

January/February 2024

Prairiewoods

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

As we move through this particularly challenging time, with so much unrest and uncertainty, we read this, from feminist and social justice advocate L.R. Knost:

“Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things break. And all things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. So go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you.”

A hopeful outlook—the recognition that the future can be different from the present, the ability and inclination to shift attention toward what is still good and possible, and the energy to start moving in that positive direction—has been shown to be a predictor of better psychological, educational, professional, interpersonal and health-related outcomes. Being hopeful is good for us.

“To be hopeful in bad times is not being foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of competition and cruelty but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness ... If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places ... where people have behaved magnificently, it energizes us to act ... And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.”

—Howard Zinn (historian, author, professor, playwright and activist), 2004

Having hope, staying hopeful, hoping against all hope. We talk about hope in many different ways—and we usually have a good sense of ourselves (or others) as being pretty hopeful, or not so much ... There are other words that we relate to hope, like “having a positive outlook,” or “being optimistic,” but the word *hope*, the full definition used by

(continued on page 3)

Hope
& Healing



image by August Stolba

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Where does hope come from? Often, for me, it comes from a recognition of connection and possibility. In October Jean Sullivan and I traveled to the Five Oaks Retreat Centre outside of Toronto for the Retreat Center Collaboration (RCC) annual gathering. The RCC is a network of more than 350 retreat centers across North America. These centers, large and small, are dedicated to transforming consciousness and caring for people and creation. Each—like one of the colored fragments inside a kaleidoscope—may have a slightly different shape and color, but seen together there is

great beauty.

The RCC is a network of change agents and healers. And each of us connected to Prairiewoods is also part of that luminous network, stretching across this continent. Imagine yourself as a thread, woven so intentionally into this fabric. It is a fabric that is illuminated not just by hope but in fact by deep faith in what is possible. This is a web of humans who are exploring the paths to resilience in people, communities and the earth. This energizes me even when the news is difficult and the weather is extreme.

“Hope is a verb with its sleeves rolled up.”

—David Orr

Imagine if every retreat center has at least 10,000 relationships, just as we do. We are now part of a web of life that touches over 3 million people and 14,000 acres of land. I imagine a constellation of several million lights across the globe, lighting our way into a different future.

Now it is time for us to activate the Prairiewoods networks to spread hope and shape a better future, for us and for the generations that follow us. This coming spring, we hope you will join with us as we gather people across eastern Iowa to explore how we can work together and take action to address environmental justice and the climate crisis. In the meantime, let us all set an intention to “regreen” the earth and heal our relationships with ourselves and each other.

Peace and all good,

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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the scientists and psychologists who have studied hope (Snyder, Lopez, 2002), comes down to three things:

- Imagining that the future can be different from the present—and maybe even better.
- Imagining that we can do something about it—we have a part in creating that future.
- Imagining the pathways it will take to get from here, the present, to there, the future.

As Howard Zinn articulates so well, the shift from despair to even the smallest sliver of hope comes down to where we focus our attention. Do we focus on what has gone wrong, how much worse things are than the way we remember and how insurmountable the problems we see appear to be? Or, do we shift our focus to what is still good, what is still possible and how we might work with those things to move toward a brighter future?

Being hopeful does not ignore or downplay the challenges and trauma that are the very real and difficult everyday experiences of people and the planet. Howard Zinn, quoted on page 1, lived his early life in poverty, spent time engaged in challenging and dangerous work in the shipyards (leading to his work with unions) and flew bombing missions while in the Air Force during World War II (leading to his support of movements for peace). Eventually he made his way to activism during the Civil Rights movement and to history as a professor at Spelman College and then Boston University. How do we, each in our own way, keep moving forward, maintaining a hopeful outlook?

We begin by placing individual and collective healing at the very center of our purpose. We begin by enhancing the conditions that create movement toward wellbeing. We begin by creating a healthy environment where people live, work and play. Those are not small or simply achieved goals—but each of us only need turn our attention to the opportunities that surface in our lives for hope-filled action (Ginwright, *Healing Centered Engagement*,

2015).

How do we move from here to there? *How do we cultivate hope in ourselves and in our community* (Scharff, 2020)?

- Spiritual engagement—we recognize and develop our relationship with something greater than ourselves, lifting up our deep sense of purpose for our lives.
- Mindfulness—as we move through our day-to-day lives, we focus our awareness on our experience of the present moment.
- Relationships—we connect with others who are supportive and bring joy into our lives.
- Choosing joy—we make time for engaging in activities that bring us joy.
- Helping—we watch for opportunities to help others, both one-on-one and through collective action.
- Gratitude—we acknowledge the good that is in our lives and feel and express our gratitude.

All of these may have, at another point in our lives, seemed like nice things to do; now we see them as necessary ways we can maintain the strength to stay engaged, heal from painful experiences and remain hopeful about our collective, interdependent future.



image by August Stolba

New Intentions for the New Year

As the year begins, we often turn our attention to new habits. This year consider which practices will build your resilience and hopefulness for the journey ahead. First begin by acknowledging that you are enough. Just as you are. You come from Light, and your life brings light to the world.

To be resilient is to be adaptable in the face of change and to grow from each new challenge. It requires practice like learning to play an instrument or enhancing your physical fitness. What will help you to build a rhythm of practice? Perhaps it is a ritual or a regular program. The recipe for your journey is uniquely your own.

“Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance.”

—Eckhart Tolle

Research tells us that gratitude is good for us. And it only takes a small effort to reap the benefits. Finding a few moments in the day to note what or who we are grateful for is enough. What will help you create a positive gratitude practice? Some have created containers to “hold” their gratitude reflections and to remind them to spend a few moments in reflection.

“Trees heal.”

—Susan Bauer-Wu, *A Future We Can Love*

69% of young people aged 13 to 25 experience the sacred in nature (*Religion News*, Nov. 7, 2023). And research suggests that just two hours in nature measurably improves human well-being. Walk our trails or participate in Forest Bathing. Get a dose of nature and feel your heart lift.

“It is the awareness that is primary.”

—Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Mindfulness for Beginners*

Make space for quiet and contemplation in your life. Participate in a Day of Self Renewal to get started, or join Chris Klug for Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction.

“All we can know for sure is that a mystery courses through us, seeking its own fullest incarnation, and that whenever we serve the mystery within, we experience a linkage to the mystery outside. When we stand in more conscious relationship to this mystery, we are more deeply alive.”

—James Hollis

Make time to engage in contemplation. Explore your purpose. Be with the questions. Walk the labyrinth on your own or schedule a walk with a group.

Whatever you choose, may it nourish your soul and fill you with hope for the days ahead.





Blessed Are You Who Bear the Light

Blessed are you who bear the light in unbearable times,
Who testify to its endurance amid the unendurable,
Who bear witness to its persistence when everything
seems in shadow and grief.

Blessed are you in whom the light lives,
In whom the brightness blazes—your heart a chapel,
An altar where in the deepest night can be seen the fire
that shines forth in you

In unaccountable faith, in stubborn hope,
In love that illumines every broken thing it finds.

—Jan Richardson, from “Circle of Grace”

Pathways of Peace: Renewal in Everyday Life

Opening Retreat: Friday, Jan. 26, 6:30 p.m.—Saturday, Jan. 27, 4 p.m.

Sabbatical Days: Fridays; Feb. 23, March 22 & April 19; 8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

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

Have you ever longed for time to step away and explore how you might achieve a more mindful and purposeful life? 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 Harvard Business Review, sabbaticals can be transformative. Time away allows us to heal, reconnect with important relationships, explore and ultimately embrace a more authentic life. But many of you have told us it is a struggle to carve out time. You may not have the option to take extended time away from work for a month or more. You feel the pressure to balance work, family and everyday life.

All of us benefit from tending to our spiritual life and

spending time in quiet reflection. The Center for Creative Leadership research suggests that we become more resilient when we rest, practice gratitude, reappraise our mental models, savor the sweet things, engage our senses and make time for mindfulness (source: www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/8-steps-help-become-resilient). In this five-month program, you will have the opportunity to sample practices and integrate them into daily life. This series of days is designed to help you balance all that your life contains and take the time to nourish your body, mind and spirit.

Participants will enjoy two overnight retreats and three 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 January!

Fee: \$1,000 (deposit of \$250 due at registration)

Spirituality in the 21st Century

Prairiewoods Spirituality in the 21st Century 2024

Friday, April 26, 6–8 p.m., & Saturday, April 27, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

in person in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, & online via Zoom

“Somewhere between the eighty-five-year-old Tibetan Buddhist leader [the Dalai Lama] and the eighteen-year-old activist [Greta Thunberg], between the sage legacy and the whole life ahead, is where the rest of us must come in. And we must.”

—Susan Bauer-Wu, *A Future We Can Love*, p. 3

The Pew Research Center has found that most of us are sad or anxious about the climate crisis. According to Paul Hawken, one of the most hopeful antidotes to this is to pay attention to the growing movement of self-organized congregations and groups dedicated to change (Wu, p. 86). Hope comes from seeing ourselves as part of this larger whole.

Join us April 26–27, 2024, to be inspired by and learn from leaders who are committed to creating a hopeful and regenerative future. We encourage you to come with your friends, your congregation or whatever group of committed humans to which you belong. Get inspired, get informed and get into action!

Susan Bauer-Wu, PhD, RN, FAAN, (virtual) is the president of the Mind & Life Institute, which serves as the primary convener, catalyst and community builder for the contemplative sciences. Her new book, *A Future We Can Love: How We Can Reverse the Climate Crisis with the Power of Our Hearts and Minds*, shares the words of the Dalai Lama and Greta Thunberg in dialogue with climate scientists, activists and spiritual leaders as they start a world-changing conversation. Learn more at www.mindandlife.org/person/susan-bauer-wu.

Rev. Veronica M. Johnson serves as Outreach Director for Faith in Place, whose mission is to “empower people of diverse faiths and spiritualities to be leaders in advancing environmental and racial justice, providing resources to educate, connect, and advocate for healthier communities.” She has a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering and a master of divinity degree from McCormick Theological Seminary. She currently serves as co-pastor of Hyde Park Union Church. She has served previously in the Baptist, AME and UCC churches, and is the former president of the council for the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago.

Leah Rampy, PhD, is a writer, speaker, retreat leader and educator who weaves ecology, spirituality, personal stories and practices to encourage others to deepen their relationship to the natural world. She recently authored the book *Earth & Soul: Reconnecting amid Climate Chaos* to be released in early 2024. She is a frequent speaker on contemplative leadership and spiritual ecology for these edge times. She has previously served as the Executive Director for Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, where she continues as an adjunct staff member. She is the founder and leader of Church of the Wild Two Rivers that meets regularly to deepen spirituality through time in the natural world. Leah offers retreats through Friends of Silence and for the Center for Spirituality in Nature, where she also serves as the senior spiritual program leader.

“Earth and soul cry out for a conversation far deeper and more profound than that of saving our lifestyle. It is time to reweave connections for the sake of mutual thriving here and now as we teeter on the edge of even greater loss.”

—Leah Rampy, *Earth and Soul: Reconnecting amid Climate Chaos*, coming in early 2024

Please pay as led, ranging from \$25–\$150. Register a group of six and take \$50 off your total registration. Lodging is available at Prairiewoods, but space is limited. **Learn more and register at www.Prairiewoods.org/Spirituality-in-the-21st-Century.**



Retreats & Programs

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship

Friday, Jan. 5, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Jan. 7, 1 p.m.

Facilitators: Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Michael Pollan wrote, “What would happen, for example, if we were to start thinking about food as less of a thing and more of a relationship?” When we think of “peace” as relationships with self, others and Earth, and apply this to the food we eat, a new way of nourishing and promoting health emerges. Let’s spend the weekend together on a pathway of peace with food at the center of our table. Drawing from the spiritual wisdom of mystics, saints and poets, as well as wisdom from physiology and nutrition, we’ll reflect on how the food we choose to eat is related to the interconnectedness of all beings. Retreatants will create actionable items that support “food peace,” for health, in one’s self, in community and on this planet we call home.

Associate Professor in Food Science and Nutrition at Iowa State University and Registered Dietitian Christina Campbell researches prenatal lifestyle choices on the health of mothers and children and the intersection of food and peace. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in medical nutrition therapy, reducing consumer food waste, the U.S. food system and sustainable diets. Prairiewoods’ Coordinator of Spiritual Services Ann Jackson, PBVM, blends eco-spirituality, literature, and leadership in service to individual spiritual direction and group facilitation. Ann delights in listening with others to the energy of Spirit stirring creativity, passion, discernment and service.

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

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



Pathways of Peace: Awakening Awareness of Energy

Friday, Feb. 23, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Feb. 25, 1 p.m.

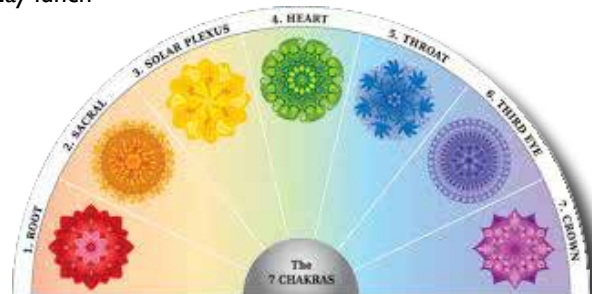
Facilitators: Tammy Bayer & Ann Jackson, PBVM

We host seven different energy centers in our bodies. Scientific research and some spiritual traditions cite that each energy center corresponds to a particular stage of life. This experiential retreat will invite women of all ages to deeper understanding of the body’s energies and engage meditative practices to integrate the mind, body and spirit for healing and wholeness. Utilizing wisdom from many resources, among them, *The 7 Healing Chakras: Unlocking Your Body’s Energy Centers* by Brenda Davies, M.D., retreatants will potentially move through past experiences to rest in the present and animate possibility.

Tammy Bayer brings an enthusiasm for life to all of her work. She has a background in education and over 20 years of experience as a doula working with growing families. Tammy is a yoga and meditation teacher and a retreat leader who finds joy in supporting women through transformative life experiences. Ann Jackson, PBVM, is Prairiewoods’ coordinator of spiritual services and blends eco-spirituality, literature and leadership in service to individual spiritual direction and group facilitation. Ann delights in listening with others to the energy of Spirit stirring creativity, passion, discernment and service.

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

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



For more information or to register, visit www.Prairiewoods.org or call 319-395-6700.

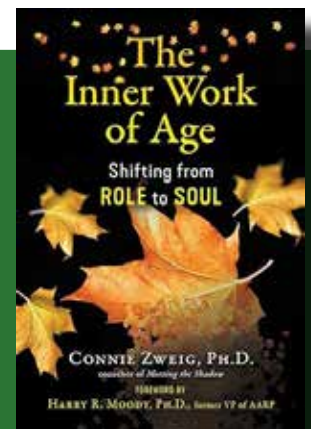
Book Review

Inner Work of Age: Shifting from Role to Soul by Connie Zweig, PhD

What if we could reimagine aging? How might we cross the threshold from ROLE to SOUL and support this transition that involves not just shifting roles, but reflecting on the soulful, internal changes in identity, meaning and purpose? Enlightened by the wisdom of Eastern and Western influences, retired psychotherapist Connie Zweig, PhD, animates the spirit of aging in her book *The Inner Work of Age: Shifting from ROLE to SOUL*.

Zweig offers wisdom to consciously move deeper and more expansively. She cites themes of aging and invites reflection around personal and societal biases, various stages of awareness,

subtle yearnings and gratitude regarding retirement (refirement), the shadows of age and gifts of eldership. The book also highlights spiritual practices from many faith traditions to assist in healing through illness, reviewing life and preparing for death. This could be a great gift for anyone in the second half of life. It’s a book to be “reflected,” not simply read.



—review by Ann Jackson, PBVM

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

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Online Information Session:

Tuesday, Dec. 19, 7–8 p.m.

Nine-Week Series: Sundays, Jan. 7–March 3, 1:30–4 p.m.

Extended Retreat Day: Sunday, Feb. 18, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Chris Klug

Mindfulness is the power of mind to be deeply aware of what's happening—without commentary or interference. Research reveals numerous benefits to the nervous system, emotions and general sense of well-being.

Over nine weeks, the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program will cultivate the skill of mindfulness through

formal meditation practices and informal integrative practices. This series consists of a two-and-a-half-hour class each week with one extended six-and-a-half-hour class. If you want to participate, please attend a free online information session.

Fee: \$400 for the nine-week series (*Those working in the human service field may register for just \$100!*)



Day of Self Renewal
Thursdays, Jan. 4 & Feb. 1, &
Mondays, Jan. 8 & Feb. 12,
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 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, 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.

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

Into the Oneness: Qigong for Energy, Equanimity & Peace

Thursdays, Jan. 4–Feb. 29,
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, acupuncture 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 wellbeing. Wisdom from the Tao Te Ching, TCM Five 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, Jan. 4 & Feb. 1,

1:45–2:30 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: \$10

On the Cusp of Change: Where Memory & Imagination Meet

Saturday, Jan. 6, 10:30–1 p.m., &
Tuesday, Feb. 13, 7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Karen Hering

Life is made of change. It always has been. But in the 21st century, the changes come faster and closer together. How can we pause to make sense of our changing world and to better understand our choices in living with change, whether it's personal or global? This yearlong series of twelve stand-alone online programs and three in-person retreats takes a deeper dive into Karen Hering's book *Trusting Change*, exploring how to engage our memory and imagination when encountering the uncertainties of the present day. The Jan. 6 opening online retreat, attuned to the start of a new year, introduces the dynamics of living with change. On the second Tuesday of each month thereafter, Karen will lead an online session of embodied practices, guided reflection and conversation with a specific focus of how to make change more trustworthy. (The Feb. 13 topic is Letting Go.) Three optional in-person retreats at the Christine Center and Prairiewoods in the spring, summer (a focused retreat for writers) and fall are open to all, whether you've participated online or not.

Fee: \$25 for January retreat, \$15 for monthly sessions

Singing Bowl Prayer

Mondays, Jan. 8 & Feb. 12,

12:45–1:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine

Quehl-Engel

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: \$10

Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Groups

Family-Centered Soul Care (for children and the adults who support them): Wednesdays, Jan. 10 & Feb. 14, 5:30–7 p.m.

Soul Care for Adults: Wednesdays, Jan. 17 & Feb. 21, 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitators: Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW

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. These monthly grief groups are open to anyone grieving loss through death.

- On the second Wednesday of each month, children and the adults who support them are invited to explore a different creative art medium.
- The third Wednesday of each month is for adults.

In January, we'll use different art mediums to express our feelings and visually represent what they might look like. Words have limits, but art can help to express our emotions when words become difficult to find. In February, we will take pieces of mosaic tile and glue them onto wooden photo frames, just as piece by piece we build a lifetime of memories. The pieces can be random, or they can make a specific design. Registration is required one week in advance. This group is now only offered in person.

Fee: Free includes all art supplies (*dinner also will be provided for the family-centered group*)

Cosmogenesis: Where to Begin? **Friday, Jan. 12, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, Jan. 13, 5 p.m.**

Facilitator: Ann Jackson, PBVM

Drawing from both science and spirituality, this overnight retreat will help us unpack evolutionary advances that may inspire us as humans to create a more equitable, joyful, sustainable world. We will trace the Universe Story and learn, explore and discover practical spiritual practices that may help us to consciously create more harmony, fulfillment and contentment in the world. Resourcing the wisdom of Brian Swimme and Matthew Fox through videos and the book *Cosmogenesis: An Unveiling of the Expanding Universe*, we will explore the intricately intertwined relationship between our individual lives and the life of the cosmos.

Fee: \$150 includes sessions, Friday night lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Commuter Fee: \$100 includes sessions and Saturday lunch

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations

Mondays; Jan. 15, Feb. 5 & Feb. 19; 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

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: \$12

Indigenous Food & Agriculture: Past, Present & Future **Tuesday, Jan. 16, 7–8:15 p.m.**

Facilitator: Dan Cornelius

This event via Zoom is co-sponsored by Shalom Spirituality Center; Food, Faith, and Farming Network; Holy Wisdom Monastery and Prairiewoods. Dan Cornelius, a member of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, is the Outreach Program Manager for the University of Wisconsin Law School's Great Lakes Indigenous Law Center and UW-Madison's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, where he works on the development of producer cooperatives, supply chain analysis, and legal and policy aspects of food and agriculture.

Fee: \$10

Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony **Saturdays, Jan. 20 & Feb. 17, 4–7 p.m. (setup begins at 2, ceremony starts at 4)**

Facilitator: Kerry Batteau

The Sweat Lodge Ceremony pre-dates recorded history and was practiced in some form by every culture in the world.



These sweats were held for reasons ranging from relaxation and socialization to healing and purification. Join us for a sweat focused on prayer, purification, recognition and healing. During the ceremony, we sit on the earth in the lodge, a small dome-shaped structure. Heated stones are placed in the center of the lodge and the water pourer, or leader, pours water over the stones to create steam. There are four rounds that include the singing of sacred songs, and after each round the lodge door is opened for more stones to be brought in. *Please note that the lodge is a small enclosure that is dark and extremely hot inside. If you have claustrophobia or any medical conditions that prevent you from going into a sauna, you should not*

What Is Spiritual Direction/ Spiritual Companionship Information Sessions **Wednesday, Jan. 17, 10–11 a.m., & Wednesday, Feb. 14, 4–5 p.m.**

Spiritual Directors/Companions: Rev. Rose Blank; Ann Jackson, PBVM; & Lucille Winnike, FSPA

Spiritual direction/spiritual companionship is a time-honored conversation and listening session between two people in which one person consults another spiritually experienced and trained listener about the ways in which the Source of All Being (God, Divine, Love, Universe, Holy, Buddha, Allah ...) may be moving in their life. It crosses all ancient spiritual traditions. Its aim is to empower us to explore a deeper experience of that Source of All Being through the experienced and compassionate company of another human being. The benefits include:

- cultivating the skill of deep listening
- articulating experiences of the Divine
- exploring various spiritual practices and resources
- engaging in discernment and exploring spiritual questions

Come learn more about this incredible resource! You are invited to join us in person or online via Zoom. Remain for as long as you like within the hour.

Fee: Free

participate in this ceremony. Please visit our website for safety protocols and to register. You will be asked to sign a release form.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 to Prairiewoods for materials

Labyrinth Walk **Sunday, Feb. 4, 2–4 p.m.**

Facilitator: Leslie Wright

Come walk the indoor labyrinth with us! All are welcome and no experience is required.



We will provide some brief guidance at the beginning for those who may be new to this practice or have been away from it for a while.

Labyrinths have been around for thousands of years. The circle and the path are symbols found across cultures and religious traditions. The labyrinth and other spiritual practices help to ground us during unsettled times when our foundations seem to shift; sometimes we can't think our way out of or to something, and sometimes we need another way of being. When engaging with or praying a labyrinth, a person travels on a single path where the way in is the same as the way out. The labyrinth can be a metaphor for how we walk through life and the situations that may currently be confronting us. In her book *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*, Lauren Artress presents a four-fold path for praying the labyrinth:

- Remembering: Be open as you begin, notice what comes and remember you are loved.
- Releasing: On the way to the center, release those things that are causing you pain and confusion.
- Receiving: Enjoy the center, be still and linger. Take a deep breath. Receive what God has for you.
- Returning: Move back out into the world, more replenished, grounded, empowered, receiving a kindness and mercy. Look for an invitation with God to do the work in the world that is yours to do.

Fee: Free-will offering

Rock Mandala Painting for the Whole Family

Saturday, Feb. 17, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Facilitator: Andi Lewis

Spend a few hours creating art with your favorite people! Learn the art of rock painting with mandalas, which are sacred works of art in the form of a circle. Using smooth stones, paints and fine dotting tools, we will make beautiful, detailed mandalas. This is a fun,



relaxing process that can be done by anyone, regardless of age. We will have time to paint several rocks and will be encouraged to take one rock home and leave one as a secret gift for a stranger to find. No experience or artistic skill is necessary, but kids 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult. (It is ideal for ages 10 and older.)

Fee: \$15 per person includes all supplies

Ongoing Programs

Metta Yoga

Mondays & Thursdays; Jan. 4–Feb. 29; 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, Jan. 4–Feb. 29, 4–5 p.m.

Convener: Ellen Bruckner

Join this online community exploration and deepening of spiritual topics via Zoom.

Fee: Free-will offering

Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton

first & third Thursdays; Jan. 4, Jan. 18, Feb. 1 & Feb. 15; 7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Carole Butz

Practice contemplative living to respond to everyday experiences with greater awareness of our connections over Zoom.

Fee: Free-will offering

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers

second Tuesdays, Jan. 9 & Feb. 13, 9:30–11:30 a.m.; & fourth Wednesdays, Jan. 24 & Feb. 28, 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; Jan. 9, Jan. 23, Feb. 13 & Feb. 27; 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitator: Judith Smith

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

Fee: Free-will offering

Men Exploring Faith

second & fourth Thursdays; Jan. 11, Jan. 25, Feb. 8 & Feb. 22; 4–5:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Linzy Martin

Join with a group of reflective men in honest conversation about life changes, either in person or via Zoom.

Fee: Free-will offering

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!*



Kathy Broghammer is a certified sound healing practitioner through the Atma Buti Sound and Vibrational School in Boulder, Colorado, and facilitates our Singing Bowl Prayer and Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations sessions.



Kathy says, "In my singing bowl sessions, I offer crystal bowls merging with a variety of Himalayan bowls and gongs to bring waves of restoration and tranquility to the mind and body. I believe the singing bowls are a tool for transformation and healing, which is ongoing. By playing and offering singing bowls to others, I listen and hold space for others to reach their own magical place."

Some of her session attendees have said that the singing bowls: "brought peace and tranquility to my inner world. Has helped heal trauma and pain. Has increased my awareness and intuition. Saved me from depression and hopelessness."

"I felt a deep trance-like relaxation. Vibration and sounds penetrated my whole being."

"Clearer thinking, profound relaxation, mentally and physically. Always wanting to return for more in this intense demanding world."



Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel facilitates our Into the Oneness: Qigong for Energy, Equanimity & Peace as well as Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep sessions. She also leads retreats at Prairiewoods. She was introduced to yoga by her mom in the 1970s and then went on to get teacher certifications in yoga, Qigong, healing and sound therapies, and more.

Catherine says that she "helps others experience healing peace, well-being and greater awareness of Oneness with The Sacred including within themselves and the rest of nature in this One Reality of which we all are part. Offered are meditative, energy-based mind-body-Spirit practices and related East-West spiritual wisdom."

"What I love about teaching Qigong (Qi = life force energy Spirit and gong = to cultivate and work with) is that most people who say they can't meditate, let alone feel energy, are able to by the end of our first class. That said, I've seen this class be a life changer for people. Especially as they take tools they learn from class with them, including energy medicine insights from Traditional Chinese Medicine through various acupressure points, flows, breathing practices, healing sounds, etc. As for Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep, it is humbling to be part of an experience which takes people into a very profound experience of rest, bliss and healing peace."

Heather English teaches gentle and chair yoga classes and first became interested in yoga when she was exploring alternative modalities for dealing with infertility. She says, "Following a career change, I took a deep dive into yoga for the potential mental health benefits it could offer. After taking teacher training, I began to consider the possibility that I might have something unique to share with yoga students."

Heather says, "Gentle yoga is a practice done at a slow and relaxing pace. It's not that we don't do 'hard' poses, but that we don't 'force' any pose. Chair yoga as we practice it is much the same. It includes seated and standing postures done both with and without the use of a chair."



"I encourage students to be curious about their bodies rather than judgmental. So often we get caught thinking about what our bodies 'should' do or what they used to be able to do—and none of this is really helpful as our bodies are always changing. Each time we get on our yoga mats, we are meeting our bodies for the first time. I want students to greet their bodies with curiosity and grace."

"Sometimes students will share with me their personal victories that they attribute to practicing yoga. As the ones who are committing time and energy to their yoga practice, I know that they have done all of the work to positively impact their own lives. I also know that just spending time at Prairiewoods has positively impacted us all and that we are so fortunate to be able to practice yoga and enjoy our little yoga community in such an amazing place."

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 visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate.



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As we enter this New Year and the light begins to grow each day, let us all reflect on the words of Albert Einstein to his daughter as he described the unifying force that "includes and governs all":

"This universal force is LOVE ... Love is Light, that enlightens those who give and receive it ... Love is power, because it multiplies the best we have, and allows humanity not to be extinguished in their blind selfishness. Love unfolds and reveals."

May you be warmed by the light of love and guided on your way this coming year.

