

Prairiewoods

January/February 2026

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER



Relationship Building

Forging connections with the Source
of All Being, Earth, Self and Others

"You know your lives are as intricately interwoven as nerve cells in the mind of a great being... out of that vast net you cannot fall... no stupidity or failure or cowardice can ever sever you from that living web."

- Buddhist activist and teacher Joanna Macy

At the heart of things, our Franciscan, ecological spirituality is about relationships. So it is no surprise that one of the five values at Prairiewoods prioritizes relationship building. The deep connections described in our values language refers to qualities of intimacy, longevity, mutuality and investment. These qualities enliven our relationships with ourselves, others, the Source of All Being and the Earth.

(continued on page 3)

Prairiewoods Staff

Aaron Brewer

Land Care Coordinator

Ann Jackson PBVM

Coordinator of Spiritual Services

Christine Kripes

Garden Coordinator

Benjamin Ofuasia

Culinary Artist

Erik Meggers

Maintenance Coordinator

Rev. Jean Sullivan

Hospitality Coordinator

Julio Vera

Massage Therapist

Leslie Schwarting

Spiritual Director

Leslie Wright

Executive Director

Logan Pratt

Communications Coordinator

Liberty Danko

Culinary Assistant

Lucille Winnike FSPA

Spiritual Director

Mariah Andrews

Food Services Director

Nancy Hoffman FSPA

Massage Therapist

Matthew Gurnsey

Development Director

Nancy Schrimper

Office Administrator

Robert Hogg

Program Assistant

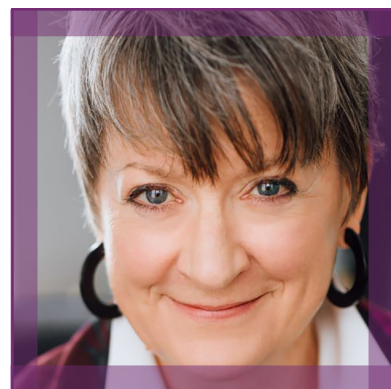
Trace Harshman

Housekeeper



Director's Corner

Looking to our storied past to envision our bright future



“

Compassion is the keen awareness of the interdependence of all living things.

Thomas Merton

”

In her 1992 address to the FSPA Central Region, just before the proposal was made that would lead to Prairiewoods, Sr. Cecilia Corcoran quoted Rilke - “But because truly being here is so much; because everything here apparently needs us, this fleeting world, which in some strange way keeps calling to us. Us, the most fleeting of all”.

We are still called and needed, today perhaps even more, to help us all rediscover or deepen our understanding of our beautiful and lifegiving interdependence.

I write this as we are preparing for a new season and a new year. Just as we greet the new year with anticipation and curiosity, we greet the years ahead with the energy of possibility. We will be celebrating our 30th anniversary during 2026. We will look back to affirm what has come before and all the relationships and ministry that has happened here. Then we look forward to the coming decades and the ministries and relationships that are forming and emerging all around us.

The evolution of Prairiewoods is an inspiration and encouragement for all of us. First, the reminder that Prairiewoods was forming in the hearts and minds of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration long before a name was chosen or the foundations were poured. For nearly thirty years before Prairiewoods was born, these women listened deeply to the land and to the people for direction to emerge.

Mission and vision took shape in conversation with the land and the community around the land. And the Vision seems even more urgent today. It is time to equip ourselves for the decades ahead.

The future is before us and it will emerge step by step just as it has during the past decades. Please come and celebrate the first 30 with us and help us to give shape to the next season of service and love.

Peace and all good,

Leslie A. Wright

Building Deep Networks of Relationships

The image of mycelial networks is a fitting metaphor for this quality and breadth of relationships that we seek to foster. These networks are diverse, interdependent and far reaching. For over thirty years Prairiewoods itself has been cultivated by a lively network of Sisters, friends, volunteers, staff, board and numerous community partners.

By contrast, as a culture, we use the word relationship frequently but with very different measures. Social media has contributed to a tendency to simply “count” relationships as an extension of our consumerist orientation. How many do we have? How often do others “engage” with us? It is often not a meaningful or lasting exchange.

We have become lost in the myth of individual human self-sufficiency. A recent documentary, *Join or Die*, points to the loss of community and relationships and its devastating effects on people everywhere. The former surgeon general Vivek Murthy names loneliness and isolation as an epidemic. What shall we do? The world is calling us to build bridges of relationship that lead to healing and peace in these troubled times.

Connectedness
Flourishing
Communion
Intimacy
Network
Kinship
Bridges



Relationships with Self and Source

In the ministry of Spiritual Direction, the intimacy of the relationship between director, directee and the Divine is one of the deepest relationships that exist. Offering a confidential, non-judgmental space to talk about what is stirring in your heart and soul is transformative. Relationship-building requires trust, vulnerability, and honesty, all of which are key pillars of Spiritual Direction.

Within spiritual direction, we find room to grieve what has been lost, to discern purpose in seasons of uncertainty, and to bring healing light to our most complex relationships, with ourselves, others and God. It is a journey of noticing—learning to see where God’s presence shimmers beneath the surface of our days and where we are being invited to respond with greater openness and love. Over time, the practice cultivates a deep awareness of grace, reminding us that even in confusion or pain, the Holy continues to move within and around us, drawing us ever closer to wholeness. It helps us rediscover the unconditional love of God and know we are not alone.

Relationships with Earth

Ecological spirituality calls us into communion with the divine in all of Creation. This profound kinship with Creation is a guiding force at Prairiewoods. Read more about this relationship with the land in the *Letter From the Land* on page 11.

For over thirty years, Prairiewoods has endeavored to cultivate greater ecological awareness. An awareness that Creation is sacramental. Every living thing, in its beauty and uniqueness -- no matter how small—is an opportunity to experience relationship with the Source of All Being. Christine Valters Paintner reminds us that “the more we cultivate intimacy with the natural world, the more we discover about God’s presence.” She encourages us to use all our senses to nourish this sense of presence and to grow in our sense of kinship with all creation. It can be simple acts -- the contemplation of a flower in spring, listening to the sound of prairie grass moving in the wind, noticing the unique beauty of a snowflake, walking a trail, finding a bench on which to meditate, tending the gardens or noticing the abundant creatures that call Prairiewoods home. These each offer opportunities to experience God’s presence and communion.



Relationship is not just proximity but instead a bond, with love as the connecting and energizing force. It is within this fabric of connectedness that we find grace, peace and hopefulness even in difficult times. Prairiewoods’ call entering these next decades is to help reweave the fabric of these connections that have been lost, with the land, with ourselves, with each other and with the Source of All Being.

There are many ways for you to find communion here. Consider some of the opportunities highlighted on the following page during our 30th anniversary year.

Save the Date! May 15th-17th



Loving the Wild: Earth-Centering Our Spirituality

With Dr. Lisa Dahill

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:

- 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



Prairiewoods

SPIRITUALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY



30 Ways to Celebrate 30 Years at Prairiewoods

There are so many ways to celebrate Prairiewoods. For those looking to commemorate Prairiewoods' 30th anniversary, here are 30 ways that you can experience nearly everything Prairiewoods has to offer!

1. Visit Grandmother Oak using one of the updated Prairiewoods trail maps!
2. Join us for a delicious meal at one of our monthly YOLO lunch events.
3. Try a new spiritual practice with one of our many retreats and programs!
4. Volunteer at Woodland Wednesdays and help preserve our sacred grounds.



5. Pray for Prairiewoods.
6. Walk the two-and-a-half miles of walking trails.
7. Water, weed, and plant seeds in our garden on Tuesdays and Fridays during the growing season!
8. Attend our 30th anniversary Garden Party on June 20th, 2026.
9. Participate in our Spirituality in the 21st Century event with our speaker Dr. Lisa Dahill, May 15-17.
10. Make a special gift to help us prepare for our next 30 years.
11. Share one of your favorite Prairiewoods memories with our staff!
12. Borrow a book from the media center!
13. Wear your favorite Prairiewoods t-shirt.
14. Visit the Food Forest.
15. Walk the Cosmic Walk and experience the story of the Universe.

16. Create your own individualized retreat!
17. Take a walk in our outdoor labyrinth.
18. Schedule a meeting with one of our spiritual directors.
19. Schedule a restorative massage or healing touch session.
20. Meditate using the 30 Meditations for 30 Years guide.
21. Invite a Prairiewoods staff member to speak about Prairiewoods at your next event.
22. Invite a friend to join you on your next visit to Prairiewoods.
23. Celebrate the Sisters who planned and founded Prairiewoods over 30 years ago during Catholic Sisters Week, March 8-14.
24. Buy a commemorative gift at our gift shop!
25. Include Prairiewoods in your will or estate plan.
26. Volunteer to plant trees at Prairiewoods.
27. Spread the word about Prairiewoods to people you know.
28. Follow us on social media and engage with our posts!
29. Host your next meeting or gathering at Prairiewoods!
30. Treat yourself to a Day of Self-Renewal.



Retreats

Living with Intention

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 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



Pathways of Peace: Re-enchanting Our Relationship With Food

Friday, Jan. 23, 6:30 p.m. — Sunday, Jan. 25, 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 weekend 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 retreat content, Friday & Saturday lodging, Saturday breakfast, lunch, dinner & Sunday breakfast, lunch)

Commuter fee: \$195 (Includes retreat content, Saturday lunch & dinner, 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

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.)

Want more retreats information?

Check out our Jan-Aug 2026 retreats brochure to find out more about our upcoming retreats, facilitators, and other opportunities to get involved at Prairiewoods! Visit Prairiewoods.org to download your copy!



In the Belly: Celebrating the Creativity of Celtic Imbolc & Saint Brigid's Day

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:

- Engaging with art, poetry, music, and prayer inspired by Brigid
- Connecting with the land during Imbolc's first stirrings of Spring
- Spiritual art journaling
- Weaving Saint Brigid cross—a traditional act of blessing and creativity
- 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)



Formed & Restored: A Journey Through Clay and Kintsugi

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. 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.

Enter the ancient Japanese art of Kintsugi, where cracked pottery is repaired with gold. 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)

Retreats

Awakening Awareness of Energy Retreat

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, retreatants 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
- Resources and practices to carry forward into life

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

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

Vocal Empowerment: Reclaim Your Voice, Reclaim Your Self Retreat

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.

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

Plus, join Mary Jane Knight for a solo concert that blends music, storytelling, and reflection on Friday, Feb. 27th from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

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

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

Programs

The Power of the Breath



Saturday, Jan. 3, 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Saturday, Feb. 6, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Jodi Isolini

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.

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

Day of Self Renewal



Friday, Jan. 2 & 23;
Thursday, Feb. 5; Monday, Feb. 9
Facilitator: Jean Sullivan

Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services (massage, reflexology, healing touch, spiritual direction), sound bath, 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: \$115 (or \$100 without a private guest room)

Program Category Key



Creativity



Ecology



Holistic Health



Personal Growth



Prayer



Spirituality

Circle of Trust: Winter Rest



Saturday, Jan. 10
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Thomas Dean

During these quarterly, day-long Circle of Trust © retreats, we will co-create trustworthy space to listen to the wisdom of our personal inner teacher in community with others through the Courage & Renewal © approach developed by Parker Palmer and the Center for Courage & Renewal. Discerning our authentic selves, our "hidden wholeness," as Palmer calls it, happens when we honor our integrity and pay attention to our inner source of truth, named in various wisdom traditions as identity, true self, heart, spirit, or soul.

Through Circles of Trust, we renew our courageous spirit as we align our inner and outer selves—our "soul" and "role"—and journey toward personal and societal wholeness.

Fee: \$50

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Sunday, Jan. 18 & 25;
Feb. 1, 8, & 22; Mar. 1 & 8
1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.



Free Info Sessions: Jan. 8 or 13
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (Zoom)

Retreat Day: Sunday, Feb. 15
9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Chris Klug

Mindfulness is the power of mind to be deeply aware of what's happening—without commentary or interference. Research reveals numerous benefits to the nervous system, emotions and general wellbeing. 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: \$400 for series (\$100 for those working in human service fields)

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



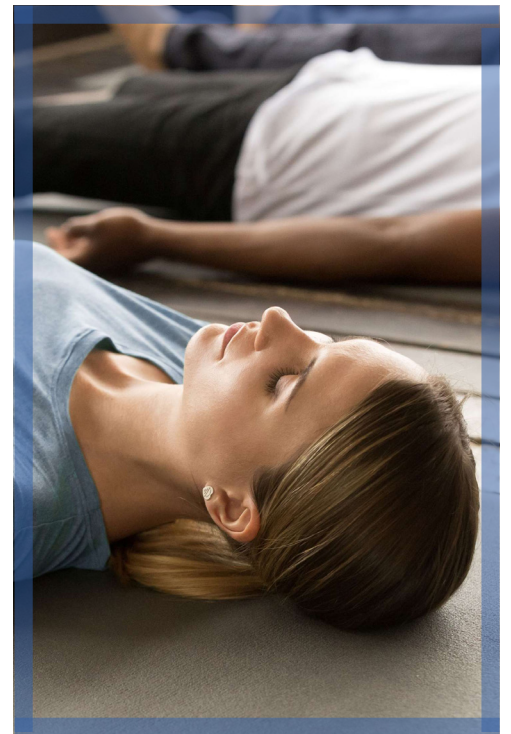
Tuesday, Jan. 13,
Jan. 20, Jan. 27, Feb. 3
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

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



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

Tuesday, Jan. 20 & 27;
Feb. 3 & 10

10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Julio Vera & Ann Jackson PBVM



Eager to learn about how breath impacts health? Different methods of breathing impact blood pressure, anxiety, fear, confidence, digestion and more.

Among Earth's rhythms, we pause to remember our own steady rise and fall of breath that carries us through each moment of life.

This gentle program invites you to the sacred practice of mindful breathing. Come breathe deeply. Come breathe wisely. Come breathe with Earth.

Fee: \$75 for series

Weathering Winter



Saturday, Feb. 21

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Christine Kirpes

Join us in exploring winter wonders of creation. Help us find signs of Prairiewoods' creatures and learn how they survive winter. Experience our trees and prairie plants and enjoy their dormant forms.

Whether you are tired of winter or not, take an invigorating stroll around our beautiful grounds for exercise & renewal. We will walk/hike outside as much as conditions allow. You are welcome to share some warm beverages inside afterward. Dress for the weather!

Fee: \$10

Online Book Study: Advice for Future Corpses by Sallie Tisdale (Zoom)

Wednesday, Jan. 28;
Feb. 11 & 25

7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Joyce Janca



This winter, we invite you to join our book study on *Advice for Future Corpses* (and *Those Who Love Them*) by Sallie Tisdale, a compassionate, clear-eyed exploration of what it means to die well and to care for the dying.

Together we'll explore what it means to face death—and life—with honesty, compassion, and grace. Reflect, share, and find meaning together. All are welcome.

Fee: \$25

The Art and Soul of Contemplative Gardening

Thursday, Feb. 5, 12, & 19

6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Cheryl Conklin



In this series we'll explore how garden design and practices support the contemplative experience and bring us into a deeper reciprocal relationship with the community of life forms that is a wholesome garden.

Fee: \$25 for the series

Becoming a Spiritual Director

Thursday, Feb. 26

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Steve Spilde



Do you long for deeper connections with your friends and loved ones? Are you ready for personal transformation? Do you seek a deeper relationship with the Divine?

The Spiritual Direction Preparation Program (SDPP) is a three-year formation program at the Franciscan Spirituality Center in La Crosse, WI. Participants prepare to serve as spiritual directors in their communities or work settings, but many participants find it to be so much more than preparing for a role. Learn more about the role of a spiritual director and discern if this training may be a welcome opportunity for growth in your life.

Fee: Free

Programs

Returning to our Roots: Saints Francis & Clare - Wisdom for Today



Thursday, Jan. 29

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Rose M. Blank, M. Div.

Come and learn some of the stories of the ministries of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare. Discover what these 12th century saints have to teach us today about our relationship with God, with others and with the Earth. Learn how their wisdom can bring a sense of peace.

Fee: \$35 (Includes lunch)



Introduction to the Enneagram

Friday, Feb. 27

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Steve Spilde



The Enneagram is a powerful tool for understanding ourselves and others, and refers to nine different personality styles. The style we favor affects what we see as important and how we act in our relationships.

In this introduction to the Enneagram, you will learn about the gifts and challenges of your personality style, how to grow beyond your default way of doing things and how to better understand people with other styles. You'll have the opportunity to complete an online assessment to help begin your process of discovery. This program is ideal for people new to the Enneagram or for those who would like a refresher.

Fee: \$75 (Includes lunch and assessment)

On-going Programs

Metta Yoga

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

Into the Oneness: Qigong for Energy, Equanimity & Peace

Friday, Jan. 2, 12:45 p.m. – 1:35 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 5, 12:45 p.m. – 1:35 p.m.
Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel
Fee: \$12

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep

Friday, Jan. 2, 1:45–2:30 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 5, 1:45–2:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel
Fee: \$12

Nature & Forest Therapy Experience

Friday, Jan. 2 & 23
Monday, Feb. 9
2:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.
Facilitator: Emelia Sautter
Fee: \$20

Forest Bathing with the Full Moon

Saturday, Jan. 3, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 1, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Emelia Sautter
Fee: \$25

Going Inward With Sounds & Vibrations

Monday, Jan. 5 & 19, Feb. 2 & 16
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel
Fee: \$15 per session

Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (Zoom)

Wednesday, Jan. 7 & Feb. 4
6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Steve Sovern
Fee: Free-will offering

Men Exploring Faith (Hybrid)

Thursday, Jan. 8 & 22, Feb. 12 & 26
4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Linzy Martin
Fee: Free-will offering

Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony

Saturday, Jan. 10
4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Kerry Batteau
Fee: Suggested donation of \$10

Singing Bowl Prayer

Monday, Jan. 12 & Feb. 9
12:45 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel
Fee: \$12

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers

Tuesday, Jan. 13 & Feb. 9, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 28 & Feb. 25, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Participants
Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer

Tuesday, Jan. 13 & 27, Feb. 10 & 24
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, Jan. 14 & Feb. 11
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW
Fee: Free

Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton (Zoom)

Thursday, Jan. 15, Feb. 6 & 20
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Carole Butz
Fee: Free-will offering

LovingKindness Meditation Practice (Hybrid)

Saturday, Jan. 17 & Feb. 21
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Facilitator: Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA
Fee: \$10

Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Group for Adults

Wednesday, Jan. 21 & Feb. 18
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW
Fee: Free

Drum Circle & Guided Imagery

Sunday, Jan. 4
Saturday, Feb. 7
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Drum Iowa
Fee: Suggested donation of \$15 (but free for all to enjoy)

Awaken Your Creativity Through Watercolor

Tuesday, Jan. 20 & Feb. 17
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Facilitator: Barb Thompson
Fee: \$50 per class

YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option)

Wednesday, Jan. 21 & Feb. 18
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Prairiewoods Chefs
Fee: \$15

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

A Letter From the Land

Is there any stronger connection than what an individual can form with earth itself? Could there possibly be something that has more meaning, provokes greater joy and contentment than digging your bare hands into soil, taking in the health benefits as you break up microbial networks that overcome one with a sense of calm and adoration, immediately relieving stress and anxiety? Only to be followed by a time to reflect on the work accomplished and reward of beauty and back aches. Ah, yes, the pain and suffering we sacrifice to be one with the earth.

If there were a stronger connection it would have to be the people that join us in the efforts. Some of our most powerful and productive moments on the land are with our Woodland Wednesday volunteers who dedicate themselves to giving back. They don't need the gardening experience, they can get plenty of that at home. It's the people that they show up for and the comradery that we build as we work together on projects. They come to honor Sister Nancy's legacy of creating a beautiful place for peace and transformation. To experience the divine, or just have a laugh over a fresh meal. It's relationships like these that keep the heartbeat of the land. We are not whole without them.

Even from its development stages, from a farm to an eco-spirituality retreat center, when it comes to land management at Prairiewoods, it has always been about the connection and respect from those who steward it. Being ever conscious that we do not own the land, we are simply guests and visitors to it. Creating a relationship of care for creation, evolving with, and listening to what is needed. Sure, we curate tree plantings and place benches and trail locations where we feel they are most suitable, but we do so with careful consideration and respect to both people who have come before us and the terrestrial succession that has occurred and is anticipated.

Like the image of the mycelial network on the cover of this newsletter the connections and relationships that run deep and wide nourish Prairiewoods and restore the land.

Many have put their imprint on the land and shared their gift from a whole-hearted place. A succession of staff like Emy, August, Cliff, Erik, Roger, Bill, Christine, Gina and Bev. The founding Sisters, and community groups like Iowa BIG, City View, AmeriCorps, United Way, Northwest Mutual, Lovely Lane, Trees Forever, Indian Creek Nature Center and Matthew 25. The list could go on. We are all committed to creating community, caring for people and earth. Conscious of our footprint all working to leave the world better than we had discovered.

It's been a busy and fruitful year on the land at Prairiewoods. Not only busy in the sense of the work that goes into maintaining the 67 acres of gardens, trails and diverse ecosystems but also busy with people sharing their energy, blessing us with their time and talents. We feel your energy and we are grateful for being a part of our mission.

There are so many ways to get involved. The land is here for you, waiting with open arms.



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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Prairiewoods

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

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Hiawatha IA 52233

Help Us Update Our Records

You may send this by mail, email ecospirit@prairiewoods.org or call 319-395-6700. If mailed, please include this address label.

- ☐ Please send your mailings electronically to _____.
- ☐ Please take us off your mailing list.
- ☐ Please note the address change.
- ☐ We receive duplicate mailings; please send only one to this address.

Are you on social media? Find "PrairiewoodsFSC" on:



Your Legacy Can Support the Next 30 Years And Beyond



As Prairiewoods enters its 30th anniversary year, we celebrate three decades of hospitality, reflection, and care for Earth, Spirit, and Community. Every retreat, conversation, and quiet walk among the trees has been made possible through the generosity of people who believe in the mission of this sacred place.

Looking toward the next thirty years, we invite you to consider how your legacy can help sustain this ministry. A planned gift is a meaningful way to extend your impact, whether through a bequest in your will, naming Prairiewoods as a beneficiary of a retirement or investment account, or creating a Donor-Advised Fund that supports our mission year after year.

To learn how to make a gift or let us know your plans, simply scan the QR code or visit our website. Your generosity ensures that the spirit of Prairiewoods continues to inspire and renew all who visit here for generations to come.

