



Prairiewoods

January - August 2026

Retreats Brochure





Prairiewoods

SPIRITUALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

This Spring, we welcome you to the land at Prairiewoods for our Annual Spirituality in the 21st Century Event. Join us for the full weekend, or a day to re-ground in the Sacred Wild.

Throughout this time, we will be able to:

- Encounter land, creatures, presences, of the more-than-human world.
- Explore how such experience connects with our hearts, faith/spirituality, the Divine
- Learn to see the world with new eyes, with new hearts, as dwelling places of the Divine
- Consider and honor the sacredness of all that is: the re-enchantment of the world
- Participate in indoor and outdoor ritual/spiritual practice
- Connect with others in discussion and contemplative presence

Loving the Wild: Earth-Centering Our Spirituality

The Rev. Dr. Lisa E. Dahill is Miriam Therese Winter Professor of Transformative Leadership and Spirituality and Director of the Center for Transformative Spirituality at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace.

Her research interests center on the expansion of spiritual, ritual, and contemplative practices to encompass place-based approaches and the inter- and multi-species relationships that comprise our human lives on Earth. She has published, lectured, and led programming in both Christian and interreligious contexts exploring these questions and is also an internationally noted scholar of the legacy and writings of Holocaust theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Dr. Dahill is a passionate cyclist, hiker, gardener, and eco-nerd who delights in living close to Earth, its holiness and creatures.



Join us for the weekend or a single day.

Friday, May 15 – Sunday, May 17

Visit Prairiewoods.org for more info!





Living with Intention (Jan. 2026)

Friday, Jan. 2, 6:30 p.m. —

Sunday, Jan. 4, 11:00 a.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Schwarting

How are you showing up in this life? Are you existing, or are you LIVING? We will discuss living with intention and participate in mindfulness group practices and body movement



activities, which will lead us into a short exploration of our mindset and heart's calling in the New Year.

Rest & quiet will be plentiful, including a Centering Prayer activity and indoor labyrinth walk while contemplating our intentions for 2026. We'll also engage in a beading practice during which you'll create an "Intention catcher" as a reminder of your intentions for the year ahead. This retreat offers dedicated time to prepare for and enter the new year with clarity and peace.

Fee: \$255 (Includes sessions, lodging, & all meals)

Commuter Fee: \$195 (Includes Saturday lunch and dinner, & Sunday lunch)

Or join us for a shorter duration:

Friday, Jan. 2, 6:00 p.m. —

Saturday, Jan. 3, 4:00 p.m.

Fee: \$225.00 (Includes 1 night of lodging)

Friday/Saturday Commuter Fee: \$175.00

Please contact the office for these options.

Power of Silence: Mini Silent Direct Retreat (Jan. 2026)

Friday, Jan. 9, 11:00 a.m. —

Tuesday, Jan. 13, 1:00 p.m.

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

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



Pathways of Peace: Re-enchanting Our Relationship With Food (Apr. 2026)

Friday, Apr. 24, 6:30 p.m. —

Sunday, Apr. 26, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Christina Campbell, Mariah Andrews, Ann Jackson PBVM

What if eating was less about rules and more about relationship—with ourselves, each other, Earth, and the Source of All Being? This retreat invites you to rediscover food as a pathway to peace and planetary connection. Through shared meals, reflection, and practices rooted in both science and spirituality, we will:



- Explore wisdom from nutrition, physiology, and earth-honoring traditions
- Reflect on how food choices connect us to the web of life
- Create practices of "food peace" that nurture health, harmony, and wholeness

Guided by dietitian Christina Campbell, plant-based innovator Mariah Andrews, and eco-spiritual facilitator Ann Jackson, PBVM, this retreat offers an inspiring, community-centered experience where food nourishes body, spirit, and Earth.

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

Commuter: \$195 (Includes retreat content, Saturday lunch and dinner, Sunday lunch)



In the Belly: Celebrating the Creativity of Celtic Imbolc & Saint Brigid's Day (Jan. 2026)

Saturday, Jan. 31, 4:00 p.m. —

Sunday, Feb. 1, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Angie Pierce Jennings

Imbolc, the Celtic festival of “first stirrings,” falls at the halfway point between Winter and Spring. It is a season of promise and creativity, honoring the fertility of the earth and the gifts of Saint Brigid—healer, poet, peacemaker, and patron of fire, water, and hospitality. As we gather in this sacred time, we will connect with the land, deepen our creativity, and honor Brigid's spirit of renewal and peace.



Retreatant experiences include:

- Visio, Lectio, and Audio Divina—engaging with art, poetry, music, and prayer inspired by Brigid
- Embodied walking prayer—connecting with the land during Imbolc's first stirrings of Spring
- Spiritual art journaling—a creative practice of reflection and integration
- Weaving Saint Brigid cross—a traditional act of blessing and creativity
- Global Pause for Peace—joining people worldwide in a moment of prayerful stillness on St. Brigid's Day

Fee: \$175 (Includes overnight lodging, Saturday dinner; Sun. breakfast and lunch)

Commuter Fee: \$100 (Includes Saturday dinner; Sunday lunch)

Awakening Awareness of Energy Retreat (Feb. 2026)

Friday, Feb. 20, 6:30 p.m. —

Sunday, Feb. 22, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Tammy Bayer & Ann Jackson, PBVM

This experiential retreat invites women of all ages into a deeper awareness of the body's energies. Through guided meditation, reflection, and embodied practices, participants will explore how the integration of mind, body, and spirit can restore wholeness and awaken possibility. Drawing on diverse sources of wisdom, this retreat offers space to gently move through past experiences, rest in the present moment, and open to new potential.



Retreatants will experience:

- Guided practices for engaging and balancing the body's seven energy centers
- Meditative tools to cultivate presence, healing, and resilience
- Insights from both scientific and spiritual perspectives on life stages and energy flow
- Opportunities for self-reflection and integration of past experiences
- A supportive circle of women sharing in the journey of wholeness

Fee: \$255 (Includes sessions, lodging, and all meals)

Commuter Fee: \$195 (Includes Saturday lunch and dinner, and Sunday lunch)

Formed & Restored: A Journey Through Clay and Kintsugi (Feb. 2026)

Friday, Feb. 27, 6:30 p.m. —

Saturday, Feb. 28, 4:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Pat Soyer & Leslie Schwarting

Step into a sacred space of creativity and renewal where art becomes a mirror of the soul.

We will begin at the pottery wheel—hands in the clay, hearts open. Here, we contemplate the potter and clay metaphor. Through shaping and molding, you'll engage in a tactile meditation on the ways we are formed—by life, by love, by challenge, and by grace. As the wheel turns, so too does the invitation to reflect on your own journey of becoming: the pressure that shapes, the water that softens, and the hands that hold you steady.



Enter the ancient Japanese art of Kintsugi, where cracked pottery is repaired with gold. Rather than hiding the breaks, Kintsugi honors them, illuminating the beauty of restoration. Through this sacred practice, you will explore your own places of fracture — the losses, wounds, and imperfections — and begin to see how they, too, can be filled with light.

This retreat is a space to remember: You are not discarded. You are not defined by your brokenness. You are being made new — more beautiful, more whole, and more true than before.

Come. Be shaped. Be mended. Be transformed.

Fee: \$225 (Includes supplies, Saturday meals and overnight stay)

Commuter Fee: \$175 (Includes supplies & Saturday lunch)



Winter & Spring Retreats

Vocal Empowerment: Reclaim Your Voice, Reclaim Your Self Retreat (Feb. 2026)

Friday, Feb. 27, 6:30 p.m. – Sunday, Mar. 1, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Mary Jane Knight

Awaken the power of your voice. If the thought of using your voice feels intimidating, this retreat may be exactly what your heart is longing for. Join us for a transformative, heart-centered journey into the healing power of sound and the human voice. Together we'll explore how the voice can express truth, soothe the nervous system, and awaken vibrations that foster balance, connection, and joy.



This retreat is especially meaningful for those who feel hesitant to sing or speak, who have felt frustrated with their voice, or who long to embrace its beauty and strength.

The retreat begins with an intimate acoustic concert by Mary Jane Knight, featuring songs from her debut album *Rising Free*. On Saturday and Sunday, we'll dive into practices of sound, vibration, vocal meditation, and communal singing—inviting healing, empowerment, and deep connection.

You'll leave with renewed confidence, celebrating the dignity, power, and unique beauty of your own voice.

Fee: \$255 (Includes Friday and Saturday lodging, All meals on Saturday; Sunday breakfast, lunch)

Commuter Fee: \$195 (Includes Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner)

Dream Work: A Portal to the Divine (Mar. 2026)

Friday, Mar. 13, 6:30 p.m. – Sunday, Mar. 15, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Allen Proctor

This retreat invites you into the transformative journey of becoming your truest self through the wisdom of your dreams. Many seek spiritual companionship to deepen self-knowledge and strengthen their connection with the Divine—and dream work offers a powerful way forward.

During this retreat, retreatants will:

- Be introduced to projective dream work as a tool for inner exploration,
- Explore the use of archetypes and symbols in translating dream messages
- Engage in creative practices and imagery to access deeper layers of meaning,
- Discover how dream work supports spiritual growth and individuation—the lifelong process of becoming who you truly are.



You may come away with a renewed sense of clarity, deeper connection with the Divine, and practical tools for weaving the wisdom of your dreams into your waking life.

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

Commuter Fee: \$195 (Includes sessions, Saturday lunch, dinner; Sunday lunch)

Addiction, Recovery and the Spiritual Journey (Mar. 2026)

Friday, Mar. 27, 6:30 p.m. – Sunday, Mar. 29, 11:00 a.m.

Facilitators: Paul Witmer & Dick Jensen

“Sought through Prayer and Meditation to improve our conscious contact with God . . .” Step 11, Alcoholics Anonymous.

Come join us for a weekend meditation retreat to improve your conscious contact with God. We will explore many dimensions of 12-step recovery, with a particular focus on deepening our spiritual path.



If you are new to meditation, you will be given some guidance and introduction to Centering Prayer, a silent meditation practice in the Christian Contemplative tradition. Many people in recovery have found profound healing and growth through Centering Prayer as an 11th Step practice

The retreat will include some introduction and review of the method of Centering Prayer with special attention to adapting Centering Prayer as an 11th step practice. Our time together will include several group meditation sessions throughout the weekend.

In addition, there will be some teaching sessions on the dynamics of recovery and the spiritual journey. And of course, there will be ample time to explore the lovely grounds of the Prairiewoods property.

Fee: \$255 (Includes sessions, lodging, and all meals.)

Commuter Fee: \$195 (Includes sessions, Saturday lunch and dinner, and Sunday lunch.)

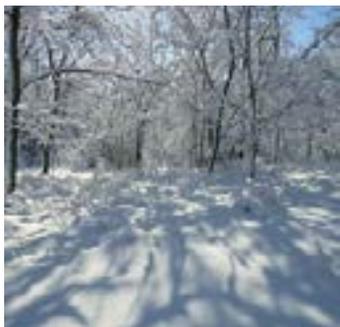


Pause, Rest, Be: A Bilingual Retreat in Spanish & English (Apr. 2026)

Friday, Apr. 10, 6:30 p.m. —
Saturday, Apr. 12, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Julie Bradley, Ann Jackson PBVM

Winter invites us to slow down, breathe deeply, and honor what is stirring within. In the quiet of this season, stillness and silence can awaken the body's wisdom and guide us toward balance.



During this bilingual retreat offered in both Spanish and English, participants will gather in community a few times to practice mindful presence, gentle embodiment, and shared silence—discovering rhythms that can be carried into daily life.

Between these group sessions and nourishing meals, you'll be encouraged to create spaciousness for your own practice of pausing, resting, and simply being. To deepen the journey, you may choose to experience one-on-one spiritual direction or restorative bodywork, such as massage, healing touch, or reflexology.

Guided by Octavia F. Raheem's *Pause Rest Be: Stillness Practices for Courage in Times of Change*, this retreat offers a sanctuary to cultivate courage, clarity, and calm amid life's transitions.

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

Commuter Fee: \$195 (Includes sessions, Saturday lunch and dinner and Sunday lunch)

Resilience & Renewal: A Retreat for Strengthening the Mind & Spirit (Apr. 2026)

Friday, Apr. 17, 6:30 p.m. —
Sunday, Apr. 19, 12:00 p.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 our needs
- 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)

Qigong and Tai Chi Basics: Finding Balance and Well-Being at the Confluence of Body, Breath and Mind (May 2026)

Friday, May 1, 6:30 p.m. —
Sunday, May 3, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Gerry Hopkins

Qigong consists of various Chinese therapeutic exercises designed to align body, breath, and mind in a manner that brings about optimal health as well as physical and emotional balance.



Tai Chi is a Chinese martial art usually done in a slow, dance-like manner designed to train our ability to maintain balance and composure when challenged. Research suggests that regular Tai Chi practice can improve strength and balance, reinforce respiratory, cardiovascular and immune systems, sharpen the mind, and reduce stress.

In the retreat you will learn a Qigong set and some fundamental Tai Chi movements. Handouts and access to a video will be made available to participants. There will also be a brief overview of how Chinese medicine and philosophy inform Qigong and Tai Chi, as well as a short introduction to standing, seated, and lying meditation. In addition, several Chinese teas will be made available to sample over the weekend.

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

Commuter Fee: \$195 (Includes Saturday lunch, dinner; Saturday lunch.)



Power of Silence: Silent Directed Retreats (Summer 2026)

Sunday, May 31, 4:00 p.m. –

Saturday, Jun. 6, 4:00 p.m.

and

Sunday, Jul. 19, 4:00 p.m. –

Saturday, Jul. 25, 4:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Lucille Winnike FSPA, Leslie Schwarting, Cindy Dunn (June only), Ann Jackson PBVM

Have you ever wondered what it feels like to truly rest in silence? This is your invitation to step into deep quiet and reconnect with the Source of All Being.



Each day, you'll meet with a trained spiritual director who will accompany you in listening for the Spirit moving in your heart. Silence becomes a sacred teacher—awakening clarity, deepening discernment, and renewing your sense of direction in life.

At Prairiewoods, the entire rhythm of retreat is designed to support your experience: reflective meals, spacious time for rest, optional practices like yoga, art, or singing bowl meditation, and the beauty of woods and prairie that invite you to walk, journal, or simply be.

Come and discover that silence is not only the absence of noise, but a presence that restores, surprises, and heals. Re-establish your deep connection with the Divine and all creation in the embrace of the Great Silence.

Fee: \$625 (Includes includes lodging, meals and six sessions of spiritual direction. Partial scholarship funds are available.)

Joyful Teaching: Cultivating Joy through Mindfulness and Social Emotional Behavior Support (Jun. 2026)

Course 1: Monday, Jun. 22, 1:00 p.m. –

Wednesday, Jun. 24, 1:00 p.m.

Course 2: Wednesday, Jun. 24. 1:00 p.m. –

Friday, Jun. 26, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Sarah Montgomery and Ann Jackson PBVM



Bring More Joy to Your Teaching & Life! Are you ready to feel more joy in your daily life and in your classroom? Join us for courses designed for educators, administrators, school staff, that weave together mindfulness, social-emotional behavior support, self-compassion, and neuroscience to help you:

- Reduce stress and re-center with simple, practical strategies
- Build resilience, curiosity, and hope in yourself and your students
- Explore mindful movement, nature-based practices, gratitude, and more
- Connect with fellow educators in a retreat-like environment

These courses combine research-based theory with hands-on practices. Optional extras like yoga, tai chi, massage, and sound healing are also available.

Textbooks are included, and overnight lodging is encouraged for full renewal.

Fee: \$120 (Overnight stays available for additional cost.)

Searching for Home: Merton & Berry in Conversation (Aug. 2026)

Friday, Aug. 7, 6:30 p.m. –

Sunday, Aug. 9, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Judith Valente and Carol Lenox

Thomas Merton spent a lifetime searching for a physical and spiritual home. While he found some sense of it at Gethsemani, his searching continued even to the abrupt end of his life. Still, Merton had an uncanny ability to sense the divine in whatever landscape or environment he was in.



Thomas Berry spent his later years trying to lead us home, recognizing that our true home is found not in some spiritual realm, but on Earth within the larger context of a Universe infused with the Divine.



Where Merton spoke of discovering the True Self, Berry spoke of the “small self” (the individual ‘I’) and the “Great Self” interconnected with the unfolding Universe. Berry, like Merton, believed it is through the Earth community that we discover both our genuine self and the divine.

Retreatants will:

- Explore both the writings of Merton and Berry in conversation,
- Reflect on what it means to find home and how our own sense of home and place affects our lives,
- Consider both the spiritual and physical aspects of home and how they necessarily co-exist.

Fee: \$255 (Includes sessions, lodging, and all meals.)

Commuter Fee: \$195 (Includes sessions, Saturday lunch and dinner, and Sunday lunch.)



Prairiewoods' 30th Anniversary Retreat: We Are Each Other's Light

For three decades, Prairiewoods has been a refuge where people, prairie, woods, and Spirit meet in wonder and awe. Now— together with the winged and finned ones, foxes and oaks, prairie grasses and butterflies—we joyfully mark this milestone with a special retreat, *We Are Each Other's Light*, guided by musicians and retreat facilitators, Sara Thomsen and retreat facilitator Paula Pedersen.

Come be nourished by the land, inspired by song, and renewed in hope. Through soul-stirring music, storytelling, silence, and community, we'll celebrate. We stand in wonder and awe at the breathtaking beauty all around us. At the same time, we stand in disbelief, despair, heartbreak at all that is broken. Song and singing hews a home to hold both the wonder and the despair. This retreat with song will paint a path of persistence, dance us into daring, awaken us to wonder. You will depart with a strengthened tenacity as tender as it is tough. Beauty will follow you home.

The rhythm of this retreat will include group sessions enriched with song and reflection, spacious time for contemplative practices, and moments to simply be with the sacred land of Prairiewoods. Whether you are part of Prairiewoods' founding story or are just now finding your way here, you are warmly invited to join this circle of gratitude and visioning. Together—with humans and more-than-humans alike—we will honor 30 years of rootedness and dream forward as each other's light.



Sunday, July 5, 4:00 p.m. —
Friday, July 10, 1:00 p.m.

With Musician & Retreat Guide
Sara Thomsen and Paula Pedersen





More Summer Retreats

Becoming the Elder Tree: Purpose in the Second Half of Life (Aug. 2026)

Friday, Aug. 14, 6:30 p.m. –

Sunday, Aug. 16, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Thomas Dean and Chris Johnson

This retreat offers opportunity to reflect on what it means to grow into the “second half of life” with authenticity, purpose, and deep connection. Together we’ll explore the sacred calling of an elder—not defined by age, but by the capacity to embody wisdom, vision, and wholeness in ways that nurture both self and community.



Drawing inspiration from ecologist Suzanne Simard’s work on the cooperative intelligence of forests, we will consider how we, too, can become like “elder trees”—sharing nourishment, guidance, and resilience for the flourishing of the whole. Prairiewoods’ own Grandmother Oak will serve as our living companion and symbol of strength throughout the weekend.

This retreat will provide safe, supportive space for reflection, listening, and authentic sharing. Participants will experience practices that encourage clarity of purpose, deeper connection with self and others, and renewed courage to live and give from the heart.

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

Commuter Fee: \$195 (Includes sessions, Saturday lunch and dinner, and Sunday lunch.)

Active Hope for Troubling Times (Aug. 2026)

Friday, Aug. 21, 6:30 p.m. –

Sunday, Aug. 23, 3:00 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: \$195 (Includes sessions, Saturday lunch and dinner, and Sunday lunch)

Other Retreats (2026)

Prairiewoods also offers retreats tailored to your needs and provides you with the most meaningful experience.

A **directed retreat** provides extended time for prayer, solitude and quiet. According to your preference, a daily one-on-one meeting with a spiritual director is provided. Retreatants enjoy comfortable guest rooms or hermitages and meals in quiet areas.



Directed retreat lengths are flexible and can be scheduled throughout the year.

Private retreats accommodate individuals who desire time alone to pray and reflect using their own spiritual resources. Retreatants enjoy a comfortable guest room and meals in the quiet areas of the spirituality center or the solitude of the hermitage. You may schedule private retreats any time throughout the year.

For **groups or organizations**, the Prairiewoods staff can help create, guide and facilitate quiet time, activities and space during Days of Prayer and Renewal. These retreats provide time for private prayer, reflection and group dialogue.

Or come for a **day of quiet and personal prayer**. You will enjoy a room at the Guest House to use for rest and relaxation during this day stay. If desired, arrangements can be made for you to meet with a spiritual director or holistic health practitioner.

Two hermitages are also available for those who seek the solitude and peace of the woods.

For more information on any of the retreat types listed here, contact Ann Jackson, PBVM, at 319-395-6700, ext. 203, or ajackson@prairiewoods.org.



Meet Our Facilitators

Allen Proctor

is a Presbyterian minister, spiritual director and dreamwork facilitator and the Director of the Haden Institute. Allen works with others to explore questions of identity, relationships, vocation and meaning, using Dream Work, the Enneagram, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, meditation practices and creation spirituality.



Angie Pierce Jennings

M.A. Religion, M.A. Psychology, brings her deep connection to Celtic spirituality and lived experience from pilgrimages to Ireland, including visits to Kildare—the site of Brigid’s ancient monastery. Angie previously served at Prairiewoods as Hosted Groups & Hospitality Coordinator and has facilitated numerous programs weaving together spirituality, creativity, and Celtic wisdom.



Ann Jackson, PBVM

is Prairiewoods’ coordinator of spiritual services. Blending love of nature, literature, leadership and spirituality, Ann delights in listening with others to the energy of Spirit stirring creativity, passion, discernment and service. Certified as a Mindfulness Meditation teacher with Jack Kornfield and Tara Brach, Ann enjoys offering spiritual direction, mindfulness meditation and facilitation to individuals and groups.



Carol Lenox

works as an environmental researcher in North Carolina. She holds a Masters of Pastoral Studies from Loyola University New Orleans.





Meet Our Facilitators

Dr. Chris Johnson

has nearly 30 years of experience in teaching, speaking, coaching, and facilitating retreats 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.



Christina Campbell

is a dietitian and professor at Iowa State University. She studies how lifestyle choices during pregnancy affect the health of mothers and babies, and how our food choices can promote peace and well-being. Christina also teaches clinical nutrition and sustainable food systems, weaving together science, practice, and a vision for a healthier and just world.

Cindy Dunn

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.



Dick Jensen

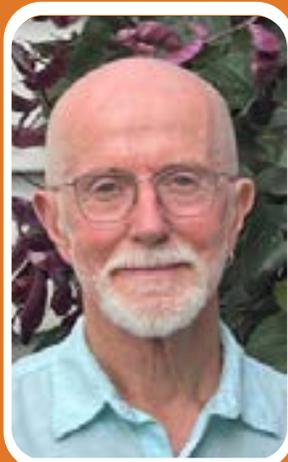
is a commissioned presenter of Centering Prayer and has decades of experience in recovery.



Meet Our Facilitators

Gerry Hopkins

has been practicing martial arts for 40 years. For almost 30 years he's had the good fortune to learn from a number of skilled Qigong and Tai Chi teachers. He has been teaching Qigong and Tai Chi in the Cedar Rapids area for 22 years.



Rev. Jean Sullivan

serves as Prairiewoods' Coordinator for Community Outreach, Engagement and Hospitality, welcoming groups that come to Prairiewoods to enjoy beautiful spaces, wonderful food and the great outdoors! With a bachelor's degree in medical anthropology, a master of divinity 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.

Judith Valente

is a journalist, the author of several spirituality titles and a poet. She guides frequent retreats for busy professionals and is the 2023-25 President of the ITMS.



Julie Bradley

brings decades of experience as an educator across the U.S., Central and South America, and Southeast Asia. Her cross-cultural journey has deepened her appreciation for the growth that blossoms when we open ourselves to new perspectives. With certifications in yoga and Mindfulness, she weaves self-awareness, authenticity, and connection into her teaching. Julie is passionate about offering tools for presence, resilience, and recognizing our deep interconnectedness.





Meet Our Facilitators



Leslie Schwarting

Leslie 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.

Kathleen Rude

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.



Mariah Andrews

is Prairiewoods' Food Service Coordinator and a plant-based innovator and author. Her commitment to offer food that is rooted in connection – to the land, to the seasons and to each other inspired her cookbook, "Plantiful Pantry." You can download the ecookbook at www.theplantifulpantry.com

Lucille Winnike, FSPA

ministers as a retreat director and spiritual director. Earlier ministries include teaching and administration in Catholic schools, as well as administration within her community. 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.





Meet Our Facilitators



Mary Jane Knight

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.

Pat Soyer

Pat Soyer is a long-time friend of Prairiewoods, a potter, and a retreat leader. Throughout his adult life, he has led retreats for lay formation, youth, and families as an expression of his deep faith. When not working, Patrick enjoys pottery as a way to ground himself, and he participates in drum circles and sweat lodges at Prairiewoods. He is married and the proud father of three grown children.



Paul Witmer

is a commissioned presenter of the method of Centering Prayer and has many hours of training in Trauma Sensitive Mindfulness which enables him to introduce several adaptations to Centering Prayer that can be helpful for survivors of trauma.

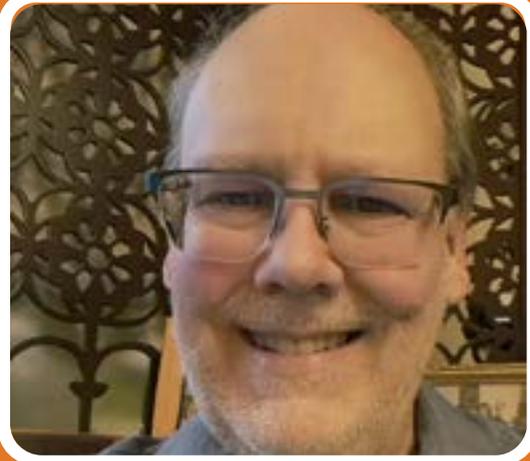
Paula Pedersen

retired in 2020 from a 30 year career at UMD, as psychology faculty and Director of Education for Inclusive Excellence. Paula is also an interculturalist and consultant to educational and leadership groups seeking self-awareness and strategies toward intercultural effectiveness. Paula strives to facilitate understanding of the complexity of multiple perspectives, whether singing, teaching, training or tending her garden.





Meet Our Facilitators



Dr. Thomas Dean

is a Circle of Trust® facilitator-in-preparation 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.

Dr. Sarah Montgomery

is a professor of education at Wartburg College. She is a former elementary teacher and Certified Mindfulness Educator who has 20 years of experience in teacher education. Sarah enjoys supporting educators using mindfulness, social emotional behavior support, and restorative practices to create classrooms rooted in connection and care.



Sara Thomsen

is a singer-songwriter and recording artist from the Duluth/Superior area. Increasing wonder and awareness, deepening connection, and widening engagement through song is at the heart of her work. Sara's ability to get people singing magically transforms gatherings into communities empowered with possibility.



Tammy Bayer

is a life-long educator, yoga instructor, energy healer and natural practitioner. She enjoys keeping classes and workshops informative and emotionally enriching. Tammy also enjoys walking with, connecting to, and empowering women of all ages.



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Mary Jane Knight

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.

Pat Soyer

Pat Soyer is a long-time friend of Prairiewoods, a potter, and a retreat leader. Throughout his adult life, he has led retreats for lay formation, youth, and families as an expression of his deep faith. When not working, Patrick enjoys pottery as a way to ground himself, and he participates in drum circles and sweat lodges at Prairiewoods. He is married and the proud father of three grown children.



Paul Witmer

is a commissioned presenter of the method of Centering Prayer and has many hours of training in Trauma Sensitive Mindfulness which enables him to introduce several adaptations to Centering Prayer that can be helpful for survivors of trauma.

Paula Pedersen

retired in 2020 from a 30 year career at UMD, as psychology faculty and Director of Education for Inclusive Excellence. Paula is also an interculturalist and consultant to educational and leadership groups seeking self-awareness and strategies toward intercultural effectiveness. Paula strives to facilitate understanding of the complexity of multiple perspectives, whether singing, teaching, training or tending her garden.

