

September/October 2023

Prairiewoods

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

HARVESTING *years of* LAND CARE

the bridge south of the Center today

“ Autumn is a season of great beauty, but it is also a season of decline: the days grow shorter, the light is suffused, and summer’s abundance decays toward winter’s death. Faced with this inevitable winter, what does nature do in autumn? She scatters the seeds that will bring new growth in the spring—and she scatters them with amazing abandon. ”

—Parker Palmer, *There is a Season*, 1995

Read the article on page 3.



the bridge in 1996

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*"The summer ends, and it is time
to face another way."*

—Wendell Berry

As I write this, it is late July, and it has been very hot and very dry. The gardens, the yard, the land look much as they often do late in August—dried-out and spent. I begin to long for the cooler days of autumn but also grieve the end of summer. I am in a middle place. It is easy to be dissatisfied and to look away from the reminders of what is coming to an end.

This year, for many reasons, I am challenging myself to stay in these moments just as they are. I am challenging myself not to live in an anticipated future. Instead I will find joy and blessing in this time that sometimes seems serene and lifeless. My garden, full of green and growing things earlier this summer, is mostly full of the empty spaces left by the produce that is finished for the season.

This is in-between time. It is especially poignant this year as I observe my parents' transitions. My father has been living with Primary Progressive Aphasia for many years. This past year the changes have accelerated, and now he is living in between what little language he has left and the next phase. He is very conscious of this loss. Almost all the words he had have been harvested and the few remaining are not sufficient. It is hard for him to find joy or peace in what to him seems like empty space. He was always a man full of words and ideas. He wonders how he can participate in life now.

This experience with my dad has caused me to think deeply about how I might prepare myself for my own transitions. I have been reading *Mindfulness for Beginners* by Jon Kabat-Zinn. This little book has inspired me to practice presence in new and simpler ways. I hope to build my ability to find purpose and peace each day—even when the day might seem empty or the future deeply uncertain.

I take heart in the certainty that I am woven into the fabric of life, and my breath alone contributes to the well-being of the whole. I wish I could share this deep certainty with my dad. If only I could help him take heart in this season that seems dry and lifeless and let Joyce Rupp's words in *The Circle of Life* (p. 175) comfort him:

"Walk me among the dying leaves, let them tell me about their power to energize Earth's soil by their decomposition and the formation of enriching humus."

His words, his work, have contributed to rich possibilities for many. Now he need simply be and trust in the harvest of his life.

We cannot know what each day will bring. Seasons change, as do we. After the exuberance of spring and before the cool air and beautiful colors of fall there is time "to slow down as ... Earth slows down and allows her soil to rest in silent, fallow space" (Rupp, p. 176). Peace to you in this season of change ...

Leslie Wright
Leslie A. Wright



Prairiewoods is an ecospirituality retreat and conference center in the Franciscan tradition. It is a nonprofit ministry sponsored by 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.

The Prairiewoods staff collaborates to publish this newsletter bimonthly. Content, except where otherwise noted, is created by our staff in consultation and with care to offer a uniquely Prairiewoods perspective.

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This newsletter arrives in anticipation of fall. It is a time when gardens slow down, leaves and grasses begin to turn here at Prairiewoods. Young people return to school. Our Green Iowa AmeriCorps leave. It is a time of transition. It is a time to pause, take stock and refocus. Anticipating the season leads us to reflect on the evolution of the land here at Prairiewoods—over thirty autumns have passed since the Sisters began envisioning this special place. And each autumn, the land “scattered her seeds” in anticipation of a new spring.

It happens that we have been revising the Land Care plan, first written in partnership with Trees Forever between 2004 and 2006. Reading and revising that early plan has illuminated the many transformations that have taken place. It inspired us to look for early photos, because we found it hard to imagine those early beginnings while standing in the midst of waving prairie grass or in the shade of mature trees. These early photos reveal a place that at first glance appears barren, but we know that instead it held the seeds of tremendous possibility and the peaceful and lush environment that now exists.

During summer’s fade into fall, it is a good time to take a step back and capture all that has happened: the change, the growth, the challenges and the surprises over the years. Luckily, there are several histories of this land. Each offers us a slightly different lens. The Title to the land tells us a story of transactions and ownership, farmers and families. The Iowa Valley RC&D takes us back to an even earlier time and documents the early geological history as well as the presence of the first peoples, the Meskwaki and Ioway. Numerous Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration have added their documentation of the journey from land purchase to ecospirituality center. Each successive group understood their relationship to the land differently. The documents reflect an evolution of consciousness that moved us from ideas of dominion, to stewardship and finally a return to kinship first demonstrated by our indigenous brothers and sisters. In response, our language changed as our understanding of and relationship with the land evolved. Instead of a “land management” plan, now we call it the “land care” plan to reflect this deeper understanding of our role.

Fall is also a time to harvest. This harvest includes all the many things we have learned, including the unique personality of each section of land. Thirteen in all were named in the early plan. Each with a different expression of creation. Prairie, oak savannah, forest and wet prairie to name a few. Each with different needs. The years, the seasons and extreme weather have introduced us to the many incarnations and enduring resilience of the land. Prairie burns helped the tall grass grow. The derecho opened up the tree canopy, catalyzing different species to emerge and strengthened our resolve to continue the regeneration of the land.

The harvest also includes all the relationships that have grown along with the woods and the prairie. As networks grow in the forest to support resilient life, so too have the networks of support grown around Prairiewoods. Connections have been built beginning with early volunteer groups like the 450 children from St. Pius who helped to plant trees that first fall. The children have grown up, as have the trees they planted. Other relationships continue to deepen with Trees Forever, I-Renew and Metro Catholic Outreach, among many others. The addition of the Green Community Gardens have opened the door to new friendships on the land, with gardeners from different cultures and countries, children and elders.

And creation is still speaking to us. Grandmother Oak has shared her life-giving energy over the years. First with the foundresses and early visitors, and most recently with Winston, a member of a visiting Tai Chi group, who described the energy he experienced as he wrapped his arms around the old oak.

The lesson of fall is that what appears spent and dormant, or perhaps fallow, to those unacquainted with this land is truly teeming with diverse life and possibility. In order to see it we must get closer, be quieter, breathe more deeply and train our eye to see differently. Thirty years ago, the foundresses did just that. They walked, sat and listened, and in response trees were planted, trails were laid, buildings rose and a name was found.

And so we also enter a time of listening and imagining. We set an intention to pause and to tend. Even more importantly, we seek to challenge ourselves to explore new ways to nourish and restore the land that has nourished and cared for us.



Reaping the Bounty of Summer



Toan Barnes



Michael & Joan Wagemester



Bob Rasmussen

Summer's Bountiful Guests

This summer has been a busy one at Prairiewoods! Our grounds have been filled with so many wonderful kids and adults, including hikers, volunteers, our community gardeners and retreatants. We've enjoyed all of them! Here's a glimpse of our visitors and friends:

Community Gardeners:

We've really enjoyed those who have rented plots in our Green Community Gardens, and we were happy to add more plots this year for a total of 27! Each garden is unique and full of beautiful produce, including some culturally significant foods from throughout Asia and Africa. We have all ages who come out to the gardens, both young and old!



the Mills family



the Jain family



Rose Zhou



the Swami family



the Mathkar family

Reaping the Bounty of Summer



Peter Correll, board member



Trees Forever Growing Futures group



Hike It Baby group

Hikers & Groups: We've had lots of hikers and visitors out on our trails every day, and we always enjoy seeing both individuals and families. We also hosted the local Hike It Baby chapter for a group hike led by our Green Iowa AmeriCorps members. Don't forget that the trails are open every day of the year from sunrise to sunset!

Volunteers: Our grounds wouldn't be as beautiful as they are without the help of so many volunteers. We have a regular crew who weed, water and mow every week, and we also have company groups that come and help for the day. One of our board members also built two sturdy benches for our community gardeners to have a place to sit and rest. We've been so thankful for help from some of the local Green Iowa AmeriCorps members who are serving with other non-profits in our community.



Hike It Baby & Green Iowa AmeriCorps



Northwestern Mutual employee



North American Practical Method Chen Style Training Camp

The following are retreats and programs that Prairiewoods is hosting online via Zoom or in person in the next two months. For more information or to register, visit www.Prairiewoods.org or call 319-395-6700.

Active Hope for All of Creation Retreat Friday, Sept. 8, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Sept. 10, 3 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathleen Rude

Embody our interconnection with all beings through the wisdom of Saint Francis and the Work That Reconnects! In a time where separation and exploitation seem to dominate our relationships with other beings and our planet, the spiritual and ecological teachings that we are all connected, that we are all kin, is balm for our souls. Embodying this knowing is healing for ourselves and for the planet. This retreat will be led by Work That Reconnects Facilitator Kathleen Rude. Together we will combine the spiritual teaching of Saint Francis, the patron saint of ecology, and the transformative wisdom of the Work That Reconnects to explore our interdependence with all life. We will invite fellow species to speak through us in the beloved ceremony, The Council of All Beings. We will spend time in the woods and prairies to hear what Earth is inviting us to embrace and to receive inspiration and healing for our weary, overwhelmed hearts and souls. In supportive community, we will honor our pain for the world, reconnect to active hope and find clarity around how we can play a part in the healing of our beautiful planet. This retreat includes experiential practices, mask making, movement, inspirational readings and simple rituals. It's engaging, invigorating and gives us tools for dealing with the challenges of living in difficult times.

Fee: \$230 includes sessions, lodging and all meals

Commuter Fee: \$180 includes Saturday lunch and dinner, and Sunday lunch



Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (S.E.E.L.) 16 Retreat

Fridays, monthly beginning Oct. 6, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

Facilitators: Rose Blank; Ann Jackson, PBVM; & Lucille Winnike, FSPA

Do you long for GOD? Do you desire time to reflect on your spiritual path and the movement of the Spirit within your life? Do you wish to enrich your spiritual experience through monthly prayer and reflection? Would you like a framework in which to explore and pray your "heart's desire"? Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (S.E.E.L.)

is an eight-month retreat based on the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Ignatius explored a number of different kinds



of prayer in creating the Exercises. He recognized that emotions and feelings in addition to the intellect help us to sense the movement of the Spirit in our lives. The Exercises develop dispositions of the heart for prayer, which then become part of daily life.

Retreatants in S.E.E.L. become increasingly aware of the presence of and activity of God in all things. They learn to discern that movement of God in their lives and in the world and to integrate meditation, contemplation and action. We invite you to commit to one hour of prayer each day for eight months, at least one monthly meeting with a spiritual director and eight monthly Friday sessions (Oct. 6, Nov. 10, Dec. 1, Jan. 12, Feb. 9, March 8, April 5 and May 10). This retreat is best suited for those who have or are interested in establishing a discipline of regular personal prayer, have experience sharing their spiritual journey with others, and are called and committed to deepening personal faith.

Fee: \$400 (payable in October or in monthly installments of \$50) plus monthly spiritual direction sessions paid separately

The Power of Silence: Silent Directed Retreat Sunday, Oct. 8, 4 p.m.–Thursday, Oct. 12, 1 p.m.

Facilitators: Lucille Winnike, FSPA; Rev. Rose Blank; & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Perhaps you've participated for years in Prairiewoods' Silent Directed Retreats. Or maybe you have seen these advertised and considered scheduling one for yourself, but aren't sure what a Silent Directed Retreat is. Either way, we invite you to consider this question: *What's the deepest silence you've ever known?* Silent Directed Retreats offer opportunities to enter into deep silence in order to sense what it feels like to awaken a quiet and palpable connection and deepen your relationship with the Source of All being.

Each day you will receive ongoing direction as you and a professionally-trained spiritual director listen intentionally to the movement of the Source of All Being in your heart. Listening in such profound silence assists you to get in touch with feelings, thoughts and actions as you reflect, meditate, pray and rest. The practice of this daily meeting assists in developing the capacity to discern, notice, sense the movement of the Source of All Being in light of your motivations, attachments, responses to that movement within the whole of your life. To share with a professional your divine experiences brings clarity, deepens your commitment and accountability to the direction of your life, surprises and offers insight into that direction.

Fee: \$400 includes lodging, meals and spiritual direction (*Partial scholarships are available.*)



Save the Date!

Silent Mindfulness Meditation Retreat

Friday, Nov. 3, 6:30 p.m.—Sunday, Nov. 5, 1 p.m.

Join Chris Klug for a silent weekend retreat to cultivate mindfulness in silence amid instruction, questioning, sitting meditation, walking meditation, mindful movement and mindful eating.

Winter's Wisdom, Rest & Renewal: A Solstice & Advent Retreat

Friday, Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m.—Sunday, Dec. 17, 1 p.m.

Join Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel for a weekend of cultivating Night Vision and awareness of Light in everything—even in darkness, in wintery seasons of our lives and in our very being.

It's Still Possible: Inner Work of Age Retreat

Tuesdays; Sept. 5, Sept. 19, Oct. 3, Oct. 17, Nov. 7 & Nov. 14; 10 a.m.—1 p.m. (includes lunch)

Facilitators: Ann Jackson, PBVM, & Joann Gehling, FSPA

Based on the poem by David Whyte *It's Still Possible*, this six-session series will offer reflection and discernment for those in the wisdom years of life. Participants will explore personal core values and spiritual practices that may light the path and illumine a way of being in service to the world—a rhythm that enlightens one's living legacy.

Fee: \$30 per session, or \$175 for six-session series when paid in advance

The Artist's Way Book Study Series

Wednesdays, Sept. 6—Nov. 8, 10:30 a.m.—12 p.m.

Facilitator: Joni Reed Cooley

Explore your creative path and its connection to your spirituality! Using Julia Cameron's book *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity* as a guide, the experiences will include group discussion, guided reflections and individual practices to go deeper and higher in your artistic expression. This series is for all types of artists (including visual arts, music, movement, writing and more) and for any point in your artistic journey, from beginning to established. **Fee:** \$200 for ten-week series, plus cost of book

Dream Workshop Series

Wednesdays; Sept. 6, 13, 20 & 27; 1–3 p.m.

Facilitator: Karen Sindelar

Dreams can open you into your inner landscape and help you to grow spiritually. Working and playing with dreams can bring transformation and inner healing. As a participant, you will be exposed to a Jungian approach to deciphering your dreams. You will be prepared to work with your dreams individually or in a group. After completing these four sessions, you will be eligible to join a monthly Dream Group (such as the one that begins Oct. 4). Facilitator Karen Sindelar, MA, LMT, holds a master's degree

in applied psychology with an emphasis in Jungian studies. Karen has been an active participant in dream groups since the 1980s. Registration is requested by Aug. 30. **Fee:** \$100 for four-week series, whether present or not (payable in advance or \$25 at each session)

Dream Group

Wednesdays; Oct. 4, Nov. 1, Dec. 6, Jan. 3, Feb. 7, March 6, April 3 & May 1; 1–3 p.m.

Facilitator: Karen Sindelar

"Dreams come in the service of wholeness and health," writes Jeremy Taylor. Dreams can open you into your inner landscape and help you to grow spiritually. Working and playing with your dreams can bring transformation and inner healing. As a participant, you will be exposed to a Jungian approach to deciphering your dreams. As a prerequisite, you must have some dream workshop experience (at Prairiewoods or elsewhere) that has introduced you to working with dreams individually or in a group.

Fee: \$160 for the eight-month series, whether present or not (payable in advance or \$20 at each session)

Day of Self Renewal

Thursdays, Sept. 7 & Oct. 5, & Mondays, Sept. 11 & Oct. 9, 8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

This popular program is now offered twice a month!

Facilitator: Rev. Jean Sullivan

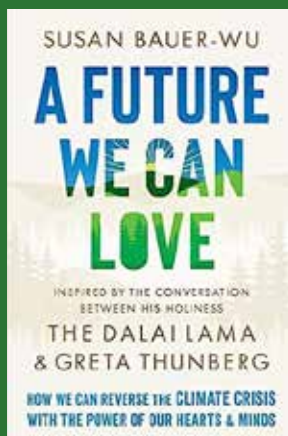
Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features

Book Review

A Future We Can Love: How We Can Reverse the Climate Crisis with the Power of Our Hearts & Minds by Susan Bauer-Wu

Inspired by a conversation between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Greta Thunberg, Susan Bauer-Wu of the Mind & Life Institute takes us on an inspired journey beginning with the knowledge we need to understand the climate crisis. Greta Thunberg knows, "we need to tell people ... right now, because we are, to a large extent, unaware of what's happening." Woven together with a very approachable explanation of the science are ways to cope with the tendency to feel overwhelmed by it all and maintain our hope and courage. Alongside the scientific sources of our knowledge, she includes the spiritual sources—"the fact that everything and everyone are interconnected ... [through] an infinite web of cause and effect."

She helps us to consider the Earth's capacity to respond—so that while we are doing what we can to reduce our emissions, we also "increase the capabilities of natural systems



to remove more carbon dioxide than we are releasing." From an interview with Matthieu Ricard, a monk who is sometimes described as the happiest man alive, we hear, "The climate crisis really boils down to altruism versus selfishness." We are then offered multiple stories of the beautiful ways humans are successfully responding!

All of this moves us to both the need and the desire to take action. She offers us a variety of "To-do" lists—showing us how others are making their own decisions about how to respond. She quotes American environmentalist Bill McKibben responding to the question "what can one person do?" He responds: "Stop being one person! Find your people!" Perhaps those of you reading this are already doing that here at Prairiewoods!

—review by Rev. Jean Sullivan

You will find many great reads in our Gift Shop. Come in to find new inspiration!

your choice of two services, group guided meditation, Singing Bowl Prayer or Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep, a private guest room, a fresh lunch, and access to the labyrinth and all that Prairiewoods has to offer. (Depending on the date, you may choose from massage, head and shoulder massage, reflexology, healing touch, spiritual direction, qigong, Nature & Forest Therapy, yoga or chair yoga. Visit www.Prairiewoods.org for details.) Registration, a nonrefundable/nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three service choices are required eight days in advance. (Masks and vaccination may be required.)

Fee: \$110 includes two services, guided meditation, singing bowls, private guest room and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room)

Mini-Hydroponics Class Tuesday, Oct. 24, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Phil Pfister

You can grow fresh leafy greens and herbs all year long with a hydroponics system. In this workshop, Linn County Master Gardener Phil Pfister will help you build your own mini-ponics system. You'll be provided the materials and hands-on instructions to build your own system to take home.

Fee: \$90 includes all supplies

Concert Under the Stars Saturday, Sept. 23, 7–9 p.m.

Facilitators: Jonny Lipford, Suzanne Teng, Gilbert Levy & Tommy Graven

Experience an unforgettable

night under a blanket of twinkling stars, serenaded by the melodic sounds of four award-winning musicians specializing in Native-style flute and world flutes. Immerse yourself in a sonic journey like no other and enjoy one complimentary drink ticket with additional beer, wine and soda available for purchase. This enchanting evening will be filled with soothing music and blissful merriment, making it an experience you won't soon forget!

Fee: \$10 includes one drink ticket, free for kids 10 and under



Mandala Drawing Workshop Saturday, Oct. 28, 10–12 a.m.

Facilitator: Andi Lewis

Come create with the Creator!

Facilitator Andi Lewis will guide us to draw a beautiful mandala, or sacred circular work of art, simply using artist's pens, drawing paper and a pencil for shading. Together we will learn about mandalas, including their spiritual significance throughout history. Then we'll spend our time drawing in a contemplative setting. We'll each leave with a unique mandala that represents our spirit!

Fee: \$15 includes all supplies



What's Your Pledge? What's Your Practice?

Tuesdays; Oct. 3, Oct. 17, Nov. 7 & Nov. 14; 5–6:30 p.m.

Facilitators: Ann Jackson, PBVM, & Leslie Wright

Based on an interview between Jeremy Lent and Rick Hanson, this four-session series will prompt you to consider the relationship between personal core values, the power of reflection and intention, and spiritual practices.

Fee: \$100 for four-session series

Y.O.L.O. (Your Other Lunch Option!)

Wednesdays, Sept. 13 & Oct. 25, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Daniel Sutherland

Tired of the same old lunch places? Let's renew our bodies and refresh our spirits in a beautiful setting! Join us for Y.O.L.O. (*Your Other Lunch Option!*)—a lunch choice celebrating wholesome, fresh food made from scratch by chef Dan Sutherland in Prairiewoods' kitchen. We dine in a community setting with friends we bring with us or new friends we meet over a delicious themed lunch. On Sept. 13, our theme will be Octoberfest. On Oct. 25, our theme will be fall's bountiful harvest. Arrive at 11:30, and the buffet line opens at noon. Registration is required at least two days in advance, and each lunch is limited to 35 people.

Fee: \$15

Sabbatical in Everyday Life

Opening Retreat: Friday, Sept. 29, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, Sept. 30, 4 p.m.

Sabbatical Days: Fridays; Oct. 27, Dec. 1, Jan. 26, Feb. 23, March 22, April 26; 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Closing Retreat: Friday, May 17, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, May 18, 4 p.m.

We all need dedicated breaks to rest and rekindle our energy and sense of direction. According to the testimony of those who have done it and the Harvard Business Review, sabbaticals can be transformative. Sabbaticals offer time to heal, reconnect with important relationships, explore and ultimately embrace a more authentic life. But not everyone can take extended leave from their everyday lives. When you participate in Sabbatical in Everyday Life, you will have the opportunity to integrate rest and renewal into your life and enhance your wellbeing and resilience. Participants will enjoy two overnight retreats and six sabbatical days, designed to renew your energy, enhance your perspective and provide opportunities to learn practices that will help you build a life you don't need to escape. Each sabbatical day will include the chance to learn new skills, spend time in quiet reflection (indoors and out) and receive two individual services such as massage or spiritual direction. Join the cohort that begins in September!

Fee: \$1,500 (deposit of \$250) Register by Sept. 1 for a 30% discount!

Into the Oneness: Qigong for Energy, Equanimity & Peace Thursdays, Sept. 7–Oct. 26, 12:45–1:35 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Based on age-old Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), this gentle and accessible class involves meditative, healing energy and compassion-based standing movement, breath work, visualization, acupressure and seated practice. We begin by opening, rebalancing and cultivating Qi (universal life force energy-Spirit) throughout the body's energy pathways, centers and organs to assist with mental, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being. Wisdom from the Tao Te Ching, TCM 5 Element Theory and beyond is sprinkled in to assist your practice of living life with greater ease, peace and harmony with the rest of nature. Class ends with seated meditation, which includes sending healing compassionate intention to others and the planet.

Fee: \$12 per session

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep Thursdays, Sept. 7 & Oct. 5, 1:45–2:35 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Rebalance mind, body and spirit through the soothing, penetrating power of healing sound and vibration via singing bowls. Then drop into deepest levels of relaxation and peace through authentic, age-old Yogic Sleep (Yoga Nidra)—a reclined, meditative experience used by stress reduction clinics, integrative health care and mystics who savor resting in blissful Oneness with The Sacred. We will close with prayerful sound healing, including a lower-octave bowl played on or near (your choice) the shrine of your heart.

Fee: \$8

Singing Bowl Prayer Mondays, Sept. 11 & Oct. 9, 12:45–1:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer

Throughout history, singing bowls have been used around the world to foster meditation, relaxation, prayer and mind-body-spirit wellness. In these in-person sessions, we let the resonant sounds of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls relax the entire body and create a pathway for clearer connection with the divine. Registration is required by noon.

Fee: \$8

Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences

Afternoon Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences: Mondays, Sept. 11 & Oct. 9, 2:30–3:45 p.m.

Full Moon Nature & Forest Therapy Walk: Friday, Sept. 29, 6–8 p.m.

Fall Forest Bathing: Thursday, Oct. 19, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Emelia Sautter

Join certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide Emelia Sautter and the land for a walk with the natural world. Experience Forest Therapy, a sensory-focused practice that invites us to slow down and be present with self and the natural world around us. According to the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy, “Forest Therapy is a practice that supports health and wellness through guided immersion in forests and other environments to promote the well-being of both people and the land.” Registration is required by the previous day.

Fee: \$15 for afternoon sessions, \$20 for longer evening sessions

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations

**Mondays, Sept. 18, Oct. 2 & Oct. 16;
6:30–7:30 p.m.**

Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer

Experience sound, stillness, playfulness and relaxation through the enigmatic vibrations of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls. During this hour, we connect with our inner selves through the song of bowls. We are invited to sit or lie down to listen and just be. Registration is required.

Fee: \$10 per session

Threshold Conversations Tuesday, Sept. 19 & Oct. 17, 7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Karen Hering

Whether you’re living through significant personal transitions or navigating a world reshaping itself faster than ever, you are invited to join a yearlong online conversation about how to make change more trustworthy. Each session focuses on one of the ten threshold skills featured in Karen Hering’s book, *Trusting Change*. The time together will include selected content from Karen’s book, silent time for writing or reflection, and small group sharing. Your voice will bring wisdom for others, while theirs may offer just the perspective you need on your threshold.

Fee: \$15

Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Group

**Wednesdays, Sept. 20 & Oct. 18,
5:30–7 p.m.**

Facilitator: Jamie Siela, LISW

*Offered in Partnership with
UnityPoint Hospice*

In grief, our very foundation can be rocked. Take time to connect with others in grief and engage the creative spark. This monthly grief group is open to anyone grieving loss through death. On the third Wednesday of each month, explore a different creative art medium. On Sept. 20, break clay pots and piece them back together, representing how we may feel shattered but can become whole again, though forever changed by our grief. On Oct. 18, we will create dimensional gift tags that can be used to add unique flair to gifts or admired as mementos. Registration is required nine days in advance. This group is a hybrid, offered both online and in person.

Fee: Free includes all art supplies

Metta Yoga

Mondays & Thursdays; Sept. 7–Oct. 30; 9:30–10:30 a.m., 10:45–11:45 a.m. (chair yoga) & 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Heather English

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga.

Fee: \$120 for eleven-punch card, \$72 for six-punch card or \$15 for single class

Go Deeper Thursdays

Thursdays; Sept. 7–Oct. 26; 4–5 p.m.

Convener: Ellen Bruckner

Join this online community exploration and deepening of spiritual topics.

Fee: Free-will offering

Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton

first & third Thursdays; Sept. 7, Sept. 21, Oct. 5 & Oct. 19; 7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Carole Butz

Online, practice contemplative living to respond to everyday experiences with greater awareness of our connections.

Fee: Free-will offering

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers second Tuesdays, Sept. 12 & Oct. 10, 9:30–11:30 a.m.; & fourth Wednesdays, Sept. 27 & Oct. 25, 6:30–8 p.m.

Facilitators: participants

Practice knitting and stitching as we create items for charity.

Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer

**second & fourth Tuesdays; Sept. 12, Sept. 26, Oct. 10 & Oct. 24;
5:30–7 p.m.**

Facilitator: Judith Smith

Practice a contemplative prayer form to help deepen your relationship with God.

Fee: Free-will offering

Men Exploring Faith

second & fourth Thursdays; Sept. 14, Sept. 28, Oct. 12 & Oct. 26; 4–5:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Linzy Martin

Join with a group of reflective men in honest conversation about life changes.

Fee: Free-will offering

Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony Saturdays, Sept. 16 & Oct. 28, 4–7 p.m.

Facilitator: Kerry Batteau

Participate in an ancient ceremony focused on prayer, purification, recognition and healing.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10

Expressing Our Gratitude

We appreciate all of the generous people who donate their time, money and other gifts to Prairiewoods! For a complete, up-to-date list of donors and volunteers, please scan this QR code or visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate.



Green Iowa AmeriCorps

This summer we had three Green Iowa AmeriCorps members with us, and they were a huge help around the grounds. Additionally, they led guided hikes with our visitors, planned some learning activities on environmental sustainability for the public and helped in our food pantry gardens. We'll really miss them and wish them well with their future plans! Here's what they said about their summer at Prairiewoods:

What have you liked best about your time at Prairiewoods?

Jasmyn Edwards: I have enjoyed getting to know the staff and learn what Prairiewoods is all about and I have also enjoyed being able to get my hands dirty, learn more about plant species and all the fun projects we do. I enjoy seeing all the progress and work that it takes to keep prairie and wooded areas as natural as possible.

Gabe Jones: I have learned so much, and I am very grateful to have the opportunity to steward the land and assist with food justice efforts! Knowing that the hard work I do contributes to conserving the native ecosystems and helps feed people is beyond rewarding.

Rita Tofanelli: What I've liked best about working at Prairiewoods was becoming more connected to nature. I've really enjoyed harvesting in the garden, catching snakes, and getting to know all the staff.

Is there anything that surprised you about Prairiewoods or the Green Iowa AmeriCorps program?

Jazz: One thing that surprised me at Prairiewoods is that it is a great community and it has a history that has been fun to learn about.

Gabe: I was surprised by how connected

so many of the Green Iowa AmeriCorps organizations are. The volunteers that come out to Prairiewoods remind me of how supported we are by people with similar goals in environmental sustainability.

Rita: I was surprised by how much Prairiewoods has changed since I've been hiking here as a little girl, and how diverse the Green Iowa AmeriCorps program is with all their different locations and program goals.



What were a couple of things that you learned while at Prairiewoods?

Jazz: I learned how to plant a tree the correct way, learned about different invasive species and plant/tree species that we have on the grounds. I also learned more about using power equipment and how much fun it is!

Gabe: Basic plant and tree identification is something I have learned, as well as some basic permaculture gardening practices. I also learned how to operate a tractor!

Rita: I have learned a lot here, how to identify trees and plants, how to drive a tractor and how to operate heavy machinery, as well as becoming very skilled in weeding and mulching.



What are your future goals around the environment or sustainability?

Jazz: I want to hopefully become a conservation officer so I can help to protect the land that we have been provided for future generations.

Gabe: Pursuing a law degree specializing in Environmental Law would be the long-term goal, but right now I'm content in finding any way I can steward.

Rita: My future goals are to further my education in environmental science as well as learning more about plant and animal species.



Welcome Aaron Brewer

A proponent of land stewardship and environmentalism, Aaron Brewer studied Parks and Natural Resources and Conservation Management at Upper Iowa University, leading to his involvement with Brucemore, Trees Forever, AmeriCorps and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Originally from Iowa City, Aaron lives in Cedar Rapids with his wife, Hannah, and daughter, Maribel.

As Prairiewoods' Land Sustainability Coordinator, you'll find him practicing his passion for gardening and managing the 70 acres of timber and prairie restoration projects. He welcomes volunteers and nature enthusiasts to join in caring for this wonderful land together and hopes you find great peace during your visit.



2023 Garden Party



We were thrilled to see so many old and new friends at our Garden Party in June! We had so much fun bringing it back to the grounds of Prairiewoods, and luckily the weather cooperated. Our chefs served delicious food, and Jonny Lipford serenaded us with beautiful music on native and world flutes. We added a new activity called the Camino de Prairiewoods, and lots of people took the tour and saw all of the wonderful things happening on the land.

All of our individual donors were so generous! People also bought loaves of bread in the Dough for Dough raffle, purchased items at the silent auction and bought Garden Shares to support our Green Prairie Garden. We also want to thank our generous sponsors, including Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust, Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Pure Mean Clean and Farmer's State Bank. Our in-kind sponsors were Wendling Quarries and KMRY AM/FM Radio. Because of everyone's generosity, we raised more than \$27,000, which will support produce served at Prairiewoods and provided to Metro Catholic Outreach's food pantry. Thank you for making this another successful Garden Party!

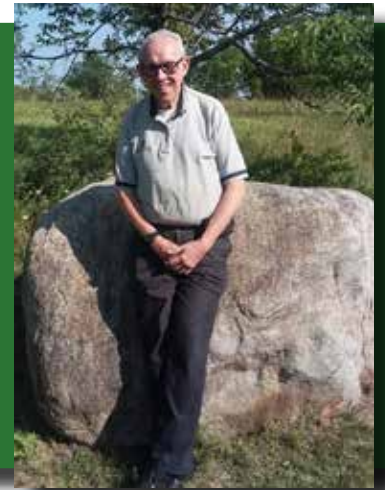
To see photos from the event and a complete list of donors, visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Garden-Party.



Did You Know?

Have you ever noticed the two large rocks on the west side of the Prairiewoods parking lot and in the island by the Guest House? According to our longtime Media Center volunteer, Doug Beadle, they're called Glacial Erratics. A Glacial Erratic is a glacially deposited rock and differs from the rocks that are native to the area in which it rests. Erratics are carried by glacial ice, often over distances of hundreds of miles and can be as big as a house. The rocks are most likely from central Minnesota and came here between 500,000 to 2.5 million years ago! According to science's understanding of the Universe Story, that is about the time in our 14-billion-year evolutionary journey that the first humans were created.

To see the area's largest exposed Glacier Erratic in Iowa head out to Waldo's Rock Park in Marion (6303 Partner's Ave, www.TourismCedarRapids.com/directory/waldos-rock-park).



Help Support Our Newsletter

Here are two ways you can help us be good stewards of our resources and produce a beautiful, informative and inspiring newsletter:

- 1. Contribute a free-will offering of \$10.** Your gift of \$10 pays for a full year of newsletters delivered to you electronically or by mail. If you would like to make this gift, please visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate and mark "Newsletter" in the notes field, mail a check to Prairiewoods or call 319-395-6700 with your credit card information.
- 2. Read your bimonthly newsletter online.** If you are willing to switch from paper to electronic, please scan the QR code at left with your phone's camera and give us your name, address and email address. We'll do the rest! (You can also call us at 319-395-6700 or email ecospirit@prairiewoods.org and we can make the change for you.) *Thank you for all you do to support Prairiewoods' mission!*





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Hiawatha IA 52233

Help Us Update Our Records

You may send this by mail, email ecospirit@prairiewoods.org or call **319-395-6700**. If mailed, please include this address label.

- Please send your mailings electronically to _____.
- Please take us off your mailing list.
- Please note the address change.
- We receive duplicate mailings; please send only one to this address.

Are you on social media? Find "Prairiewoods FSC" on:



Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, Oct. 1, 1–4 p.m.

Join us for outdoor fun for people and pets! Gather your family, your friends and your favorite animal companions and head to the annual Blessing of the Animals at Prairiewoods! Please bring your pets on leashes or in carriers, their clean-up bags, and lawn chairs or blankets. We'll have this free event rain or shine, and it will be moved indoors if there's inclement weather.

- We'll have a parade with people and pets at 1:15 p.m., and the blessings will begin around 1:30. Our very own Nancy Hoffman, FSPA, and Rev. Jean Sullivan will perform the blessings.
- We'll also have the Cedar Valley Humane Society passing out information and collecting donations for their organization. If you would like to help them, they'll gratefully accept cash donations, dry cat or dog food, HE liquid laundry detergent, antiseptic wipes, or 1-gallon or 2-gallon Ziplock bags. For a complete list of their needs, visit www.CVHumane.org/wish-list.
- Eastern Iowa Arts Academy will also be on hand to host a sun print workshop. Sun prints, also called cyanotypes, have been used to make records of plants for hundreds of years. Sun print paper is coated with chemicals that react when exposed to sunlight. When you place objects like leaves on the paper, they block the light so that the paper remains white while the areas around the leaves turn a beautiful Prussian blue. Explore the land for some flat leaves and flower petals to turn into a lovely sun print to take home!

We hope you and your beloved animals will join us for this fun, free event!

