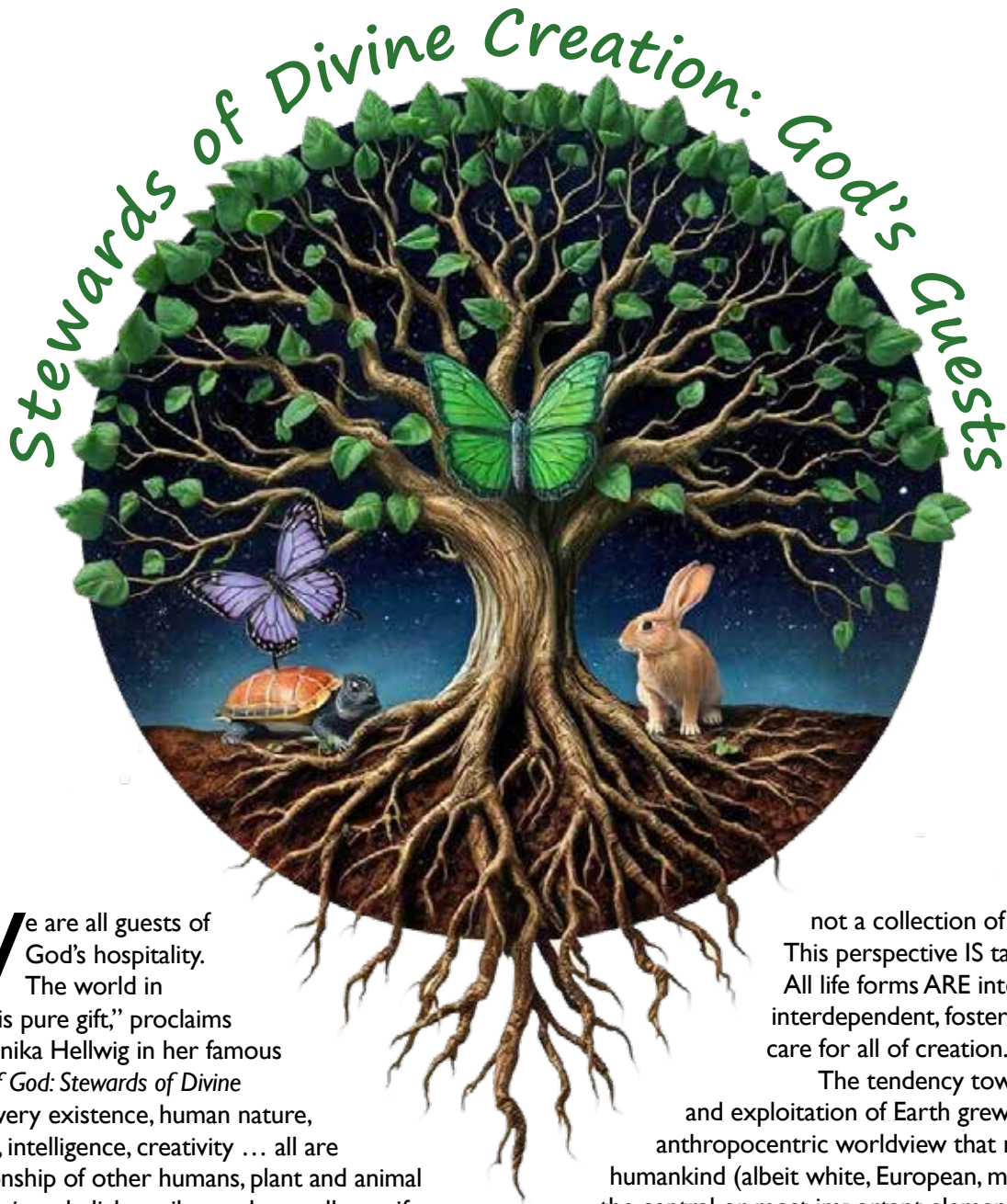


March/April 2025

Prairiewoods

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER



“We are all guests of God’s hospitality. The world in which we live is pure gift,” proclaims theologian Monika Hellwig in her famous work *Guests of God: Stewards of Divine Creation*. Our very existence, human nature, consciousness, intelligence, creativity ... all are gift. Companionship of other humans, plant and animal life, water, air, minerals, light, soil, sun, sky ... all are gift. Grateful for this generous Source of All Being, how are we to live?

As Guests: A Shift from Ownership to Kinship

We are shifting from dominion over Earth to kinship—from ownership to kinship—from host to guest! Can you feel it? For more than 50 years, cultural historian Thomas Berry emphasized the need for a new relationship with Earth, stating, “The universe is a communion of subjects,

not a collection of objects.” This perspective IS taking hold! All life forms ARE interconnected, interdependent, fostering respect and care for all of creation.

The tendency toward dominion and exploitation of Earth grew out of an anthropocentric worldview that regarded humankind (albeit white, European, male humans) as the central or most important element of existence, especially as opposed to God, plant or animal species. This has led to environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, pollution, disrespect for the gift of all of life, disconnection from the natural world, overconsumption—a looming climate crisis. Al Gore, former vice president and environmental advocate, warns, “*The climate crisis is not a political issue, it is a moral and spiritual challenge to all of humanity.*”

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Cook

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Holistic Services, Spiritual
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Director

Ali Yoka
Chef & Kitchen Manager



I am writing this in the early days of the new year. This is a time when our thoughts often turn to resolutions and new beginnings. In 2024, Prairiewoods' expanded solar array went live, and we began some small initiatives to reduce waste, such as composting our brown paper towels. But as the year came to a close, we began to wonder "what's next?" How might we increase our relationship with and care of Creation in 2025? Prior efforts have included straw-bale hermitages, solar arrays, LEED certification and avoidance of single-use products. The LEED certification process guided us during the mid-2000s.

But in the 12 years since our certification, much has changed and much has been learned. Perhaps most importantly was the realization of our need to move from a net zero approach to sustainability to a measurably regenerative approach that heals and renews.

This is a tall order. We will need a roadmap to guide us, a stewardship plan. A plan that will guide our decisions with regards to our built environment and operational practices for the next several years. With the help of talented volunteers and staff, we will begin to build this plan in 2025 with a goal to have it ready for our 30th anniversary in 2026.

The first step was to begin to name the principles that will guide us into the future. To do this, we looked at indigenous design principles, the Living Building Challenge, regenerative design principles and the principles of ecological spirituality and St. Francis. As a result, here are some of the key questions we will be asking ourselves this year:

- How might we contribute to the renewal and restoration of our planet by creating a net positive environmental impact here at Prairiewoods?
- How might we move beyond sustainability, striving to meet our current needs while ensuring that future generations can thrive?
- How might we foster a harmonious balance between humans and the natural world?
- How might we foster unity and collective purpose in caring for Earth and one another?

We will be guided by the wisdom of the natural world and the Franciscan principles of our foundresses. Will you join us in reflecting on these questions in 2025?

Peace and all good,

Leslie A. Wright

foundresses Joann Gehling, Betty Daugherty & Nancy Hoffman, FSPA, at our LEED celebration, Dec. 14, 2012



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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(continued from page 1)

The current, colonial, capitalist society focuses on profit over people, individual over collective, disregard for all life as "property" to be owned. People of European descent have much to learn from the wisdom of Indigenous people who fully embody kinship—living directly in touch with nature. Shifting from a mentality of ownership to a sense of kinship and stewardship with and as Earth is critical. The time is NOW. "What did you do when you knew?" cries environmental activist and poet Drew Dellinger.

What we do, consume, produce, enjoy carries implications far beyond the network of human and wiser ecological relationships than we realize. Recognizing our kinship with Earth inspires deeper sustainable behaviors and policies that protect the environment for future generations. Monika Hellwig emphasized the importance of community and shared responsibility, stating, "We are not isolated individuals but part of a larger whole." This perspective impels us to act collectively to address justice issues. As guests and stewards of divine creation, we actually, Hellwig suggests, co-create with the Source of All Being's hospitality in three ways:

- We are unfinished creatures entrusted with our own becoming. Faced with infinite choices, we dwell in possibility. Yet, we squander time and talents by failing to reflect on the gift of life, dedicating our purpose and presence to focus and shape what we become together.
- We co-evolve with the Source of All Being to shape the universe, its ecology, use of mineral resources, etc. We must assume our human responsibility to cooperate with Source to develop spiritual, scientific and technological knowledge and competencies that serve social and ecological justice and equality throughout the world.
- We mediate relationship with one another and all of creation by how we offer or restrict access of others to associate and act, establish law and customs, regulate who and how decisions are made regarding natural resources and human products ... Everything we do or don't accept in cultures, civilizations and economies impacts kinship.

Kinship invites us to expand our web of responsibility to include the wisdom of Indigenous languages and practices, to value, nurture and sustain those systems for the sake of all life.

Awakening to our connection with Earth—as Earthlings—we consciously move toward a more balanced, fulfilling life. The research of Prairiewoods' Spirituality in the 21st Century featured speaker, neuroscientist Lisa Miller, PhD, confirms that "we are all on a path of awakening, again and again facing new challenges, closing and opening doors, moving ever and always toward great awakening" (*The Awakened Brain*, page 237). Neuroscience cites that humans have an innate, hard-wired capacity for transcendent awareness—to see into the deeper nature of life—KINSHIP!

What do we do with this capacity? Share it with all forms of life! Dr. Miller's research reveals that when humans cultivate this innate capacity—kinship—it leads to greater resilience and health. "Individuals who cultivate a strong spiritual core are less likely to experience despair, addiction and depression," Dr. Miller states. Developing an awakened brain involves recognizing our interconnectedness with every life force on Earth.

This awareness motivates environmentally conscious behaviors as individuals perceive the planet's wellbeing as integral to their own. We build an awakened global society! Justice is practiced through interdependent kinship and love. We treat all living beings and systems as part of an encompassing, interconnected web of life. Amid seemingly irreconcilable differences, people find common ground. We embrace imagination and approach work as an opportunity to further human calling and contribution. Schools embrace the responsibility and opportunity to nurture the spiritual core of all children. In this spirit of reciprocity among kin, all life and all cultures invite us to awaken to a reality much larger than any one individual or system or culture or civilization, and to translate that wisdom and inspiration into decisions and actions that serve the common good.

An Invitation to Awaken to Intersecting Justice Issues for the Sake of Future Generations

Everything connects. Consider the impact of kinship on:

- **Ecospirituality:** Integrating spiritual awareness with ecological activism fosters a holistic approach to environmental justice.
- **Immigration:** Environmental degradation often leads to displacement. Recognizing our shared responsibility can drive efforts to address the root causes of climate-induced migration.
- **Gift Economy:** A kinship consciousness that encourages sharing resources sustainably, challenging consumerism and promoting equitable distribution.
- **Democracy:** Inclusive decision-making that considers the well-being of the planet and all its inhabitants strengthens democratic processes.

Shifting our consciousness from dominion over Earth to one of kinship enhances all dimensions of life and animates our innate spiritual capacities. In the words of Judy Cannato, an author focused on ecospiritual growth, "We are called to awaken to a new way of being in the world, one that recognizes the sacredness of all creation." Let's heed this call, embracing kinship and working toward a just and sustainable future for all.

For a deeper understanding of the neuroscience behind spirituality and its benefits, you may find the following talk by Dr. Lisa Miller insightful: www.youtube.com/watch?v=BuBDmIRThk. We also invite you to join Dr. Miller for Spirituality in the 21st Century. (See pages 4–5.)

—Ann Jackson, PBVM



The Awakened Brain

with **Researcher & Author Lisa Miller, PhD**
Professor of Clinical Psychology at Columbia University

Monday, May 5, & Tuesday, May 6

at First Lutheran Church (1000 3rd Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa)
Costs begin at \$25.

Scan the QR code or register today at prairiewoods.org/spirituality-in-the-21st-century



Can cultivating spirituality promote a healthy brain?

Learn from Dr. Lisa Miller, one of the nation's leading neuroscientists and founder and director of the Spirituality Mind Body Institute at Columbia University. Dr. Miller combines cutting-edge science with direct tools for application for all people.

What impact does spirituality have on the brain & wellbeing?

According to Dr Miller's research, those reporting a moderate or high level of spirituality are:

- **60%** less likely to have significant depression
- **70%** less likely to engage in risky behaviors
- **80%** less likely to become addicted to alcohol and drugs

How will this impact our community?

"To shape a narrative from your experiences, and to connect your story to a greater one, is essential for developing empathy, a sense of purpose and wellbeing."
—Tonya Hotchkin,
Tanager Place

"Adopting a highly attentive mindset, as Dr. Miller advocates, can transform the way we engage with youth and families in the field of mental health. By shifting our focus from solely achieving goals to cultivating awareness, we strengthen relationships, identify subtle indicators of wellbeing, and foster social and emotional development. This approach encourages us to meet people where they are, honoring their unique experiences and promoting healing through genuine connection. When we practice attentiveness, we enhance our capacity to inspire, empower and support growth in those we serve."
—Kimberly Abram , Cedar Rapids Community School District

SPIRITUALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Spirituality & Mental Health

The New Science of Spirituality & Our Quest for an Inspired Life

Participate in one of three sessions, either in person or virtually. (Online option is Monday only.)

Monday, May 5, 6–8:15 p.m. (in person or online)

Keynote & Daily Practices Workshop (open to all)
\$25 (\$10 for students, books available for purchase)

Tuesday, May 6, 9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. (in person)

Keynote, Daily Practices Workshop, Lunch & Book Signing (open to all with dedicated content for those who work in human services or with youth)
\$40 (includes lunch, \$10 for students, books available for purchase & Dr. Miller available for signing)

Tuesday, May 6, 6–8:15 p.m. (in person)

Keynote & Daily Practices Workshop (open to all with dedicated content for those who work in healthcare; CME & CEU credits available)
\$25 (\$10 for students, books available for purchase)

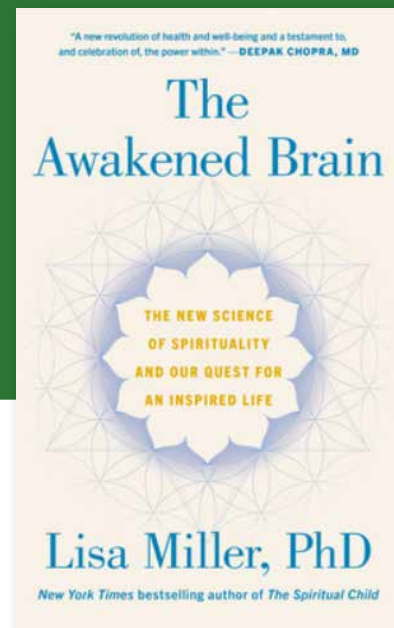
The MedQuarter Regional Medical District and its Faith & Medicine Task Force recognize the importance of both the physical and mental health of the community. By bringing Dr. Lisa Miller to the area to present about her research on spirituality and its impacts on physical and mental health, the community will have an opportunity to learn how spirituality can play a role in personal health that is meaningful and relevant, especially in today's challenging health environment.

"The change I would make is to prioritize time for the practices that help me find my peace, understand my place in the world, help me find meaning in life experiences and help me manage life's stressors. That would look like more yoga, more swimming, more time being in nature. More conversations with friends and strangers about the beauty in music, live theater and visual arts."

—Barb Gay, Zero Suicide Institute

"Everyone needs to find peace and support in a way that makes sense for them. Understanding how spirituality or connection impacts our own mental health can be critical in finding an improved quality of life. The more we learn about the world around us, the better equipped we are to manage what comes!"

—Emily Blomme, Foundation 2



Continue the learning with an advance book study and a follow-up retreat!

The Awakened Brain Book Study (Zoom) with Leslie Schwarting, Thursdays, March 27–April 24 (See page 9.)

Cultivating an Awakened Brain Retreat (in person) with Ann Jackson, PBVM, & Leslie Schwarting; Friday, June 20–Saturday, June 21 (See our website.)

Sponsored by



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

The Nature of Real Connection: Five Lessons from the Woods Retreat (in person)

Friday, March 14, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, March 16, 1 p.m.

Facilitator: Sam Rahberg

A Retreat for Men

There are no shortages of responsibilities and relationships in a day, yet we are still left hungry for something more. We don't want transactional conversations; we want real connection. What can we do to find that? Join a weekend retreat with other men who are curious about these questions. We will look toward nature for some insight and encouragement. We'll explore the deep bonds between people and the natural world. Through short presentations, time in nature and interactive conversations, we will explore five lessons from the woods—grounding in the present, building community, embracing change, learning from the elders, and giving and receiving. Each day offers opportunities for real conversation, relaxation and spiritual renewal.

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

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



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

Friday, March 21, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, March 22, 4 p.m.

Facilitators: Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Spring invites a spirit of discovery as seeds break open with sprouts emerging from the seemingly sleepy soil, enlivening Earth once again with vibrant color and growth. Impelled and inspired by the determination of the tiniest of sprouts peeking through winter's final snowfall, we, too, begin to awaken from dormancy. Explore with a learning community how spring sprouts provide opportunities to transform our relationships with self, others and Earth through our personal food choices. To deepen our understanding of all that the season has to offer, we'll draw on the wisdom of environmentalists, mystics, poets and contemporary sages. Using our senses, such as taste, smell and touch, we'll connect with the greening power of spring foods, such as asparagus, spinach and kale. Bring ideas for resourcing spring foods from local sources or healthy, springtime recipes to share as we gather around the spring table in peace and relationship.

Fee: \$150 includes sessions, Friday lodging, and Friday dinner through Saturday lunch

Commuter Fee: \$100 includes sessions, Friday dinner and Saturday lunch



“Trees show us how to grow toward the life-giving light ... collaborating and sharing with others in community so that all might thrive. Trees know the importance of darkness, when they can droop and rest ... We, too, must chart our path in sunshine and shadow, drawing on the wisdom of trees to guide us.”

—Leah Rampy & Beth Norcross,
Discovering the Spiritual Wisdom of Trees

Discovering the Spiritual Wisdom of Trees Retreat (in person)

Friday, March 28, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, March 30, 1 p.m.

Facilitator: Leah Rampy, PhD (last year's Spirituality in the 21st Century facilitator!)

We live in uncertain times, poised on the edge of increasingly rapid change and loss for Earth, ourselves and all that we love. Our connections to the living world have frayed, and it's difficult to find our way back to the relationships and possibilities for which we long. Yet, there is wisdom available to us for living in these fraught times; there is guidance close at hand that can point the way to healing and wholeness for our days and the times beyond. We'll look to the ancient spiritual and ecological wisdom that trees have to offer. Trees, our elders who have graced Earth far longer than the human family, demonstrate living in community and collaborating for mutual benefit. They invite us to open more fully to the awe and wonder of this world, allowing our awareness of sacred oneness to deepen. In the company of trees, we'll be called to bear witness to loss and to expand our hearts to hold our grief alongside joy and beauty. With group conversation, optional practices, and spacious time for wandering or sitting in silence with trees, we'll seek to enliven our understanding of resilience, healing and hope and bring home the blessings of this retreat time.

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

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



Retreat Brochure Available!

To help you prepare for the months ahead, Prairiewoods has created a six-month Retreat Brochure with details on retreats we will host in the coming months. To download a printable copy, visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Group-Retreats. If you would like us to mail you a copy, please send your mailing address to alewis@prairiewoods.org.

Save the Date!

for these in-person retreats:

A Spring Day in the Garden & Woods with Scott Koepke & Aaron Brewer, Friday, May 16–Saturday, May 17

Exploring Traditional Chinese Meditative, Healing & Martial Arts with Gerry Hopkins, Friday, May 16–Sunday, May 18

The Power of Silence: June Silent Directed Retreat with Prairiewoods spiritual directors, Sunday, June 8–Saturday, June 14

Joyful Teaching: Cultivating Joy through Mindfulness & Social & Emotional Learning with Sarah Montgomery, PhD, & Ann Jackson, PBVM, Monday, June 16–Wednesday, June 18; & Wednesday, June 18–Friday, June 20

Cultivating an Awakened Brain with Ann Jackson, PBVM, & Leslie Schwarting; Friday, June 20–Saturday, June 21

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship Summer Table with Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM, Friday, June 27–Saturday, June 28

What's This Mindfulness Stuff All About Anyway? (in person)

Tuesdays, Feb. 25–March 18, 4:30–6 p.m.

Facilitator: Ann Jackson PBVM

Join a learning community of mindfulness practitioners. Come explore together various mindfulness activities and walk away each week with mindful practices to utilize in your everyday life. Themes will include mindful eating, mindful speaking and listening, mindfully cultivating kindness amid grief and mindfully moving to become still.

Fee: \$75 for four-week series

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) (in person)

Mondays, March 3–April 21, 5:30–8 p.m.; & Sunday, April 13, 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 wellbeing. This series cultivates the skill of mindfulness through formal

meditation practices and informal integrative practices. It consists of a two-and-a-half-hour class each week for eight weeks with one extended six-and-a-half-hour silent retreat day.

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

Zumba with Julio (in person) Wednesdays, March 5–April 30, 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Julio Vera

Zumba is a high-energy fitness class that combines dance and aerobic exercises set to upbeat Latin and international music. It's a fun, full-body workout suitable for all fitness levels, blending easy-to-follow choreography with cardio, muscle conditioning and balance. It's perfect for anyone looking to stay active while having a great time!

Fee: \$10 per session

Day of Self Renewal (in person) Thursdays, March 6 & April 3; Mondays, March 10 & April 14; & Fridays, March 28 & April 11; 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Jean Sullivan
Now offered on Fridays, too!

Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services, group meditation practices, 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, forest therapy, spiritual arts, mindfulness, yoga or chair yoga.) Registration, a nonrefundable/nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three service choices are required eight days in advance.

Fee: \$110 includes two services, group meditation practices, private guest room for the day and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room)

LovingKindness Meditation Practice (in person)

Saturday, March 8, 10–11:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA

LovingKindness meditation offers a daily practice to assist us in being compassionate to ourselves, others and all of creation. Fostering compassion and kindness instead of judgment, anxiety and fearful reaction, this short daily practice can assist us in creating a world environment that brings forth compassion and creative life-

giving choices. This program includes presentation, practice and discussion.

Fee: \$10

Terra Divina: A Spiritual Practice of Engaging with Earth (in person) Sundays, March 9 & April 13, 3–4:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Stephanie Heifner

Like lectio divina is a sacred reading of 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 engage in conversation with nature. We begin with a brief conversation, sharing in learning about the season we are in. We learn the steps of terra divina and then wander independently as we practice for about 40 minutes. We conclude by gathering as a group, sharing bread and herbal tea, and talking about our experiences.

Fee: \$15

Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences (in person)

Nature & Forest Therapy Experience: Mondays, March 10 & April 14, 2:30–3:45 p.m.

Forest Bathing with the Full Moon: Friday, March 14, & Saturday, April 12, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitator: Emelia Sautter

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.

Fee: \$25 for longer moon walks, \$20 for shorter experiences

Starting Seeds & Transplants (in person)

Monday, March 10, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Linn County Master Gardener Phil Pfister

Starting flowers and vegetables from seed is not only fun and satisfying, but it can also be a cost-effective way of expanding your garden varieties. We'll learn tips and techniques on seeding, transplanting and setting plants out in the garden, as well as extending the early and late growing season.

Fee: Free-will offering

Programs

Celebrate the 800th anniversary of *The Canticle of the Creatures*, a prayer that, even in 1225, was a clarion call to protect our common home and live in

solidarity with all creation. Written by St. Francis of Assisi during a time of personal suffering and illness, *The Canticle* expresses St. Francis' deep connection to God through the natural world. Praising Brother Sun, Sister Moon and all living things, *The Canticle* radiates humility, gratitude and interconnectedness—values that remain at the heart of Franciscan spirituality. Join us for one of these programs celebrating *The Canticle of the Creatures* and all of Creation!

Solar Appreciation Day (in person) **Friday, March 14, 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.**

Facilitators: area solar energy experts

Honor the power of the sun and its incredible contribution to a sustainable future! Let's learn more about this powerful resource together. This morning will include talks with experts about solar energy's role in combating climate change, a reading of the *The Canticle*, sun-inspired refreshments and the chance to connect with fellow sun enthusiasts. Whether you're a solar expert or just curious, this event is for you.

Fee: free-will offering

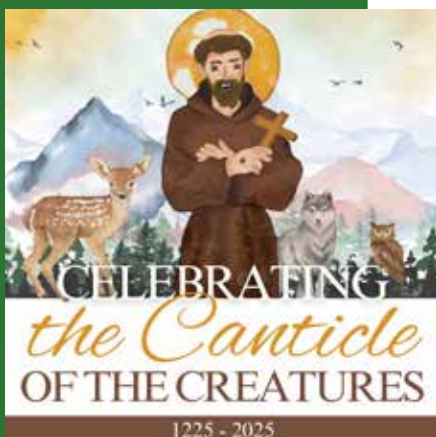
Earth Day Celebration of *The Canticle of the Creatures* (in person)

Tuesday, April 22, 12–1 p.m. or 5–6 p.m.

Facilitators: Christine Kirpes & Leslie Schwarting

Honor the beauty of creation and our shared responsibility to protect it. This special Earth Day walk celebrates the interconnectedness of all life. It will include a reflective reading of *The Canticle*, a guided walk through the Prairiewoods trails, and a community prayer and commitment to care for our planet. Let's come together in gratitude for our common home and embrace the spirit of stewardship and harmony with all of nature. All are welcome to this celebration of Earth, nature and faith!

Fee: free-will offering



Awaken Your Creativity through Watercolor (in person) **Tuesday, March 11, 9:30–11:30 a.m.**

Facilitator: Barb Thompson

Join a hands-on, beginner's painting workshop that includes a tracing sheet, step-by-step instructions and an example to reference as we paint, making it perfect for beginners. Class starts with a few watercolor exercises and a demonstration of the project. Then we will be invited to work at our own pace to paint a festive clover wreath. This is recommended for ages 8–100. Simply bring a positive attitude, ready to learn a new skill!

Fee: \$50 includes all art supplies



Native-Style Flute Circle (in person)

Thursdays, March 13 & April 17, 6–8 p.m.

Facilitators: Horizons Flute Store & School (Jonny Lipford & friends)

Join a friendly Native American-style flute circle that's open to all. Whether you're a seasoned player or just curious, this is a great chance to learn and share in a relaxed setting. Bring your own flute or borrow one of ours—we'll even have some for sale if you'd like to keep the experience going. Spectators are welcome, and you'll join the music-making before you know it. No need to sign up—just drop by and enjoy the music and community spirit!

Fee: Suggested donation of \$10 per session

YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option) (in person)

Wednesdays, March 19 & April 16, 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. We dine in a community setting with friends we bring with us or new friends we meet over a delicious themed lunch. Registration is required by the previous Friday.

Fee: \$15 per lunch

An Unplugged Evening at Prairiewoods (in person)

Thursdays, March 20 & April 10, 4:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Leave your devices behind and swap screen time for real-time connection with others. This is 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

ONE WORLD LISTENING

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER CONFERENCE

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

MATTHEW SANFORD

Pioneer in adapting yoga for people with disabilities

APRIL 25-26, 2025

ALSO FEATURING LYNN MEINDERS,
CHRIS ROBERTS AND CHAR PETERSON

LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN • www.FSCenter.org



together will be available. Or bring a book and simply be in the presence of others! Come and go as you please, as there will not be a formal program.
Fee: \$5 includes soup and salad

Grief Circle Series (in person)
Wednesdays; March 26, April 23,
May 28, June 25 & July 23;
10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Facilitators: Leslie Schwarting & Ian Montgomery

Often, we feel alone in our grieving process, as our culture encourages us to simply move on. In this five-part series, we will be invited to talk about our thoughts, feelings and loss with others. Sometimes those closest to us, while well-intentioned, may not fully understand our grief. The support of others can bring a great deal of comfort and healing. To build trust in our work together, please commit to attending the majority of sessions; the first session is required.

Fee: Free-will offering

The Awakened Brain Book Study (Zoom)

Thursdays, March 27–April 24,
7:30–8:45 a.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Join us for a transformative journey through Dr. Lisa Miller's groundbreaking book *The Awakened Brain: The New Science of Spirituality and Our Quest for an Inspired Life*. This book study invites us to explore the profound connection between science, spirituality and mental health. Let's engage in some deep discussions on how spirituality shapes our resilience, creativity and wellbeing. We'll share insights into the neuroscience behind the awakened brain, as well as reflective exercises and group sharing to connect the book's ideas to our personal life. This book study will give us deeper insights into Dr. Miller's research and writings before she leads our Spirituality in the 21st Century event May 5–6. Whether you're a seasoned spiritual seeker or simply curious about the science of the mind, this book study will inspire and enlighten you!

Fee: \$45 for five-week book study includes the book (or \$20 if you already own the book)

Circle of Trust® (in person)
Saturday, April 5, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Thomas Dean

Give yourself the time and space to engage your whole, authentic self with courage and support as we explore the questions of your life. During these

Eco-Grief: Finding Hope Across Generations (Zoom)

Thursday, March 27, 6:30–8 p.m.

Facilitators: Victoria Loorz, Kayla Jacobs & Gabriela Martinez

Participate in a transformative webinar exploring a spiritual approach to dealing with eco-grief and intergenerational action for our common home. Learn from Victoria Loorz, an expert in the field, and two youth climate activists who will share their experiences, challenges and ways they sustain hope while advocating for change. We will explore the emotional and spiritual impacts of the climate crisis and offer pathways to hope and resilience. Together, we'll reflect on how to transform despair into meaningful action and hope for the future.

Fee: Suggested donation of \$15

quarterly, day-long Circle of Trust® retreats (also offered July 12, Oct. 4 and Jan. 10), we will co-create trustworthy space to listen to the wisdom of our personal inner teacher in community with others. Discerning our authentic selves, our "hidden wholeness," as Parker Palmer calls it, happens when we honor our integrity and pay attention to our inner source of truth. Through Circles of Trust, we renew our courageous spirit as we align our inner and outer selves—our "soul" and "role"—and journey toward personal and societal wholeness. Each gathering will include poems, stories, songs, artwork and activities from diverse cultures and wisdom traditions, offering opportunities for individual reflection, trustworthy sharing and deep listening. Attend one, some or all of these circle gatherings, which are open to all, regardless of background or belief.

Fee: \$50 per session, or \$175 for the four-part series (if paid in advance)

Building Great Garden Soil (in person)

Thursday, April 10, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Linn County Master Gardener Phil Pfister

Great gardens start with rich, fertile, healthy soil. We'll discuss best practices for building and maintaining healthy soils, including composting, cover crops, mulching, soil amendments, till versus no-till, watering practices and more.

Fee: Free-will offering

Mandala Drawing Workshop (in person)

Friday, April 11, 9:30–10:30 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



Spring Edible Perennial Gardening Workshop (in person)

Tuesday, April 15, 1–2:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Christine Kirpes

Discover the art of growing perennial rhubarb and asparagus and how we have incorporated them into our permaculture beds in the Green Prairie Garden at Prairiewoods. Topics will include choosing hardy, productive varieties of rhubarb and asparagus; preparing your beds; planting and caring for plants during and after harvest to minimize maintenance; best planting practices for long-term growth; and tips for harvesting and incorporating these perennials into your meals. This class is perfect for beginners and seasoned gardeners interested in creating productive, eco-friendly gardens.

Fee: Free-will offering

Finding Flowers Among the Weeds (in person)

Saturday, April 26, 10–11:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Jasia Standley of Graceful Bear Wellness

Spring is in the air, and the forest is waking up! Join us for a delightful guided nature walk as we explore the woods in search of edible plants. Learn to identify plants like violets and dandelions, discover how valuable many plants commonly known as weeds can be, and enjoy the beauty of nature in full bloom. We'll learn how to spot several edible and medicinal plants in their natural habitat and connect with fellow nature lovers. This will be a great outing for families or individuals!

Fee: Suggested donation of \$5 for individuals or \$10 for families

Ongoing Programs

Metta Yoga (in person)

Mondays & Thursdays; March 3–April 28; 9:30–10:30 a.m. (gentle yoga) & 10:45–11:45 a.m. (chair yoga)

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, March 3–April 28, 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

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations (in person)

first & third Mondays; March 3, March 17, April 7 & April 21; 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer

Experience sound, stillness, playfulness and relaxation through the vibrations of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls.

Fee: \$12 per session

Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (Zoom)

first Wednesdays, March 5 & April 2, 6–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Steve Sovern

Engage in communal reflection on the insights of Teilhard de Chardin, Ilia Delio and similar deep thinkers.

Fee: Free-will offering

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

Thursdays, March 6 & April 3, 12:45–1:35 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

This gentle class involves healing energy and movement, breath work, visualization, acupressure and seated practice.

Fee: \$12

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep (in person)

Thursdays, March 6 & April 3, 1:45–2:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Rebalance mind, body and spirit through the soothing power of healing sound and vibration via singing bowls.

Fee: \$10

Go Deeper Thursdays (Zoom)

Thursdays, March 6–April 24, 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; March 6, March 20, April 3 & April 17; 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

Singing Bowl Prayer (in person)

second Mondays, March 10 & April 14, 12:45–1:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer

Let the resonant sounds of singing bowls relax the body and create a pathway for clearer connection with the divine.

Fee: \$10

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers (in person)

second Tuesdays, March 11 & April 8, 9:30–11:30 a.m.; & fourth Wednesdays, March 26 & April 23, 6–8 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 11, March 25, April 8 & April 22; 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

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

For Children: Wednesdays, March 12 & April 9, 5:30–7 p.m.

For Adults: Wednesdays, March 19 & April 16, 5:30–7 p.m.

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

Take time to connect with others in grief and engage the creative spark in monthly grief groups.

Fee: Free includes all art supplies (dinner is provided for the children's group)

Men Exploring Faith (hybrid)

second & fourth Thursdays; March 13, March 27, April 10 & April 24; 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

Drum Circle & Guided Imagery (in person)

Sundays, March 30 & April 6, 2–4 p.m.

Facilitator: Drum Iowa

Come for a lively drum circle—we'll have you drumming in no time!

Fee: Suggested donation of \$15 (but this is free for all to enjoy)

Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony (in person)

Saturdays, March 8 & April 26, 4–7 p.m. (setup begins at 2 p.m., 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

Local Businesses, Nonprofits & Social Groups Host Meetings at Prairiewoods

Have you ever wondered who else comes to Prairiewoods? We have a wonderfully diverse set of relationships developed over many years of hosting groups. Businesses from small (Friendship Yoga) to medium (Big Grove Brewery) to large (Collins Aerospace) come for retreats, planning meetings and off-campus gatherings. Many nonprofits that serve the corridor have trainings and celebrations here (Trees Forever, Catherine McCauley Center, UnityPoint) and sometimes use the time to take a step away for opportunities for learning and reflection. Organizations in the public sector (Iowa Health and Human Services, AmeriCorps and Master Gardeners) gather to plan next steps and offer programs. In addition to interfaith organizations, we host Episcopalians, Methodists, Catholics, Jews, Lutherans, Quakers, Buddhists, Unitarian Universalists, and those from the United Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ. Educators and administrators come from Cedar River Academy, Cedar Rapids School District, Kirkwood, Coe, Cornell, Mount Mercy, University of Dubuque and the University of Iowa—and sometimes they bring their students with them! We also welcome artists and craftspeople (Old Capital Quilters' Guild, Embroiderer's Guild, Horizons Flute School, and many, many writing groups) and offer a time and space for focus, concentration and inspiration!

Some come for a 90-minute meeting, others stay for three days. Some are all business when they are here, while others build time into their agendas for labyrinth walks and hikes to Grandmother Oak. Others make sure there are gaps in their programming so that participants might schedule a massage, reflexology, healing touch or spiritual direction.

If you'd like to make a reservation, please visit www.Prairiewoods.org/book-a-meeting-space.

“ Re-igniting the Spirit of Caring is a three-day workshop designed to reconnect participants to their purpose. Participants gain insight and expand their ability to care for themselves, their colleagues, and the patients and families they serve in the healthcare environment. Prairiewoods provides a peaceful and nurturing space that is ideal for our participants to disconnect from the stressful healthcare environment. We feel extremely fortunate to have access to such a wonderful facility in our community.”

—Carol Meade, UnityPoint



Our Guests Say It Best!

Here are a few comments from recent Prairiewoods guests about hosting their meetings or workshops at Prairiewoods:

“It is always heartwarming to participate in (this event). It has been particularly delightful while the event has been hosted at Prairiewoods. You and everyone we met there exude kindness and compassion. Together, you make an

already awe-inspiring place even more welcoming. Thank you for your hospitality.”

—Robin B., community event facilitator

“Thank you for your wonderful hospitality. Prairiewoods has always been a very sacred place for us to come and be renewed.”

—meeting participant

“We love Prairiewoods and all the wonderful people that help make it a comfortable, loving and peaceful place! Thank you!”

—Jonny L., workshop facilitator

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.



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 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 "PrairiewoodsFSC" on:



SPIRITUALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Spirituality & Mental Health

The Awakened Brain: The New Science of Spirituality & Our Quest for an Inspired Life

with **Researcher & Author Lisa Miller, PhD** • **Monday, May 5, & Tuesday, May 6**
at First Lutheran Church (1000 3rd Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa)

Monday, May 5, 6–8:15 p.m. (in person or online)

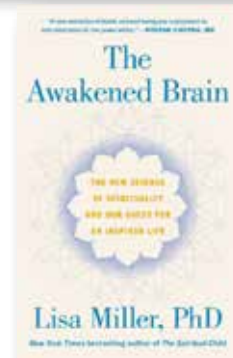
Keynote & Daily Practices Workshop (open to all)
\$25 (\$10 for students, books available for purchase)

Tuesday, May 6, 9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. (in person)

Keynote, Daily Practices Workshop, Lunch & Book Signing (open to all with dedicated content for those who work in human services or with youth)
\$40 (includes lunch, \$10 for students, books available for purchase & Dr. Miller available for signing)

Tuesday, May 6, 6–8:15 p.m. (in person)

Keynote & Daily Practices Workshop (open to all with dedicated content for those who work in healthcare; CME & CEU credits available)
\$25 (\$10 for students, books available for purchase)



Please choose one session to attend. See pages 4–5 for complete details.