

Prairiewoods

November/December 2025

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER



Spiritual Encounters

Celebrating Thirty Years of
Eco-Spirituality at Prairiewoods

2026 marks thirty years of imagination, ministry, curiosity, healing, and deep care for the Earth at Prairiewoods Franciscan Eco-Spirituality Center in Hiawatha, Iowa, where the land has offered generous reciprocity to all who enter Prairiewoods Lane.

Since its founding in 1996, this 70-acre sanctuary of woods, prairie, and community has become a sacred meeting place. People from all over the world have walked, prayed, listened, shared their hearts, and been welcomed just as they are.

(continued on page 3)

Prairiewoods Board

Greg Barnett

Software Engineer, Retired

Rev. Rose Blank

United Methodist Clergy, Retired

Peter Correll

Martin Construction

Charles Crawley (Chair)

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Marie DesJarlais, FSPA (Liason)

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Spiritual Director & ESL Instructor

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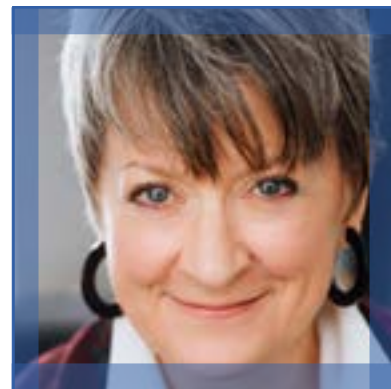
AVP RE-Consumer Support Manager

Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust



Director's Corner

The power of presence and the intersection between technology and spirituality



According to Lauren Jackson, writer for the New York Times newsletter *Believing*, the “faith tech” industry is booming. Millions of people are seeking to nourish their spirituality with online resources, especially chatbots. Some of the questions people are asking are practical or curious, but many reflect deeper concerns and yearnings.

“

The spiritual life does not remove us from the world but leads us deeper into it.

Henri J.M. Nouwen

”

I myself have benefitted from being able to participate in programs and hear speakers online that I might not otherwise have been able to take advantage of. And I have met people all over the world who are also on deeply meaningful spiritual journeys. However, I am concerned about replacing our in-person, experiential spiritual journey in creation with a journey in the metaverse.

One reason for my concern is that it seems as though we have become a vending machine culture. We are so used to being able to Google our questions and get immediate responses. Like many good things, insights may be slow to unfold and the messengers of the answers we seek may be wholly unexpected—the wind in the leaves, the whisper of the prairie, finding ourselves eye to eye with a doe in the woods. Grace may come in the silence or in the song. What is required of us is to make space for that to happen. And to find ourselves in community with others who are also seeking.

In this technological world we can be tempted to forget the tremendous power of presence. Energy, compassion and love envelope us when we are humans together, sharing the journey. It is often enough to know that we are truly seen and heard. Let us explore the mystery together. Often it is in the dance of listening, contemplating and sharing that we are transformed and inspired. We all seek connection, assurance and answers. Please be reminded, and let those in your circle of care know that Prairiewoods waits for you.

Peace and all good,

Leslie A. Wright

Those who cross Prairiewoods' threshold are often seekers. Some yearn for quiet and peace away from the chaotic noise of modern life. Others arrive with an unnamed ache for "something more," a deeper intimacy with the Divine. Whatever their longing, they are met with open hearts, hospitality, and gentleness.

No matter where our feet connect with the Earth, the Source of All Being is alive and thriving in and around us. Yet, the constant barrage of news, demands, and distractions interrupts that awareness. Time at Prairiewoods re-grounds and re-connects us to the all-loving presence of the Divine. Retreatants often describe experiences of gentle whispers, sudden revelations, or an expanded inner knowing—all signs of what Prairiewoods calls "spiritual encounters."

What Are Spiritual Encounters?

Spiritual encounters are more than a fleeting feeling. They are a moment when the veil between the ordinary and the Sacred grows thin. They may arise in silence, in conversation, in ritual, or in the simple act of walking among trees. They are a meeting with the Divine that awakens awareness, deepens belonging, and shifts perspective.

As foundress Sister Betty Daugherty, FSPA, once wrote, "Three major questions accompany us on life's journey: 'Who are we?' 'Where do we come from?' 'Where are we going?' Our lifetime work is to uncover the answers... and as our perspective gradually changes, we might not even realize a shift in our entire worldview, an evolution of our consciousness."

Spiritual encounters spark this evolution, reminding us we are part of something larger and inviting us to grow.

Matthew Andrews' Encounter

Writer Matthew J. Andrews once came to stay at a hermitage on the grounds of Prairiewoods. What he sought was time for uninterrupted prayer and contemplation. What he found was much more.

Walking the trails, he encountered the Cosmic Walk, a meditative path that traces the history of the universe from the Great Flaring Forth to the present day. "Slowly walking between markers and imagining the hundreds of millions of years in each stride," he shared, "produced in me something like standing over the rim of the Grand Canyon: a sense of awe and grandeur, an understanding that the things that ail me are fleeting and meaningless in comparison."

He reflected: "Why else spend eons forming the Himalayas, the rolling prairies, the Great Barrier Reef, the boreal forests, Big Sur, and each and every waterfall? I think God loves when we delight in Creation, and I think God is happy to share it with us."

During his hikes, Matthew noticed the creek under thin ice, the hoot of an owl, the bark of trees "grained uniquely like fingerprints," and the smile of a fellow pilgrim taking it all in. For him, Prairiewoods became a place of awe, humility, and reconnection.



Matthew J. Andrews
matthewjandrews.com

**What does the future hold
for Prairiewoods?**

Continue to page 4 to
find out!

Natalie Baur's Encounter

Before her retreats at Prairiewoods, Natalie Baur expected life's answers to arrive in a dramatic "Eureka" moment. Here, she discovered that guidance comes through feelings and connections. Embracing "open heart" as her mantra, she practices daily openness with herself and others, trusting that silence and compassion will gently point her in the right direction. Prairiewoods invites encounters that may not offer immediate clarity. Rather, it cultivates practices of openness and trust, encounters less about revelation and more about transformation—a deepening of how to live with love daily.

Experiences of awe in the vast sweep of cosmic time, and the discovery of openhearted presence in silence, express the wide spectrum of spiritual encounters that have touched thousands of lives at Prairiewoods over the past thirty years.

Gratitude from the Foundresses

The founding Franciscan Sisters dreamed of co-creating a retreat center holding ecological spirituality at its center with a living community. Sister Nancy Hoffman, FSPA, put it simply: "It's all about community! We chose a founding mission which would foster God's plan for transformation of all creation as one community of love."

Founding board member Sister Lucille Winnike, FSPA, voiced gratitude for "the loyalty and dedication of the community that IS Prairiewoods." From six initial foundresses and a supportive FSPA community, Prairiewoods has welcomed thousands of retreatants and collaborators, including local groups, who share passion for ecological and spiritual vision.

The foundresses collectively state in this anniversary year: "We express a deep sense of gratitude to all who have been so supportive, generous, and committed in responding to us. We are thankful for the thousands who are part of the Prairiewoods community. Thanks to the land and creatures who share their riches. Thanks to the FSPA community for supporting and trusting. Praise and gratitude to a God whose Spirit has guided us all these years."



From left to right: Joann Gehling, Lucille Winnike, and Nancy Hoffman



Looking to the Future

As ecological and spiritual challenges deepen globally, the vision of Prairiewoods' mission is more vital than ever. Retreatants find here a place to breathe, to dream, and to embody what author Judy Cannato described: "What we as human beings envision, what we dream and desire, what we hope for and work toward—all of it affects the universe, all of it has an impact on Earth and every single creature that is." For thirty years, Prairiewoods has helped individuals nurture transformation, revere Creation, and foster the growth of consciousness toward community with all beings.

As our future unfolds, Prairiewoods will continue to welcome seekers, honor the Earth, and celebrate the Spirit that enlivens all. It will remain, in the words of the foundresses, a "community of love"—a place where spiritual encounters flourish, and the Sacred is discovered anew each day.

Sister Joann Gehling, FSPA, one of the founding sisters, captures the heart of this enduring vision: "I hold deep gratitude for the Prairiewoods Board, staff and guests, past and present. We continue to welcome ALL people. 'Joy is a reflection of God's life within us.'" Her blessing reminds us that Prairiewoods' story is ultimately a story of joy—rooted in gratitude, shared in community, and alive in the Spirit that continues to guide this sacred place.



What's been your most powerful spiritual encounter?

What are other ways you can continue to find moments of peace and awe?

Give the Gift of Renewal

Looking for a meaningful gift for your loved ones this holiday season? Give the gift of peace, transformation, and renewal with a gift certificate from Prairiewoods!

Prairiewoods gift certificates are the perfect way to share rest and renewal with someone you love. Certificates can be used for a wide variety of services here at Prairiewoods, including:

- Retreats
- Programs
- Overnight stays
- A Day of Self Renewal
- Healing practices like massage, reflexology, or healing touch
- Spiritual Direction
- Gift shop items

Stop by the Prairiewoods front desk at 120 E Boyson Rd in Hiawatha, Iowa or call 319-395-6700 to give the gift of peace and possibility today!



Retreats

Celebrating the Light of Advent Retreat

Friday, Nov. 14, 6:30 p.m. –
Sunday, Nov. 16, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Jean Sullivan and Ann Jackson PBVM

Spend a quiet weekend anticipating how you might continue to birth light into the world and preparing to enter 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'll honor both the tiniest spark of light within and the roaring blaze of Love that surrounds the world. This retreat will offer a space to slow down amidst the holiday rush and connect with the true meaning of the Advent season.

Fee: \$255 (Includes Friday and Saturday lodging, Saturday BLD; Sunday breakfast and lunch.)

Commuter Fee: \$180 (Includes Saturday lunch & dinner; Sunday lunch.)

Pathways of Peace: Food as Relationship - Winter Table

Friday, Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m. – Saturday, Dec. 14, 4:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Christina Campbell and 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. Utilizing activities such as 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 and foster peace at personal, community and global levels.

Fee: \$175 (Includes Friday lodging and dinner, Saturday breakfast & lunch)

Commuter fee: \$95 (Includes Saturday breakfast & lunch)



Silent Mindfulness Meditation Retreat

Friday, Nov. 6, 6:30 p.m. –
Sunday, Nov. 8, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Chris Klug

Mindfulness is the awareness of what is happening in the present moment. It shapes a wise and compassionate relationship with and response to experiences as they unfold 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."

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.

Lodging 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)

Power of Silence: Mini Silent Directed Retreat

Friday, Jan. 9, 11:00 a.m. – Tuesday, Jan. 13, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Cindy Dunn, Leslie Schwarting, Ann Jackson PBVM, Lucille Winnike FSPA, Joann Gehling, FSPA

Begin the new year in silence and stillness. Silent, directed retreats invite you into deep silence where you can awaken a quiet, living connection with the Source of All Being. Each day, meet with a trained spiritual director who will gently guide you as you listen to the movements of Spirit in your heart.

Silence creates space to notice your thoughts, feelings, and longings, and to reflect, pray, rest, and discern. At Prairiewoods, everything—meals, solitude, reflective practices, and time in nature—supports your journey inward. Optional activities such as yoga, art, and sound meditation deepen your experience, while walks in the prairie or quiet moments at dusk connect you with the presence of creation all around.

This is an invitation to rest, to listen, and to rediscover the healing wisdom of silence. As Carolyn Myss reminds us, *"The soul always knows what to do to heal itself. The challenge is to silence the mind."*

Fee: \$500 (Includes lodging, meals and spiritual direction. Partial scholarship funds are available.)

Retreats

Living with Intention

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Growing an orchid requires more than sunlight and water—it asks for patience, attention, and a quiet kind of devotion. In many ways, living an intentional life is the same. It's not about perfection or productivity; it's about presence. About choosing, again and again, to tend to what matters.

This retreat is an invitation to step away from the noise and return to the rhythm of care—care for yourself, your inner life, and who you want to become. Like the slow unfolding of an orchid bloom, this experience is designed to help you reconnect with your natural pace, your purpose, and your own quiet wisdom.

Together, we'll set intentions for the coming year. Through guided practices, meaningful conversation, body movement, and stillness, you'll begin to nurture the life within you that's been waiting for light.

Pick which option works best for your schedule:

- Friday, Jan. 2, 2026, 6:30 p.m. – Jan. 4, 2026, 11:00 a.m. (Includes 2 overnight stays and all meals - \$255.00)
- Friday, Jan. 2, 2026, 6:30 p.m. – Jan. 4, 2026, 11:00 a.m. (Includes all meals on Saturday, LD, no overnight accommodations - \$195.00)
- Friday, Jan. 2, 2026, 6:30 pm – Jan. 3, 2026, 6:00 p.m. (Includes one night lodging and BLD on Saturday - \$225.00)
- Friday, Jan. 2, 2026, 6:30 p.m. – Jan. 3, 2026, 11:00 a.m. (Includes LD Saturday, no overnight accommodations - \$175.00)

Come as you are. Leave more rooted, more open, and more alive.

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

Friday, Dec 12, 6:30 p.m. – Sunday, Dec. 14, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Catherine Quehl-Engel

In the velvety darkness of winter, the soul and body crave quiet stillness—a season The Sacred offers for rest, repair, incubation, and dreaming. This retreat invites inter-spiritual wisdom and practices drawn from nature, including Winter Element (TCM) Qigong, Taoist and yogic philosophy, and Celtic and Christian mystical traditions.

Together we'll cultivate an "inner monastery," a Soul Shelter where Presence infuses us with Light and peace. Slow, meditative movement, gentle seated practices, Yogic Sleep, and singing bowl sound baths will help to calm the mind, balance the body's energy, and awaken the mysterious life force of Spirit. Lectio Divina, stargazing, optional woodland walks, and listening for dreams and synchronicities deepen this wintertime journey of renewal.

Lodging Fee: \$255 (Includes Friday and Saturday lodging, Saturday BLD; Sunday break fast and lunch)

Commuter Fee: \$180 (Includes Saturday lunch and dinner; Sunday lunch)

Prairiewoods' Holiday Retreat

Friday, Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m. –

Sunday, Dec. 21, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Jean Sullivan, Ann Jackson, PBVM

Need a bit of light-heartedness to shift from the holiday blues? This retreat will offer time for lots of quiet reflection, as well as some holiday laughter and fun such as a collective cookie bake & frost, hot chocolate storytelling by the fire, a luminary walk through the woods, and more! Come gently coax your holiday spirit into joy with a beautiful community of people.

Bring a friend and receive 20% off!

Lodging Fee: \$230 (Includes Friday and Saturday lodging, Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner; Sunday breakfast and lunch.)

Commuter Fee: \$180 (Includes Saturday lunch and dinner; Sunday lunch.)



Keep on the lookout
for our Jan - June 2026
Retreat Brochure
coming soon!

Programs

The Power of the Breath

Saturday, Nov. 1 & Dec. 6
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.



Facilitator: Jodi Isolini;
Unlimited Breath Facilitator

Your breath is the first—and the last—thing you do in life, it holds incredible power to energize, heal, and transform. In this breathwork session, we'll move beyond gentle, meditative breathing into a dynamic practice that enlivens your whole being.

Important information and instructions:

- It is recommended that you do not eat a few hours before class.
- Bring a thick mat, blanket, and a small pillow if you wish.
- Please dress in layers, there may be temperature changes during your session.

Through guided writing, intentional breathing, and flow-based movement, you'll release what no longer serves you, access your subconscious, and awaken your mind, body, and spirit. Benefits may include increased energy, emotional release, greater lung capacity, deeper peace, and a renewed sense of purpose. Come ready to surrender to the breath—and leave feeling transformed.

Fee: \$35 per session

Program Category Key



Creativity



Ecology



Holistic Health



Personal Growth



Prayer



Spirituality

Words Make a Way Inward to the Soul

Saturday, Nov. 1
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 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 truthful, heartfelt, and body-infused words. By writing what we experience and receive from our sacred center, we can continue to receive this sacred sight—absorbing 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 Prarie Woods labyrinth.

Fee: \$40

Breathe Deep: Mindful Breathing for Health, Spirit, and Earth



Tuesday, Oct. 28, Nov. 4, Nov. 11, Nov. 18
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Julio Vera and Ann Jackson PBVM

Are you eager to learn about how your breath impacts your health? Different methods of breathing can impact blood pressure, anxiety, fear, confidence, and digestion. Join us for this gentle program that invites you to slow down, breathe with intention, and reconnect with the calm and healing within. Each breath becomes prayer, presence, and communion with Earth.

Fee: \$75 for all four sessions

Dream Group

Wednesday, Nov. 5, Dec. 3, Jan. 7, Feb. 4, Mar. 4, Apr. 1, May 6
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Karen Sindelar

Dreams can open you into your inner landscape and help you to grow spiritually. Working and playing with your dreams can bring transformation and inner healing. As a participant in this monthly Dream Group, you will be exposed to a Jungian approach to deciphering your dreams.

In this Dream Group, we will be working with dreams individually and in a group setting. The book *Dream Wise: Unlocking the Meaning of Your Dreams* by Marchiano, Stewart and Lee will guide our discussions.

Fee: \$175 (or \$25 per class)

The Energetic Power of Words

Tuesday, Nov. 4
5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.



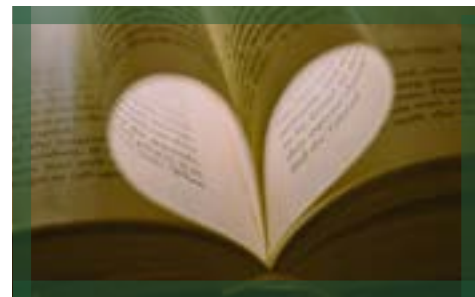
Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

Our words shape the world around us—and within us. In this uplifting program, we'll explore how language carries energy, influences our emotions, and impacts those we encounter.

Together, we'll learn to recognize the power in what we speak, discover positive words that bring life and light, and practice using them with intention.

Join us as we transform everyday language into a tool for encouragement, connection, and hope!

Fee: \$35 (includes dinner & program)



Book Study Invitation: The Good Death, by Suzanne B. O'Brien (Zoom)



Wednesday, Nov. 5,
Nov. 19, Dec. 3
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Joyce Janca, of the
Death Collective of Eastern Iowa

You are warmly invited to join a book study on *The Good Death: Supporting Your Loved One through the End of Life* by Suzanne B. O'Brien. Together, we'll hold space for tender conversations about love, presence, and compassion at life's sacred threshold.

Come as you are—whether curious, grieving, or simply seeking wisdom — and find companionship in this meaningful exploration.

Fee: \$20 for the series

Day of Self Renewal

Thursday, Nov. 6 & Dec. 4
Monday, Nov. 10 & Dec. 8



Facilitator: 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))

Ash Wood Splint Ornament Class

Saturday, Nov. 15
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

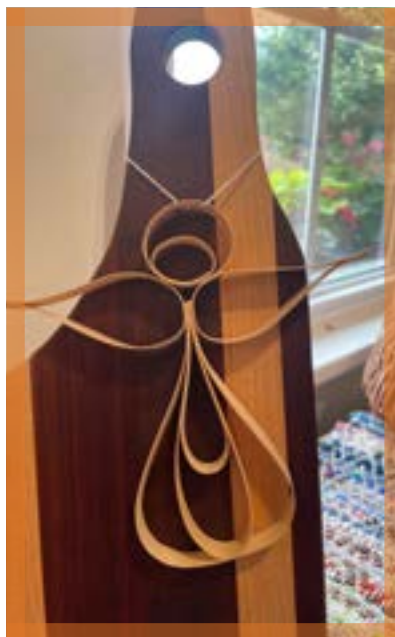


Facilitator: Molly Kephart

Discover the beauty and tradition of working with ash wood in this hands-on class. Using natural ash wood splints, you'll learn traditional weaving techniques to create unique, handcrafted ornaments perfect for holiday décor, gifting, or adding a natural touch to your home.

Guided by an Amana based artisan, explore the history of ash wood weaving, practice basic shaping and binding skills, and leave with three beautiful ornaments you made yourself. All materials are provided, and no experience is necessary—just bring your creativity and a willingness to work with your hands.

Fee: \$35



Labyrinth Walk



Nov. 7
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Leslie Wright
New Location: Groundswell Cafe

Walk the indoor labyrinth with us! Labyrinths have been around for thousands of years, its circle and the path are symbols found across cultures and religious traditions. To enter a labyrinth is to choose to walk a spiritual path. All are welcome and no experience is required.

The three phases of the meditative spiritual journey include:

- **Releasing:** Let go, quiet your mind.
- **Receiving:** Open your heart, be still and linger. Take a deep breath. Receive what is there for you.
- **Returning:** Move back out into the world, more replenished, grounded, and empowered. Bring your new insights and discoveries out into the world

Fee: Free

Programs

Let Your Heartbreak Be your Guide: Lessons in Engaged Contemplation



Tuesday, Oct. 28, Nov. 11,
Nov. 25, Dec. 9
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Kim Novak

In this four session study, we'll 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.

Explore the intersection of spiritual growth, transformation, and social justice using contemplative practice, study, and reflection. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome!

Fee: \$25 for series

Living Together in Community: Adventuring with Pooh & Friends (Zoom)

Tuesday, Jan. 13,
Jan. 20, Jan. 27, Feb. 3
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.



Facilitators: Maggie Lears and Donna Mollenkopf (in partnership with Well for the Journey Retreat Center)

Glean wisdom on living better together as we journey with Pooh and his friends. Each week, we'll read from A.A. Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh to see how these delightful stories connect with our own. We'll also draw from Benjamin Hoff's *The Tao of Pooh*, exploring wisdom and quotes from the *Tao Te Ching*, an ancient Chinese spiritual text.

Weekly themes include uniqueness, friendship, getting unstuck, time for reflection, moving out of gloominess, and doing small things with great love.

Fee: \$125 for series

On-going Programs

Metta Yoga

Mondays, 9:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.
Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.
Facilitator: Heather English
Fee: \$120 for 11 classes, \$72 for 6 classes, \$15 for single class

Meditation at Prairiewoods (MAP)

Mondays, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Jean Sullivan
Fee: Suggested donation of \$5

Go Deeper Thursday (Zoom)

Thursdays, 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Ellen Bruckner
Fee: Free-will offering

Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony

Saturday, Nov. 1 & Dec. 6
4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Kerry Batteau
Fee: Suggested donation of \$10

Going Inward With Sounds & Vibrations

Monday, Nov. 3 & 17, Dec. 1 & 15
6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer
Fee: \$12 per session

Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (Zoom)

Wednesday, Nov. 5 & Dec. 3
6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Steve Sovern
Fee: Free-will offering

Forest Bathing with the Full Moon

Wednesday, Nov. 5, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 4, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Emelia Sautter
Fee: \$25

Day of Self Renewal

Thursday, Nov. 6 & Dec. 4
Monday, Nov. 10 & Dec. 8
Facilitator: Jean Sullivan
Fee: \$110 (or \$95 without a private guest room)

Into the Oneness: Qigong for Energy, Equanimity & Peace

Thursday, Nov. 6 & Dec. 4
12:45 p.m. - 1:35 p.m.
Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel
Fee: \$12

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep

Thursday, Nov. 6 & Dec. 4
1:45-2:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel
Fee: \$10

Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton (Zoom)

Thursday, Nov. 6 & 20, Dec. 4 & 18
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Carole Butz
Fee: Free-will offering

Drum Circle & Guided Imagery

Sunday, Nov. 9 & Dec. 7
2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Drum Iowa
Fee: Suggested donation of \$15 (but free for all to enjoy)

Singing Bowl Prayer

Monday, Nov. 10 & Dec. 8
12:45 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer
Fee: \$10

Nature & Forest Therapy Experience

Monday, Nov. 10 & Dec. 8
2:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.
Facilitator: Emelia Sautter
Fee: \$20

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers

Tuesday, Nov. 11 & Dec. 9
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Facilitator: Participants
Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer

Tuesday, Nov. 11 & 25, Dec. 9 & 23
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Judith Smith
Fee: Free-will offering

Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Group for Children

Wednesday, Nov. 12 & Dec. 10
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW
Fee: Free

Men Exploring Faith (Hybrid)

Thursday, Nov. 13 & Dec. 11
4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Linzy Martin
Fee: Free-will offering

LovingKindness Meditation Practice (Hybrid)

Saturday, Nov. 15
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Facilitator: Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA
Fee: \$10

Awaken Your Creativity Through Watercolor

Tuesday, Nov. 18
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Facilitator: Barb Thompson
Fee: \$50 per class

Sacred Listening Through Mental Illness

Tuesday, Nov. 18 & Dec. 16
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Tracy Lees
Fee: Free-will offering

Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Group for Adults

Wednesday, Nov. 19 & Dec. 17
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW
Fee: Free

YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option)

Wednesday, Nov. 19 & Dec. 17
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Prairiewoods Chefs
Fee: \$15

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

Harvesting Sun and Soil: Agrivoltaics in Action at Prairiewoods

What do you get when you combine agriculture and solar farming? The answer is Agri-voltaics! Agrivoltaics is a common worldwide practice and is a great way to utilize land under and around solar arrays by growing shade tolerant fruits and vegetables, native plants or hosting grazing livestock. Prairiewoods has taken on this practice under our oldest solar array by starting a vegetable garden to supplement and test different types of produce than what our permaculture food pantry garden currently provides.

With the help of our dedicated volunteer, Gina Sison, we were able to grow a diverse group of veggies, including pattypan squash, tromboncino squash, cherry tomatoes, dragon tongue beans, celery, carrots, broccoli, cucumbers, ginger, peas, turnips, peppers, a variety of greens and herbs, and mushrooms such as lion's mane, shitake, and yellow oyster. Flowering plants like strawflowers, snapdragons, marigolds, nasturtiums, and sweet alyssum were also included to attract pollinators and beneficial insects to the garden.



With this being a new practice to us we were sure to do some research, and in our project planning we found that many common vegetables would tolerate this mostly shaded area. In fact, we think the shade helped them thrive and not become over heated. The solar arrays themselves benefit from the cooling effect of transpiration from the live plants, helping them to operate more efficiently. Most of the vegetables and flowers planted in spring were started using heat mats and grow lights inside the adjacent I-Renew building, which uses the power generated from the solar panels. To minimize the use of plastics, we used soil blocks on stainless steel trays to start our seeds. It has gone so well, we have plans to expand out from underneath the array and into a mowed area next spring, maximizing the space the land offers.

Sustainability and land stewardship have always been a big part of Prairiewoods' philosophy and land ethic. Whether it's the straw bale hermitages, a solar water heater, permeable pavers, insulation berms, catchment ponds, permaculture food forests, or a gravel bed tree nursery, Prairiewoods has always been at the forefront of sustainable building and land practices. With this in mind, we wanted to share an example of what is possible with this agrivoltaics project. We are encouraged by the strong yield and harvests that are contributing to putting nutritious ingredients on guests' plates and we love the positive feedback from our admiring visitors. It is also exciting to see how our talented chefs are able to make tasty recipes using lesser known produce such as tromboncino and patty pan squash.

Our 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.



Prairiewoods
FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

The Prairiewoods staff collaborates to publish this newsletter bimonthly. Content, except where otherwise noted, is created by our staff to offer a uniquely Prairiewoods perspective. Please address all correspondence to:

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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:



Prairiewoods Holiday Bazaar



Saturday, November 22
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Join Prairiewoods for our annual Holiday Bazaar, where you'll find dozens of handcrafted items from local vendors. These include:

- Monastery chocolates & candy
- One-of-a-kind jewelry, wood crafts, and pottery
- Handmade soaps and lotions
- Hand-knit hats, mittens, and blankets
- Holiday wreaths
- And so much more!

Prairiewoods will also be selling gift shop items and gift certificates that would make the perfect present for your loved ones this holiday season!

Don't miss your chance to shop handcrafted goods from local vendors at Prairiewoods!

