

# Prairiewoods

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

## Revisiting a Sense of **ONENESS**

It is early September 2024. My windows are open, and the symphony of the woods is lilting through the screen. The crickets provide an anchoring hum, birdsong provides a melody, and the gentle, rhythmic movement of the leaves adds percussion to this morning's serenade. The early sun is resting on the trees, coaxing the woods awake. The deep feeling that all is right with the world is palpable here in the refuge that is Prairiewoods.

The truth is that the presidential elections are days away, wars are raging, and people right here in Hiawatha, Iowa, are facing food insecurity. Simply put, division is rampant.

At its roots, Prairiewoods works to educate, inspire and embody ecological spirituality. Nurturing a sense of oneness is a key underpinning of ecological spirituality. For some of you, this concept resonates deeply in your bone marrow. You have a core understanding that we are spiritual beings connected to the Source of all Being, one another and Earth. You have lived experience that has demonstrated that we are one with a Higher Power and the creation by which we are surrounded. For others, this statement may feel foreign as you observe conflict on the world stage or experience discord with others or within.

For years, while I marveled at the beauty of Earth and knew of God's deep love for and presence within me, I didn't give the concept of oneness much thought. I was busy being busy. I put on my high heels and pencil skirt and went to work in a hospital. The idea of being intrinsically connected to others, God or nature was not part of my daily awareness. As I reflect, I try not to think about everything I missed in my first 50 years!

*(continued on page 3)*

Grandmother Oak  
by Emily Osweiler

## PRAIRIEWOODS STAFF

**Aaron Brewer**  
Land Sustainability  
Coordinator

**Derek Doan**  
Cook

**Joann Gehling, FSPA**  
Holistic Services, Spiritual  
Director

**Trace Harshman**  
Housekeeper

**Nancy Hoffman, FSPA**  
Holistic Services Coordinator,  
Outdoor/Land Management

**Robert Hogg**  
Program Assistant

**Brenda Horn**  
Cook

**Ann Jackson, PBVM**  
Spiritual Services  
Coordinator, Spiritual  
Director

**Christine Kirpes**  
Garden Coordinator

**Andi Lewis**  
Marketing Coordinator

**Erik Meggers**  
Maintenance Coordinator

**Sandy Rosenberger**  
Development Coordinator

**Nancy Schrimper**  
Office Administrator

**Leslie Schwarting**  
Spiritual Director & Retreat  
Facilitator

**Jean Sullivan**  
Outreach, Engagement &  
Hospitality Coordinator

**Julio Vera**  
Massage Therapist

**Lucille Winnike, FSPA**  
Retreats, Spiritual Director

**Leslie Wright**  
Director

**Ali Yoka**  
Chef & Kitchen Manager



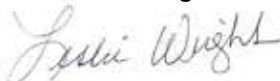
We recently held a work session with staff and board members to identify Prairie Woods' evolutionary priorities for the next several years. We had powerful conversations about many things. Strong themes emerged that I believe Prairie Woods is uniquely poised to address. Some of these themes I have talked about before, such as how science is underscoring the importance of a healthy spiritual life and connections to nature as contributors to the wellbeing of people. But more important to me than the science are the benefits of healthy spirituality. No surprise to any of you they include a sense of peace, love, inspiration, purpose, and improved mental health and resilience. Our spiritual life also impacts how we engage with community in very positive ways.

The Fetzer Institute's research suggests that 49% of people aspire to be more spiritual. And the Gallup Faith and Wellness research finds that 85% of adults connect with a Higher Power. At the same time, a growing percentage of adults identify as spiritual and not religious. The New York Times reports the "dechurching" of America is one of the largest and fastest growing cultural shifts. A 2023 Prairie Woods survey found that over 20% of respondents are spiritual and not religious and over 40% are not engaged in a faith community. Yet research indicates that humans miss the membership and participation that denominations have offered, needing a sense of "belonging, becoming and beyond" (Sacred Design Lab) and inter-spiritual spaces not embedded in a particular tradition (Fetzer). We hunger for connection, shared experience and unity.

So it is clear that the world is calling us to cast a wider net and help people we know and love—and people we haven't yet met—nurture a healthy spirituality. So now we are asking ourselves what resources are needed to be a safe and healing space and to be able to offer the radical hospitality needed at this time. We will need to be spiritual innovators, all the while leaning on the wisdom of peoples and traditions that formed our foundations. And we cannot forget how this land we are upon is an essential partner in what is offered here.

I hope you will continue to help us co-create the future of Prairie Woods. Your energy and light inspire us every day.

Peace and all good,

  
Leslie A. Wright



Prairie Woods 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:** Prairie Woods 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 Prairie Woods 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 Prairie Woods perspective.

Please address all correspondence to:

Prairie Woods  
120 E Boyson Rd  
Hiawatha, IA 52233  
319-395-6700

[www.PrairieWoods.org](http://www.PrairieWoods.org)  
[Ecospirit@PrairieWoods.org](mailto:Ecospirit@PrairieWoods.org)



(continued from page 1)

Oneness is alive and well within me now and in the global world. At Prairiewoods, this awareness fuels our mission to support and cultivate holistic wellbeing for all.

In his book *Ecological Spirituality*, Diarmuid O'Murchu writes, "Oneness with God is not a thread between God and us but more like an inclusive space gathering all creation. Total and perfect inclusion is what Love is."

Thomas Keating writes, "We come across Oneness in infinite ways. This is because God is always happening. In the divine Oneness, there is no other."

Within the Christian tradition, Jesus' beautiful imagery crystallizes the concept of Oneness: "I am the Vine, and you are the branches. Abide in me as I in you" (John 15: 4-5). As individuals, organizations, communities, animals and Earth, we are the branches tied back to the Source of All Being in the Vine. We are one active living organism— together.

So why does this matter? Why does understanding our interconnectedness make any difference? Imagine how active attention to and integration of this deep knowledge would change our world. Decisions would be approached differently, resources would be used more consciously and the simple acknowledgment of our shared humanity would lead us to a world where we respond thoughtfully instead of reacting impulsively. Consciousness would be elevated.

Contemplating what might be different naturally leads to the question: *How can we activate Oneness in our lives?* It takes nothing more than an open heart and a mindful awareness of what is in your field of vision, both practically and spiritually. One can let the experience unfold by getting still, listening to your inner awareness or simply gazing at the sky. If you desire more formal practices, I invite you to try centering prayer, spiritual direction, meditation and mindfulness experiences at Prairiewoods.

Author Paul Smith writes, "There are many different degrees of intensity, concentration, and conviction in the Oneness experiences of different individuals. Like all divine-human creation, it emerges as a co-creation molded by both God and our consciousness. Don't expect or try for your experience to be just like another's. The most striking effect of the experience of Oneness is not new fact-knowledge or concepts. Instead, it is a new-found spiritual energy, a greater spiritual vision. We are raised to a whole new level of life."

As the Prairiewoods symphony continues to waft through my window, the words of Black Elk, an Oglala Lakota tribal leader, come to mind: "Peace will come to the heart of humanity when they realize their Oneness with the Universe. It is everywhere."

—Leslie Schwarting

the woods at sunrise  
by Emily Osweiler

## How Are You Awakening to Oneness?

“Oneness is very simple: everything is included and allowed to live according to its true nature. This is the secret that is being revealed, the opportunity that is offered. How we make use of this opportunity depends upon the degree of our participation, how much we are prepared to give ourselves to the work that needs to be done, to the freedom that needs to be lived.”

—Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, Sufi Mystic,  
*Working with Oneness*

As we listen to retreatants and guests of Prairiewoods, we celebrate the many and varied ways people are collectively awakening a spirit of oneness today. Here are just a few ways our guests find oneness on these sacred grounds:

Practicing deeper listening without an agenda in conversations to address separation and isolation

Engaging in group gardening to foster a sense of shared responsibility for food deserts in our community

Becoming grounded in your environment by taking a bio-region quiz to grow your relationship with the region to which you belong

Mindfully consuming to live more sustainably on Earth

Praying and meditating with others for war-torn, global areas in need of loving energy

## Share the Gift of Prairiewoods with a Loved One


If you're looking for the ideal gift this holiday season, consider buying a gift certificate for your favorite Prairiewoods experiences! Gift certificates can be used for:

- programs or retreats (such as qigong, singing bowls, mandala painting or any retreat)

- holistic services (including massage, healing touch, reflexology and spiritual direction)
- Gift Shop purchases

Contact Prairiewoods at 319-395-6700 or [ecospirit@prairiewoods.org](mailto:ecospirit@prairiewoods.org) to buy a gift certificate for any dollar amount.





Meditating on Audrey Marcus's quote: "You are comprised of: 84 minerals, 23 elements, and 8 gallons of water spread across 38 trillion cells. You have been built up from nothing by the spare parts of the Earth you have consumed, according to a set of instructions hidden in a double helix and small enough to be carried by a sperm. You are recycled butterflies, plants, rocks, streams, firewood, wolf fur, and shark teeth, broken down to their smallest parts and rebuilt into our planet's most complex living thing. You are not living on Earth. You are Earth."

Celebrating diversity of relationships as we intentionally meet with and learn with and from people who don't look like us

Reflecting to become more aware of how the Source of All Being reveals itself through many people, circumstances and nature

Taking time to sense the pulse and place of Earth, realizing that everything breathes

Participating in Terra Divina—a spiritual practice of engaging with Earth—on Sunday afternoons (see p. 8 for details)

As Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee says, oneness is "the work that needs to be done ... the freedom that needs to be lived." Do you recall when you first awakened to oneness?

## Share the Gift of Prairiewoods with a Stranger

In the spirit of St. Francis, we honor each person's journey as they nurture their relationships with the Source of All Being, Earth, self and others. We understand that, while many of our programs are free or have a small suggested donation, some require a larger investment. We will not turn anyone away because of inability to pay.

If you would like to help others attend a program or retreat or take part in a service like spiritual direction, please consider adding a donation to your registration fee or contact us. And if you need financial assistance to attend a program or service, please contact us at 319-395-6700 or [ecospirit@prairiewoods.org](mailto:ecospirit@prairiewoods.org).

For more information or to register, visit [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org) or call 319-395-6700.

## Silent Mindfulness Meditation Retreat (in person)

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

**Facilitator:** Chris Klug

As Jon Kabat-Zinn writes in *Full Catastrophe Living*, “Life unfolds in moments. The healing power of mindfulness lies in living each one as fully as we can.” Mindfulness is the awareness that knows what is happening in the present moment as it is happening. It shapes a wise and compassionate relationship with and response to experience as

it unfolds moment by moment. As Joseph Goldstein writes in *A Heart Full of Peace*, “Mindfulness is the quality and power of mind that is deeply aware of what’s happening—without commentary and without interference ... keeping us connected to brushing our teeth or having a cup of tea.” Scientific research shows that mindfulness can positively affect stress resilience, physical and mental health, the ability to sustain attention, self-regulation of emotions, interpersonal skills, and general wellbeing and happiness. Come cultivate mindfulness in silence through sitting meditation, walking meditation, mindful movement and mindful eating with time for instructions, questions and discussion.

**Fee:** \$255 includes sessions, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

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



## The Cup of Our Life Retreat (in person)

Saturday, Nov. 9, 9 a.m.–Sunday, Nov. 10, 11 a.m.

**Facilitator:** Leslie Schwarting

How do you find your cup of life these days? Empty? Overflowing? Somewhere in between? Cups come in all colors, styles and sizes, and we invite you to bring a favorite cup from home as we learn together and experience what it might be like to take time to refill our own cup of life. Focusing on themes found

within Joyce Rupp’s book *The Cup of our Life: A Guide for Spiritual Growth* and using a combination of mediums like journaling, labyrinth walking, artistic expression and conversation, our



hope is that you will leave this retreat more aware of who you are and how you might find refreshment in your daily journey. Experience a renewed appreciation for the ups and downs of life and head home with tools and tips of renewal to carry on the practice of filling your own cup.

**Fee:** \$175 includes sessions, Saturday night lodging, Saturday lunch and dinner, and Sunday breakfast

**Commuter Fee:** \$95 includes sessions and Saturday lunch and dinner

## Winter’s Wisdom, Rest & Renewal: A Solstice & Advent Retreat (in person)

Friday, Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Dec. 15, 1 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Catherine Quehl-Engel

Like quiet Earth in winter, we—amid the stress and conflicts of these times—need revitalizing ways to pause for rest and “letting be” amid the darkness so we can open to mysterious healing forces working with and in us to birth life anew. Come 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. This retreat includes ways of transforming our relationship with uncertainty or fear, and for experiencing mystical union with The Sacred amid silence, The Dark Night, all of Creation, and in our bodies, minds and souls. We will experience this increased awareness of Oneness and peace via inter-spiritual mystical wisdom, rest and mind-body-spirit practices. It includes winter’s wisdom from our brothers and sisters found in the rest of nature—quiet earth, still waters, spirit of Bear, night sky, moon and stars. It also integrates soothing night prayers, insights from Advent and Celtic Christian spiritual ways of being, Buddhism, Taoism and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Spiritual practices include slow, meditative energy and compassion-based Qigong movement and acupressure, yogic sleep (yoga nidra), and vibrational singing bowl sound healing for rebalancing mind, body and spirit.

**Fee:** \$255 includes sessions, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

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



## Our Guests Say It Best!

Here are a few comments from recent Prairiewoods guests:

“The intentional slowing down created the space for my heart to listen to Spirit and to open itself to trust and hope instead of fear and worry.”

—Carla S., Silent Directed Retreat participant

“Thanks so much ... for helping to make our Young Adult Evening of Prayer such a positive experience. We all enjoyed and appreciated the warm hospitality, delicious meal, and beautiful, comfortable environment for our event. (We) were also pleased to introduce Prairiewoods to some of our young adults so they might take advantage of your place in the future.”

—Bob G., hosted group facilitator

**Living with Intention Retreat (in person)**  
**Friday, Jan. 3, 6 p.m.–Sunday, Jan. 5, 1 p.m. (Choose the length of retreat that works best for you!)**

**Facilitator:** Leslie Schwarting

Oscar Wilde wrote, “To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all.” How are you showing up in this life? Are you existing, or are you really living? Join us as your schedule allows, as a commuter or with one or two overnight stays. We will discuss living with intention on Friday evening and participate in a mindfulness group practice. After breakfast on Saturday, a body movement activity will lead us into a short exploration of our mindset and heart’s calling in the new year. Rest and quiet will be plentiful on Saturday afternoon, with an optional centering prayer activity. On Saturday evening, we will walk the indoor labyrinth while contemplating our intentions for 2025. Sunday morning will greet us with a beading practice in which we will create an intention catcher as a keepsake of our intentions for the year ahead. We intend for this retreat to give you dedicated time to prepare for and enter into 2025 with clarity and peace.



**Friday–Sunday Fee:** \$265 includes sessions, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

**Friday–Sunday Commuter Fee:** \$195 includes sessions, Saturday lunch and dinner, and Sunday lunch

**Friday–Saturday Fee:** \$225 includes Friday and Saturday sessions, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

**Friday–Saturday Commuter Fee:** \$175 includes Friday and Saturday sessions and Saturday lunch

**Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship Retreat (in person)**

**Friday, Jan. 24, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Jan. 26, 1 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM

*Explore an innovative approach to deepening your relationship with food, your connection with the land, and co-creating a learning community to promote health and wellbeing for all!*

Michael Pollan asks, “What would happen ... if we were to start thinking about food as less of a thing and more of a relationship?” Peace with food will be the center of our table. Join a learning community to deepen your connection to food and to the land through your food choices. We’ll

engage the Wheel of Food Peace Transformation, a creative approach developed to foster new ways of relating to food and land. Drawing from meditative practices, spiritual and ecological resources, physiology, and nutrition, we’ll consider how the food we choose to eat connects us to all life forms. Retreatants will create a personal Food Peace action plan to cultivate peace for self, others and all of creation. If you choose, we will reconvene at seasonal tables in 2025 to learn to access a variety of foods, noting how our choices reconnect and ground us to others and to the land.



*Continue the Pathways to Peace: Food as Relationship journey throughout 2025 in spring (March 21–22), summer (June 27–28), fall (Sept. 6–7) and winter (Dec. 13–14).*

**Fee:** \$255 includes sessions, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

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

**Pause. Rest. Be. Mid-Winter Silent Directed Retreat (in person)**

**Friday, Jan. 31, 5 p.m.–Sunday, Feb. 2, 1 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Ann Jackson, PBVM

Winter offers a grand invitation to pause, rest and be with all that’s stirring within us. Pausing to sense stillness and silence often surfaces the wisdom of the body. We will gather a few times to listen to the wisdom of silence together and to learn mindful embodiment practices to incorporate into our daily rhythms. Between those few brief group opportunities and some wholesome meals will be time for us to individually practice pausing, resting and being. You may choose to participate in one or two sessions of spiritual direction and can also receive massage, healing touch or reflexology. The content of this retreat is inspired by Octavia F. Raheem’s brilliant offering *Pause Rest Be: Stillness Practices for Courage in Times of Change*.



**Fee:** \$255 includes mindfulness meditation sessions, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

**Commuter Fee:** \$180 includes mindfulness meditation sessions, Saturday lunch and dinner, and Sunday lunch

**January–June 2025 Retreat Brochure Available!**

To help you prepare for the year ahead, Prairiewoods has created a six-month Retreat Brochure with details on retreats we will host January–June 2025. To download a printable copy, visit [www.Prairiewoods.org/Group-Retreats](http://www.Prairiewoods.org/Group-Retreats). If you would like us to mail you a copy, please send your address to [alewis@prairiewoods.org](mailto:alewis@prairiewoods.org).

**Save the Date!**

**Earth, Body, Mind & Spirit Retreat (in person)** with Shawn Westbrook, Feb. 15–16

**Awakening Awareness of Energy Retreat (in person)** with Tammy Bayer & Ann Jackson, PBVM, Feb. 21–23

**Japanese Art of Kintsugi: Embracing Our Imperfections with Grace & Courage Retreat (in person)** with Jean Pagliaro & Julie Connelly, Feb. 28–March 1

## Terra Divina: A Spiritual Practice of Engaging with Earth (in person)

Sundays, Nov. 10 & Dec. 8,  
3–4:15 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Stephanie Heifner

Join us for a monthly gathering to practice terra divina and tune into the seasons playing out on the landscape. Like lectio divina is a sacred reading of the text, terra divina is a sacred reading of the earth—the “Book of Creation.” With an attitude of wonder and with all of our senses, we’ll engage in conversation with nature. The gathering begins with a brief conversation, sharing in learning about the season we are in now. We’ll learn the steps of terra divina and then wander independently as we practice for about 40 minutes. We will conclude by gathering again as a group, sharing bread and herbal tea, and conversing about our experiences.

**Fee:** \$15

## African Prayer Beads Workshop (in person)

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2–4 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Helen Armstrong,  
Director of African Ministry at St.  
Mark’s United Methodist Church

Gather together to learn the history of prayer beads that are an important part of African cultures.

These beads are often used to count blessings and give thanks for individual graces, such as the animals and plants of Earth. We’ll hear from participants in African Women Empowered (AWE), a local nonprofit ministry that provides skills training for African women, about their experiences and their move to eastern Iowa. Enjoy this opportunity to help support their mission and also make your own set of prayer beads to take home with you!

**Fee:** \$40 includes all art supplies, including beads from Africa



## Pathways of Peace: Labyrinth Walk (in person)

Sunday, Nov. 3, 2–4 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Leslie Wright

All are welcome to walk our indoor labyrinth. We will be walking the labyrinth for peace and wisdom for ourselves, our loved ones, and our community, nation and world. We will provide some brief guidance for those who may be new to this spiritual practice or have been away from it for a while. The labyrinth can be a metaphor for how we walk through life and the situations that are currently confronting us. All are welcome and no experience is required.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations (in person)

Mondays; Nov. 4, Nov. 18, Dec. 2 &  
Dec. 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:** \$12 per session

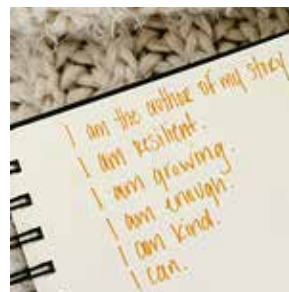
## Dream Group (in person)

Wednesdays, beginning Nov. 6,  
1–3 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Karen Sindelar, MA, LMT

“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 in this seven-month series (Nov. 6, Dec. 4, Jan. 8, Feb. 5, March 5, April 2 and May 7), 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:** \$175 for the seven-month series, whether present or not



## Day of Self Renewal (in person)

Thursdays, Nov. 7 & Dec. 5; &

Mondays, Nov. 11 & Dec. 9;

8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

See p. 11 for details.

## Singing Bowl Prayer (in person)

Thursday, Nov. 7, 1:45–2:30 p.m.;

& Mondays, Nov. 11 & Dec. 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 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

## Nature & Forest Therapy Experience (in person)

Mondays, Nov. 11 & Dec. 9,

2:30–3:45 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Emelia Sautter

Join 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, this 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.” This is a trauma informed practice, and all are welcome. This is not exercise or hiking; it is a slow, sensory walk with the land. Registration is required by the previous day.

**Fee:** \$15

## Micro-Retreat: You are Enough! Conversation & Practices to Quiet Mind Chatter (in person)

Tuesday, Nov. 12, 5:30–8 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Leslie Schwarting

Do you remember the song “This One’s for the Girls” by Martina McBride? If not, we encourage you to look it up! Whether you are in high school, in mid-life or an ageless goddess, many



of us have experienced self-doubt at one time or another. Come for dinner and an evening of honest conversation and play. We will explore practices to calm the negative chatter in our minds, reduce anxiety and connect to the Oneness of Spirit that lives and breathes through us daily. Make plans, call your friends and come for an evening of restoration. This event is open to those 16 and older.  
**Fee:** \$35 includes dinner

**On the Cusp of Change (Zoom)**  
**Tuesdays, Nov. 19 & Dec. 10,**  
**7–8:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Karen Hering

How can we pause to make sense of our changing world and better understand our choices in living with change, whether personal or global? Take a deep dive into Karen Hering's book *Trusting Change*, exploring how to engage our memory and imagination when encountering the uncertainties of the present day. Karen leads an online session of embodied practices, guided reflection and conversation with a specific focus on how to make change more trustworthy. On Nov. 19, we'll talk about imagining a way, and on Dec. 10 we'll widen what we trust.  
**Fee:** \$15 per session

**YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option)**  
**(in person)**  
**Wednesdays, Nov. 13 & Dec. 11,**  
**11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Ali Yoka, Derek Doan & Brenda Horn

Tired of the same old lunch places? Let's renew our bodies and refresh our spirits in a beautiful setting!



Join us for YOLO (*Your Other Lunch Option*)—a lunch choice celebrating wholesome, fresh food made from scratch by our chefs. We dine in a community setting with friends we bring with us or new friends we meet over a delicious themed lunch. Check our website for monthly themes. Feel free to arrive at 11:30, and the buffet line

opens at noon. Registration is required by the previous Friday.  
**Fee:** \$15 per lunch

**Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Groups (in person)**  
**Family-Centered Soul Care (for children and the adults who support them):** Wednesdays, Nov. 13 & Dec. 11, 5:30–7 p.m.

**Soul Care for Adults:** Wednesdays, Nov. 20 & Dec. 18, 5:30–7 p.m.  
**Facilitators:** Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW

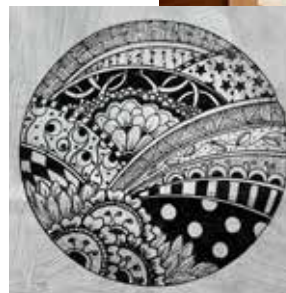
*Offered in Partnership with UnityPoint Hospice*

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 November, we'll experiment with paper bead making, choosing patterns and colors that speak to us to create a finished project, like a bracelet, with personalized beads. In December, we'll create snow globes that can be personalized with photos or items that remind us of our love one. Registration is required one week in advance.  
**Fee:** Free includes all art supplies (dinner is provided for the family group)

**Drum Circle (in person)**  
**Sunday, Nov. 17, 2–4 p.m.; &**  
**Saturday, Dec. 7, 6–8 p.m.**  
**Facilitator:** Drum Iowa

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

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



**Unplugged Evening at Prairiewoods (in person)**  
**Thursday, Nov. 21, 4–8 p.m.**  
**Facilitator:** Leslie Schwarting

Join us for an Unplugged Evening at Prairiewoods. Modeled after Europe's wildly popular Offline Club, we invite you to leave your devices behind and swap screen time for real-time connection with others. Dinner will be available for purchase, and this will be an unstructured time for you to unwind, meet like-minded people, catch up on hobbies like knitting or needlework, and be in community with others. Games, books, mandala coloring and other fun things to do together will be available. Or you can bring a book and simply be in the presence of others! Feel free to invite others for a new experience of connecting together without your devices. This event will be held on the third Thursday of each month. Feel free to come and go as you please, as there will not be a formal program.  
**Fee:** \$5 (*À la carte dinner and snack options will be available for purchase.*)

**Create Your Own Peaceful Patterns Gift Bag (in person)**  
**Saturday, Dec. 7, 2–4 p.m.**  
**Facilitator:** Andi Lewis



Take a break from your busy holiday schedule to create a meaningful, one-of-a-kind gift bag to give to someone special! We will

learn about Peaceful Patterns, often called doodles or tangles, which are detailed black-and-white drawings created by repeating simple patterns. Then we'll use fine artist's pens to draw our

very own Peaceful Patterns on a paper gift bag that will add a personal touch to any holiday gift. This will be a fun, creative workshop, so bring your best friend or family to create together! No experience or artistic skill is necessary.  
**Fee:** \$15 includes all art supplies

## Into the Oneness: Qigong for Energy, Equanimity & Peace (in person)

Thursday, Dec. 5, 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 open, rebalance and cultivate Qi (universal life force energy-Spirit) throughout the body's energy pathways, centers and organs to assist with mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing. We send healing intention to others and the planet.

Fee: \$12



## Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep (in person)

Thursday, Dec. 5, 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 close with prayerful sound healing, including a lower-octave bowl played on or near (your choice) the shrine of your heart.

Fee: \$10



## Ongoing Programs

### Metta Yoga (in person)

Mondays & Thursdays; Nov. 4–25 & Dec. 2–19; 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 from the spiritual environment of Prairiewoods.

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

### Mindfulness at Prairiewoods (MAP) (in person)

Mondays, Nov. 4–Dec. 23, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Ian Montgomery

Join a weekly gathering of meditators who share the simple goal of sitting together to meditate in silence.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$5

### Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (hybrid)

first Wednesdays, Nov. 6 & Dec. 4, 3–4:30 p.m. or 5:15–6:45 p.m.

Facilitator: Steve Sovern

Gather in community, recognizing that we have the opportunity to co-create the universe and participate in the energy of evolution.

Fee: Free-will offering

### Go Deeper Thursdays (Zoom)

Thursdays, Nov. 7–21 & Dec. 5–19, 4–5 p.m.

Facilitator: Ellen Bruckner

Join this online community exploration and deepening of spiritual topics.

Fee: Free-will offering

### Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton (Zoom)

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

Facilitator: Carole Butz

Slowly explore *New Seeds of Contemplation*,



a beloved book by Thomas Merton, one of the great spiritual leaders of our time.

Fee: Free-will offering

### Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers (in person)

second Tuesdays, Nov. 12 & Dec. 10, 9:30–11:30 a.m.

Facilitators: participants

Practice knitting and stitching as we create items for charity. All are welcome! (The Wednesday evening group will not meet in November and December because of the holidays.)

Fee: Free

### Evening Centering Prayer (in person)

second & fourth Tuesdays; Nov. 12, Nov. 26 & Dec. 10; 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitator: Judith Smith

Practice a contemplative form of prayer to help deepen your relationship with God or Source of All Being.

Fee: Free-will offering

### Men Exploring Faith (hybrid)

second Thursdays, Nov. 14 & Dec. 12, 4–5:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Linzy Martin

Join with a group of reflective men in honest conversation about life changes. (The group will not meet on the fourth Thursdays in November and December because of the holidays.)

Fee: Free-will offering

### Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony (in person)

Saturdays, Nov. 16 & Dec. 14, 4–7 p.m. (setup begins at 2:30, ceremony starts at 4)

Facilitator: Kerry Batteau

Join us for a traditional ceremony focused on prayer, purification, recognition and healing in which we sit in a lodge around heated stones.

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

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](http://www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate).

## Welcome Julio Vera, our new massage therapist!

Julio Vera graduated from Carlson College of Massage Therapy in 2024.

He specializes in therapeutic, deep tissue, muscle tension and relaxation massage.

Born in Mexico, Julio is bilingual in English and Spanish. He recently moved to Iowa from New York City with his

family who is local to the area. Julio is also a dance fitness instructor with a passion for helping others achieve their goals.

*\$45 for 30 minutes  
\$65 for 60 minutes  
\$90 for 90 minutes*

Scan the QR code to schedule with Julio!



## ¡Bienvenido Julio Vera, nuestro nuevo masajista!



Julio Vera se graduó de Carlson College of Massage Therapy en 2024. Se

especializa en masajes terapéuticos, de tejido profundo, tensiones musculares y relajación.

Nacido en México, Julio es bilingüe en inglés y español. Recientemente se mudó a Iowa desde la ciudad de Nueva

York con su familia que vive en el área. Julio también es un instructor de baile y una pasión por ayudar a otros a lograr sus objetivos.

*\$45 por 30 minutos  
\$65 por 60 minutos  
\$90 por 90 minutos*

¡Escanea el código QR para agendar con Julio!

## Join Us for Our Popular Day of Self Renewal

Could you use a day away from your usual routine? Have you experienced a big change in your life and need some time to reflect on what's next? Do you know someone who is always caring for others and could use a day of being cared for themselves? A Day of Self Renewal may be just the thing!

You choose how your body, mind and spirit are nurtured that day. Gentle, compassionate, experienced practitioners guide you through two sessions of your choice:

- yoga or chair yoga
- qigong
- nature & forest therapy
- massage or head & shoulder massage
- healing touch
- reflexology
- spiritual direction



With plenty of unscheduled time and (if you choose) a room of your own, you can walk our 72 acres, rest under Grandmother Oak, walk the labyrinth as a meditative practice, or spend time in the Art Room drawing, painting or creating a collage. In the middle of the day, lunch is served—no preparation, no clean-up! Then you are welcome to participate in Sound Bath or Singing Bowl Meditation.

This tranquil day is offered on the first Thursday and second Monday of each month from 8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Registration, a nonrefundable/nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three services choices are required eight days in advance. The cost is \$110 and includes two services, guided meditation, singing bowls, a private guest room and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room). For more information or to register, contact us at [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org) or 319-395-6700.



Prairie Woods Franciscan Spirituality Center  
120 E Boyson Rd  
Hiawatha IA 52233

### Help Us Update Our Records

You may send this by mail, email [ecospirit@prairiewoods.org](mailto: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 "Prairie Woods FSC" on:



## Prairie Woods Holiday Bazaar

Saturday, November 23, 8 a.m.–noon

Join us for our annual Holiday Bazaar, where you'll find many wonderful items for your holiday gift shopping list! We'll also have coffee, warm apple cider and sweet treats available to purchase, so grab your friends and family and get into the spirit of the season!

The Holiday Bazaar features more than a dozen local artists with handcrafted items including:

- one-of-a-kind jewelry, wood crafts and pottery
- handmade soaps and lotions
- hand-knit hats, mittens, blankets and other goods
- pies, cookies and other baked items
- holiday wreaths
- fabric bags, aprons and skirts from African Women Empowered

In addition, Prairie Woods will be selling:

- gift shop items, such as wind chimes, Prairie Woods T-shirts, and books on ecology and spirituality
- fresh-cut greenery bundles or swags from the Prairie Woods' grounds
- monastery candy from the Trappist Nuns of the Mississippi Abbey
- gift certificates for any dollar amount

Don't miss this chance to shop handcrafted goods from local artists and enjoy the holiday season!