

Prairiewoods

September/October 2025

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER



Food as Healing

Food as Relationship, Food as Responsibility

At Prairiewoods, we believe that all of life is interconnected. We live in sacred relationship with Earth, each other, and all beings. One of the most tangible ways we express that relationship is through food—how it is grown, how it is prepared, how it is shared.

Food nourishes the body and spirit. It connects us to the land, to community, and to generations past and future. Yet in our modern world, food has become something else: a commodity, an industry, often disconnected from both people and the planet.

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Prairiewoods Staff

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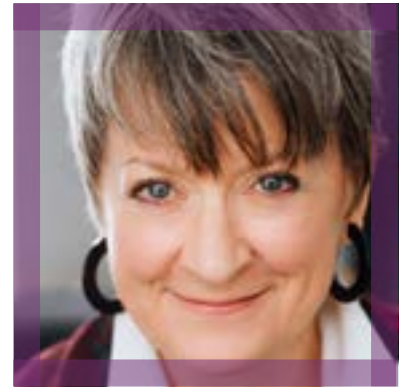
Ali Yoka

Chef & Kitchen Manager



Director's Corner

Join us as we celebrate the journey so far and the journey yet to come!



September and October is a time when we think about the turning of the season – cooler days, changing leaves and harvest in the garden. So what will we harvest this fall? What if what we hoped would grow did not? How will we heal our disappointment – perhaps even disillusionment in the face of unfulfilled expectations? Perhaps it is not your garden that has failed but something closer to your heart or something that feels infinitely larger. This is a time Joanna Macy has accurately named the “Great Unraveling”. And yet there is cause for hope.

“

Do you know how many beautiful things can be seen in a single second? How you can blow up a second like a balloon and fit infinity inside of it?

Andrea Gibson

”

Here at Prairiewoods we are working hard to create opportunities to rest, to heal, and to set new direction. We seek to offer all of you – those navigating their own transitions, changemakers and healers – a place to build resilience for the road ahead.

Join us in September and October for the Season of Creation. It is a time to renew our relationships with self, others, creation and the Source of all Being. We have **more than 20 programs and retreats** during these two months and our celebration will culminate with the Blessing of the Animals. It is a sweet gathering of humans and the creatures that bless them.

May you find your moments of peace and hope in unexpected places this fall.

Peace and all good,

Leslie A. Wright

This fall, we invite you to join us in reimagining a different way forward through Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship, an ongoing retreat and practice led by Dr. Christina Campbell of Iowa State University, and Ann Jackson PVBM. Christina teaches that “peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with self, others, and the Earth.” If food is relationship, then how we grow, share, and consume food can either sustain or fracture that wholeness.

At Prairiewoods, this is both a personal and communal practice. It’s woven into every retreat meal, every garden bed, every compost bin. And it’s deeply needed, because our current food system is, in many ways, broken.

What’s Broken in our Food Systems?

Industrial Agriculture & Monoculture Farming

Large-scale industrial farming prioritizes high-volume, single-crop production, often relying on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. This approach not only damages soil health and biodiversity—it makes it harder for small farmers to survive. Independent growers using regenerative methods face steeper costs and fewer subsidies.

Laura Krouse of Abbe Hills Farm started one of the first farms in Iowa to offer a CSA and help grow that model across the state. Her work has been about more than growing vegetables; it’s been about teaching others how to build local food capacity through community-supported agriculture.

Her solution? Decentralize. Grow more food closer to home, reconnect communities with local production, and teach ourselves to eat seasonally.

Distribution Challenges for Small Farmers

Even when small farmers grow food sustainably, getting that food to market is its own struggle. Most distribution systems favor large producers and corporate supply chains. Small farmers must handle everything from growing to marketing to distribution themselves.

Inequities in Access

Our food system doesn’t serve everyone equally. Many communities face limited access to fresh, nourishing food. This inequity is twofold:

For consumers, it means fewer healthy, affordable choices.

For small farmers, it means extra hurdles to reaching local buyers and fair markets.

As Drew Erickson of the Linn County Food Systems Council and Rodale Institute Midwest Organic Center puts it: “It takes a village to create a sustainable food system. There are missing pieces all the way up and down the chain—from farmers who want to grow food but can’t get access to land or capital, to building local markets for these products. Where and how we spend our money matters.”

Prairiewoods has been working in partnership with Metro Catholic Outreach and the Hiawatha Library Food Pantry for several years to increase our neighbor’s access to fresh, healthy and local food. Thousands of pounds of produce goes to our partners each season. In addition, Prairiewoods offers affordable garden plots to our neighbors who lack access to land to grow their own food.

Food Waste & Overconsumption

Globally, nearly one-third of all food produced is wasted. At Prairiewoods, we see mindful eating, gratitude, and composting as spiritual practices—ways to honor the resources, labor, and life behind each bite.



What is Prairiewoods Doing to Help Heal the System?

Continue to page 4 to find out!

Prairiewoods' Commitment + Invitation to YOU

Through our own garden-to-table practices, partnerships with local farmers and producers, and plant-forward, seasonal menus, Prairiewoods is committed to helping heal our broken food system.

We especially invite you to try new, seasonal foods. As Laura reminds us:

"We don't need tomatoes on our sandwiches in January. Wait until July—then it's the only thing you should have on your sandwich."

Laura's bottomline? "Try some new food!"

At Prairiewoods, we prepare creative, plant-forward meals featuring locally sourced ingredients to help guests discover new flavors and make them part of their own repertoire.

We also encourage our broader community to follow the same path. As Laura Krouse recommended on page 3:

- Shop at farmers markets as often as you can.
- Support co-ops like New Pioneer that offer a wide range of local produce, dairy, and specialty products.
- If you're a retailer or food service organization, work with food hubs that prioritize local sourcing—helping small farmers get their products to market and making fresh, regional food more accessible for all.

And as Laura reminds us, one of the simplest ways to support local food systems is by embracing what's in season—and letting go of what isn't. Choosing not to buy tomatoes in January or strawberries in the middle of winter helps reduce unseasonal demand that props up industrial agriculture and long-distance shipping.

Instead, try some new food. Wait for what's ripe and ready close to home—and enjoy it when it's at its best. We invite you to join us—not just by attending Pathway to Peace but by reflecting on your own daily choices:

What does it mean for you to be in relationship with your food?

What small steps might you take today toward food peace?

The Problem	The Healing Pathway	Prairiewoods Practices
Monoculture Farming	Biodiversity & Regenerative Agriculture	Kitchen Garden, Local Sourcing
Overprocessed, Packaged Foods	Whole, Seasonal, Plant-Forward Foods	Plant-Based Menus, Seasonal Recipes
Food Waste & Overconsumption	Mindful Eating, Composting	Kitchen Composting, Portion Awareness
Non-local Monopolies	Local Food Systems/Hubs, Community Co-ops	Partnering with Local Producers
Disconnection from Food	Food as Relationship	Pathway to Peace Retreat, Food Circles
Loss of Food Traditions	Cooking, Preserving, Seed Saving	Cooking Classes, Garden Programming



Pathway to Peace: Food as Relationship

Through guided reflection, garden walks, and shared meals, Pathway to Peace invites participants into deeper awareness of their food choices as part of a peacebuilding practice.

Dr. Christina Campbell introduces three core principles:

- **Contemplate:** Understand how your food is grown, raised, and sourced.
- **Cultivate:** Prepare simple, health-promoting meals. Grow a bit of your own food.
- **Connect:** Support local farmers. Advocate for just food policies in your community.

Our Gardens & Local Food Partners

At Prairiewoods, we grow a portion of our produce in our own gardens and orchard. We also partner directly with these local producers:

- Abbe Hills Farm
- Rhubarb Botanicals
- New Pioneer Co-op

While we are committed to healing the broken food system, we know there is more work to do. We are actively building new relationships and working to increase the number of local farmers and producers we collaborate with over the next few years.

Where in your life do you feel most connected to the food you eat?
What's one small step you can take today to strengthen that relationship?

Faux Guacamole: A Local Twist on a Classic

A great way to use a variety of seasonal produce, from cilantro to zucchini! In fact, zucchini takes the place of avocado in this plant-forward dip that is bright, creamy, and perfect for fall gatherings. (And, yes, our taste testers confirm it really does taste like classic guacamole.)



INGREDIENTS

- 1 large zucchini, cut into smaller pieces
- 2 jalapeño peppers
- 2 tomatillos, peeled and halved
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
- ¼ cup red onion, chopped
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp cilantro
- ½ tsp kosher salt, divided

COOKING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.
2. Spread zucchini, tomatillos, and jalapeños evenly on the cookie sheet. Coat with olive oil and ¼ tsp kosher salt.
3. Bake for 25 minutes, until veggies are slightly charred.
4. Let roasted veggies cool, then remove skins and stems from jalapeños. Chill veggies for 2–3 hours.
5. Add chilled veggies plus remaining ingredients to a food processor. Pulse on low until just blended. Salt to taste.
6. Serve with tortilla chips.



Retreats

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship - Autumn Table

(in person)

Sept. 5, 6:30 p.m. – 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, local and global levels. Lean into all the wisdom that this season offers. What can you learn?

- 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. 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

Vocal Empowerment: Reclaim Your Voice, Reclaim Your Self

(in person)

Aug. 22, 6:30 p.m. – 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. Friday evening is for sharing stories. Saturday begins with experiments with sound & vibration and ends with singing for healing. Spend the night in the lodge Friday (with a campfire) or come just for Saturday.

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

Commuter Fee: \$120 includes sessions and lunch

The Power of Silence: Silent Directed Retreat

(in person)

Oct. 5, 5 p.m. – Oct. 11
1 p.m.

Facilitators: Ann Jackson, PBVM; Leslie Schwarting; Lucille Winnike, FSPA; & Joann Gehling, FSPA

What's the deepest silence you've ever known? Awaken and experience a quiet and palpable connection with the Source of All Being as you enter into a deep silence. 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 life. We try to hold any outside stimulation to a minimum so that everything—the silence, solitude, reflective activities, meals, etc.—supports your journey within. 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.)

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

(in person)

Sept. 5, 6:30 p.m. – 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

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

Information Sessions: Tuesday, Aug 26, and Wednesday, Aug. 28
7–8 p.m. (Zoom)

Eight-Week Series: Mondays, Sept. 8, 15, 22, 29 & Oct. 6, 20, 27 & Nov 3
5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

plus extended class Sunday, Oct 26 from
9 a.m. - 3 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. Over eight weeks, this series will cultivate the skill of mindfulness through formal meditation practices and informal integrative practices. It consists of a two-and-a-half-hour class each week over eight weeks with one extended six-and-a-half-hour class. If you want to participate, please attend one of the free information sessions.

Fee: Free for information sessions, \$400 for eight-week series (Those working for a nonprofit may register for just \$100!)



Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL) 18 Retreat (in person)

Opening and Closing: Sept. 26 & May 8
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (lunch included)

Nov. 7, Dec. 5, Jan. 9, Feb. 6, Mar. 6, Apr. 3
9 a.m. – 1 p.m. (lunch included)

Facilitators: Leslie Schwarting, Ann Jackson, PBVM, Lucille Winnike, FSPA

Do you desire time to reflect on your spiritual path and the movement of the Spirit within your life? Do you wish to enrich your spiritual experience through monthly prayer and reflection?

Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL) is an eight-month retreat based on the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Learn to explore:

- kinds of prayer
- the source and presence of the Source of All Being
- the movement of God in your life and the world

Fee: \$450 (payable in September 2025 or \$50 a month), plus the cost of monthly spiritual direction

Resilience & Renewal: A Retreat for Strengthening the Mind & Spirit (in person)

Sept. 26, 6:30 pm.–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. Through guided reflection you may learn to:

- use prayer, silence and practices that cultivate deep listening
- explore how resilience is nurtured not through striving, but through surrender,
- trust an awareness of the Divine
- 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

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

Retreats

Silent Mindfulness Meditation (in person)

Nov. 7, 6:30 p.m.–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. 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
- general well-being 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 Saturday lunch & dinner, and Sunday lunch

An Unplugged (mostly) Silent Weekend (in person)

Sept. 12, 6 p.m.– 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, yourself 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 breakfast

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

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



Programs

Pilgrimage to Justice: Walking the Path of Nonviolence (webinar)

Sept. 3
6:30 – 8 p.m.

Facilitator: Dr. Ken Butigan

Catholic peace activist and educator Dr. Ken Butigan will lead this free webinar exploring pilgrimage as a sacred path toward ecological justice and nonviolence. Part of the Pilgrimages of Hope for Creation initiative, this event highlights local efforts across Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin.

Held during the Season of Creation, this virtual gathering will reflect on our spiritual call to care for our common home during this Jubilee year of Laudato Si' and The Cantic of the Creatures.

Register here: <http://bit.ly/3I5RyxR>

Suggested fee: \$15

Sponsored by the Tri-State Network, a coalition of Catholic sisters and spirituality centers in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

Notice something different?

Retreats & Programs will be separated into categories, giving you a way to discern different aspects of what you might be interested in here at Prairiewoods. Color coding as follows:

Creativity

Ecology

Holistic Health

Personal Growth

Prayer

Spirituality

Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences (in person)

Forest Bathing with the Full Moon

Sept. 7
6 – 8 p.m.

Forest Bathing with the Blood Full Moon

Oct. 6
6 – 8 p.m.

Afternoon Nature + Forest Therapy

Sept. 8 and Oct. 13
2:30 – 3:45 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 moon walks
\$20 for afternoon experience

Awaken Your Creativity through Watercolor (in person)

Sept. 16, Oct. 21, Nov 18
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 work at our own pace.

- September - Acorns
- October - Pumpkins
- November - Feather

Class is recommended for ages 8–100. Simply bring a positive attitude, ready to learn a new skill!

Fee: \$50/class includes all art supplies

Let Your Heartbreak Be your Guide: Lessons in Engaged Contemplation (in person)

Sept. 9, and 23, Oct. 14 and 28, Nov. 11
6 – 8 p.m.

Facilitator: Kim Novak

During what feels like deeply painful and conflicted times in our communities and world, how do we continue to show up for ourselves and one another - open-hearted and hopeful?

In this 5-session study, we will study and reflect on author Adam Bucko's book, "Let Your Heartbreak Be Your Guide: Lessons In Engaged Contemplation." Bucko offers practical guidance on how to adopt an "engaged contemplation," a lived spirituality responsive to suffering and injustice by sharing some of his own heartbreak and transformation.

The facilitator from SAGES (Sacred Activism Grounded in Everyday Spirituality) provides a safe space to explore the intersection of spiritual growth, transformation and social justice using contemplative practice, study & reflection. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome!

Fee: \$25 for series, in person only

Life as a Pathway - Wandering & Wondering as Pilgrims of Hope

Sept. 28
1 – 5 p.m.

Facilitator: Kim Novak

The sacred art of pilgrimage involves both an inward and outward journey - a spirit of always being "on the way".

Whether we choose to approach life as a regular traveler or pilgrim is up to each of us. The inner journey of the pilgrim is driven by longing and curiosity, transforming the outer journey into an encounter with the Holy in all.

Join us for an afternoon of reflection, discussion, and wandering as we consider the ways that each of us can embrace our lives as "Pilgrims of Hope".

Fee: Free



Dear Younger Me: A Journey of Reflection, Forgiveness and Renewal (in person)

Sept. 16, 30 and Oct. 14, 28
5:30 - 8 p.m.

Facilitator: Cindy Dunn

Step away from the noise of daily life and enter a sacred space designed for deep reflection and soul renewal. Dear Younger Me is a transformative retreat that invites you to embark on an intimate journey of self-discovery, healing, and connection with God's boundless love.

During this journey, you will be guided through:

- a life review
- personal reflection
- uncovering stories that shaped you and your life

Come as you are. Leave renewed, with a heart softened by love, a spirit anchored in grace, and a deeper understanding of your worth in the light of God's unending mercy. This is your sacred pause—a time to breathe, reflect, and return home to your heart.

Fee: \$100 (dinner included)

Positively Plantiful: Plant-Based 101 Presentation (in person)

Sept. 23
6 p.m.

Facilitator: Mariah Andrews

Curious about adding more plant-based meals to your life? Join Mariah Andrews for a relaxed, practical introduction to plant-based eating. You'll get simple tips for getting started, pantry essentials, and protein guidelines, plus enjoy light samples and take home an easy recipe. This is a casual, presentation-style class — perfect for anyone wanting to learn more without diving into a full cooking workshop.

Fee: \$15



Circle of Trust© (in person)

Oct. 4 (Autumn Harvest)
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. 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. Each gathering includes poems, stories, songs, artwork and activities from diverse cultures and wisdom traditions, offering opportunities for individual reflection, trustworthy sharing and deep listening. This is open to all, regardless of background or belief.

Fee: \$50

Self Care for Professional Caregivers (via Zoom)

Oct. 22
6 - 7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Elizabeth Lewis

Professional care-giving can compromise your resilience. Secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, and a heightened risk of chronic physical, emotional and spiritual disconnect and mental health issues are just some of the many signs of caregiver stress overwhelm.

In this workshop you will expand relaxation practices aimed at helping renew your energy and inner balance throughout the work day.

Fee: \$25

This workshop is of benefit to anyone who in their professional life contributes to the positive health and wellbeing of others.

Day of Self Renewal (in person)

Sept. 4 & 8, Oct. 2 & Oct. 13

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Jean Sullivan

Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services (massage, reflexology, spiritual direction or forest therapy), group meditation practices, private guest room for the day, fresh lunch, and access to all that Prairiewoods has to offer. Registration is 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)

Programs

Words Make a Way Inward to the Soul (in person)

Nov. 1
1 - 5 p.m.

Facilitator: Cyra Dumitru, MA, PPM

Cultivating an inner haven where we can hear our soul speak and receive our soul's imagery is vital to cultivating resilience and equanimity.

One mindfulness practice that can build paths to and from our soulful centers involves words: truthful, heartfelt, body-infused words. By writing down what we experience and receive from our sacred center, we can continue to receive this sacred sight—absorbing daily and integrating the soul's knowing with greater awareness.

We will use poems to:

- guide and inspire
- pause and reflect
- speak to personal experience as a way to calm our inner haven

Incorporated into our session will be walking the Prairiewoods labyrinth.

Fee: \$40

Channeling Mr. Rogers: How the Labyrinth Can Guide Us as Modern Day Helpers (in person)

Oct. 22
6 - 8 p.m.

Facilitator: Marion Patterson, Winding Pathways

There's a nurturing element to all human beings..."

Mr. Rogers encouraged the nurturing quality in us. He paused to feed his fish and introduced viewers to everyday helpers. As we experience division in the country, we can be the antidote to the angst around us by being a helper. Participants will connect through nurturing and helping stories. A unique labyrinth will help explore our theme.

Fee: \$25



On-going Programs

Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (Zoom)

Sept. 3 & Oct. 1
6–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Steve Sovern
Fee: Free-will offering

Metta Yoga (in person) Mondays & Thursdays

9:30–10:30 a.m. (gentle yoga) & 10:45–11:45 a.m. (chair yoga)

Facilitator: Heather English
Fee: \$120 for 11 classes, \$72 for 6 classes, \$15 for single class

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

Thursdays, Sept. 4 and Oct. 2
12:45–1:35 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel
Fee: \$12/class

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep (in person)

Thursdays & Fridays Sept. 4
1:45–2:45 p.m.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel
Fee: \$10

Go Deeper Thursdays (Zoom)

Thursdays beginning Sept. 4
4–5 p.m.

Facilitator: Ellen Bruckner
Fee: Free-will offering

Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton (Zoom)

first & third Thursdays beginning Sept. 4
7–8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Carole Butz
Fee: Free-will offering

Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations (in person)

Sept. 15, Oct. 6 & 20
6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer
Fee: \$12 per session

Meditation at Prairiewoods (MAP) (in person)

Mondays beginning Sept. 8
6:30–7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Ian Montgomery
Fee: Suggested donation of \$5

What is this Mindfulness Stuff All About? (in person)

Sept. 2
5–6:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Ann Jackson, PBVM
Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer (in person) second & fourth Tuesdays beginning Sept. 16 5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitator: Judith Smith
Fee: Free-will offering

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

For Children: Sept. 10 & Oct. 29

For Adults: Sept. 17 & Oct. 15
5:30–7 p.m.

Facilitators: Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW
Fee: Free includes all supplies (+ dinner for children's group)

Outdoor Morning Hatha Yoga (in person)

Sundays beginning Sept. 7
9–10 a.m.

Facilitator: Sarah Cram Driscoll
Fee: Suggested donation of \$10

Singing Bowl Prayer (in person)

Sept. 8 & Oct. 13
12:45–1:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer
Fee: \$10

Drum Circle & Guided Imagery (in person)

Sept. 28 & Oct. 12
2 p.m.

Facilitator: Drum Iowa
Fee: Suggested donation of \$15 (but free for all to enjoy)

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers (in person)

Sept. 9, Oct. 14 Sept. 24 & Oct. 22
9:30–11:30 a.m. 6–8 p.m.

Facilitators: participants
Fee: Free

Loving Kindness Meditation Practice (in person)

Sept. 13 & Oct. 4
10 a.m.

Facilitator: Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA
Fee: \$10

Sacred Listening Through Mental Illness (in person)

Sept. 16 & Oct. 21
6 p.m.

Facilitators: Tracy Lees
Fee: Free-will offering

YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option) (in person)

Sept. 17 - Italian & Oct. 15 - Mexican
11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Facilitators: Ali Yoka & Mariah Andrews
Fee: \$15 per lunch

To find out more specifics about Retreats & Programs, visit prairiewoods.org



Prairiewoods

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

How Exciting: Check out the New Website

Discover something fresh! Our newly redesigned website is live—sleeker, faster, and easier to explore. Dive into a seamless experience filled with inspiration, curated collections, and exciting updates. Come see what's new and find exactly what you're looking for. Visit now and let us know what you think!

30 Stories for 30 Years

Stories unite us and shape our identity. As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we invite you to share your moments—big or small—that reflect our mission and impact. Submit your story, inspire connection, and celebrate three decades of shared experiences. Video, photo, poem, pictures are all great ways to reflect on your time/s at Prairiewoods. For questions, ecospirit@prairiewoods.org.

Rooted & Rising: A New Look for Prairiewoods

Why the logo change?

As we near our 30th anniversary, our new logo honors Prairiewoods' roots while reflecting the growth, transformation, and interconnectedness at the heart of our mission.

Why Now?

This is a season of renewal. Our updated logo is designed to be more adaptable for digital use, embroidery and other formats - helping us welcome a new generation with clarity and care.

What happens to the old logo, t-shirts, stickers, etc.?

We will continue using existing items as long as they are useful - honoring the legacy of where we've been, even as we step into what's next.



Mission:

Prairiewoods Franciscan Ecospirituality 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.

Save the Date!

Holiday Bazaar November 22, 2025

Holiday Bazaar will help you jump-start your holiday shopping and get in the spirit of the season! It features hundreds of handcrafted items made by local artists. Visit prairiewoods.org for details.



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. Please address all correspondence to:

Prairiewoods
120 E Boyson Rd
Hiawatha, IA 52233
319-395-6700
prairiewoods.org
ecospirit@prairiewoods.org





Prairiewoods
FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

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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:



Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, Sept. 28 from 1-3 p.m.

Gather your family, friends and favorite animal companions and head to the annual *Blessing of the Animals*. Please bring your pets on leashes or in carriers, their clean-up bags, and lawn chairs or blankets. We'll have this free event rain or shine. (Moved indoors if there's inclement weather.)

- 1:15: A parade with people and pets
- 1:30: Blessings by Nancy Hoffman, FSPA, and Rev. Jean Sullivan
- Cedar Valley Humane Society will be on site passing out information and collecting donations. They'll gratefully accept cash donations, dish soap, HE liquid laundry detergent, baby wipes, or 1-gallon or 2-gallon Ziplock bags. For a complete list of their needs, visit www.CVHumane.org/wish-list.

We hope you and your beloved animals will join us for this fun, free event!