the constellation Cassiopeia. According to NASA, "The galaxy is currently undergoing an immense burst of star formation. This flurry of activity is shown by the unmistakable blue-hued knots speckling the galaxy's spiral arms, each of which marks a clump of hot newborn stars." As we humans are moving forward, so too are the stars and galaxies and all of creation!



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*"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."
— Albert Schweitzer*

In November, we were treated to the phenomenon of the "supermoon"—the closest full moon we'll see until 2034. (1948 was the last time it was this close!) I happened to be outdoors here at Prairiewoods, early in the evening. As I stood in the restored prairie, the sky to my right was full of sunset colors, while a giant ball of orange rapidly descended below the horizon. On my left, the moon arose, huge and round and bright. Stretching one hand toward each ball of cosmic light, while feeling my feet planted firmly on this Earth, I felt profoundly a part of all creation.

As I stood there, I couldn't help but think of Prairiewoods and our connection with you! We marvel at the moon's beauty, knowing it is visible to us only because the sun's light is reflected there. At Prairiewoods, we know that the light and tranquility of this sacred space, and the healing and transformation that occur here, are only possible because of you. Your willingness to join us, your participation, your presence, the many gifts you share with us—these kindle the flame of Prairiewoods. We are truly, profoundly, grateful.

Thomas Merton tells us that "The deepest level of communication is not communication, but communion. It is wordless ... beyond speech ... beyond concept." As we celebrate the holidays and turn to face the new year, we pray for wisdom and communion. May you find both the time and the silence to seek—and (re)discover—that deep communion, to celebrate with us that "All Are One"!

Peace and all good,

Jenifer Hanson, Director



Prairiewoods is a Catholic ecospirituality retreat and conference center in the Franciscan tradition. It is a nonprofit ministry sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Mission: Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center is a sacred space where people of all faiths and cultures are invited to explore and nurture their relationships with the Source of All Being, Earth, Self and Others with an increasing awareness of the story of the Universe.

Prairiewoods publishes this newsletter bimonthly. Content focuses on happenings and opinions that support Prairiewoods' mission and vision.

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The following are some upcoming programs. Retreats can be found in the Retreat Brochure insert. For more information or to register, visit www.Prairiewoods.org or call 319-395-6700.

Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony
Saturday, Dec. 31, 1–5 p.m.; &
Saturdays, Jan. 14 & Feb. 11, 4–9 p.m.
Facilitator: Kerry Batteau

Prairiewoods offers a Sweat Lodge Ceremony focused on prayer, purification and healing. The lodge is a small dome-shaped structure in which participants sit on the earth around heated stones. Participants are asked to bring food for a simple potluck meal after. Registration is requested so that additional protocols and a release form can be mailed to you.
Fee: Suggested offering of \$10 to Prairiewoods

Hatha Way Yoga
Mondays & Thursdays; Jan. 5–Feb. 27; 9:30–10:30 a.m., 4:15–5:15 p.m. & 5:30–6:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Cindy Hathaway

Link your movements with your breath and cultivate strength, flexibility and relaxation through regular yoga classes. Cindy Hathaway of Hatha Way Yogi leads multiple one hour Gentle/ Beginner's and Chair Yoga classes each Monday and Thursday. Please bring your own mat if possible. People of all fitness levels are welcome.
Fee: \$99 for eleven-punch card or \$60 for six-punch card, one punch per session

Essential Oils at Prairiewoods
Mondays; Jan. 2, Jan. 16, Jan. 30, Feb. 6 & Feb. 20; 6:30–8 p.m.
Facilitators: Rachel Fischer & Donette Johnson

Join a team of teachers every other Monday to learn more about essential oils and their effective, safe use in this ongoing series. Topics include:

- Introduction to Essential Oils with Rachel Fischer (Jan. 2)
- Essential Oils: Beyond the Basics with Rachel Fischer (Jan. 16)
- Thyroid Support with Essential Oils with Donette Johnson (Jan. 30)
- Green Cleaning with Essential Oils with Rachel Fischer (Feb. 6)

- Pain, Inflammation & Supporting Exercise with Essential Oils with Rachel Fischer (Feb. 20)
Fee: \$5 per session

Wednesday Women
Wednesdays, Jan. 4–Feb. 22, 10–11:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Marj English, OSF
 Join this lively group of women every Wednesday to be spiritually enriched, updated, inspired and challenged—you are welcome to come any time!

On Jan. 4, continue watching and discussing the DVD series *Messages of the Mystics* by Barbara Leonhard, OSF, which will introduce you to Jean Vanier, an inspiring modern religious icon.

Jan. 11 through March 15, read and discuss *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being: God, Evolution, and the Power of Love* by Iliia Delio, OSF. Sister Iliia, who will be our speaker at our *Spirituality in the 21st Century* conference May 5–6, combines scripture and science to encourage an inclusive spirituality grounded in a modern understanding of our place in the ever-changing universe. Books are available through the Prairiewoods Office for \$22, and reading assignments are listed online.
Fee: \$10 per session



Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations
Wednesdays; Jan. 4, Jan. 18, Feb. 1 & Feb. 15; 6–7 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer
 Experience sound, stillness, gentle movement, playfulness and relaxation through the enigmatic vibrations of Himalayan singing bowls. During this hour, you will be led in gentle movement through the song of bowls to connect with your inner self, and then be invited to sit or lie on a yoga mat to listen and just be. Hear the sounds and feel the vibrations of the singing bowls going inward. Let your soul rest and allow yourself to be recreated as part of the Universe Story!
Fee: Suggested offering of \$10 per session

Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton
Thursdays; Jan. 5, Jan. 19, Feb. 2 & Feb. 16; 6:30–8 p.m.
Facilitator: Betty Daugherty, FSPA

Do you want to learn to live a more contemplative life? Come learn from the *Bridges to Contemplative Living* series, which includes musings of Thomas Merton and other spiritual writers. The intent is to encourage contemplative living and growth in the ability to respond to life's events with greater faith.
Fee: \$5 per session

Now on Mondays!
Drumming for Healing
Mondays; Jan. 9, Jan. 23, Feb. 13 & Feb. 27; 6–7 p.m.

Facilitator: Sheri Mealhouse (Hawkwoman)
 In the cosmic experience, drumming touches many people at a deep level and brings all creation together as a community. Drumming—and feeling the Creator's rhythm inside of you—resonates with a variety of people. Come see how it resonates with you! No experience is necessary, and percussion instruments are available. All ages welcome! This group meets in the Art Room during winter.
Fee: Free-will offering to facilitator

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers
Tuesdays, Jan. 10 & Feb. 14, 9:30–11 a.m.; & Wednesdays, Jan. 25 & Feb. 22, 7–8:30 p.m.

Practice your hobby in the company of new friends! If you enjoy knitting or crocheting, you are invited to create beautiful works of art in the form of hats, mittens, blankets and baby items. The Knitters & Stitchers are a group of crafters of various skill levels who create handmade goods for charity twice a month. New participants are always welcome.
Fee: Free



Offered in Partnership with Cedar Memorial

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Tuesdays, Jan. 10–Feb. 28,

12:30–3 p.m.; or Thursdays,

Jan. 12–March 2, 5:30–8 p.m.

Combined Extended Class: Saturday, Feb. 18, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Chris Klug

Prairiewoods is the Linn County home for Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). Mindfulness is the quality and power of mind that is deeply aware of what's happening—without judgement, commentary or interference. In this eight-week series, you will cultivate the skill of mindfulness through formal and informal meditation practices. Chris Klug, a grief counselor, has been an instructor in the MBSR program at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics since 2001. Please note that you will not receive confirmation of your registration until after you have a personal conversation with Chris.

Fee: \$400 for eight-week series (partial scholarships available through Cedar Memorial)

Information sessions for the spring MBSR series will be Tuesday, Feb. 28, from 8:30–9:30 a.m., and Wednesday, March 1, from 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Evening Centering Prayer

Tuesdays; Jan. 10, Jan. 24, Feb. 14

& Feb. 28; 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitator: Judith Edwards

Centering prayer is a form of meditation focused on praying in silence. Relax, clear your mind and find God's presence within you during this time of silence and centering prayer. The group meets in the Guest House, and you may join at any time.

Fee: Free-will offering

Cedar Valley Flute Society

Wednesdays; Jan. 11, Jan. 25, Feb. 8

& Feb. 22; 6–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Jonny Lipford & friends

Are you soothed by the sounds of the Native American-style flute? Do you enjoy playing or listening to indigenous instruments? Join this flute

circle facilitated by award-winning instrumentalist Jonny Lipford and others. Surround yourself with a community of like-minded individuals of all skill levels. Everyone is welcome, even if you don't play the flute!

Fee: Free-will offering

Connecting Past Experiences and Present Pain

Thursday, Jan. 12, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitators: Dr. Suzanne Bartlett Hackenmiller, MD, FACOG, FABOIM; & Karen Sindelar, MA LMT R-DMT HTSM-CP, CCA

Trauma comes in many forms. This workshop will delve into some of the research findings and anecdotal evidence in an effort to understand how childhood trauma can be connected to adult illness. Explore the medical research as well as the holistic and spiritual aspects of trauma and how it can manifest in your life. The process may include short experiential exercises, holistic and integrative practices, spiritual practices, group discussion, and affirmations. (Participants will not be expected to share personal experiences.) The evening will end with a conversation about follow up, integrative medicine practices and ongoing support opportunities.

Fee: \$20 (scholarships available)

T'ai Chi Chih®

Thursdays, Jan. 12–Feb. 16, 1–2:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Nancy Hoffman, FSPA

Do you want to feel and be well? T'ai Chi Chih®, or *Joy Through Movement*, is a series of twenty simple actions that are slow, gentle and easily done by anyone, regardless of age or physical condition.

The movements promote physical, mental, emotional and spiritual harmony. No previous experience is necessary. Nancy Hoffman, FSPA, is the holistic services coordinator at Prairiewoods and an accredited T'ai Chi teacher.

Fee: \$60 for six-week series



Men's Prayer Group has a New Name!

Men Exploring Faith

Thursdays; Jan. 12, Jan. 26, Feb. 9 & Feb. 23; 7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Bob Davis

As they mature, many men undergo a major life transformation from goal driven-ness to receptivity, from ego to wisdom. The transition may seem quite disruptive while on the way to being life-enhancing. Join with a small group of reflective men in honest conversation about life's changes and faith's response.

Fee: Free-will offering

Day of Self Renewal

Mondays, Jan. 16 & Feb. 20, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Facilitators: Prairiewoods staff

Find rest and relaxation for your mind, body and spirit during our monthly Day of Self Renewal, which features two 40-minute holistic services of your choice, group energy work, a private guest room, trails for walking, fresh lunch and hours of free time. (Choose from healing touch spiritual ministry, spiritual direction, dream interpretation, Swedish massage, singing bowl body healing, head and shoulder massage or yoga.) Registration, a non-refundable deposit of \$25 and your top three service choices are required at least five days in advance.

Fee: \$95

Singing Bowl Prayer

Mondays, Jan. 16 & Feb. 20,

12:45–1:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer

Let the resonant sounds of gemstone and brass singing bowls relax your entire body and create a pathway for your clearer connection with the divine. Some yoga mats and pillows will be available for your complete relaxation.

Fee: \$5 per session

Rohr Discussion Circle

Tuesdays, Jan. 17 & Feb. 21, 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitator: Prairiewoods staff

Do you enjoy having your conscience pricked or your mind ruffled? Do you seek practical applications of religious teachings in your daily life? Come for a new monthly viewing of a topical presentation by

Father Richard Rohr, OFM, followed by a discussion. Rohr is a Franciscan priest, the founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation, and an internationally recognized ecumenical teacher. He focuses on contemplation and radical compassion, especially for the marginalized, out of a Franciscan perspective. Feel free to bring a meal to enjoy during the viewing.

Fee: \$10

A Morning of *Shinrin Yoku* (Forest Bathing)

Friday, Jan. 20, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

(Snow Date: Monday, Jan. 23)

Facilitator: Dr. Suzanne Bartlett Hackenmiller, MD, FACOG, FABOIM

Explore the ancient healing path of *shinrin yoku*, or forest bathing, with Dr. Suzanne Bartlett Hackenmiller, a practitioner of Integrative Medicine. In an extended gentle, contemplative, guided walk across the Prairiewoods land, use your senses to enhance your well-being in this naturally healing environment. Dress to be outside and be with the land in her annual process of resting. Breathe, relax, wander, touch, smell, taste, see, listen, share and engage. Consider: What if the land actually loves humans? What if it needs us? Come to the land ready to invite its gifts. Speak to it; let it know what you need. Listen; let it whisper its medicine.

Fee: \$15 (\$9 to add lunch)

A New Series at Prairiewoods!

The Spiritual Dimension of Minimalism & Animal Companionship

Sundays, Jan. 22 & Feb. 19, 2–3:30 p.m.

Facilitators: Jennifer Murphy & Nancy Hoffman, FSPA

Is there a spiritual meaning to camping? Can taking a photo or feeding your cat be spiritual? What could be spiritual about clearing out the clutter after Christmas? Explore the spiritual significance of some typical human activities one Sunday each month in the new *Spiritual Dimension of ...* series. The facilitator will make an opening presentation on the topic, and then invite participants to offer responses, stories and experiences. There might even be show and tell! Expand your awareness of the sacred in everyday life when you join

in these unique conversations! Topics include:

- The Spiritual Dimension of Minimalism with life coach Jennifer Murphy (Jan. 22)
- The Spiritual Dimension of Animal Companionship with Franciscan Sister Nancy Hoffman (Feb. 19)

Fee: Suggested offering of \$10 per session



Life = Change. Transitions: Rediscovering the Spark Within

Friday, Feb. 3, 3:30 p.m.–Sunday, Feb. 5, 4 p.m.

Facilitators: Kathleen Macferran & Mary Mackenzie

This workshop will invite you to find peace amid the chaos, spend less time being stressed, get back to balance faster, speak your truth to anyone, stop being hard on yourself, ask for help when you need it and see beauty in challenges. Led by nationally renowned speakers Kathleen Macferran and Mary Mackenzie, this workshop will use the frameworks of Marshall Rosenberg's *Nonviolent Communication* and William Bridge's *Managing Transitions*.

Fee: \$370 (or \$395 after Jan. 6) includes sessions, materials, lodging, Friday dinner, and Saturday and Sunday breakfast and lunch

Commuter Fee: \$260 (or \$285 after Jan. 6) includes sessions, materials, Friday dinner, and Saturday and Sunday lunch

Conscious Aging Workshop

Tuesdays, Feb. 7–March 28, 1–3 p.m.

Facilitator: Joann Gehling, FSPA

Does your own aging leave you feeling afraid, lonely or less capable? As a participant in this eight-week series, you will use the exclusive workbook *Conscious Aging: Cultivate Wisdom, Connect with Others, Celebrate Life* by Kathleen Erickson-Freeman to learn how to:

- Explore any self-limiting beliefs or assumptions you may have about aging to help you make better choices
- Develop compassion for yourself to help you cope more effectively with aging-related change, worry and stress
- Reflect on what has given your life meaning and how that informs your intentions for your own aging
- Limit your isolation by accepting your shared humanity in the aging process
- Accept and reduce your fear around the topics of death and dying

The workshop will focus on listening to your own inner wisdom and guidance, integrating Talking Points and best practices, sharing in intimate conversation circles and listening to the collective wisdom of the group. Registration is requested by Jan. 31. **Fee:** \$150 for eight-week series includes workbook (partial scholarships available)

Seeing IS Believing: Visio Divina

see website for days and times

Facilitator: Rodney Bluml

On the first and third Tuesdays of each month, you are invited to come together in a circle of trust to integrate imagination, learning and prayer through the contemplative practice of *Visio Divina*, or holy seeing. *Visio Divina* involves listening to the word of God, viewing art, pondering God's message, letting your heart speak and resting in God. The sessions stand alone, so you may attend one or all. Art images are usually borrowed from *The Saint John's Bible*, a hand-written, hand-illuminated Bible.

Fee: \$10 per session (\$9 to add lunch)

Lectionary-Based Faith Sharing

see website for days and times

Facilitator: Rodney Bluml

Meet with other seekers to discuss life and faith in a trusting environment. Use the upcoming Sunday readings from the three-year Lectionary cycle used in many Christian churches to explore and discuss various topics. Learn about the culture of the Bible. Imagine being in the first audience to hear the Word proclaimed. Raise questions, feelings and impressions for dialogue. Come as often as you like.

Fee: \$5 per session

Introducing a New Winter Film Series

Get out of the house and cozy up at Prairiewoods for the new *Winter Film Series*. It's sure to shed light on a variety of thought-provoking topics! Feel free to bring snacks, enjoy the film and stay after for conversation about the film's topic.

Samsara

Sunday, Jan. 29, 2–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Emy Sautter

Samsara means “the ever turning wheel of life” in Sanskrit. This non-verbal film will take you on a visual journey through the interconnection of all life. Filmed over a period of almost five years and in twenty-five countries, *Samsara* explores sacred grounds, industrial sites and natural wonders. *Samsara* is not a traditional documentary, as it is without dialogue or text; instead it encourages an inner interpretation, almost like a brilliantly-visual guided meditation. According to its creators: “*Samsara* explores the wonders of our world from the mundane to the miraculous, looking into the reaches of man’s spirituality and the human experience. Through powerful images, the film illuminates the links between humanity and the rest of nature, showing how our life cycle mirrors the rhythm of the planet.” Registration is requested (but not required) by Jan. 27. **Fee:** Free-will offering to help establish permaculture landscaping at Prairiewoods

Divided We Fall

Sunday, Feb. 26, 2–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Emy Sautter

In a time of escalating hate and division in America, *Divided We Fall* tells a story of combating hate with love and unyielding optimism. In the aftermath of Sept. 11, a college student journeyed across America with a camera and captured stories of hate and healing in the Sikh American community. What began as a solitary journey to document untold stories became an award-winning documentary film that inspired a movement for brave new dialogue about race and religion in America. Considered the definitive film on the Sikh experience since 9/11, it is a powerful film for all audiences. According to Diana Eck of Harvard University, this film is “a starting point for the new dialogue on race and religion that is essential for America’s future.” Registration is requested (but not required) by Feb. 24. **Fee:** Free-will offering for inter-religious education

A Thousand Voices

Sunday March 19, 2–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Yvette Neshi Lokotz, cofounder of *Star Nations Magazine & Radio Network*

In *A Thousand Voices*, strong tribal women will lead you through the history of the invasions of the American Southwest while also explaining how those invasions changed their roles as women. This eye-opening film shatters stereotypes and features interviews with women from a variety of tribes from the southwestern United States. *A Thousand Voices* is a documentary in which, according to its creators, “Each woman tells a story deeply rooted to her culture ... and the ‘thousand voices’ that precede her.” Yvette Neshi Lokotz is a drum maker, teacher of Native American Medicine and Medicine Dress Dancer. She is an enrolled tribal member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation. Registration is requested (but not required) by March 17. **Fee:** Free-will offering to the Water Protectors at Standing Rock

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In honor of Lucy Slinger, FSPA, for her work with the Prairiewoods land
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In memory of Ambrose & Florence McDonnell Marlene McDonnell
In memory of Paula Fisher
McGuire & Peggy Fisher Wells
Paul & Phyllis Fisher
In memory of Therese Marie Pedretti, FSPA, & other faithful Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration Lucille Pedretti
In memory of Doreen & Ray Polking
Sandy Gannon
In memory of Rev Dr Barbara Schlachter
Carollyn Hartsfield
Judith Sutherland
In memory of Ivy Jane Yoder
Tammy Yoder

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Important Dates for 2017

Prairiewoods is planning some of our biggest events for next year. Please put them in your calendar today so you don't miss a moment! (For other important dates, please check www.Prairiewoods.org regularly.)

Spirituality in the 21st Century with Ilia Delio, OSF, & Sara Thomsen: May 5–6
Garden Party: June 3
Sweetgrass Flute & Nature Festival: Sept. 29–Oct. 1 (with the Blessing of the Animals Oct. 1)
Holiday Bazaar: Nov. 18



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Hiawatha IA 52233

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Jesus' prayer for the unity of all was: "...^a that they may become completely one,^b so that the world may know that you have sent me and^c loved them even as^d you loved me."

—John 17:23

In a divided world, may the winter holidays remind us that we are meant to be one.

Merry Christmas
from **PRAIRIEWOODS**