

Prairiewoods

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

*Reweaving
Connections •
Cultivating Hope •
Taking Action*

Each year, Spirituality in the 21st Century invites speakers and community members to come together to explore and expand our thinking about our spirituality and relationships with ourselves, others, Creation and the Source of All Being. Last year, Jeremy Lent explored the intersections of science and ancient wisdom. His words called us to work toward an ecological civilization. This year, we continue this important exploration. We will focus on how we can awaken to possibilities, become more resilient in the face of complex challenges and create change.

Our speakers will help us remember three things:

- Even in the face of complex challenges like the climate crisis, we can cultivate hope.
- Solutions will emerge from our connections, not in isolation.
- The accumulation of simple actions can have a transformative effect.

“Hope is ‘that virtue by which we take responsibility for the future.’”

—Lyanda L. Haupt, *Rooted*, p. 36

How might we cultivate hope? The Pew Research Center has found that most of us are sad or anxious about the climate crisis. We are uncertain about the future, and our fears often cause us to turn away from that which seems

beyond our ability to control. Greta Thunberg reminds us that uncertainty is the home of possibility. In order to reorient ourselves to possibility, it will be essential to examine our perspectives, remain curious and practice compassion.

Paul Hawken suggests that one of the most hopeful antidotes in these difficult times is to pay attention to the growing movement of self-organized congregations and groups dedicated to change (Susan Bauer-Wu, *A Future We Can Love*, p. 86). Hope comes from seeing ourselves as part of this larger whole. Many writers speak of community connections and limit it to people. Reconnecting with the Earth community is as important as attending to what’s happening in the human community—perhaps more so, as those relationships have been neglected for so long by many of us.

Out of these connections, we begin to understand the actions we are called to take. From that, we glimpse the possibilities that are more than we will ever comprehend—and hope arises.

“The difficulty is that with the rise of the modern sciences, we began to think of the universe as a collection of objects rather than as a communion of subjects.”

—Thomas Berry

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I sit here writing to you in the cold darkness of a mid-January morning. Everything and everyone seems to be asleep. But you will be reading this as we head into March and April. The time of year we often speak of as a reawakening of the Earth. I don't want to create too ponderous a metaphor—but it seems such a good way to think about our current times. We have been asleep and are now awakening. This awakening is to our relationship with all creation. Many of us, myself included, are rediscovering what our elders and St. Francis told us so long ago.

In the coming months, I encourage you to reflect upon two themes in this “awakening” subject. Both involve love. Joel Sartore, creator of The Photo Ark, has been quoted as saying, “You can't save what you don't love.” Prairiewoods was founded on a deep love for the Earth and the Source of All Being. We know from experience that visitors and guests experience that deep love, even if they cannot name it, when they are here on the land. Our challenge now is to offer that experience to as many people as possible. That felt experience of profound connection is truly transformative.

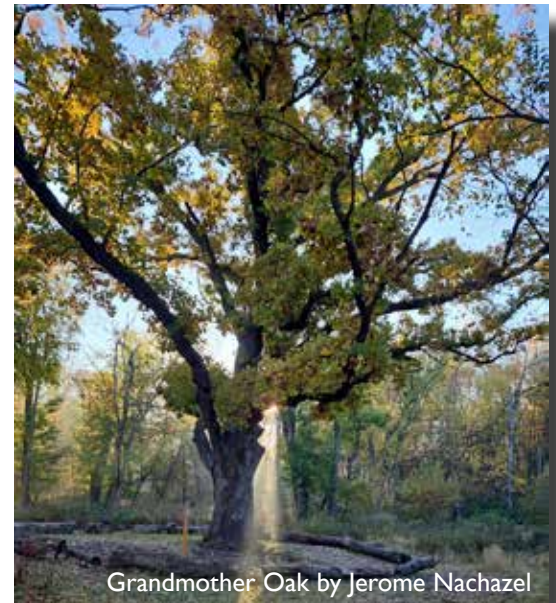
This profound connection reveals the second theme to which we must attend: how deeply we are—and have been—embraced and cared for by Creation. We have been fed and forgiven by the Earth. We have been held even when we have forgotten our right relationship with our brothers and sisters and all created beings. We have stressed and tested this beautiful home we call Earth. Now it is time for us to reawaken to who we are and what we are called to do. We are called to love creation as we have been loved.

I do not say this from a place of darkness. I say this energized by a powerful sense of hope and possibility. People everywhere are yearning for this. If we all lean into the creative power of the Universe instead of blindly extracting from it, we will, as Susan Bauer-Wu says, co-create a “Future We Can Love.”

“All” it requires of us is to love and be loved.

Peace and all good,

Leslie A. Wright



Grandmother Oak by Jerome Nachazel



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 Mindfulness Initiative echoes Berry’s words. They acknowledge that “climate change is a physical reality, demanding urgent political and practical solutions.” But more importantly they emphasize that “its inner dimension, overlooked entirely by mainstream approaches, is a crisis of relationship ... Lack of conscious connection with ourselves, with others and with the world we share drives this crisis.” They join the voices often heard at Spirituality in the 21st Century that have been urging us to awaken (or perhaps more accurately *reawaken*) to our place in a deeply interconnected and interdependent universe. Our individual thriving depends on the thriving of the whole.

To reawaken to these truths and build our stamina for the work ahead requires us to move toward mindfulness. This move will help us to examine our mental models of how the world works. Our western culture prizes separation; our souls know that we are interwoven into the fabric of the cosmos, deeply connected to Earth. When we fray these connections, we are caught in loneliness and grief for this loss of kinship—whether we realize it or not. This is Thomas Berry’s call to incense that is aided by deepening connections to the living world around us. “It simply can’t be emphasized enough that our culturally dominant narrative of ‘separation from,’ ‘power over’ and ‘ownership of’ nature creates the mistaken belief that we can manage, technologically innovate and ‘carbon’ trade ourselves out of the evolutionary dead end we have been heading into for a couple of centuries” (Daniel Christian Wahl, *Building a Regenerative Future*, May 26, 2022).

It is time to act. Inaction has the same effect as denying the crisis. Only 27% of respondents in a recent Pew Research Center survey believe that individual Americans can do a lot to reduce climate impacts. The largest percentage appear to believe that the large businesses and corporations are responsible and able to make change. As an antidote to this sentiment, I would offer the words of Daniel Christian Wahl, who asserts that “a regenerative human impact on Earth is not only possible but has been the norm for most of our species’

deep history” (Wahl). Unless we attend first to our soul purpose—living more closely aligned with and learning from the wisdom of the living world—we risk rushing to action based on our ego needs or our rational thinking. The work to which we are called is often beyond our understanding. Discernment can guide us to action that we don’t fully understand with results that will only be apparent far beyond our lifetime.

Together we can continue to build our capacity to “co-create regenerative futures” (Wahl). The journey will be iterative and messy. We cannot allow ourselves to get waylaid by notions that there is only one solution and it will be delivered by others. We, ourselves, are the collective engines of positive and transformative change. We can create the positive networks that amplify the impact of each small effort. Reweaving our connections to each other and all of Creation will help us sustain each other for the road ahead.

Our annual Spirituality in the 21st Century event offers the opportunity to hear from three speakers deeply engaged in responding to the climate crisis and awakening our commitment to change: Susan Bauer-Wu, author of *A Future We Can Love*; Dr. Leah Rampy, former director of Shalem Institute and author of the just-released *Earth & Soul: Reconnecting amid Climate Chaos*; and Rev. Veronica Johnson, Outreach Director for Faith in Place.

Join us April 26–27 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 and weave the connections necessary to move towards a thriving future for all.

To learn more about the speakers who will inspire us, turn to pages 6–7.



Putting Hope into Action

Is the thought of climate change becoming overwhelming to the point where you just want to give up? Do you feel like your individual choices to reduce waste and pollution are no longer making an impact? You're not alone. We're here to encourage you to remain hopeful, avoid thoughts of fear and guilt, keep yourself motivated, and celebrate your progress.

With Earth Day approaching on Monday, April 22, it's the perfect time to think about how each of us can make a positive impact on our environment through small changes in how we live. From our diet habits to our shopping and transportation choices, every small decision can be an impactful one.

Prairiewoods has always tried to lead by example, and we hope that our practices will continue to make a difference and inspire generations to come. From small things like only using cloth napkins for our meals, to big projects like our recent addition of solar panels that make us 100% solar powered, we strive to reduce our impact on the environment.

Here are some additional things that we can all do:

At Home:

- Can or preserve your own food
- Shop locally and at farmers markets
- Eat a plant-rich, vegan or Mediterranean diet
- Cook meals from scratch to reduce food packaging waste
- Make your own household cleaners
- Use alternatives to paper towels
- Invest in solar green energy at your home
- Switch to LED lighting
- Turn off lights and appliances when not in use

In the Garden:

- Transition to electric lawn equipment
- Plant vegetable and herb gardens
- Compost food and lawn waste
- Reduce your turfgrass lawn by planting native plants
- Plant diverse native trees

Rethink Your Transportation:

- Drive an electric or hybrid vehicle
- Ride your bike, walk, carpool or take public transportation where possible
- Work from home when possible
- Reduce unnecessary trips
- Maintain proper tire and vehicle maintenance

Other Practices to Consider:

- Shop used or pre-worn clothing—avoid throw away fashion
- Host a clothing swap with friends
- Engage in conversation by joining local activist groups
- Speak to local representatives and vote for climate-conscious candidates
- Refuse single-use plastics and use reusable drink containers
- Take reusable grocery or produce bags to the store
- Take short showers or use energy efficient appliances
- Wash clothes with cold water and hang to dry
- Follow recycling guidelines
- Adjust your thermostat while away from home or when sleeping
- Accept electronic receipts versus paper receipts



Whether you like to follow social media, read books, listen to podcasts or volunteer, there are endless resources available with tips on how to live sustainably.

Check Out These Websites:

- zerowastechef.com
- buynothingproject.org
- zerowaste.org
- theminimalists.com
- freecycle.org/town/CedarRapidsIA
- cedar-rapids.org/local_government/sustainability/community_climate_plan.php

Get Involved:

Here are ten local nonprofits with an environmental focus:

- Sierra Club—Iowa Chapter
 - Trees Forever
 - Wickiup Hill Learning Center (Linn County Conservation)
 - I-Renew
 - Linn & Johnson County Clean Energy Districts
 - Iowa Interfaith Power & Light
 - Feed Iowa First
 - Matthew 25 Tool Library
 - Backyard Abundance
 - Monarch Research Project
- Be sure to check out **EcoFest** on April 20 in the NewBo District! This is the corridor's premier Earth Day celebration. It's a family-friendly festival that includes interactive activities, eco-products, fun ways to reduce and reuse household items, local foods, arts and free live music. EcoFest helps us connect our personal choices to individual, community and planetary sustainability. We hope you'll join us!

Food for Thought:

- More plastic has been produced in the last ten years than in the whole preceding century.
- Going solar is not only good for the environment but also creates jobs here in Iowa!
- An average urban tree will sequester 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide by 40 years of age. The more urban yard and street trees we have, the more carbon we can capture!

A Message from Foundress Nancy Hoffman, FSPA:

"Each of you is an extension of Prairiewoods. Together we are making great strides in finding ways to incorporate effective ways to combat climate change. Thank you for sharing your practices, teaching us and challenging us to live and act in more sustainable and regenerative ways. All of us together are making a difference. God bless you."

Prairiewoods Spirituality in the 21st Century: Hope in Action

Friday, April 26, 7–9 p.m., & Saturday, April 27, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
(please note the updated times)

in person at Grant Wood AEA in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, & online via Zoom

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 (Susan Bauer-Wu, *A Future We Can Love*, p. 86). Hope comes from seeing ourselves as part of this larger whole.

Join us April 26–27 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!*

Friday, April 26

6:30 p.m. Doors to Grant Wood AEA open.

6:30 p.m. Sara Thomsen's music welcomes all into the space.

7–9 p.m. Leah Rampy opens our conversation about reweaving our connection with Earth and our own soul. She will remind us of our deep and inextricable connections to self, others and all Creation. She will help us build the fortitude and resolve necessary to plant seeds for the future and lay the stepping stones that lead toward a future of greater mutual flourishing and well-being.

Saturday, April 27

8 a.m. Doors to Grant Wood AEA open.

8:45 a.m. Sara Thomsen's music welcomes all into the space.

9 a.m.–noon Hear from Rev. Veronica Johnson as she reflects on her experience working with congregations across the Midwest as they wrestle with sustainability and climate change. Susan Bauer-Wu (virtual) shares the wisdom and guidance she has collected in her new book *A Future We Can Love*. She and dozens of visionary scientists, activists and spiritual leaders offer us a new lens through which to consider the current crisis and meaningful rituals and practices for connecting to Earth and renewing hope.

Noon Enjoy a delicious, fresh lunch prepared by Prairiewoods' kitchen team, enjoy Sara's music, relax and connect.

1–3:30 p.m. Leah and Veronica return to help us integrate what we have learned and send us off with renewed hope, deeper connections and inspiration for actions we can take.

The cost is \$75 for online participants or \$100 for in-person participants, including lunch. Students can register for just \$25. Register a group of six or more and take \$100 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.*

Earth & Soul Book Reading & Discussion

Friday, April 26, 1–3 p.m.

Facilitator: Leah Rampy, PhD

Come to Prairiewoods for an optional book reading, discussion and signing with author Leah Rampy, PhD, prior to her presentations at Spirituality in the 21st Century. Leah's book, *Earth &*

Soul: Reconnecting amid Climate Chaos, was just released in February. In the midst of accelerating climate devastation and an uncertain future, Leah's new book calls us to renew a deep and personal relationship with Earth.

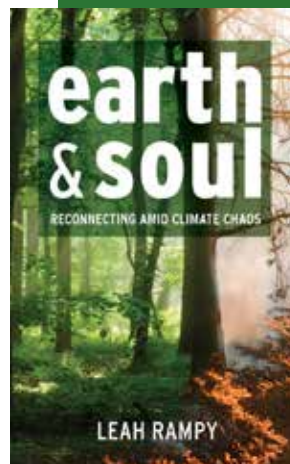
Leah faces directly into the devastation of climate chaos and biodiversity

loss while leading her readers on a soul journey into grief and loss to also claim the beauty, joy and possibilities available when we reconnect with Earth. She presents compelling personal experiences and engagingly lyrical stories of whales, cedars and sparrows so that we can see the necessity and urgency of learning from the wisdom of our kin in the natural world.

Leah writes at the intersection of spirituality, ecology and story, illuminating a path to reweaving nature and soul. Under her deft guidance, the beauty and genius of this sacred world unfolds before us. Even now—when the world as we knew it is ending and a new story lies beyond what we can envision—we may live fully alive and lay stepping stones toward a diverse and vibrant world of oneness and mutual flourishing.

Come listen to Leah read from *Earth & Soul* and participate in a discussion about the book. Feel free to bring your own copy for signing, and copies also will be available for purchase.

Fee: Free-will offering



“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*

“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

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. Learn more at www.faithinplace.org/staff-bios-2.

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* that was just released in February 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. Learn more at www.leahmoranrampy.com.

Sara Thomsen will weave her soulful, hope-filled music throughout the two-day event. “Thomsen’s soulful voice, poetic lyrics and unforgettable melodies cut through to the heart and the soul of human experience,” proclaims the *Minnesota Women’s Press*. With a voice rich as the best Midwest soil, Sara’s songs carry you inward and outward—in, to the particulars of your own life, and out, into the shared humanity of us all. Her performance style is easygoing and full of humor and depth, capturing the audience’s engagement. Sara has released six solo albums and is a weaver of song and community singing. At concerts, conferences, classrooms, workshops, retreats, jails, places of prayer and lines of protest, to be with Sara is to want to sing. Increasing wonder and awareness, deepening spiritual connection, and widening social engagement through song is at the heart of her work. Sara’s ability to get people singing magically transforms gatherings into communities empowered with possibility. Learn more at www.sarathomsen.com.



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

Retreats

Turning back Toward the Light Retreat (in person)

Friday, March 8, 6 p.m.–Sunday, March 10, 11 a.m. (choose your time)

Facilitator: Rev. Jean Sullivan

As we prepare ourselves to wrap up a long, cold winter, in anticipation of the spring equinox, we will use Katherine May's new book *Enchantment: Awakening Wonder in an Anxious Age* as our inspiration. "May ... explore(s) the restorative properties of the natural world—from a pebble in the hand to the ... pleasure of the ground beneath her bare feet to the magic of a moon shadow. Enchantment is an invitation to each of us to experience life in all its sensual complexity and to find the beauty waiting for us there." We will take time for quiet and meditation alongside spirited conversation and celebration of the coming season. As the weather allows, we will explore Prairiewoods for signs of spring! Rev. Jean Sullivan serves as Prairiewoods' Coordinator for Outreach, Engagement and Hospitality, welcoming groups that come to Prairiewoods. She has a bachelor's degree in medical anthropology, a master of divinity and nearly three decades in ordained congregational ministry with the United Church of Christ.

Saturday Only Fee: \$75 for Saturday 9 a.m.–4 p.m., includes lunch

Friday & Saturday Fee: \$125 for Friday 6 p.m.–Saturday 4 p.m., includes Friday lodging and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Weekend Fee: \$175 for Friday 6 p.m.–Sunday 11 a.m., includes two nights' lodging, Saturday meals and Sunday breakfast



Inner & Outer Communities of Care: Circle Singing Retreat (in person)

Friday, April 5, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, April 6, 4 p.m.

Facilitators: Mary Cohen & Marie Garry

Research indicates singing is a powerful medicine for managing stress, activating the vagus nerve to help us feel safe and connected. Songs enliven! As we sing songs of hope and love, we create space for strengthening our inner wisdom and resilience. Through guided conversations and practice, participants affirm one another and deepen a community of care. As we sing together, we harmonize, revitalize, share struggle, and celebrate hope and healing. The songs we will sing embody our interconnectedness with Earth and all creation. All voices are welcome, including people who do not "identify" as singers yet wish to sing, people who sing in the car and shower, and experienced singers. This retreat also will offer opportunities to create through improvisation and songwriting. We will offer yoga nidra, a resting practice, and healing practices for self-regulation. Professor of Music Education at the University of Iowa Mary L. Cohen researches music-making and wellbeing, songwriting and collaborative communities. A 2009 foundress of the Oakdale Prison Community Choir, she collaborated with the Soweto Gospel Choir, Maggie Wheeler and Sara Thomsen to design and host "Learning Exchange," a model for singing, movement and discussion based on a select theme. J. Marie Garry, MA, is a professional counselor, workshop facilitator and song artist. Over the years, she has performed and recorded with the musical groups Aurora and A Delicate Balance. Her current musical passion is singing, writing and sharing songs sourced from the community singing movement. Together Mary and Marie cohost a regional singing circle that is also a part of the Ubuntu Choir Network.

Fee: \$200 includes retreat sessions, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Commuter Fee: \$140 includes sessions and Saturday lunch



Programs

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations (in person)

Mondays; March 4, March 18, April 1 & April 15; 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: \$12

Journey toward A Future We Can Love (hybrid)

Tuesdays; March 5, 12, 19 & 26; 6–7:30 p.m.

Facilitators: Jean Sullivan; Ann Jackson, PBVM; & Aaron Brewer

Susan Bauer-Wu is One of Prairiewoods' Spirituality in the 21st Century Speakers

Join us for a deep read, conversation and education about climate crises through Susan Bauer-Wu's *A Future We Can Love: How We Can Reverse the Climate Crisis with the Power of our Hearts and Minds*. It is inspired by a conversation between the Dalai Lama and Greta Thunberg. Blending science and spirituality, Bauer-Wu offers a roadmap to help us educate people to more clearly speak and act on behalf of the Earth community. Each week we will dive deep into understanding the urgency to act and transform our fear and grief into action. Join us via Zoom or in person for any one or more sessions.

Fee: \$25 per session or \$75 for four-session series

Intention: The Inner Work of Age (in person)

Tuesdays; March 5, March 19, April 2, April 16, April 30 & May 14; 10 a.m.–1 p.m.

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

Inner reflection and setting intentions can shift and reframe how we actually age! Crossing the threshold from role to soul is not for the faint of heart! Such a shift often impacts our sense of identity, body image, approach to learning new things, disposition for change, images of the divine ... This series will build community and offer a variety of spiritual practices that may assist in fully claiming and embodying your intention to choose to age consciously. Amid this time of momentous cultural transformation, shifting from role to soul is critical to personal and global wellbeing. Join this community of "elders" to lift intention and surface passion, wisdom and service for life.

Fee: \$35 per session, includes lunch, or \$180 for six-session series if paid prior to March 5

Day of Self Renewal (in person)
Thursdays, March 7 & April 4, &
Mondays, March 11 & April 8,
8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

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. (Services may include 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 (in person)

Thursdays, March 7–April 25,
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 wellbeing. 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 (in person)

Thursdays, March 7 & April 4,
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 Common Ground Book Tour (in person)

Thursday, March 7, 6:30–8 p.m.

Facilitators: Brian Hazlett & Ryan Allen

Meet with editors Brian Hazlett and Ryan Allen to discuss their book *On Common Ground: Learning and Living in the Loess Hills*. This anthology of essays, poems, photographs and artwork was inspired by a gathering of writers, naturalists and artists near Broken Kettle Grasslands in 2021. Highlights from that fall weekend included a prairie burn and encountering the Nature Conservancy's bison herd. We will watch a 30-minute documentary about the experience and then have time for questions with the editors.

Fee: Free-will offering

Singing Bowl Prayer (in person)
Mondays, March 11 & April 8,
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: \$10

On the Cusp of Change: Grieving & Practicing Equanimity (Zoom)
Tuesdays, March 12 & April 9,
7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Karen Hering

In the 21st century, change comes 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. On the second Tuesday of each month, Karen will lead an online session of embodied practices, guided reflection and conversation with a specific focus of how to make change more trustworthy. On March 12, we'll talk about grieving, and on April 9, we'll talk about practicing equanimity. 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: \$15 per session

Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Groups (in person)

Family-Centered Soul Care (for children and the adults who support them): Wednesdays, March 13 & April 10, 5:30–7 p.m.

Soul Care for Adults: Wednesdays, March 20 & April 17, 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. In March, we'll work with macrame feathers, which can symbolize the transience of the grief journey. Feelings come and go in unpredictable waves as we maneuver our new normal. In April, we'll make colorful window clings. Just as your loved one brought color and light to your life, colors can also represent the different emotions you are experiencing during your grief journey. Registration is required one week in advance. This group is now offered only in person.

Fee: Free includes all art supplies (dinner is provided for the family group)

Braiding Sweetgrass Book Group Discussion (Zoom)

Thursday, March 14, 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitators: staff from Prairiewoods, the Franciscan Spirituality Center & Marywood Spirituality Center

Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist and as a woman, author Robin Wall Kimmerer shows how other living beings offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices. In reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten its flourishing today, she circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of ecological consciousness requires the



Thelen-Teilhard Christophany Group (hybrid)

Wednesday, April 3, 5:15–6:45 p.m.
Facilitator: Steve Sovern

This Christophany Group begins its monthly gathering at Prairiewoods on the first Wednesday of each month. Based upon the belief that love is the fundamental energy of evolution, we gather in community, recognizing that we have the opportunity to co-create the universe and participate in the energy of evolution. These groups are formed as spaces of deep relationality with a vision to heal our world and transform lives through the real-world experience of communal reflection, shared friendship and collective spiritual practice based on the insights of Teilhard de Chardin and the authors who interpret and advance his vision. Group discussions will incorporate a Lectio Divina-like process to assure the inclusion of perspectives of all participants.

Fee: Free-will offering

acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. Please join staff from the Franciscan Spirituality Center, Marywood Spirituality Center and Prairiewoods for an evening of discussion and reflection over Zoom. All are welcome! Please register by March 7.

Fee: \$5 (please purchase the book separately)

Civilized Wildlings (in person) Community Art Installation:

Wednesday, March 20–Sunday, April 21
Reception & Artist Talk: Sunday, April 21, 2–5 p.m.

Facilitator: Jill Foote-Hutton

Offered in partnership with Iowa Ceramics Center & Glass Studio

Prairiewoods and the Iowa Ceramics Center & Glass Studio, with grant funding from the Iowa Arts Council, are entering into the final phase of the Civilized Wildlings series with multi-media artist Jill Foote-Hutton. Part three of this series will begin March 20 with the display of community-made mosaics created at the Ceramics Center. This exhibition will feature 20–35 mosaic projects that community members created at a November workshop. (Call 319-395-6700 for viewing hours.) On Sunday, April 21, Prairiewoods will host a reception with Jill Foote-Hutton with an Artist Talk beginning at 2:30 p.m.

Fee: Free-will offering

Drum Circle (in person) Saturday, March 23, & Sunday, April 28, 2–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Drum Iowa

Join Drum Iowa and Prairiewoods for a wonderful outdoor drum circle (weather permitting). Don't forget your drums! (We also will have instruments available for you to borrow.) You don't need to be a magnificent drummer or musician to enjoy this fun afternoon, and you are by no means obligated to participate. Spectators are welcome, and we'll have you drumming in no time! Registration is not necessary.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 (but this is a free event for all to enjoy)

The Universal Christ: Finding Christ in Every THING (in person)

Wednesdays, April 3–May 8,
 6:30–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Kim Novak

Richard Rohr's book *The Universal Christ* provides a new/old way to understand and embody the love of Christ in God, Self and Other. This series provides opportunities for self-transformation and increasing our awareness of Christ in all things. As a Franciscan, Rohr explores our Original Goodness, and how owning this goodness leads us to a place of compassion for all. We will look beyond the "rules" of our church, culture and current understanding in order to see that "Everything visible, without exception, is the outpouring of God." When we come to truly see Christ in our neighbor, animals, the environment—how we connect and care for them is transformed. Everything is sacred, everything is spiritual.

Fee: \$100 for six-week series

Mandala Drawing Workshop (in person)

Saturday, April 13, 10–11:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Andi Lewis

Come create with the Creator! We will draw a beautiful mandala, or sacred circular work of art, using artist's pens and drawing paper. 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



Ongoing Programs

Metta Yoga (in person)

Mondays & Thursdays; March 4–April 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 (Zoom) Thursdays, March 7–April 25, 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 (Zoom) first & third Thursdays; March 7, March 21, April 4 & April 18; 7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Carole Butz

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

Fee: Free-will offering

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers (in person)

second Tuesdays, March 12 & April 9, 9:30–11:30 a.m.; & fourth Wednesdays, March 27 & April 24, 6:30–8 p.m.

Facilitators: participants

Practice knitting and stitching as we create items for charity.

Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer (in person)

second & fourth Tuesdays; March 12, March 26, April 9 & April 23; 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitator: Judith Smith

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

Fee: Free-will offering

Men Exploring Faith (hybrid)

second & fourth Thursdays; March 14, March 28, April 11 & April 25; 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, March 23 & April 20, 4–7 p.m. (setup begins at 2, ceremony starts at 4)

Facilitator: Kerry Batteau

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

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10

Iowa BIG Student Projects

Students from Iowa BIG and Prairiewoods have been partnering for the last several years on some amazing projects. Iowa BIG is a public-school program in the metro area that promotes learning through working on project teams to develop initiatives the students care about. Students get to experience learning in real-life, hands-on situations. This year we're thrilled to be hosting three different Iowa BIG teams! We're also grateful to their teachers, Mark Matson and Nate Pruett, for overseeing the projects. Here are their projects:

Flying Drone Team: This group of young women have been doing drone filming at Prairiewoods this fall and winter. Their goal is to create drone videos that Prairiewoods can use on our website and social media to show the land and buildings from a different vantage point. They've learned how to use cameras effectively, they've learned how to utilize editing software to convert the raw footage into something fun to watch, and they've even captured a couple of sunrise videos that can be sped up to show some of the beauty of Prairiewoods "waking up" for the day.

Natural Playscape Teams: These two groups of young men and women have been the brains and brawn behind designing and fabricating much of what people will see in the Natural Playscape area at Prairiewoods. They'll be adding to what last year's Iowa BIG students built, including a puzzle table, swing, teeter totter, music wall, outdoor kitchen and even an outdoor theater for children to play with! They're all very excited to have these outdoor Natural Playscape pieces in place so that young visitors to Prairiewoods can have a memorable experience. They've learned how to research, design and fabricate each of the items they built. This includes using power tools, collaborating with their teammates and recognizing that their time spent will benefit our community for years to come.

Community Gardens Raised Garden Beds Team: This team will be building twelve raised garden beds in the Green Community Gardens and are about a third of the way through their project. During the winter months, they're making numbered signs for each garden plot and a larger sign for the garden entrance. The students are learning basic construction skills and power-tool operation and troubleshooting. They're also enjoying getting their hands dirty in the soil and recognizing the importance for kids to play in nature.



Kaleb Wesselink

Last fall, Kaleb Wesselink, a senior at Linn-Mar High School, approached us about doing his Eagle Scout project at Prairiewoods. Eagle Scout is the highest achievement or rank attainable in the Boy Scouts and requires completion of a community service project, among other things. The projects he chose included replacing a foot bridge on the trails and adding a two-person swing near the Hermitages. The old foot bridge was not wide enough for maintenance vehicles to drive over, and the new bridge allows our vehicles to easily get to all of the locations on our trail system. The construction of the new swing provides a place for guests to sit and enjoy nature.

When Kaleb was asked what he would tell others who have never visited Prairiewoods, he said, "Prairiewoods offers visitors a place to disconnect from the stress and constant movement of life. This has rung especially true in my life as a place to decompress and just sit in nature and appreciate the stillness. There are so many trails and benches to walk and sit on as well as different landscapes from the prairie, to the stream, and woods. I would recommend visiting it sometime."

We are so grateful to Kaleb, his family and his team of volunteers who helped accomplish these two impactful projects!



Pictured from left to right, top to bottom: Flying Drone Team (Avery, Anna, Olivia, Ava and Brianna), Natural Playscape Team 1 (Rex, Olivia and Josie), Natural Playscape Team 2 (Anna, Kiyaree and Becca) and Community Gardens Raised Garden Beds Team (Lauren and Bryan, missing Riley and Lillianna)

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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Since 2001, our *Spirituality in the 21st Century* event has brought you speakers like Marcus Borg, Walter Brueggemann, Ilia Delio and Peter Block. This year, we've got three national speakers you won't want to miss!



Spirituality in the 21st Century: Hope in Action
Friday, April 26, &
Saturday, April 27

See pages 6–7 for details.

