

PRAIRIEWOODS

Franciscan Spirituality Center

A Place of Peace and Transformation

July–December
2025 Retreats

120 East Boyson Road • Hiawatha, Iowa 52233 • 319-395-6700 • www.Prairiewoods.org

*a peace-filled path,
by Jenifer Hanson*

HOPE
peace
stillness
purpose
resilience
transition
community



July–December Retreat List

2025 retreats

Read pages 3–7 for full descriptions of each retreat!

The Power of Silence: July or October Silent Directed with Cindy Dunn (October only); Ann Jackson, PBVM; Leslie Schwarting; Lucille Winnike, FSPA; & Joann Gehling, FSPA; Sunday, July 6, 5 p.m.–Saturday, July 12, 1 p.m.; & Sunday, Oct. 5, 3 p.m.–Saturday, Oct. 11, 1 p.m.

Enter into deep silence to sense what it feels like to awaken a quiet and palpable connection with the Source of All Being during a weeklong silent retreat with time to reflect, meditate, pray and rest. (page 3)

Navigating Transitions: A Path to Reset & Renew with Jill Saunders & Leslie Schwarting, Friday, July 25, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, July 27, 11 a.m. (Choose the length of retreat that works for you!)

Find a path forward in the midst of change, either big or small, to help you reset and renew as you navigate your transition. (page 3)

Active Hope for Troubling Times with Kathleen Rude, Friday, Aug. 1, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Aug. 3, 3 p.m.

Find a safe and sacred space to honor your feelings and discover that you are not alone, whether you are troubled by the state of the world or are struggling with personal challenges. (page 4)

Becoming the Elder Tree: Purpose in the Second Half of Life with Dr. Thomas Dean & Dr. Chris Johnson, Friday, Aug. 15, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Aug. 17, 1 p.m.

Envision a second half of life that calls forth your truest self and unique purpose and consider what it means to be an elder, honoring our special wisdom, vision and wholeness. (page 4)

Vocal Empowerment: Reclaim Your Voice, Reclaim Your Self with Mary Jane Knight, Friday, Aug. 22, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, Aug. 23, 4 p.m.

Reclaim your voice and your self in a heart-led exploration of the unique, incredible human voice and its capacity to express emotions and unleash powerful healing vibrations. (page 4)

Pathways to Peace: Food as Relationship Autumn Table with Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM, Friday, Sept. 5, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, Sept. 6, 4 p.m.

Sense autumn's call to transform our relationship with self, others and Earth through our personal food choices, deepening our understanding of all that the season has to offer through the wisdom of environmentalists, mystics, poets and contemporary sages. (page 5)

The Path of Transformation: A Weekend of Reflection, Renewal & Connection with Shawn Westbrook, Friday, Sept. 5, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Sept. 7, 11 a.m.

Step beyond what we know and grow into something greater through yoga, meditation, eco-therapy practices, ritual and self-inquiry. (page 5)

An Unplugged Weekend with Leslie Schwarting, Friday, Sept. 12, 6 p.m.–Sunday, Sept. 14, 11 a.m.

Escape the noise, step away from all screens and immerse yourself in the present moment for a weekend of real moments and real connection. (page 5)

Resilience & Renewal: A Retreat for Strengthening the Mind & Spirit with Leslie Schwarting; Rev. Jean Sullivan & Ann Jackson, PBVM; Friday, Sept. 26, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Sept. 28, 11 a.m.

Explore what resilience is and how we can strengthen it by taking a sacred pause—a time to rest, reflect and renew your inner strength. (page 6)

Silent Mindfulness Meditation with Chris Klug, Friday, Nov. 7, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Nov. 9, 1 p.m.

Learn and practice mindfulness, an awareness that knows what is happening in the present moment as it is happening, in the midst of silence. (page 6)

Celebrating the Light of Advent with Rev. Jean Sullivan; Leslie Schwarting & Ann Jackson, PBVM; Friday, Nov. 14, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Nov. 16, 1 p.m.

Spend a quiet weekend preparing to enter deeply into the anticipation, rest, hope and light of Advent as we gather stories of celebration, forgiveness, reconciliation and birth. (page 6)

Winter's Wisdom & Rest Within Thy Soul's Shelter with Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel, Friday, Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Dec. 14, 1 p.m.

Slow down, relax, let go, shift awareness and open to the Unknown and mysterious at work within and around us through inter-spiritual wisdom and related experiences. (page 7)

Pathways to Peace: Food as Relationship Winter Table with Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM, Saturday, Dec. 13, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Sense winter's call to rest and prepare for a new cycle of life as we transform our relationship with self, others and Earth through our personal food choices. (page 7)

A Warm & Cozy Holiday Retreat

with Rev. Jean Sullivan & Ann Jackson, PBVM; Friday, Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Dec. 21, 1 p.m.

Battle the holiday blues with a bit of lightheartedness through quiet reflection and holiday fun, including a cookie bake, fireside storytelling and a luminary walk through the woods. (page 7)





As summer turns to fall and fall evolves into winter, the life of the land at Prairiewoods reflects the special nature of each season. That true nature of each season offers a unique threshold to humans to journey within to sense a deeper way of being in the world.

Linda Leonard writes in *Call to Create: Celebrating Acts of Imagination*, "If we see the soul's journey as cyclical, like the seasons ... then we can accept the reality that periods of despair or fallowness are like winter—a resting time that offers us a period of creative hibernation, purification, and regeneration that prepare us for the births of spring."

Prairiewoods continues to celebrate the value and rhythm of each season in its 30 years of existence on the land. Each season offers varied facets of healing, peace and transformation. Our menu of summer and fall retreats offer spiritual teachings, practices, and community support for attendees to navigate personal and communal challenges. Prairiewoods continues to be a place that nurtures all to seek clarity and discernment to emerge stronger and more resilient. We look forward to seeing you soon.



The Power of Silence: Silent Directed Retreats

Sunday, July 6, 5 p.m.–Saturday, July 12, 1 p.m.; or Sunday, Oct. 5, 5 p.m.–Saturday, Oct. 11, 1 p.m.

Facilitators: Cindy Dunn (October only); Ann Jackson, PBVM; Leslie Schwarting; Lucille Winnike, FSPA; & Joann Gehling, FSPA

What's the deepest silence you've ever known? Enter into deep silence to sense what it feels like to awaken a quiet and palpable connection with the Source of All Being. Each day you will receive ongoing direction as you and a professionally-trained spiritual director intentionally listen to the movement of the Source of All Being in your heart. Silence assists you to get in touch with feelings, thoughts and actions as you reflect, meditate, pray and rest. Silence deepens the capacity to discern, notice and sense the movement of the Source of All Being within the whole of your life. Sharing with a professional may bring you clarity, deepen your commitment and accountability to the direction of your life, and offer insight into that direction. We try to hold any outside stimulation to a minimum so that everything—the silence, solitude, reflective activities, meals—supports your journey within. A daily centering practice is offered. Optional reflective activities such as artwork, yoga and singing bowl meditation are available throughout the week. Come re-establish and remember the deep connection we share with all of Creation as we listen together to the great silence.

Fee: \$525 includes lodging, meals and daily spiritual direction (*Lodgers only, please. Partial scholarships available.*)



summer 2025 retreats

Navigating Transitions: A Path to Reset & Renew

Friday, July 25, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, July 27, 11 a.m. (Choose the length of retreat that works for you!)

Facilitators: Jill Saunders & Leslie Schwarting

Are you currently facing a transition, either big or small? Have you experienced a change in your job status, a divorce, empty nesting or the loss of a loved one? Are you searching for some meaning and clarity on what's next? You'll be treated to a path forward that will help you reset and renew as you navigate your transition. Come for a heart-centered, guided journey in which you will:

- learn a map for how to navigate your transition that gives you insights and permission to step forward in your truth
- practice acceptance for your journey and consider the healing power of accepting what is
- play with a resiliency toolkit and spiritual practices to provide you with renewal for your transition
- clarify your core values and learn how living in alignment with your deepest values can propel you forward

Friday–Sunday Fee: \$255 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 at 5 p.m. Fee: \$225 includes Friday and Saturday sessions, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Friday–Saturday at 5 p.m. Commuter Fee: \$175 includes Friday and Saturday sessions and Saturday lunch





summer 2025 retreats

Active Hope for Troubling Times

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

Facilitator: Kathleen Rude

Whether you're troubled about the state of the world or are struggling with personal challenges, you'll find a safe and sacred place in this retreat to honor your feelings and to discover that you are not alone. Working with the transformative power of The Work That Reconnects process, you will be embraced in a compassionate experience that will ground you in gratitude, allow you to honor your pain, feel your interconnectedness to all life and embrace your unique Light for making a difference in your life and in the world. This retreat will offer you a supportive community, transformative rituals, healing time on the land, deep sharing, quiet reflection, song, movement and celebration.

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



Becoming the Elder Tree: Purpose in the Second Half of Life

**Friday, Aug. 15, 6:30 p.m.–
Sunday, Aug. 17, 1 p.m.**

Facilitators:

Dr. Thomas Dean & Dr. Chris Johnson

Envision a second half of life that calls forth your truest self and unique purpose and consider what it means to be an elder in the deepest sense: when our lived years contribute to a special wisdom, vision and wholeness of self that are shared for the benefit of the community and society. Inspired by ecologist Suzanne Simard's revelations about how forests are communities that are cooperative, collaborative, communicative and reciprocal, we will consider how we can be the elder trees that nurture, support and pass wisdom to others for the health and wellbeing of the entire community. Prairiewoods' revered Grandmother Oak will thus be our touchstone and inspiration for the weekend.

This retreat follows the Circle of Trust® approach developed by Parker Palmer and the organization he cofounded, the Center for Courage and Renewal. This retreat will welcome participants of all ages and at any stage of life.

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



Vocal Empowerment: Reclaim Your Voice, Reclaim Your Self

Friday, Aug. 22, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, Aug. 23, 4 p.m.

Facilitator: Mary Jane Knight

Come for a heart-centered journey into the power of the human voice—its ability to express deep emotion, release fear and awaken healing vibrations within. It's not just for singers; in fact, it may be especially meaningful for those who feel hesitant to speak or sing or who have been told they "can't" or "shouldn't" use their voice. We'll begin Friday evening around the campfire (weather permitting), sharing stories and songs in a safe, welcoming space. On Saturday, we'll explore how the voice works and experiment with sound and vibration in the body. We'll reflect on our personal relationships with our voices and then use them in group vocal meditation practice—a powerful alternative to silent meditation, especially for those navigating grief, trauma or PTSD. We'll close with communal singing for healing, connection and empowerment—lifting our voices together through Mary Jane's song-affirmations from her album, celebrating the dignity and power of our own unique voices. Come just for Saturday or join around the campfire and spend the night Friday.

Fee: \$195 includes sessions, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Commuter Fee: \$120 includes sessions and lunch





fall 2025 retreats

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship Autumn Table

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

Facilitators: Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Harvest is just beginning! Nourishing body and spirit, autumn foods provide possibilities to foster peace at personal, community and global levels. Lean into all the wisdom that this season offers. What old ways of thinking about your relationship to food might you release or compost? What ways of being might you want to preserve for future days? Through a series of writing prompts, conversations and a walk in the woods, use this time to deepen your relationship to food and nature. Drawing on the wisdom of environmentalists, mystics, poets and contemporary sages, we will reflect on ways to resource locally sourced autumn foods. Through contemplation and connection, let's brainstorm how we might prepare for the upcoming winter months, celebrate the holidays with less environmental impact, and create opportunities for personal and planetary health.

Fee: \$175 includes sessions, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Commuter Fee: \$95 includes sessions and Saturday lunch



The Path of Transformation: A Weekend of Reflection, Renewal & Connection

Friday, Sept. 5, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Sept. 7, 11 a.m.

Facilitator: Shawn Westbrook

Throughout life, we encounter cycles of change, challenge and renewal. Whether facing transitions, seeking clarity or deepening self-understanding, these moments invite us to step beyond what we know and grow into something greater. This retreat will offer space to explore personal transformation through movement, reflection and connection to the natural world. Using yoga, meditation, eco-therapy practices, ritual and self-inquiry, we will follow a four-stage journey inspired by universal patterns of growth and renewal—from challenge to clarity, uncertainty to insight and separation to wholeness. Rooted in ancient wisdom and practical tools for modern life, this retreat offers a supportive space to navigate personal shifts and move forward with greater purpose.

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

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



An Unplugged Weekend

Friday, Sept. 12, 6 p.m.–Sunday, Sept. 14, 11 a.m.
(Choose the length of retreat that works for you!)

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Escape the noise, step away from screens and immerse yourself in the present moment. This weekend is for those seeking a break from the constant demands of technology, offering a peaceful space to reconnect with nature, ourself and others—without distractions. Nestled in a serene location, this retreat offers mindfulness, prayer and meditation; nature immersion; creative exploration; meaningful connections; and the opportunity to rest and recharge. No phones, no emails, no notifications—just real moments and real connections. Whether you're looking to reset your mind, reduce stress or simply enjoy a break from technology, this retreat is your invitation to unplug and rediscover the beauty of a slower, more intentional life. Ready to press pause? Join us for this transformative experience.

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

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

Friday–Saturday at 5 p.m. Fee: \$225 includes Friday and Saturday sessions, Friday lodging, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

Friday–Saturday at 5 p.m.

Commuter Fee: \$165 includes Friday and Saturday sessions and Saturday lunch





fall 2025 retreats

Resilience & Renewal: A Retreat for Strengthening the Mind & Spirit

Friday, Sept. 26, 6:30 pm.–Sunday, Sept. 28, 11 a.m.

Facilitators: Leslie Schwarting; Rev. Jean Sullivan & Ann Jackson, PBVM

In the whirlwind of life, resilience can be an anchor that steadies us. Explore what resilience is and how we can strengthen it. This retreat offers a sacred pause—a time to rest, reflect and renew our inner strength. Through guided reflection, prayer, silence and practices that cultivate deep listening, we will explore how resilience is nurtured not through striving, but through surrender, trust and awareness of the Divine. Together, we will deepen our understanding of the neuroscience of resilience; explore practices to help us determine what we need; enjoy guided meditations, contemplative prayer and singing bowls for renewal; experience segments of solitude to gather our thoughts and deepen our connection with the Divine; and have meaningful conversations that honor intuition and discernment. This is an invitation to step away from the noise, reconnect with our inner wisdom and cultivate tools that can help us thrive. Whether we seek healing, clarity or simply space to breathe, we will leave with a renewed sense of strength, peace and presence.



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

Commuter Fee: \$195 includes sessions and Saturday lunch and dinner

Silent Mindfulness Meditation

Friday, Nov. 7, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Nov. 9, 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



Celebrating the Light of Advent

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

Facilitators: Rev. Jean Sullivan; Leslie Schwarting & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Spend some time anticipating how you might continue to birth light in the world. Spend a quiet weekend preparing to enter deeply into the anticipation, rest, hope and light of Advent. We will reflect on the many invitations we receive to sense and honor this season of light as we gather stories of celebration, forgiveness, reconciliation and birth. We will honor the tiniest spark of light within to become a roaring blaze of love surrounding the world. This retreat will offer a space to slow down amidst the holiday rush and connect meaningfully with the true meaning of Advent.

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





winter 2025 retreats

Winter's Wisdom & Rest Within Thy Soul's Shelter

Friday, Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Dec. 14, 1 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

The soul and body sense the Sacred summons to receive winter's gifts: Within the velvety darkness and quiet stillness of winter God offers regenerative rest, repair, incubation and dreaming. Gifts of Holy Encounter, transformative wisdom and guidance are offered—if only we slow down, relax, let go, shift awareness and open to the Unknown and mysterious at work within and around us. This retreat offers such inter-spiritual wisdom and related experiences.

Partake in insights from nature, winter-based (TCM) qigong energy medicine, Taoist and yogic philosophy, as well as Celtic and other Christian mystical contemplative perspectives. Cultivate an inner monastery or Soul Shelter both in and around the physical body for communing with Presence while strengthening your inner being with Light and peace, including for the sake of others and our world. Experience tranquil meditative, gentle movement and stillness practices to calm mind, shift awareness, rebalance energy centers and pathways of the body, and develop more relaxed, effortless, prayerful ways of being amid everyday life, which allow primordial life force energy Spirit to infuse, love, heal and work with us from the inside out.

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



Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship Winter Table

Saturday, Dec. 13, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Facilitators: Christina Campbell & Ann Jackson, PBVM

As we enter the colder months, Earth retreats and rests to prepare for a new cycle of life. While much of the land and its inhabitants slumber, a few crops—including resilient greens and root vegetables—thrive in cooler temperatures, assuring a continued abundance of nourishing foods. We, too, need this time of restoration. Using activities like meditation and responding to writing prompts, we'll consider how that wisdom applies to our relationship with food and nature. Guided by environmentalists, mystics, poets and contemporary sages, let's gather around the winter table and explore ways in which our food choices can support a healthy outlook during winter to foster peace at personal, community and global levels. Come check in with this lively learning community and see what impact this might have for personal and planetary health!

Commuter Fee: \$95 includes sessions and Saturday lunch (Add optional Friday lodging for \$80.)

A Warm & Cozy Holiday Retreat

Friday, Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Dec. 21, 1 p.m.

Facilitators: Rev. Jean Sullivan & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Bring a friend and you both get 20% off as a holiday gift!

Need a bit of light-heartedness to shift from the holiday blues? This retreat will host lots of quiet reflection and plenty of holiday laughter and fun, including:

- a collective cookie bake and frost
- hot chocolate storytelling by the fire
- a luminary walk through the woods

Come gently coax your holiday spirit into joy with a beautiful community of people.

Fee: \$230 includes sessions, Friday and Saturday lodging, and Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch

Commuter Fee: \$180 includes sessions, Saturday lunch and dinner, and Sunday lunch (Bring a friend and get 20% off!)





Facilitators (in alphabetical order)

2025 retreats

Christina Campbell (*Pathways of Peace*) is associate professor in food science and nutrition at Iowa State University and a registered dietitian. She researches prenatal lifestyle choices on the health of mothers and children and the intersection of food and peace. In her courses, she provides space for students to learn about the prevention and treatment of chronic disease, reducing consumer food waste and sustainable diets.



Dr. Thomas Dean (*Becoming the Elder Tree*) is a Circle of Trust® facilitator with the Center for Courage and Renewal and is senior presidential writer/editor at the University of Iowa, where he also teaches interdisciplinary humanities and writing courses. He has taught in numerous community programs, has facilitated retreats and workshops, and is a trained Land Ethic Leader through the Aldo Leopold Foundation, bringing programs on Leopold and the land ethic to libraries and nature centers across Iowa. Thomas loves to work with others to discover, understand and express the “wild soul” in all of us—how our authenticity and life purpose are intertwined with our relationships with the natural world.



Cindy Dunn (*The Power of Silence*) is a spiritual director trained at the Franciscan Spirituality Center and a retreat leader. She is a lifelong learner and compassionate listener. Cindy volunteers as a chaplain at St. Luke's Hospital.



Joann Gehling, FSPA, (*The Power of Silence*) is one of Prairiewoods' foundresses and has been on staff since it opened in 1996. She is available for spiritual direction, counseling, hosting retreats and healing touch spiritual ministry. Sister Joann has a doctorate in ministry with a concentration in feminist theology and psychology.



Ann Jackson, PBVM, (*The Power of Silence, Pathways of Peace, Resilience & Renewal, Celebrating the Light of Advent, A Warm & Cozy Holiday Retreat*) is Prairiewoods' coordinator of spiritual services. Blending love of nature, literature, leadership and spirituality, Sister Ann delights in listening with others to the energy of Spirit stirring creativity, passion, discernment and service. Newly certified as a Mindfulness Meditation Teacher with Jack Kornfield and Tara Brach, she is committed to mindful living and compassion, evolving consciousness, and personal and social transformation by bringing mindfulness to local and global communities. She enjoys offering spiritual direction and facilitation to individuals and groups.



Dr. Chris Johnson (*Becoming the Elder Tree*) has nearly 30 years of experience in teaching, speaking, coaching and facilitating retreats with a wide range of audiences in education, nonprofit and faith-based organizations around issues of vocation, calling and purpose;



life transitions; leadership development; and spirituality in life and work. Chris is a Circle of Trust® facilitator in association with Parker J. Palmer and the Center for Courage and Renewal, and is founder and principal of The Milkweed Group, LLC, whose work is to create and hold safe, courageous spaces that nourish inner wisdom, sharpen clarity of purpose, and nourish capacity to live and lead for a better world.

Chris Klug (*Silent Mindfulness Meditation*) began teaching Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) at University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics in September of 2001. He has practiced mindfulness meditation and yoga since 1985, including participation in several extended silent mindfulness meditation retreats. He received training in MBSR for health-care professionals from Jon Kabat-Zinn, Saki Santorelli and staff at the Center for Mindfulness. He has a wide range of experience in the helping professions, including peace education and at Iowa City Hospice. In addition to teaching MBSR and follow-up groups, Chris is a grief counselor in private practice in Iowa City and a consultant to the Palliative Care staff at the UI Hospitals & Clinics.



Mary Jane Knight (*Vocal Empowerment*) is a classically trained vocalist, composer and educator dedicated to using music as a vehicle for healing and empowerment. With roots in opera, church music and education, she bridges the worlds of music therapy, emotional wellness and accessible artistry. She has a music education degree from Simpson College and a vocal performance degree from the University of Nebraska. Her newly released album, *Rising Free: A Journey of Healing*, is a collection that





Facilitators (in alphabetical order)

2025 retreats

is both ethereal and raw, blending opera-like storytelling with accessible, heartfelt melodies and stripped-down arrangements.

Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel (*Winter's Wisdom & Rest Within Thy Soul's Shelter*) is a Franciscan affiliate who has been leading spiritual retreats for over a quarter century. She is a certified meditation, yoga and advanced yoga nidra instructor, sound healer, spiritual director/companion, dream guide, energy healer and qigong instructor, emerita college chaplain and Episcopal priest.



Kathleen Rude (*Active Hope for Troubling Times*) is a senior Work That Reconnects facilitator who has been mentored by WTR root teacher Joanna Macy. Kathleen is also a shamanic practitioner, environmental activist and author.



Jill Saunders (*Navigating Transitions*) is a leadership development facilitator and coach with over 20 years of experience working with Fortune 250 companies including Cargill, Wells Fargo, UBS Bank, General Mills, Hilton Hotels and CHS. She has her coaching certification from the Hudson Institute of Santa Barbara and is a certified HeartMath coach and facilitator. She loves to create experiences for people that will give them tools and resources to create a life of renewal and vitality, align their head and heart, clarify what's most



important and move forward with focus. She lives in South Minneapolis and has one son, Tyler, who is 23. She loves to write and create products in her downtime.

Leslie Schwarting (*The Power of Silence, Navigating Transitions, An Unplugged Weekend, Resilience & Renewal, Celebrating the Light of Advent*) is a full-time spiritual director and retreat facilitator at Prairiewoods. As a wife, mother of three adult women and former hospital executive, Leslie's journey has led her to profound joy in serving this ministry. Her extensive corporate background, which includes leading large teams, strategic planning, project management and business development, as well as her spiritual direction training, have uniquely prepared her for this role. She finds great fulfillment in supporting others as they seek to deepen their connection to the Divine, themselves and others, and is deeply empathetic to their personal and spiritual growth.



Rev. Jean Sullivan (*Resilience & Renewal, Celebrating the Light of Advent, A Warm & Cozy Holiday Retreat*) serves as the Outreach, Engagement and Hospitality Coordinator at Prairiewoods, welcoming groups that come here to enjoy beautiful spaces, wonderful food and the great outdoors! With a bachelor's degree in medical anthropology, a master of divinity degree and nearly three decades in ordained congregational ministry with the United Church of Christ, she has also explored the impact of stress and trauma on individuals and the community and how we build resilience. Jean lives in



a 100-year-old home on the southeast side of Cedar Rapids with her husband and clergy colleague, Ed; her son, Buster; and her daughter, Cleo.

Shawn Westbrook (*The Path of Transformation*) is a dedicated yoga instructor, healer, nature lover and lifelong learner. His healing journey began with a deep-rooted love for nature, which he nurtured through the years. This deep connection to the land and natural rhythms has informed his approach to health and wellbeing, believing that true health begins through harmony with the natural world and its rhythms to help reveal our authentic self. Shawn's teachings are heavily influenced by the principles of aligning with nature and its rhythms, particularly the ideas of eco-therapy, alchemy, shadow work and individuation—the process of becoming who we truly are. Shawn guides students not only through physical postures, meditation and breathwork, but also through inner explorations that help us connect with our true, authentic selves.



Lucille Winnike, FSPA, (*The Power of Silence*) ministers as a retreat director and spiritual director. Earlier ministries include teaching and administration in Catholic schools, as well as administration within her community. Sister Lucille has a master's degree in mathematics from Notre Dame University, where she later did further studies in spirituality and interned as a spiritual director. She says, "Many persons who come here experience the richness and healing powers of Prairiewoods itself, of Mother Earth, of God. It is my privilege to meet with some of those people."





Retreat Information

2025 retreats



General Retreat Information

- **Registration:** For further information or to register for retreats in this brochure, visit www.Prairiewoods.org/Group-Retreats.
- **Refunds** (minus a \$25 non-refundable deposit) or a credit on your account (to be used for another Prairiewoods retreat or program) are available by calling 319-395-6700 if your cancellation is more than one week prior to the beginning of the retreat. If Prairiewoods cancels the retreat, a full refund will be available.
- **Scholarships:** 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 some of our retreats require an investment. We will not turn anyone away because of inability to pay. If you need financial assistance to attend a retreat, please contact us at 319-395-6700 or ecospirit@prairiewoods.org.



Private Retreats

Are you going on sabbatical? Are you approaching a major life transition? Do you need space to write or create art? Come to Prairiewoods!

- **Private Retreats** are available (according to your schedule and Prairiewoods' availability) by contacting Ann Jackson, PBVM, at 319-395-6700, ext. 203, or ajackson@prairiewoods.org. A \$25 non-refundable deposit holds your registration.
- **Six-Day Private, Directed Retreats** cost \$525 and include lodging, meals and one daily session of spiritual direction.
- **Overnight Stays** in the Guest House cost \$85 per night (including three meals) or \$65 per night (breakfast only), and in the Hermitage (single occupancy only) cost \$60 per night (you provide your own food, minimum two overnights). Double occupancy in the Guest House is \$130 (including three meals) and \$90 (breakfast only).
- **Holistic Services** (such as massage, reflexology or healing touch) are available upon request for \$65 per hour.
- **Spiritual Direction** is available upon request for \$50 per hour.
- **Programming**, such as yoga, qigong, singing bowl meditation or centering prayer, may also be available. Visit www.Prairiewoods.org for a complete schedule.
- **Day Stays** are available for \$40 (including room and lunch) or \$30 (room only).
- **Deposits** of \$25 (payable via credit card by phone at 319-395-6700 or by check payable to Prairiewoods and mailed to 120 E Boyson Rd, Hiawatha, IA 52233) hold your registration and are non-refundable. Full payment is due upon arrival. Online registrations (www.Prairiewoods.org/Group-Retreats) require full payment at the time of registration by credit card only.



Design Your Own Group Retreat!

Imagine creating a retreat for you and your close companions or colleagues. We'll help you find a date (based on space availability). We can provide the meals, the overnight accommodations, and the services you need to relax and rejuvenate. Each retreatant pays \$85 for an overnight and three meals. Then you'll have plenty of free time to walk our 2.5 miles of trails, give Grandmother Oak a hug, move through the labyrinth together or gather in the Prayer Circle. Additional group services can be arranged, including guided forest therapy, group spiritual direction, singing bowl meditation, centering prayer, yoga or qigong. Appointments for individual holistic services can also be scheduled, including massage, reflexology, healing touch and spiritual direction. (Costs for individual and group services are not included in the base rates and vary by service.) Contact Jean Sullivan at 319-395-6700, ext. 202, or jsullivan@prairiewoods.org to schedule your group retreat today!

