

January/February 2022

# Prairiewoods

A CATHOLIC, FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER



## Practicing Jubilee

**P**raise be! Prairiewoods' 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee invites us to use the time to grow in commitment through prayer, education, organizing, celebrating and witnessing to the Source of All Being, and to resist forces that threaten communities, nations, the world. Prairiewoods' creation story tells of the foundresses inviting their own religious community of sisters and area, civic and faith communities to acknowledge the wisdom of the land. Together, walking, listening, dreaming on the land, their hearts heard the call of the land: a place of peace and transformation. That's when Prairiewoods' stewardship of the land was birthed. Praise be! Jubilee—for the call of the land and full-hearted response.

Spanning widely varying cultures—which all direct attention to attitudes of reverence, care for and listening to the land—this age-old spirituality of Jubilee originated among indigenous people and early agrarian society. They honored and respected the land in a deeply interdependent, life-sustaining relationship with obligations to the land itself, and to ancestors, clans, animals, moon, sun, fire ... all of creation.

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*photo by Joni Reed Cooley*

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*"And as with prayer, which is a dipping of oneself toward the light, there is a consequence of attentiveness to the grass itself, and the sky itself, and to the floating bird. I too leave the fret and enclosure of my own life. I too dip myself toward the immeasurable."*

—Mary Oliver, *Winter Hours: Prose, Prose Poems, and Poems*

I will be forever grateful for the two short stints of my life spent in Minnesota—once as a child and again in mid-life—for teaching me that I could find joy outdoors in all four seasons. Minnesotans

don't believe in bad weather, they believe in bad gear. With the right gear, we can experience nature's welcome in every day—even the coldest or shortest days of winter. There are consequences for attentiveness to nature though, Mary Oliver claims, as she describes a "dip toward the immeasurable." Theologian Thomas Berry would say we move "from a spirituality of the divine as revealed in words to a spirituality of the divine as revealed in the visible world about us."

It sounds so simple and so beautiful. And yet, we struggle. "We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories. The old story, the account of how we fit into it (the Universe), is no longer effective. Yet we have not learned the new story," says Berry. We have been listening only to ourselves, he says, yet every part of creation has its own voice—the trees, the wind, the stars—and these voices "constitute a community of existence that is profoundly related." WE are profoundly related.

In the deep of winter, Mary Oliver's words entice me to make my own "dipping" toward the light or move toward the immeasurable. I feel pulled to enter more fully into the integral community Berry's words paint so beautifully. So, like a good (honorary) Minnesotan, I gather my best winter gear and get out into the woods, or even to the parking lot outside the Prairiewoods Center where, in the early evening dark, I can stand in front of the prairie, under a deep blue sky, and experience the consequences of attentiveness. In those moments of being fully present in the winter world, I remember that one of those consequences is deep joy. My heart leaps as if in celebration: right there in the parking lot, I am called to celebration with all my relatives—the prairie, the woods, the stars, perhaps an owl or a running deer. And why not? As Thomas Berry says, "... in the end, the universe can only be explained in terms of celebration. It is all an exuberant expression of existence itself."

In the spirit of celebration, I wish you joy in your winter holidays. I also wish each of you the opportunity for quiet attentiveness. Finally, may you all have good gear for getting out into the beauty of winter!

Peace and all good,

Jenifer Hanson, Director



Prairiewoods is a Catholic ecospirituality retreat and conference center in the Franciscan tradition. It is a nonprofit ministry sponsored by Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

**Mission:** Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality 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.

The Prairiewoods staff collaborates to publish this newsletter bimonthly. Content, except where otherwise noted, is created by our staff in consultation and with care to offer a uniquely Prairiewoods perspective.

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They were dependent on the land and the land on them. Survival was at stake! The call of the land generated responses from Indigenous people who, in turn, made agreements with one another. One response: the “Dish with One Spoon” treaty between Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, recognized the obligations these two tribes who lived closely on the land had to each other and to Earth, and her plants, animals, waters, forests.

The story of the land continued to be written. Scripture echoes the call of the land heard by the Hebrews, people who were experiencing an exile. Instead of losing hope and despairing, they dreamed of restoration and better times ahead. Sound familiar? A caring, attentive God speaks to weary, exhausted people as they enter a new chapter in their lives, “When you enter the land I am giving you ...” step back from your ordinary routines. Practice a reverent attitude toward one another, the land and ourselves. People listened, planned, prayed and prepared to live anew. The heart of Jubilee resides in practicing Sabbath—letting land lie fallow, forgiving debts, freeing captives and proclaiming liberty, discovering what belongs to whom and returning it. Jubilee evokes holding a great feast, learning to sing the canticle of “Jubilate,” an expression of joy and gratitude.

Amid the chaos of the world, and in light of the multicultural expressions and rituals, an ancient practice of Jubilee emerges anew today! In this ever-evolving call of our collective interdependence with the land, we’re invited to a deeper rhythm of rest and re-creation to increase the momentum of our response. We are urged to forgive debts and return property, to honor the Source of All Beings, our origin. As we do, we engage in the great ritual of Jubilee. THIS time is an opportunity to co-create an approach to life that embodies this specific spirituality. In her book *Jubilee Time*, Maria Harris states that within the life rhythm of Jubilee, “work differing from that of earlier decades takes precedence. The work involves crossing boundaries; pausing to our lives and land, and proclaiming liberty to all the earth’s inhabitants. It involves revisiting and honoring ancestors, making mature assessments and judgments, and giving shape to individual stories. Each of these spills over into a great song of praise and gratitude that affirms and completes life, even in the face of inevitable death.”

Ultimately, Jubilee animates reflection on and with the land, on forgiveness, on freedom, on justice and on jubilation. How do we embody this? What might it look like in light of today? Author, teacher and theologian Marva Dawn, in her book *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, suggests we embody: ceasing, resting, embracing, feasting. She invites a sense of time—sabbath—with the land that compels deeper reflection on the meaning of forgiving debts, freeing captives, proclaiming liberty, and rejoicing in expressions of joy and gratitude. This Jubilee reflection begins

in stillness.

**Ceasing invites us to literally stop.** It is translated from “Shabbat” in the Jewish tradition, which literally means “stop working.” Set aside time in our daily, weekly, monthly rhythm in order to rest from our work life and shift from dispositions of productivity and accomplishment, meaningless busyness, anxiety, worry and tension. Stop accumulating. Stop controlling people or circumstances. Center in stillness and ground self with the land and all of creation.

**Resting invites us to lie fallow.** Notice our relationship to possession, power, person, creation. A second word for rest in the Jewish tradition is “Nuakh,” which means dwell or settle. Be restfully present. Rest the whole of our being: physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially, spiritually. Liberate ourselves and one another and all of creation to be. What calls for our forgiveness? How are we living in unity? Reconnect and sense rhythmic elements of the land: life/death, sun/moon, day/night, spring/fall, inhale/exhale. Pause and listen to what is emerging.

**Embracing opportunity invites us to embody wholeness and to hold the whole.** Contemplate the wisdom of emotions, gifts and goods. Reflect on values. We are to bring glad tidings to the poor, to liberate those who are bound—beginning with ourselves—to forgive injuries and debts, to receive forgiveness, to share gifts and goods. Ask for support from family, friends, colleagues, community, land and all of creation to rebalance life. Notice where experiences of exile exist—and embrace the larger global context.

**Feasting invites our expression of joy and gratitude.** Celebrate this new life by hosting a great feast of rejoicing and thanksgiving. Feast with affection—love expansively! Render thanks for the call of Jubilee, the land and the Source of All Being at the heart of it all.

Listen, can you hear the land? Practicing Jubilee commissions us, as Maria Harris articulates in *Proclaim Jubilee*: “Some of us will be commissioned mainly as Sabbath people—not only in keeping it but in assisting the rest of the community to let the land lie fallow. Some will be agents of forgiveness—counselors, therapists, healers, penitents. Others will work to serve justice as students, teachers, ecologists, homemakers, money-raisers or entrepreneurs of Camp Lemonade Stands. Others will practice Jubilee in the governmental arena, as policy-makers and as executives. Still others will be jubilant artists, dancers and jugglers, sculptors and singers, poets and mimes.” Our response to the call will lead us across boundaries, necessitate risking doing too little or too much, and stretch our creativity to generate new ideas and initiatives to restore Earth’s gifts in service to freedom and justice. **Praise be! Prairiewoods 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee.**



photo by Becky Brooker



## Communal Examen for the New Year

*Indebtedness to the spirit of the land,  
rooted in ancient practices of many cultural and faith traditions,  
in light of the lack of equity across the world,  
during this critical time of climate challenge ...  
we offer this meditation as one Jubilee practice.*

### Terra Divina

(slightly adapted from Victoria Loorz,  
*Church of the Wild: How Nature Invites Us  
into the Sacred*)

**D**erived from an ancient practice of *Lectio Divina*, a contemplative reading of Scripture, *Terra Divina* invites a contemplative listening with the land.

You might travel to a favorite acre of land or sit inside looking at picturesque land just outside a window. Wherever you find yourself, begin to wander, allowing your body to literally sense when it is time to cross a threshold. As you approach the threshold, you might cup your hands to your heart or bow deeply. The threshold could involve stepping off the trail, walking under a tree branch, stepping over a stone, casting your eyes just beyond the interior through the window to the beauty that eagerly invites your gaze. As you step across the threshold, attune your sight, mind and heart into deeper awareness and presence, open receptivity, to a slower, more attentive way of moving. Surrender your regular ways of rushing words and walk. Ask permission of the land to enter its space.

Each state of *Terra Divina* invites us to enter into what the ancients call “nature,” the first book of God.

photo by Joni Reed Cooley

**1. Wander (lectio).** Wander, as if wandering with your whole body and all senses were like reading a book with your eyes and mind alone. Read the language of the breeze and birds and leaves and sunlight. Notice what captures your attention. Where does your attention linger?

*Touch.* Sense how your body moves, how each step moves you closer and also farther away, how the wind touches your cheek and your hair just as she (wind) caresses the leaves on the trees. May every step be intentional and soft, connecting with the ground solidly before lifting the other foot.

*Look.* Soften your eyes to see all the beauty, the composting death alongside new growth. Slowly, with gratitude and reverence, scan all that is close-up and faraway.

*Listen.* When the chatter of your inner conversation blocks your ability to listen, tenderly sweep aside the words with a deep breath. Listen closely to the voices and songs of tree, plant, water, perhaps the voices of birds. The movement of other hidden ones. Listen to sounds near and far—human ones too. Just listen.

*Breathe.* Breathe deeply. Draw your attention to the way you normally breathe without thinking. Notice the depth or shallowness of your breath. What smells invite your attention? What taste does air have?

**3. Respond (oratio).** Allow resonance to conjure up a response within you. Engage fully with open heart in this new relationship.

*Voice.* As you respond, share what is arising within you. Speak it in your own language or translate it into an embodied movement or sound.

*Memories.* Record the feeling cellularly. Invite every cell of your body to record/journal the random wisdom received.

*Feelings.* Note the energy that your body experiences? How can you express that energy? Laugh? Cartwheel? Tears? What emotions are welling? Where are they located in your body? Acknowledge these. Be curious and allow all emotions to arise.

**2. Listen (meditatio).** Deeply listen to the land and to other. Enter into conversation with stone, tree, ant, petal, wind, cloud ... Risk it. What draws you into conversation? A cliff? The creek bank? Clouds gathering speed above you? Ants focused on transporting a leaf across a path? Move closer if possible and settle in. Invite the conversation to come slowly.

*Observe.* Using all your senses, offer your full attention. Look carefully and closely. What is moving? Who is in relationship with whom? Listen closely. Listen farther away. Get up close and smell. Maybe even taste. Relax into a comfortable posture. Feel, really feel, Earth, with all your senses.

*Imagine.* Invite imagination to guide you. As you watch tree or cloud movement or squirrel bringing acorn to its nest, what might be happening? How is tree connected to Earth? What does it look like beneath the soil? How many creatures met here, and who has been born here or died here? Do any unexpected words or images come? What story is longing to be told?

*Mirror.* Practice reciprocity. Mirror Earth's softness or bird's song or wind's whisper back. Mirror similar movement and sounds back. Dance, chant, step, sing ... in a way that mirrors. How might they be mirroring us?

*Praise.* Notice deeply and offer praise. Write a poem. Sing. Draw. List what you appreciate and see and hear and taste and touch. Praise all.

**4. Release (contemplation).** Now ... let it all go. Release with a huge breath. Shake out all the emotions. Step into the sunshine. Lie down against a tree. Feel pure gratitude of being alive, of being held, of connection. Breathe deeply. What mantra is Earth repeatedly singing to you? Allow this receptive, contemplative connection to fill you as you rest with land for an extended period of silence.

*Gratitude.* Before you take leave, offer a gesture of gratitude. A gift of your pure presence for this sacred conversation. Offer a deep bow. Extend a silent blessing.

*Threshold crossing.* Cross over again as you reenter the world of your responsibilities. Recognize how you are a bit more of yourself than you were, thanks to this opportunity to listen to the land.

## Hosting Groups at Our Ecospirituality Center



photo by August Stolba

At Prairiewoods all are welcome, and the hosted groups who visit us over the years deepen the mission along with us, nurturing relationships and connecting with Earth and each other. We asked some of our friends about their experience at Prairiewoods and why they choose to gather at our ecospirituality center.

“Prairiewoods is a perfect location for our retreat group based on Parker Palmer’s *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life*. Prairiewoods’ setting is perfect—a lovely retreat center, beautiful grounds for quiet contemplation, delicious food, and wonderful hospitality. But more importantly, Prairiewoods offers a spirit of serenity, benevolence, and acceptance where ‘the shy soul,’ as Parker Palmer calls it, can be welcomed safely and affirmatively in our circle of trust.”

—Dr. Tom Dean, Circle of the Inner Teacher

“For our Cedar Valley Embroiderers Guild Stitchers’ Retreat, Prairiewoods is a very special place where we refresh our bodies and minds in a beautiful nature setting. The staff provides all the accommodations for us to enjoy fellowship, laughter and to stitch to our heart’s content.”

—Martha Quint Lawrence, Cedar Valley Embroiderers Guild

“We are always greeted with friendly faces from retreat center staff whom we have formed positive connections with over the years. We can tell they are excited about our arrival.

“Each day we begin at 6 a.m. for foundations training in front of the Guest House. The flowers and shrubbery on grounds provide for a serene atmosphere. It is common to see deer off in a close distance. We train for an hour and a half; then we get ready for breakfast. For people that exert as much effort in physical activity as our group does, every meal is very important to us! Every Camp participant would tell you; we are well fed every meal with DELICIOUS and healthy food!

“The North American Practical Method Training Camp that’s held at Prairiewoods Retreat Center has gained international recognition. The teachings offered by Master Chen, group comradery, and total immersion in eating, sleeping and living Taiji offered in a harmonious atmosphere draws participants into the totality of the experience. Our consistent base of Practical Method students look forward to many more camps to come.”

—John Upshaw, Chen Style Taijiquan North American Practical Method Training Camp



photos by John Upshaw



## Deepening Relationship with Nature

*“The world of life, of spontaneity, the world of dawn and sunset and starlight, the world of soil and sunshine, of meadow and woodland, of hickory and oak and maple and hemlock and pineland forests, of wildlife dwelling around us, of the river and its wellbeing—all of this [is] the integral community in which we live.”*

—Thomas Berry

**A**s an ecospirituality center, Prairiewoods encourages everyone who comes here to explore and nurture their relationships with creation as part of our wider WE. Here are some ways you may wish to engage with the land and its many occupants here at Prairiewoods:

**Prairies** In his introduction to *Tallgrass Conversations*, Thomas Dean writes, “Prairie is among the most altered and threatened ecosystems in the world. At the same time, our natural world is our first and most profound home. Care of the world is always essential, and care arises from conversation.” Walking the prairie in each season, noticing the changes and the richness of life is one way to enter that conversation. You may also wish to get involved by collecting seeds or participating in a prairie seed stomp this winter.

**Woods** Simply walking, sitting, being in the woods may be your way of entering into relationship with the land. Grandmother Oak and other points along our 2.5 miles of walking trails offer places for quiet contemplation. You might find the ancient path of the labyrinth helps you center yourself and enter into silent communion with the woods. If you are seeking a more active engagement, we are always in need of trail tenders, photographers and more.

**Water** Dry Creek runs through the Prairiewoods land and is home and water-source to a wide variety of wildlife. There are also water-management features—retention ponds, storm-water culverts and drainage systems. Water is life, and we welcome guests, visitors and volunteers to take part in water stewardship projects and assist in watering plants and trees.

**Permaculture and Food Security** Permaculture is both a philosophy and a set of practices that work with nature, rather than subdue nature, to establish and maintain landscape and gardens. Prairiewoods is using permaculture practices and design in our gardens, while also engaging with food security issues within our larger community. The Green Prairie Garden is a shared project with Metro Catholic Outreach in which food is grown for distribution at the MCO food pantry and use in Prairiewoods’ kitchen. We also have the Garden of Eat’n and the Healing Garden to teach and engage folks with edible landscaping and food foraging.

Two new projects in this area are: **Food Forest** Working with Backyard Abundance, we will transform the orchard, heavily damaged in the derecho, into a food-rich landscape! And **Community Gardens** In partnership with the City of Hiawatha and the Master Gardeners Association, we will offer community gardens here at Prairiewoods for those who wish to grow their own food in a no-till, organic environment. Volunteers are needed for both projects to get infrastructure in place and to sustainably cultivate the land!

To get involved as an outdoor volunteer at Prairiewoods, please contact August Stolba at [astolba@prairiewoods.org](mailto:astolba@prairiewoods.org).



photo by Becky Brooker



photo by Angie Pierce Jennings



photo by Laura Weber



The following are retreats and programs that Prairiewoods is hosting online via Zoom or in person in the next two months. For more information or to register, visit [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org) or call 319-395-6700.

## Honoring Grief & Celebrating Life Retreat Wednesday, Jan. 12, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Kathleen Rude

We have lost so much in this past two years from the ravages of Covid-19, the derecho, the lockdown and social isolation. We haven't been able to gather together to grieve and remember. Our heroic healthcare workers, in particular, have had to put emotions aside just to get through the days of caring for the sick and dying. Our unexpressed grief has taken an emotional and spiritual toll on us all. While it still isn't safe to gather in person, it is time to come together in virtual space to grieve those we have lost—our human loved ones, treasured trees, creature-kin, lost life moments—and to celebrate the gift of their lives. We will spend this retreat day via Zoom in ritual, reflection and sharing, honoring our grief in the morning and celebrating life in the afternoon. We will have ample breaks throughout and 90 minutes for lunch and relaxation.

**Fee:** \$75

## Flaring Forth: Re-Wilding Spirituality through Storytelling Retreat

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

**Facilitator:** Amy Nolan, PhD, and Laura Weber, PhD

"Once upon a time ..." "In the Beginning ..." "Long ago, in a galaxy far away ..." The opening lines of some of the greatest stories ever told are calling! Right on cue, the New Year 2022 invites us to sink into storytime, to help us reconnect with creation and our "wilder selves." We have lost so much during the political and Covid maelstrom we've all been experiencing, and the jagged rhetoric and spiritual malaise accompanying the experience have been spiritually debilitating. It's been wild, for sure, but not the kind of wild that will help us heal the whole. This retreat will offer those who come the inspiration to tap into the healing power of storytelling to tune us into the wider, wilder "We." How do our foundational mythologies shape us? How do our intimate relationships with landscapes and creature-kin teach us about what it means to be embedded in

the web of life? How can the deep wisdom of ancient stories help heal spiritual wounds inherited from time immemorial? Come join two diminutive crone-women with passion and expertise in language, literature, storytelling, spirituality and theology to help us weave our own wild stories with the BIG story of the universe's flaring forth and unfolding. Experience how wild stories will help heal our World-soul!

**Fee:** \$230 includes sessions, lodging and all meals

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

## Goodbye, Hello: Healing Relationships for Spiritual Wholeness Retreat

**Friday, Feb. 25, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Feb. 27, 1 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Many relationships have suffered the effects of discord, disorientation or dissolution over deeply divisive issues arising from socio-political upheaval and the agonizing trek through a global pandemic. Family members, lifetime friendships, even significant other relationships have been challenged, strained and broken open when differences come to light. This retreat helps us go deeper into the spiritual grounding that offers healing and wholeness. Through meditative energy medicine movement and embodied prayer, journaling, yogic sleep, a fun process for exploring dreams as spiritual guidance and encounter, meditations for increased compassion and greater skillfulness with difficult emotions, and singing bowl healing through sound and vibration we will explore paths to spiritual renewal and offer gentle openings for healing and creative beginnings. Goodbye to hopelessness and spiritual lethargy. Hello to holistic healing and possibilities for spiritual renewal! *Note:* This is intended as a spiritual retreat. The retreat should not be understood as offering psychological counseling services; however, it could be helpful in conjunction with relationship counseling.

**Fee:** \$230 includes sessions, lodging and all meals

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

## Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:

# Spirituality & Stories of the Land

**S**pirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will be hosted online via Zoom April 29–30 with words of wisdom from our esteemed guest presenter, **Jim Enote**, a Zuni tribal member and CEO of the Colorado Plateau Foundation. As former director of the A:shiwí A:wán Museum and Heritage Center, Jim worked with Zuni artists to create maps that give voice to the land's own stories, showing how we are embedded in creation's story in ways mysterious and profound. The A:shiwí have been in present-day North America for thousands of years. Their sacred lands are marked by trails of prayer, story and song, carried along by canyon, river and rain. Drawing on a kaleidoscopic breadth of ancestral wisdom, Jim will share his deep love of the land's precious stories. While creation is unfolding her mysteries in human hearts, Western notions of place and home are challenged, and our groundedness in the wider "We" emerges. This is the time of the Great Turning, when we must learn from our elders how Earth's own stories attune us to spiritual insights about our communal origin, destiny and the complex interdependence that connects us with all our relations.



## Metta Yoga

**Mondays & Thursdays; Jan. 3–Feb. 28; 9:30–10:30 a.m., 10:45–11:45 a.m. & 5:30–6:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Heather English

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga from the spiritual environment and natural beauty of Prairiewoods. Join us in person as we link our movements with our breath and cultivate strength, flexibility and relaxation through regular hatha-style yoga classes. RYT-200 Hour Certified Yoga Alliance Instructor Heather English offers Gentle/Beginner's Yoga every Monday and Thursday. People of all fitness levels and abilities are encouraged to participate whenever available. Beginning in January, registration for each session is required.

**Fee:** \$99 for eleven-punch card or \$60 for six-punch card, one punch per session

## Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations

**Mondays; Jan. 3, Jan. 17, Feb. 7 & Feb. 21; 6:30–7:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel  
Experience sound, stillness,

playfulness and relaxation through the enigmatic vibrations of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls. During this in-person hour, we will connect with our inner selves through the

song of bowls. We will be invited to sit or lie down to listen and just be. We will hear the sounds and feel the vibrations of the singing bowls going inward. Let's let our souls rest and allow ourselves to be recreated! Registration is required.  
**Fee:** \$10 per session

## Prayer Experience Series

**Tuesdays, Jan. 4–Feb. 22, 11:30 a.m.–12 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Angie Pierce Jennings

We are blessed with many ways to pray and reflect including songful prayer, contemplative prayer, visio divina, embodied prayer, silent prayer, guided meditation and many others. All are welcome to join this ongoing prayer series via Zoom and experience the joys of prayer and meditation together. Registration is not required.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## Go Deeper Thursdays

**Thursdays; Jan. 6, Jan. 20, Feb. 3 & Feb. 17; 4–5 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Ellen Bruckner & Laura Weber

"Go Deeper" emerged in the context of the global pandemic, or as Prairiewoods calls it, the *PanDeepening*. Our reflective and lively Thursday conversations opened us to spiritual deepening, providing a sacred space to share our PanDeepening awareness, a place where we explored venues for collective presencing and delving into the wider "We" space. As our journey meandered through topics associated with inter-breathing and collective consciousness, we embraced diverse resources for consideration. Through simple breathing meditations, poetry, practicing mindfulness, storytelling, re-languaging, listening to creation's song and many small group experiences, we have been learning to read the collective and listen deeply to our emergent, inter-connected wisdom. In the process, we are becoming more expansive, more inclusive, recognizing our place in the wider "We." Who is this "We" that we mean? It is wider than our own ego or individual selves, wider than our most intimate circles, our community, work, worship and social circles, and wider even than our human community. It is no less than the "We" of all creation. To explore our January-February topic, *Embracing an Ecological Civilization*, sign up online to receive the Zoom link. A one-time registration for January-February is required.

**Fee:** \$10 per month

## Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton

**Thursdays; Jan. 6, Jan. 20, Feb. 3 & Feb. 17; 6:30–8 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Carole Butz

The practice of contemplative living helps us respond to everyday experiences with greater awareness of our connections with God and others. It becomes a positive force in our lives and provides direction for our journey, enabling us to embrace our truest selves. This group meets via Zoom on the first and third Thursday evenings of each month. We use the *Bridges to Contemplative Living* series, which includes excerpts from the writings of Thomas Merton and other authors, to explore the truths of human existence. The process involves readings, reflections and contemplative dialogue. Please register for your first session to get the Zoom link.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## Women in Interfaith Dialogue

**Saturday, Jan. 8, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Angie Pierce Jennings, Virginia Melroy & Dr. Paula Sanchini

Come together quarterly with women of various faith traditions for conversations about faith and spirituality. Our winter topic is spirituality and aging. We can all tune into the intergenerational wisdom from grandmothers and elders, children, and people of all ages as we are all aging. How might we reflect creatively on this wide topic? Does our spirituality influence our perceptions of aging? And how is aging interwoven with our own spirituality? We are invited to bring a reading or prayer to share with the group, as well as an object that represents the topic or our spirituality in general. Registration is required by Friday at noon. This group meets via Zoom.

**Fee:** \$10

## Day of Self Renewal

**Mondays, Jan. 10 & Feb. 14, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Angie Pierce Jennings

Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services, group guided meditation, singing bowl prayer, a private guest room, a fresh lunch, and access to the labyrinth and all that Prairiewoods has to offer. (Choose from massage, head and shoulder massage, reflexology, healing touch, spiritual direction, Nature & Forest Therapy Walk, yoga or chair yoga.) Registration, a nonrefundable, nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three services choices are required eight days in advance. (At this time, massage, reflexology and healing touch are available for vaccinated individuals.)

**Fee:** \$110 includes two services, guided meditation, singing bowl prayer, private guest room and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room)

## Singing Bowl Prayer

**Mondays, Jan. 10 & Feb. 14, 12:45–1:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Throughout history, singing bowls have been used around the world to foster meditation, relaxation, prayer and mind-body-spirit wellness. In these in-person sessions, we will let the resonant sounds of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls relax the entire body and create a pathway for clearer connection with the divine. We will be invited to just receive and breathe. Registration is required by noon.

**Fee:** \$5 per session



## Afternoon Nature & Forest Therapy Walk

**Mondays, Jan. 10 & Feb. 14, 2:30–3:45 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Emelia Sautter

Join the land and certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide Emelia Sautter for a walk with the natural world. Experience Forest Therapy, a sensory-focused practice that invites us to slow down and be present with self and the natural world around us. According to the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy, "Forest Therapy is a practice that supports health and wellness through guided immersion in forests and other environments to promote the well-being of both people and the land. It is inspired by *shinrin yoku*, the Japanese practice of 'Forest Bathing.'" Hundreds of studies show numerous positive effects, including reductions in stress, anxiety, depression, mental fatigue, anger and pain. Improvements include better cognitive functioning, sleep, mood, confidence and creativity. Time with our nature kin also boosts our immune system, regulates blood pressure, improves relationships, increases feelings of gratitude and much more. Registration is required by the day before. Please bring a water bottle and dress for being outdoors.

**Fee:** \$15

## Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers

**Tuesdays, Jan. 11 & Feb. 8, 9:30–11 a.m.; & Wednesdays, Jan. 26 & Feb. 23, 6:30–8 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** participants

Practice knitting and stitching in the company of new friends! This is a group of crafters of various skill levels who create handmade goods for charity. New participants are always



welcome, including those who are new to knitting and crocheting. Together we create hats, mittens, blankets and baby items for charity. Grab your needles and join us! This group meets in person on the second Tuesday and fourth Wednesday of each month. Registration is not necessary.

**Fee:** Free

## Evening Centering Prayer

**Tuesdays; Jan. 11, Jan. 25, Feb. 8 & Feb. 22; 5:30–7 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Judith Edwards

Come to Prairiewoods for Evening

Centering Prayer on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. This is a prayer/support group for people who enjoy centering prayer, a form of meditation focused on silent prayer. In this time of silence, we will relax, empty our minds and find God's presence within us. Sessions stand alone.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## Men Exploring Faith

**Thursdays; Jan. 13, Jan. 27, Feb. 10 & Feb. 24; 4–5:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Linzy Martin

Behavioral scientists and spiritual guides have noted a major transformation in the life direction of many men as we mature. It may happen gradually or abruptly, as early as our 20s or in our 50s or 60s. Some men never make this shift, described as a change from goal drivenness to receptivity, from ego to wisdom. The transition can start from the inside (*Why am I doing what I'm doing?*) or the outside (from a loss or threat), and it may seem disruptive while on the way to being life-enhancing. Join with a small group of reflective men in honest conversation about these changes. This group meets in person the second and fourth Thursdays of each month.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

*Offered in Partnership with Unity Point Hospice*

## Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Group

**Wednesdays, Jan. 19 & Feb. 16, 5:30–7 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Jamie Siela, LISW, & Kristine Shultis MDiv, LMT, CHT

In grief, our very foundation can be rocked. Take time to connect with others in grief and engage the creative spark. This online monthly grief group is open to anyone grieving loss through death. On the third Wednesday of each month, explore a different creative art medium. On Jan. 19, we will decorate a reusable canvas bag using a cardstock silhouette in a pattern of our choice and be creative with paint. On Feb. 16, we will discuss how, in grief, we may feel like our hearts are broken. We will create a multicolored heart woven with string and beads to represent our journey of the heart. Registration is required by noon eight days in advance. This group meets online.

**Fee:** Free, includes all art supplies

## Embrace Your Creative Spirit

**Saturday; Jan. 22; 10 a.m.–noon, 1–3 p.m. & 3:30–5:30 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Mary Kopecky, Andi Lewis & Carol Tyx

Throughout Prairiewoods' 25 years, we have celebrated the spirituality of

creativity. This day at Prairiewoods will offer three opportunities to explore and nurture our creativity and our spirit through willow weaving, mandala drawing and poetry writing.

From 10 a.m.–noon, join Mary Kopecky for willow weaving. We'll make a woven willow candle holder that can also be used as a suet feeder or flower holder. This beautiful willow piece will make a great addition to any home or garden! Then from 1–3 p.m., work with Andi Lewis to draw a beautiful mandala, or sacred circular work of art. Finally, join Artist in Residence Carol Tyx from 3:30–5:30 p.m. for a poetry writing session in which we will write and read several different ecospirituality poems. Join us for one session or make it a whole day of creativity with the Creator!

**Fee:** \$20 per session, or all three for \$60 and get continental breakfast and lunch

## Holistic Healing for Educators & Classrooms: Credit I

**Friday, Feb. 25, 5:30–8:30 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 26, 8 a.m.–5:30 p.m.; & Sunday, Feb. 27, 9 a.m.–noon**

**Facilitators:** Kim Seward, RN, BSN, CMI, & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Have the stressors of teaching, the pandemic, hybrid-learning and daily life affected your personal happiness and well-being? Have you experienced difficulty finding time to engage in self-care activities that may help? In this 1-hour credit course via Zoom only, learn "micro-interventions" to use daily to reset your brain and empower you to fully show up with a compassionate heart toward yourself, your students, your family and the world. Through practices of mindfulness, self-compassion and neuroscience, begin to restore holistic healing and build resiliency, joy, optimism and curiosity, leading to health and well-being. This course provides educators and any school or university staff or administrator with research-based theory, collaborative design and opportunities to practice. A text, *Practicing Presence*, is included in the registration fee. This course is being offered via Zoom. (It will also be offered in person June 27–29.) Dual registration with Grant Wood AEA is required. **Fee:** \$50 to Prairiewoods, plus \$35 to Grant Wood Area Education Agency (Thanks to a generous donation by the Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, all additional costs will be covered.)



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*"If we have a wonderful sense of the divine, it is because we live amid such awesome magnificence."  
—Thomas Berry*

*Merry Christmas &  
Happy New Year  
from Prairiewoods!*

photo by Frank Olsen

March/April 2022

# Prairiewoods

A CATHOLIC, FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

## A LOVE STORY *Where do we begin?*

**S**tories birth meaning. They captivate and take root, burrowing into our psyche (from the Greek word “psyche” for *soul*), our soul, especially our communal Soul, our World-Soul (from Latin “anima mundi”). The Story of the Great Flaring Forth is one way we might talk about our universal story of origins. The tale is explosive, gorgeous, cosmic in scope and mysteriously unfolding, expanding, dynamic and unpredictable, highlighting key moments when this, rather than that, might have existed in some way or another. Humanity appears almost as a sacred footnote, a late post-script in the epic journey that is creation. The miracle of creation as it flares forth is that the original impetus for Life progresses toward fuller, more complex union. In all its bewildering diversity, Life continues to astound, to evolve in unfathomably unified intricacy and lavish beauty. It is the story of evolutionary consciousness, of the universe becoming conscious of itself. A gentle, meandering “Cosmic Walk” at Prairiewoods tells of the 13.7-billion-year journey,

It is a BIG story.

What of other stories of origins? “In the Beginning” or “Once upon a time” stories teach us so much about who we are, and why we are here. Many will be familiar with a creation story from the Priestly source of Genesis that features Holy Breath, a mighty wind hovering over the waters of the abyss, bringing creation into being. “Let there be Light!” (Genesis 1:3) In such stories as the creation etiologies we find in the Book of Genesis, humanity appears as the culmination of creation, honored as the “image and likeness” of the divine (Genesis 1:26–28). From the Yahwist (older than the Priestly source) of Genesis, we learn that humanity seems to have as its primary vocation the tender care for creation in all its beauty and splendor (Genesis 2:15). The combined Priestly-Yahwist accounts of creation from Genesis 1–2 weave an auspicious story, inspiring and sacred.

*(continued on page 3)*

*photo by Jessica Lien*



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**A**t Prairiewoods, we often tell our own origin story, especially in this year of Jubilee. We tell how our foundresses spent time in study and discernment, listening to the land that would become Prairiewoods, and birthing this ecospirituality center with the support of their FSPA community. We talk of the Universe Story and the work of theologian Thomas Berry and physicist Brian Swimme and their impact on the development of Prairiewoods' mission. Deeply embedded in Prairiewoods' origin story is the story of St. Francis of Assisi, who spoke to all of creation as equals, calling the birds and the wolves, the sun and the moon, "brother" and "sister." For Franciscans, "It is one sacred universe, and we are all a part of it" (Richard Rohr, *Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi*).

One of the temptations in a significant anniversary year is to only tell our origin stories. After all, we are celebrating the beauty of what was created. In Prairiewoods' case, though, we believe (as our lead article states) "in the great Mystery that is Love unfolding." The final station on the Cosmic Walk that wends through our woods is, "Consciousness changing"—we are alive in a wonderful world welcoming the powers of the Universe to continue developing in us. Therefore, as our Jubilee year begins to wind toward its close, it is appropriate to ask and wonder—together—how will the story continue to unfold moving into our next 25 years?

A few things we know: that we will continue to go deeper into what it means to welcome people of all faiths and cultures, to hold space for those who seek to deepen and nurture relationships with Source of All Being, Earth, Self and Others. We will continue to explore our connection with the abundant life on this land, and seek new ways to engage with our neighbors, our friends, and the "wider We." Please know you are invited to join us in co-creating the unfolding story of Prairiewoods—participate, engage, share your dreams, volunteer, donate, or just be present in this space and dream the world you hope to see into being! We hope that this and every issue of our newsletter will continue to give voice and shape to our story.

My own Prairiewoods story is a very personal love story so surprising and illuminating and humbling—who expects profound, worldview-shattering change when they accept a new job? I wasn't quite prepared for it. But I thank you for the ways each of you have allowed your stories to intersect and overlap with mine these six (nearly seven) years, for the new eyes and ears and heart you have gifted me! Even in the darkest times, when we've shared grief and loss and bewilderment, the beauty of our shared Prairiewoods story shines. May that light grow ever brighter to light our way forward. Together. Peace and all good,

Jenifer Hanson, Director



Prairiewoods is a Catholic ecospirituality retreat and conference center in the Franciscan tradition. It is a nonprofit ministry sponsored by Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

**Mission:** Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality 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.

The Prairiewoods staff collaborates to publish this newsletter bimonthly. Content, except where otherwise noted, is created by our staff in consultation and with care to offer a uniquely Prairiewoods perspective.

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(continued from page 1)

There are many other sacred stories of origins, etiological tales that enlighten and enthrall, motivate and hold meaning for many. Prior to the Hebrew creation stories, other ancient sources (e.g., proto-Sumerian accounts, the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, the Akkadian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Hindu accounts of creation) offer cataclysmic tales of warring gods who create humanity to tend the Earth and serve the abode of the divine. There are stories in which creation emerges from the slain remains of a cosmic giant, where Leviathan-like guardians of the seas and ambassadors of the underworld take their dramatic cues from their benevolent foils in the realms above creation. There are myths of creation that celebrate the wisdom and fecundity of other-than-human life, like Great Turtle and Spider Grandmother, leading us to understand that we are part of a great Web of Life, not its center nor its apex, but embedded in Life's breathing, living being—that we are One.

Jim Enote, Suni tribal member, thought leader and our honored guest speaker for *Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* this April 29–30, will be speaking about stories that the land tells, and how our spirituality arises from them, leaving us trembling with humility and reverence. (See page 6.) That sense of reverent humility, espoused by the recently-deceased eminent sociobiologist E.O. Wilson, is essential as we interpret and live out our foundational stories. “Look closely at nature. Every species is a masterpiece, exquisitely adapted to the particular environment in which it has survived. Who are we to destroy or even diminish biodiversity” (E.O. Wilson, 1929–2021)? Who are “We” indeed, in the vast web of Life?

Humanity clings to its stories of origins because they birth meaning. They give purpose, speak profoundly about our identity and our place in the whole. Without our stories of origins, we falter in our soul, wondering who we are, where and how we belong, and what mission is ours to embrace for our brief journey as “human-merely-being” (ee cummings). Listening to our ancient sacred stories offers profound comfort and wisdom as we learn our place in creation. They reside in the deepest recesses of our

imagination and become the very fabric of our relational identity. The unfolding Universe Story or the Great Flaring Forth, for example, gives us the opportunity to listen, listen deeply to the exuberant symphony that is wrought through Love. When heard in concert with the land's own stories of the songs of mountains and rivers, red fox and timber wolf, towering pines and majestic oaks, the Big Story births wonder, reverence, gratitude and Love. Through the accounts of many faith-filled sojourners familiar with their own creation stories of old, the Big Story recognizes the resonant refrain pulsating again and again as galaxies spin their magnificent spirals and stars burst spectacularly into supernovas. Constellations and planets unfurl the refrain in a cosmic choral swell: “We are One! We are One! We are One!”

Prairiewoods welcomes and celebrates the next phase of our Big Story as it honors our holy journey of the past, with the great aspirational hope that our expanding consciousness of our sacred place embedded in the whole universe proceeds with great joy, gentle humility and overflowing gratitude. Humanity is such a profound iteration of the heart of divine Love that birthed a story in which Love itself, the dream of creation that keeps mysteriously unfolding day after day, re-creates and co-creates with every whirl of our home planet. Sunrise, sunset. Each day we draw breath, we co-create anew as instruments of this divine Love. We open our eyes and ears, hearts and minds to the great Mystery that is Love unfolding, revealing how interconnected we are with each other, with creation and with the Source of All Being. This is our mission, the one that binds us to one another, and the one that requires us to enter into the Story's telling with full voice and proclaim it with all our hearts. Here the Story of Love begins, and here it will ever be: “We are One! We are One! We are One!”



# Prairiewoods'

# EVOLVING STORY

## a staff storytelling

The trail passing through the prairie and woodland known as the Cosmic Walk invites us to experience the story of the universe and to contemplate our place in time. Wooden signs demarcate significant moments in the story of the unfolding universe, leading us to the present moment.

Challenging times call more urgency to our mission of peace and transformation. Prairiewoods has been so fortunate to hear the stories of the many visitors who attest to the need of sacred space throughout the pandemic. There are those without any access to a quiet, green place. Some find solace in Prairiewoods' programming that encourages a deeper dive into the work that heals and connects. We receive many notes of thanks. Notes like:

"Thank you, thank you, thank you. I feel God working in me as I flow through your generous care and kindness ..."

"Finding Prairiewoods in 2020 was truly transformational to my spiritual life. Thank you for your excellent work!"

"You are a loving agent of sharing a faith that encourages human interaction, self-actualization, and an understanding of the importance of ecological relationships in the world and universe."

It is an important time. John O'Donohue said, "Possibility is the secret heart of time," and this evolutionary moment is rife with possibility. Throughout the pandemic, Prairiewoods continues to be co-created as a place of peace and transformation by the generosity of supporters' charity, talent and time. Thank you for taking this journey with Prairiewoods.

—Jessica Lien, development coordinator

Twenty five years ago, six inspired and enthusiastic and somewhat clueless women got the go-ahead to found an eco-spirituality center. After weeks and months of pondering, discussing and praying, our mission statement emerged. It was to be 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. From henceforth, everything up to this very day unfolds from this statement.

How over-joyed I was when the group discerned that I, along with Sister Therese Pedretti, would spearhead the outdoor development. In addition they thought I would be a good candidate to address the holistic, physical part of the "self" mentioned in the mission statement. Within the week, I was off to massage therapy school amidst the very puzzled inquiries of my family.

"You are going to do what?" Very long pause. "Oh, that's nice."

Today, twenty five years later, I know it is way more than nice! How could I have known that literally thousands of extraordinary people would bless our space as they utilized our services to help integrate body and soul experiences through massage, healing touch and other modalities.

How could I have ever known that wonderful companions would come to share in our mission and teach yoga, singing bowls, tai chi, chi gong, forest bathing, sounding and a host of other sensory modalities. As the unfolding of the mission statement continued, these companions spoke the pronoun "our" as they broadened the ownership of the six original women.

As time progressed and unfolded, we practitioners knew we were an integral part of all the other offerings at Prairiewoods. Each department is enriched by and in turn enriches every other department. Nothing can define holistic more clearly. Helping someone to get in touch with and to value his or her own body and spirit enables a person to be aware that his or her spirit is one with every creature and being in the universe. That oneness is the connection to God within everything.

Have we had miracles at Prairiewoods? Of course, every day! How fortunate are we to often hear from people who relate their personal sense of healing, whether it is spiritual or physical. Sometimes a miracle consists of just being able to keep on going through very challenging times. I find myself humbled, inspired and overjoyed to be in a privileged relationship with those who come to share this sacred space and nurture their relationship with Source of All Being, Earth, self and others.

In the beginning of this writing, I mentioned that we were somewhat clueless. Well, I still am at times, but I do know one thing for certain: the Spirit has been our guide and continues to guide us in the unfolding of our mission. We are so blessed. And *you*, dear reader, are an important part of this blessing and unfolding.

—Nancy Hoffman, FSPA, holistic services coordinator, outdoor/land management

“We need to share our land,” is a phrase Sister Nancy repeated often as we walked the grounds and dreamed up what we could co-create with it next. Our beautiful, protected grounds are open for all people, plants and animals to come and experience peace and transformation in nature, and it is healing for us and our creature kin. Today, though, we see that a lack of fresh, healthy food and the disconnect between food production and our environment brings conflict and stifles positive transformations within ourselves and our community. In 2013, the United Nations boldly declared that “small-scale organic farming is the only way to feed the world,” and in the years following Prairiewoods grew some amazing partnerships to co-create local and sustainable models to work toward enacting this declaration.

We give space to and continue to support Metro Catholic Outreach in their mission to not just feed those in need, but feed them the fresh and healthy foods they deserve. Now the Green Prairie Garden annually produces thousands of pounds of fruits and vegetables for the Metro Catholic Outreach food pantry, thanks to their many dedicated volunteers.

We envisioned and created resilient, nourishing and healthy ecosystems with help of Backyard Abundance, culminating in our Garden of Eat’n and Healing Garden at Prairiewoods. Now these spaces provide space for a multitude of educational initiatives relating to what you can do to create a more environmentally- and socially-beneficial landscape around your own home or business. Both of these initiatives utilize permaculture principles and practices, boasting that neither require chemical fertilizers, pesticides or fungicides and are no-till operations, meaning our soil remains alive and in place.

Going forward we are excited to be once again working with these two organizations and welcoming a new one into the mix as we move forward into the spring of 2022. In partnership with the Linn County Master Gardeners and with the help of Metro Catholic Outreach, we will be working to share our land with our neighbors by creating the Green Community Gardens. Starting in February, neighbors of Prairiewoods will be invited to apply for and lease 30 community garden plots with priority given to low income and immigrant communities.

In partnership with Backyard Abundance, we are working to create a more inviting and welcoming space for our neighbors to the north by transforming our orchard into a food forest and gathering space. Once again this will be an amazing educational tool, and also a great resource for anyone, or anything, looking to reflect in nature and find a snack.

We are beyond excited to extend our welcome and share our land with more people, plants and animals, but it takes a village to do so! Keep your eye out for volunteer opportunities to help make these projects a reality come spring!

—August Stolba, land care & holistic ecology coordinator

*“We are committed to building bridges of relationships that stretch us to be people of encounter who stand with all suffering in our Earth Community. Our collaborations provide an opportunity for us to fulfill that mission, to help build relationships and bridge the gaps of social inequity.”*

The statement above is one of Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration’s (FSPA) commitments, made at our 2018 general assembly. Later that same year, FSPA restructured their partnership with the Mayo Franciscan Healthcare System; this presented an opportunity to establish the FSPA Seeding the Legacy of Healing Fund, which honors the longtime commitment of FSPA to the ministry of health care. An internal initiative, this fund allows FSPAs the chance to build upon existing ministry partnerships they have with other nonprofit organizations. Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration has a long-standing tradition of wisely stewarding and investing means that has allowed time, talent and financial resources to be invested back into global, national and local concerns.

In July 2020, Sister Lucille Winnike and I, supported by Sisters Nancy Hoffman, Donna Mae Venteicher and Marie DesJarlais, applied to the FSPA Seeding the Legacy of Healing Fund. The proposal that the five of us submitted relates to the mission of Prairiewoods: “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.” We consider healing of body, mind, spirit and land to be essential to our Prairiewoods’ ministries. The common good is also served in expanding the collaboration of Prairiewoods with other significant social justice groups.

We requested funds to grow the Prairiewoods endowment fund, as well as to deepen Prairiewoods’ outreach to four nonprofits: Catholic Worker House in Iowa City, and the Catherine McCauley Center, Matthew 25 and the African American Museum in Cedar Rapids. Funds have been directly distributed to these entities, however, due to the pandemic and the derecho, there has been limited personal interactions. Projects await future development.

The challenge to each of us: HOW and WHERE are we “Seeding a Legacy of Healing”?

—Joann Gehling, FSPA, holistic services, spiritual director

## Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Spirituality & Stories of the Land

with Jim Enote & Sara Thomsen

Friday, April 29, 7–9 p.m., & Saturday, April 30, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. (via Zoom)

Fee: \$75 full event, \$25 Friday only, \$50 Saturday only • To register, visit [Prairiewoods.org/Spirituality-in-the-21st-Century](https://prairiewoods.org/Spirituality-in-the-21st-Century)

*“Sacredness is a means and a motivation for protecting lands, waters, and our most special places. Finding our way to sacred places is a journey of joy, epiphany, and understanding, and about learning to walk straight on a crooked path.”*

—Jim Enote

Join us for *Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 2022*, where storytelling meets spiritual map-making. This year’s gathering will celebrate our communal spiritual journey into the valleys, groves and life-giving waters of the land’s sacred mysteries. Mapping our place within the web of creation enfolds us in the 13.7-billion-year journey of the universe. At Prairiewoods, Grandmother Oak and our silent fallen sentinels from the 2020 derecho, embedded in the Great Story of creation’s Flaring Forth told on our Cosmic Walk, have continued weaving a story of life and loss, co-creation and healing. This is our communal spiritual legacy. How might we map our own interior soul-scape as sacred kin embedded in Earth’s unfolding story, finding our way together on a wild, meandering pathway?

*Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* will offer words of wisdom from our esteemed guest presenter, **Jim Enote**, and songs of rejuvenation and hope from musician-of-Earth **Sara Thomsen**. Jim, a Zuni tribal member and CEO of the Colorado Plateau Foundation, and Sara, foundress and artistic director of Echoes of Peace Choir, musical web-spinner of life, will accompany us on an exploration and celebration of stories of the land. As former director of the A:shiwí A:wán Museum and Heritage Center, Jim worked with A:shiwí (Zuni) artists to create maps that give voice to the land’s own stories, showing how we are embedded in creation’s story in ways mysterious and profound. A:shiwí elders, having been in present-day North America for thousands of years, noted that their sacred lands are marked by trails of prayer, story and song, and have been carried along by canyon, river and rain. While creation is unfolding her mysteries in human hearts, Western notions of place and home are challenged, and our groundedness in the wider “We” emerges. This is the time of the Great Turning, when we must learn from our elders how Earth’s own stories attune us to spiritual insights about our communal origin, destiny, and the complex interdependence that connects us with all our relations. As gentle troubadour of Earth-song and storyteller of the land’s beauty, hopes and tears, Sara will accompany us with the elixir of melody to offer healing balm for our collective trauma from the 2020 derecho, and help us open to the possibility of new life. What a culmination and celebration of Prairiewoods’ 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Year! Come, be immersed in the Great Story, and we will find our path together!



The following are retreats and programs that Prairiewoods is hosting online via Zoom or in person in the next two months. For more information or to register, visit [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org) or call 319-395-6700.

## Soul-Scapes Retreat: Creating Sacred Space Inside & Outside at Home

Friday, March 18, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, March 20, 1 p.m.

Facilitators: Jen Kardos, Fred Meyer & Laura Weber



Spring is the time for thinking of green, for gardening and birdsong, gorgeous spring bulbs that flower into fullness, and mornings filled with delight and promise. Covid has kept many of us at home, creating work and school space, living and moving space for ourselves and our families. What about a natural play-and-pray space, a “Soul-Scape”? Come to Prairiewoods to reimagine your home’s Soul-Scape, where sacred dreamings coalesce with nature’s symphony, bringing light and life to those natural wonders

that are integral to our spiritual meanderings. What draws you to creation? Come explore how mountains and deserts, oceans and rivers, forests, prairies and all manner of creature-kin inspire our spiritual longings and immerse us in our heart’s vocation. On this weekend retreat, we will begin with time on Friday evening to immerse ourselves in springtime’s natural delights, with plentiful space for listening and forest bathing, deer trails and fox lairs. We will tune into the language that is creation unfurling to discover more deeply what draws and entralls us. Saturday will find us working with our interior sacred space, exploring how nature’s subtle attractors are stimulating our spiritual awareness and stoking our capacity for presence and joy. Time for gentle movement, poetry, music and a communal tea service will aid us as we identify with a Soul-Scape unique to our own journey. As Sunday unravels, we will find ourselves reimagining our sacred space at home, one that reflects and embodies how we ourselves are nurtured by creation, and how we in turn can co-create harmony and wholeness right in our own spare nook or backyard grotto. *Note:* Please bring a photo or sketch of an area at home (either interior or exterior) that you would like to reimagine as a sacred space for re-creation and en-JOY-ment. Now is your time to create a Soul-Scape that grounds and centers you!

**Fee:** \$230 includes sessions, lodging and all meals

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

## Prayer Experience Series

Tuesdays, March 1–April 26, 11:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

Facilitator: Angie Pierce Jennings

We are blessed with many ways to pray and reflect including songful prayer, contemplative prayer, visio divina, embodied prayer, silent prayer, guided meditation and many others. All are welcome to join this ongoing prayer series via Zoom and experience the joys of prayer and meditation together. Registration is not required.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## Metta Yoga

Mondays & Thursdays; March 3–April 28; 9:30–10:30 a.m., 10:45–11:45 a.m. & 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Heather English

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga from the spiritual environment and natural beauty of Prairiewoods. Join us in person as we link our movements with our breath and cultivate strength, flexibility and relaxation through regular hatha-style yoga classes. RYT-200 Hour Certified Yoga Alliance Instructor Heather English offers Gentle/Beginner’s Yoga every Monday and Thursday. People of all fitness levels and abilities are encouraged to participate whenever available. Registration is required for each session.

**Fee:** \$99 for eleven-punch card or \$60 for six-punch card, one punch per session

## Go Deeper Thursdays

Thursdays; March 3, March 17, April 7 & April 21; 4–5 p.m.

Facilitators: Ellen Bruckner & Laura Weber

“Go Deeper” emerged in the context of the global pandemic, or as Prairiewoods calls it, the *PanDeepening*. Our reflective and lively conversations opened us to spiritual deepening, providing a sacred space to share our PanDeepening awareness, a place where we explored venues for collective presencing and delving into the wider “We” space. As our journey meandered through topics associated with inter-breathing and collective consciousness, we embraced diverse resources for consideration.

Through simple breathing meditations, poetry, practicing mindfulness, storytelling, re-linguaging, listening to creation’s song and many small group experiences, we have been learning to read the collective and listen deeply to our emergent, inter-connected wisdom. In the process, we are becoming more expansive, more inclusive, recognizing our place in the wider “We.” Who is this “We” that we mean? It is wider than our own ego or individual selves, wider than our most intimate circles, our community, work, worship and social circles, and wider even than our human community. It is no less than the “We” of all creation. To explore our March-April topic, Emergent Eco-Spiritualities, sign up online to receive the Zoom link. A one-time registration for March-April is required. **Fee:** \$10 per month

From our friends at the Franciscan Spirituality Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin:

## Spiritual Direction Preparation Program

NEW COHORT STARTS IN SEPTEMBER 2022

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- ▶ Develop your compassionate listening skills, experience personal transformation and deepen your spiritual understanding.
- ▶ Featuring in-person and virtual workshops, meetings with supervisors, verbatims, written reflections and annual reviews.



APPLY TODAY:

[www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org)



## **Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton**

**Thursdays; March 3, March 17, April 7 & April 21; 7–9 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Carole Butz

The practice of contemplative living helps us respond to everyday experiences with greater awareness of our connections with God and others. It becomes a positive force in our lives and provides direction for our journey, enabling us to embrace our truest selves. This group meets via Zoom on the first and third Thursdays of each month. We use the *Bridges to Contemplative Living* series, which includes excerpts from the writings of Thomas Merton and other authors, to explore the truths of human existence. The process involves readings, reflections and contemplative dialogue. Book purchase is required after your first session. Please register for your first session to get the Zoom link.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## **Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations**

**Mondays; March 7, March 21, April 4 & April 18; 6:30–7:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Kathy Broghammer



Experience sound, stillness, playfulness and relaxation through the enigmatic vibrations of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls. During this in-person hour, we connect with our inner selves through the song of bowls.

We are invited to sit or lie down to listen and just be. We hear the sounds and feel the vibrations of the singing bowls going inward. Let's let our souls rest and allow ourselves to be recreated! Registration is required.

**Fee:** \$10 per session

## **Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers**

**Tuesdays, March 8 & April 12, 9:30–11 a.m.; & Wednesdays, March 23 & April 27, 6:30–8 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** participants

Practice knitting and stitching in the company of new friends! This is a group of crafters of various skill levels who create handmade goods for charity. New participants are always welcome, including those who are new to knitting and crocheting. Together we create hats, mittens, blankets and baby items for charity. Grab your needles and join us! This group meets in person on the second Tuesday and fourth Wednesday of each month.

**Fee:** Free

## **Evening Centering Prayer**

**Tuesdays; March 8, March 22, April 12 & April 26; 5:30–7 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Judith Smith

Come to Prairiewoods for Evening Centering Prayer on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. This is a prayer/support group for people who enjoy centering prayer, a form of meditation focused on silent prayer. In this time of silence, we relax, empty our minds and find God's presence within us. Sessions stand alone.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## **Men Exploring Faith**

**Thursdays; March 10, March 24, April 14 & April 28; 4–5:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Linzy Martin

Behavioral scientists and spiritual guides have noted a major transformation in the life direction of many men as we mature. It may happen gradually or abruptly, as early as our 20s or in our 50s or 60s. Some men never make this shift, described as a change from goal drivenness to receptivity, from ego to wisdom. The transition can start from the inside (*Why am I doing what I'm doing?*) or the outside (from a loss or threat), and it may seem disruptive while on the way to being life-enhancing. Join with a small group of reflective men in honest conversation about these changes. This group meets in person the second and fourth Thursdays of each month.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## **Day of Self Renewal**

**Mondays, March 14 & April 11, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Angie Pierce Jennings

Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services, group guided

meditation, singing bowl prayer, a private guest room, a fresh lunch, and access to the labyrinth and all that Prairiewoods has to offer. (Choose from massage, head and shoulder massage, reflexology, healing touch, spiritual direction, Nature & Forest Therapy Walk, yoga or chair yoga.) Registration, a nonrefundable/nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three services choices are required eight days in advance. (At this time, massage, reflexology and healing touch are available for vaccinated individuals.)

**Fee:** \$110 includes two services, guided meditation, singing bowl prayer, private guest room and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room)

## **Singing Bowl Prayer**

**Mondays, March 14 & April 11, 12:45–1:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Kathy Broghammer

Throughout history, singing bowls have been used around the world to foster meditation, relaxation, prayer and mind-body-spirit wellness. In these in-person sessions, we let the resonant sounds of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls relax the entire body and create a pathway for clearer connection with the divine. We are invited to just receive and breathe. Registration is required by noon.

**Fee:** \$5 per session

## **Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences**

**Afternoon Experiences:** Mondays, March 14 & April 11, 2:30–3:45 p.m.

**Welcoming Spring Experience:** Wednesday, March 16, 6–8 p.m.

**Earth Day Celebration Experience:** Friday, April 22, 6–8 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Emelia Sautter

Join the land and certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide Emelia Sautter for a walk with the natural world. Experience Forest Therapy, a sensory-focused practice that invites us to slow down and be present with self and the natural world around us. According to the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy, "Forest Therapy is a practice that supports health and wellness through guided immersion in forests and other environments to promote the well-being of both people and the land. It is inspired by *shinrin yoku*, the Japanese practice of "Forest Bathing." Time with our nature kin reduces stress and depression, improves cognitive functioning, boosts our immune system, regulates blood pressure, improves relationships, increases feelings of gratitude and much more. Registration is required by the day before. Please bring a water bottle and dress for being outdoors.

**Fee:** \$20 per session (\$15 for shorter afternoon sessions)

## **Rededication to Peace & Memorial**

**Sunday, March 13, 1–2:30 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Prairiewoods staff

Betty Daugherty, FSPA, dreamed of redesigning Prairiewoods' original peace pole. Ironically, the peace pole did not survive the 2020 derecho that devastated Linn County. Her dream came true posthumously as Prairiewoods commissioned local artist Lisa Williams and the Iowa Ceramics Center and Glass Studio to design a new monument to peace to stimulate our senses, spirits, imaginations and hearts to birth peace throughout the world. Join us for a prayerful memorial for friends and trees we've lost during the pandemic and the unveiling and dedication of this beautiful, outdoor symbol of peace.

**Fee:** Free

*Offered in Partnership with  
Unity Point Hospice*

## **Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Group**

**Wednesdays, March 16 & April 20, 5:30–7 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Jamie Siela, LISW, & Kristine Shultis, MDiv, LMT, CHT

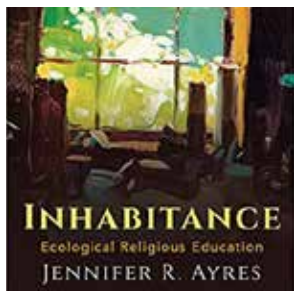
In grief, our very foundation can be rocked. Take time to connect with others in grief and engage the creative spark. This online monthly grief group is open to anyone grieving loss through death. On the third Wednesday of each month, explore a different creative art medium. On March 16, we will use cord and yarn to create a rainbow to represent the times that we had with our loved one or the times yet to be. On April 20, we will make a “you have a piece of my heart” puzzle frame using recycled puzzle pieces, glue and a picture frame. Registration is required by the previous Monday, nine days in advance. This group meets online. **Fee:** Free, includes all art supplies

## **Inhabitation Book Discussion Wednesday, March 23, 6–8 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Angie Pierce Jennings

Just as the spring season begins, we are invited to join in a Zoom discussion of the wonderfully hopeful ecospiritual book *Inhabitation: Ecological Religious Education* by Rev. Dr. Jennifer R. Ayers. The author writes, “Calling a place ‘home’ inspires the desire to know it, as best as possible, with a ‘loving eye.’ That is to say, by approaching the earth (and its particular places that are most familiar) with a desire to see, know, and love it, humans encounter it as a living subject with which they might cultivate a relationship ... The work of ecological faith, then, is embracing the divine remaking of human life so that it is ever more ‘at home’ on earth. That work is about learning inhabitation.” Let’s spend the evening together pondering and

discussing these beautiful insights about inhabitation and cultivating a loving relationship with our home places. Registration is required by the previous day. This discussion will meet via Zoom. **Fee:** \$10



## **Gardening to Ease Stress & Anxiety: A Four-Part Series beginning Friday, March 25, 12–1 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Jen Kardos

Now more than ever, we need to return to our gardens. We all know

instinctively how we feel better with time outside with wild plants. Intentionally cultivate and grow that connection in this four-part series. Easy-to-understand, scientifically proven benefits will be covered alongside hands-on gardening techniques. Offering many of the benefits of meditation, gardening can be a powerful mindfulness practice. All are welcome, whether we plan on growing an herb container garden in a window, joining a community garden for the first time or growing veggies in our own backyard. This four-part series begins on March 25 via Zoom and then continues in person in the Green Community Gardens on April 22, June 3 and June 24, from 4–6 p.m.

**Fee:** Free for first session, \$20 for each in-person session (or \$50 for four-part series)

## **Women in Interfaith Dialogue Saturday, April 2, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Angie Pierce Jennings & Virginia Melroy

Come together quarterly with women of various faith traditions for conversations about faith and spirituality. Our spring topic is spirituality and flowers. This is the time of year when flowers begin to emerge, reminding us of the beauty of creation and the hope of new life. Which flowers have special spiritual significance to you personally or within your faith tradition? Perhaps the lily or the lotus, springtime daffodils or dandelions? What do flowers symbolize in your spiritual life? We are invited to bring a reading or prayer to share with the group, as well as an object that represents the topic or our spirituality in general. Registration is required by Friday at noon. This group meets via Zoom. **Fee:** \$10

## **Walk with an Eco-Ologist Tuesday, April 12, 4–6 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Raptology

The diversity of flora and fauna that bloom and appear and the ecological services they provide are just the tip of the iceberg in understanding why they are there and what that means to us. Join us on the second Tuesday of each month (starting in April) as we walk and reflect on how the landscape changes and evolves with the help of a local ‘ologist—diving deeper into topics such as ornithology (birds), lepidopterology (butterflies and moths), wild ethnobotany (wild edibles) and petrology (rocks). Our first Walk with an Eco-Ologist will feature raptologists from Raptology and their avian partners. They will help us to identify, look for and understand birds of prey and how we can help these beautiful creatures thrive through conservation practices. **Fee:** \$20

## **A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety Book Discussion**

**Wednesday, April 20, 6–8 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Angie Pierce Jennings

In honor of Earth Day, we will discuss the book *A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety: How to Keep Your Cool On a Warming Planet* by Sarah Jaquette Ray. The author was inspired to write this book while attending to the emotional needs of her environmental science students, realizing that only focusing on the gloom and doom facts of climate change didn’t actually help or activate students, it simply made them feel hopeless. Using the climate wisdom and emotional intelligence of her Gen Z students, she developed a strategy for dealing with climate emotions and framing an environmental movement that focuses on imagining the world we want to create, identifying our unique super powers and working with them. She encourages readers to see ourselves as community instead of individuals and says Gen Z folks are able to put together the intersectionality of climate/environmental justice and social justice in a way no other generation has. Learn, grow and discuss this brilliant and accessible intergenerational book as a community! Registration is required by the previous day. This discussion will meet via Zoom. **Fee:** \$10

*Save the date!*

## **Mindfulness for Mothers: Good Morning, I Love You**

**Tuesday, May 10, & Wednesday, May 11, 10 a.m.–2:30 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Kim Seward, BSN, RN, CMI, & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Mothers of all ages are invited to learn mindfulness, compassion and self-care for stress relief.

## **Prairiewoods Nature Arrangements: Community Supported Restoration a year-long offering beginning May 5**

Support Prairiewoods and get a monthly gorgeous, seasonally-inspired natural creation for your table, mantle, threshold, Soul-Scape prayer space or anywhere at home you’d like a natural arrangement to connect with the land at Prairiewoods. We welcome you to join in Community Supported Restoration by ordering your seasonal arrangements ahead of time, like a CSA, and then pick them up on the first Thursday of each month, May 2022–May 2023. These are 12 natural arrangements for your home and for your soul! Register by April 22. **Fee:** \$120 for 12 monthly bouquets

# Donors (November & December 2021)

We appreciate all of the generous people who donate their time, money and other gifts to Prairiewoods! For a complete, up-to-date list between Newsletters, please visit [www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate](http://www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate).

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*In honor of Madeleine Charney*  
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Winnike, FSPA  
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Phyllis Ann Ries, RSM  
M.L. Folkedahl-meehleder

*In honor of Mary Rasmussen*  
Jon Krieg & Patti McKee  
*In honor of Kathy Reardon*  
Martha Gelhaus & Kevin  
Pokorny  
*In honor of Bev Richardson*  
Pat Van Buskirk  
*In honor of Marlou Ricke, FSPA*  
Katie Myers  
*In honor of Ellen Schlachter*  
Rev. Mel & Ellen Schlachter  
*In honor of Sue & Thad Stanton*  
Carol Barrick  
*In honor of the volunteers*  
Bob Engler & Carol Nilles  
*In honor of Lucille Winnike, FSPA*  
Shirley Jekerle  
Mary McCauley, BVM  
Judi O'Brien Anderson  
Becky Wilson

## MEMORIALS

*In memory of Marie Addis, FSPA,*  
& Elaine Addis  
Janet & Ron Nimer  
*In memory of Linda Coffin*  
Fisher Phyllis Fisher  
*In memory of Betty Daugherty,*  
FSPA Anonymous  
Carole Butz  
M.L. Folkedahl-meehleder  
Jean & Mike Junis  
Linda Kettner  
Tamara McReynolds  
Jean Ann Rausch, FSPA  
Rev. Janelle Siffring  
*In memory of Betty Daugherty,*  
FSPA, & Gertrude Daugherty,  
FSPA Mark & Sara Eisbach  
*In memory of Kevin Day*  
Dennis & Pat Day  
*In memory of Sr. Adele Doughan*  
Mary K. Doughan, RSM  
*In memory of Joe Fagan*  
Lou Ann Burkle  
*In memory of family & ASC*  
members  
Therese Anne Kiefer, ASC  
*In memory of Dorothy Kestel*  
Jo Ann Kreiman  
*In memory of Tara King*  
Laurie Erlacher  
Becky, Jenny & Sara Norlin  
*In memory of Bill Krieg*  
Mary Rasmussen  
*In memory of Bill Lonergan-*  
*Highley Ginny Dougherty*  
Patricia Elliott

*In memory of Bill Lonergan-*  
*Highley Sarajejan Henry*  
Janice Kass  
Annette & Rod Kervin  
Earl & Judy Lockhart  
Mary Moore  
Nancy Schrimper  
*In memory of Carrie & Will*  
Lumsden Linda Lumsden  
*In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Luther*  
Lundine Cindy Lundine  
*In memory of John Luster*  
Charles Luster  
*In memory of David L. May*  
Barbara & David May  
*In memory of Heath Mihal &*  
*Leona Mihal*  
Gene & Sue Mihal  
*In memory of Rich Niccolls*  
Bette Niccolls  
*In memory of Mireta Niebuhr*  
Joyce Niebuhr  
*In memory of Margaret O'Connor*  
Sandra Henderson  
*In memory of Therese Pedretti,*  
FSPA Melody Rockwell  
Cindy Swift  
*In memory of John Pelton*  
Beth Pelton  
*In memory of Clem & Loretta*  
Reidy Joseph & Sara Kane  
*In memory of Agnes & Vance*  
Reindl Rita Grimm  
*In memory of JoDee Rottler*  
Juanita Williams  
*In memory of Norma*  
Rubenbauer Mary Ellen &  
Roger Baumhover  
*In memory of The Rev. Barbara*  
Schlachter  
Rev. Mel & Ellen Schlachter  
*In memory of Sr. Mary Myron*  
Stork  
Joseph & Rosanne Mashek  
*In memory of James & Carolyn*  
Truitt Andrea Truitt  
*In memory of Connie Wall*  
Jo Dillon  
*In memory of Kent Warner*  
Brenda McMillin  
*In memory of Ivy Yoder*  
Tammy Yoder

## IN-KIND DONATIONS

Mary Ann Barry  
Marie Brown  
Kay Landuyt & Larry Robinson  
Mary Mockler

Linda Ponder  
Tony & Gaylen Wobeter

## VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Nancy Allen  
Susan Armitage  
Mary Ann Barry  
Doug Beadle  
Rose Blank  
Carole Butz  
Julia Campa  
Emma Castiblanco  
Georgia Christensen, FSPA  
Mary Cohen  
Joni Reed Cooley  
Marie Desjarlais, FSPA  
Shannon Finnegan  
Ginny Fleming  
John Fletcher  
John Frankhouse  
Jolene Frankhouse  
Maddox Freeze  
Barb Gay  
Lydia Gehling  
Christine Gust  
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Linda Keefe  
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Diane Morris  
Mike Nesslage  
Laura Nettles, FSPA  
Roger Norfolk  
Diane Olsen  
Frank Olsen  
Nathan Phelps  
Conti Roberts  
Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA  
Terrie Seibert  
Gian Luc Sison  
Gina Sison  
Lyndon Sison  
Lucy Slinger, FSPA  
Judith Smith  
Jay Stolba  
Jacob Umstead  
Leslie Wright  
Xavier High School



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Hiawatha IA 52233

You may send this by mail, email [ecospirit@prairiewoods.org](mailto:ecospirit@prairiewoods.org) or call **319-395-6700**. If mailed, please include this address label.

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- Please take us off your mailing list.
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Are you on social media? Find "Prairiewoods FSC" on:



Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center presents:

*Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

**Spirituality & Stories of the Land**

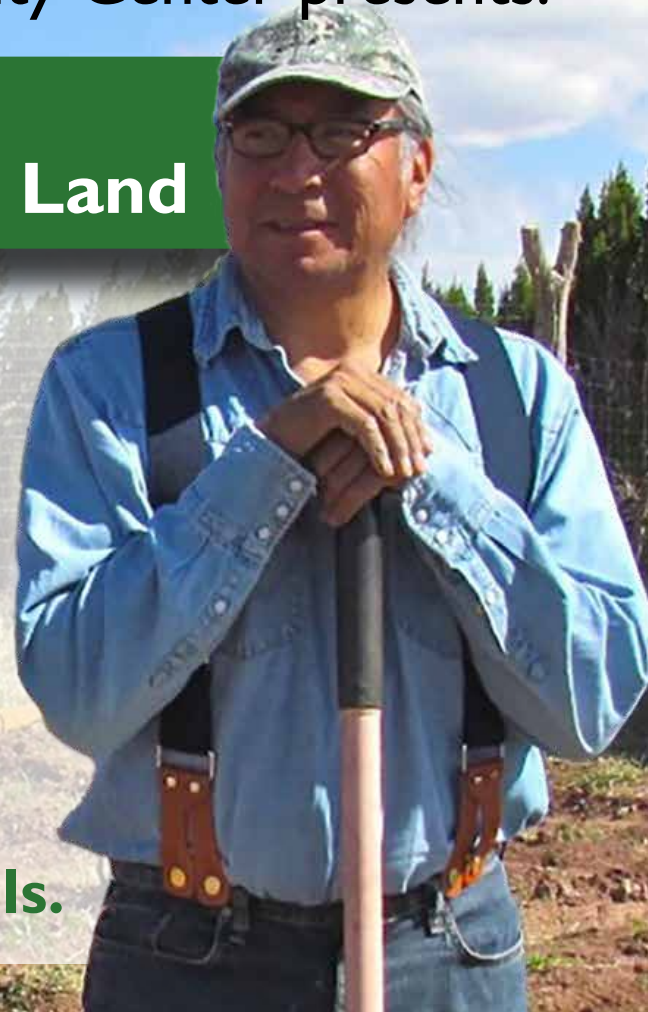
with **Jim Enote**

(Zuni tribal member & thought leader)

**Friday, April 29, & Saturday, April 30**

via Zoom

**See page 6 for complete details.**



May/June 2022

# Prairiewoods

A CATHOLIC, FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

## JUBILATION

A Place of Peace and Transformation

### On Top

*All this new stuff goes on top  
turn it over, turn it over  
wait and water down  
from the dark bottom  
turn it inside out  
let it spread through  
Sift down even.  
Watch it sprout.  
A mind like compost.*

—Gary Snyder

When Prairiewoods was founded in the mid-1990s, the foundresses were composting: taking the rich leavings of older paradigms and ways of seeing the world and our human place in it, mixing them with new ideas gleaned from the work of Teilhard, Thomas Berry and others, and sprinkling in their hopes for a more beautiful world. For two years they added to the pile, turning it over and over, while using their senses to see, hear, feel, taste what the soil and their more-than-human kin on this land were dreaming into being. By the time they hosted the first retreat in July of 1996, a rich humus had been composted, in which were planted the seeds of a generative collaboration. What emerged was this place of peace and transformation called Prairiewoods.

One of the beautiful realities hidden within the metaphor of composting is that nothing is lost in the process of creating this new, rich nutrient-dense material.

Everything that is added to the pile is incorporated and transformed as it becomes the growth medium for something new. Everything our foundresses brought to the compost pile as they created Prairiewoods is still here, nourishing those who come here seeking spiritual deepening, peace and their own transformative experiences.

For the past two years we've all been living through the upheavals of another birth, as a new global era is born and stretches into being. We are again called to compost, adding to the pile our fears and our griefs, the truths we've seen laid bare in the shaky cinematography of cell phone videos, all the "things that couldn't happen" that have. As difficult as it is, we are called to add the trappings of our old lives—lives we didn't necessarily ask to trade in or transform—to create the new life that is emerging.

*(continued on page 3)*

## PRAIRIEWOODS STAFF

**Laurie Erlacher**  
Cook

**Joann Gehling, FSPA**  
Holistic Services, Spiritual  
Director

**Jenifer Hanson**  
Director

**Trace Harshman**  
Housekeeper

**Brydon Hill**  
Cook

**Nancy Hoffman, FSPA**  
Holistic Services  
Coordinator, Outdoor/  
Land Management

**Ann Jackson, PBVM**  
Spiritual Services  
Coordinator, Spiritual  
Director

**Andi Lewis**  
Marketing Coordinator

**Jessica Lien**  
Development Coordinator

**Erik Meggers**  
Maintenance Coordinator

**Angie Pierce Jennings**  
Hosted Groups &  
Hospitality Coordinator

**Mary Rasmussen**  
Hospitality Assistant

**Nancy Schrimper**  
Office Administrator

**August Stolba**  
Land Care & Holistic  
Ecology Coordinator

**Dan Sutherland**  
Chef/Kitchen Manager

**Laura Weber**  
Retreats Coordinator,  
Associate Director

**Lucille Winnike, FSPA**  
Retreats, Spiritual  
Director



*"Our bodies, our thoughts, our minds, our spirits are affected by the whole of the earthen community, and affect this whole in return. This is both a mystical sensibility and a scientific fact. It is an awareness that makes us tingle with its responsibility, its beauty, its poetry. It makes our lives our most foundational form of activism. It means everything we do matters, and matters wondrously."*

—Lyanda Lynn Haupt, from *Rooted: Life at the Crossroads of Science, Nature, and Spirit*, p. 22

When I read the sentences above in Lyanda Haupt's most recent book, I was immediately struck by their truth. At Prairiewoods, the integration of science, nature and spirit is central to our identity. It is also why, though our mission is not understood to be primarily "activist" in nature, how we live our values is, indeed, our "foundational form of activism." Our participation in the wider WE, our understanding of the inherent interconnectedness of the Whole, calls us to evaluate our actions, programs, processes on the basis of the values articulated in our mission and vision statement. Namely:

### *Our Franciscan heritage calls us to:*

- Integrate the principles of the universe—interiority, diversity and communion—as a basis for all decision making.
- Provide programs and opportunities for ongoing personal transformation for the development of wisdom and compassion.
- Reverence the Divine Presence within all creation, including each member of the Earth Community.
- Encourage care for the earth through our practices, programs, retreats and outreach.
- Collaborate with others in developing programs that enhance spiritual deepening and impact greater ecological consciousness.
- Celebrate the privilege of being human.
- Provide sanctuary and rest, a place where each individual is welcomed with warm hospitality and respect.
- Encourage dialogue among various faith traditions to promote respect and cooperation.
- Continue involvement with the broader community around sacred values.

Prairiewoods' mission and vision statements are quite beautiful. (I did not craft them, so I can say so without bragging.) These values statements serve as guideposts for embodying and enlivening our mission, as well as for bringing our vision closer to its full flowering. We invite you to engage with us in our ponderings as we strive to grow ever more fully integrated and aligned as an ecospirituality center.

Peace and all good,

Jenifer Hanson, Director



Prairiewoods is a Catholic ecospirituality retreat and conference center in the Franciscan tradition. It is a nonprofit ministry sponsored by Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

**Mission:** Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality 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.

The Prairiewoods staff collaborates to publish this newsletter bimonthly. Content, except where otherwise noted, is created by our staff in consultation and with care to offer a uniquely Prairiewoods perspective.

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# Jubilation: A Place of Peace & Transformation

(continued from page 1)

In the context of gardening, composting has an element of fun and excitement. We throw in scraps, they disintegrate, break down into molecules that recombine in a new way. Integration and dis-integration are clearly seen as parts of one continuous holistic process, the results of which are visible and visibly enriching. In the context of global pandemic, climate change, mass extinction and social upheaval, composting ourselves often feels overwhelming, frightening, confusing and unnatural. It can be difficult to see pivoting, renegotiating, daily risk assessment as healthy and holistic when it mostly feels burdensome and scary.

In some ways it may seem a bit like a cosmic twist that Prairiewoods declared a 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee year in the midst of these “unprecedented” times. How do we celebrate while everyone isolates? Are our hearts even able to experience jubilation in a zeitgeist of anxiety and depression? How do we reach, much less express, joy and gratitude through layers of loss and sadness?

One answer might be found in the Franciscan spirituality that our Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (FSPA) foundresses included in the life-giving humus when they established Prairiewoods. Betty Daugherty, FSPA, wrote:

“Francis is all about relationship; not a relationship based on hierarchy, power and control, but one of sisterhood and brotherhood, of connection and engagement. His stance is one

of humility and gratitude.

“The view of the cosmos in the 13<sup>th</sup> century was certainly different than it is today, but Francis, the mystic, knew within himself that he and all of creation emerged out of the same Love. Without knowledge of quantum physics and all the ways in which the new cosmology reveals the connections between spirituality and science, he saw that all things are related. All created things—not just fellow humans, animals, the birds he preached to or the wolf he tamed, but even the sun, moon, water and wind—were his sisters and brothers.

“In his spirituality we find the same understandings that science highlights for us today: the sacredness and interconnectedness of all existence, the interdependence of all life.”

All that has been created has emerged “out of the same *Love*.” We are one, our shared origin and our shared home is *Love*. This is cause for jubilation, indeed! If we can hold our hearts truly open to this one-ness, if we can live in attunement with it, the difficult composting we have been experiencing suddenly starts to feel generative and creative, not merely painful. The *WE* that is emerging is something new, but it includes and embraces within it all that came before. In this 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee year, we can feel deep gratitude and joy for all that *IS* Prairiewoods, even as we face the next 25 years knowing that the rich compost being tended now will be the growth medium for the peace and transformation to come.



the compost pile at Prairiewoods, as photographed by Laura Weber

# WHAT'S EMERGING at PRAIRIEWOODS

Every year the spring brings about a resurrection of new life as bits of green begin to emerge from the brown, gold and white landscape. We rejoice as the sun once more warms our skin, as our mammal, amphibian and reptilian friends emerge from their period of rest and our migratory avian kin return from warmer lands to sing songs not heard for months. The trees we planted last year will soon signal that they have survived their first winter in their forever home and once again our prairies will grow to welcome our pollinator friends. These cycles play out over and over, but this year we are excited for new emergences as we too crawl out from hibernation to show our green!

Thanks to a generous grant from Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, space for community gardens is one of the new things emerging at Prairiewoods this spring. In a partnership between the Linn County Master Gardeners and Prairiewoods, there will be up to 30 plots available in the *Green Community Gardens*, located just south of the Green Prairie Garden. Applications are still in circulation for people in the neighboring areas to rent their own gardens, allowing them to have access to healthy and culturally relevant foods. Space has been cleared, a fence built and plots divided; water, tools, seeds, seedlings and classes will be provided to help people have a successful year of gardening. We are excited about this emerging opportunity for this Encuentro (*encounter*) moment of getting to know the neighbors of Prairiewoods.

The Sisters of St. Francis Sacred Heart Charitable Fund also gave us a generous grant to evolve our orchard into the *Four Winds Food Forest* and gathering space. With the help of Backyard Abundance and a dedicated volunteer committee, we have created a beautiful design for the space that will include a diverse variety of native species that are edible for both humans and animals, as well as multiple gathering spaces for relaxation, contemplation and education. We hope this project will act as a sanctuary for our guests, neighbors and creature-kin alike!

On top of these two growing projects, we are offering some amazing *new programs*. Join us on the second Tuesday of each month for our Walk with an Eco-Ologist series in which an expert in fields ranging from entomology to dendrology guides us through Prairiewoods and sheds light on their discipline. Another program we will be launching is our Art of Nature, Nature of Art series, which will be led by a local nature-centric artist who will guide a reflection and teach us how to create art in mediums from poetry to ceramics. Lastly, we are offering a nature CSA, or as we like to call it, *Community Supported Restoration*, where you can receive a beautiful arrangement each month to display at your home or business.

Don't worry—all of this hard work won't fall to just Sister Nancy, August and our volunteers! We are very excited to announce that we have been awarded two summer *Green Iowa AmeriCorps Land and Water Stewards* to help us grow at Prairiewoods. Do you know someone who would benefit from a three-month, intensive learning opportunity, working on the Prairiewoods grounds and helping with programming? Contact August at [astolba@prairiewoods.org](mailto:astolba@prairiewoods.org)!



## Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Spirituality & Stories of the Land

with Jim Enote & Sara Thomsen

Friday, April 29, 7–9 p.m., & Saturday, April 30, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. (via Zoom)

Fee: \$75 full event, \$25 Friday only, \$50 Saturday only • To register, visit [Prairiewoods.org/Spirituality-in-the-21st-Century](http://Prairiewoods.org/Spirituality-in-the-21st-Century)

### **C**reation speaks. How are we listening?

Join us for *Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Spirituality & Stories of the Land*, where storytelling meets spiritual map-making. This year's online gathering via Zoom will celebrate our communal spiritual journey into the valleys, groves and life-giving waters of the land's sacred mysteries. Mapping our place within the web of creation enfolds us in the 13.7-billion-year journey of the universe. At Prairiewoods, Grandmother Oak and our silent fallen sentinels from the 2020 derecho, embedded in the Great Story of creation's Flaring Forth told on our Cosmic Walk, have continued weaving a story of life and loss, co-creation and healing. This is our communal spiritual legacy, and it is rich with infinite nuance and diversity. Each of us has a story to tell, and each of us is embedded in creation's own story. When we are able to see our little stories as microcosms of a Universe Story, we can see a vast, mysterious network beneath the surface. Our emergent spiritualities reflect the profound depth and wisdom of an enduring matrix of life, energy, hope and love once we can tap into creation's own Story.

*Creation speaks. How are we listening?* *Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* will offer words of wisdom from our esteemed guest presenter, Jim Enote, and songs of rejuvenation and hope from musician-of-Earth Sara Thomsen. Together they will give voice to the land's own stories, showing how we are embedded in creation's story in ways mysterious and profound. A:shiwí elders, having been in present-day North America for thousands of years, note that their sacred lands are marked by trails of prayer, story and song, and have been carried along by canyon, river and rain. While creation is unfolding her mysteries in human hearts, Western notions of place and home are challenged, and our groundedness in the wider "We" emerges. This is the time of the Great Turning, when we must learn from our elders how Earth's own stories attune us to spiritual insights about our communal origin, destiny, and the complex interdependence that connects us with all our relations. What a culmination and celebration of Prairiewoods' 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Year! Come, be immersed in the Great Story, and we will find our path together!

**Jim Enote** is a Zuni tribal member and has spent over 40 years working professionally to protect and steward cultural and natural resources. He is the CEO of the Colorado Plateau Foundation, which supports regional Native communities to protect water and sacred places, ensure food security, and preserve languages and ancestral knowledge. He also serves as the chair of the board of trustees for the Grand Canyon Trust and lives in Zuni, New Mexico.

With a voice rich as the best Midwest soil, **Sara Thomsen** creates songs that carry you inward and outward—in, to the particulars of your own life, and out—into the shared humanity of us all. Her performance style is easygoing and full of humor and depth, capturing the audience's engagement. Sara's music gently enfolds and unfolds the listener. Thomsen has released six solo albums and is a weaver of song and community singing. At concerts, conferences, classrooms, workshops, retreats, jails, places of prayer, and lines of protest, to be with Sara is to want to sing!



Prairiewoods' 2022 Garden Party

A Night  
in the  
Cosmos

Saturday,  
**June 4,**  
at 5 p.m.

Purchase tickets  
by May 30 at  
[www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org)

Experience the majesty of the universe at *A Night in the Cosmos!* Get swept away by the twinkling lights, an out-of-this-world dinner, and stellar live and silent auctions. It will be a celestial night to remember!

*Prairiewoods' 2022 Garden Party: A Night in the Cosmos* will transport you to a night under the stars, where everything feels magical. On *Saturday, June 4*, join us in the second floor Ballroom at the DoubleTree by Hilton in downtown Cedar Rapids for a heavenly evening of food, friendship and fundraising for Prairiewoods.

The Garden Party is a great way to support the wide variety of spiritual and ecological programming Prairiewoods provides throughout the year. Don't miss this chance to experience *A Night in the Cosmos!*

*The festivities include:*

- *5 p.m. Social hour* with an impressive silent auction and a cash bar
- *6 p.m. Out-of-this-world dinner* and wine with seven of your closest friends—or soon-to-be friends—and time to put in last-minute bids on your favorite auction items
- *7 p.m. Live auction* featuring a variety of amazing items ranging from exclusive Prairiewoods experiences to one-of-a-kind parties

Tickets cost \$55 each or \$440 for a table of 8 and must be reserved by May 30 at [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org) or 319-395-6700. Please register each guest by name with dietary restrictions. If you can't attend, please consider sending a donation. We hope you'll join us under the stars!

The following are retreats and programs that Prairiewoods is hosting online via Zoom or in person in the next two months. For more information or to register, visit [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org) or call 319-395-6700.

### Jubilation Retreat in Honor of Prairiewoods' 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee

**Friday, May 6, 12 p.m.–Saturday, May 7, 1 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Laura Weber, PhD

Come to Prairiewoods to celebrate your soul singing with the joy of all creation as we warm up for a Prairiewoods weekend of homecoming and the gentle embrace of Earth. What a time to celebrate life in this sacred place, where we explore and nurture our relationships with Source of All Being, self, others and creation.



Springtime is a time of opening, of coming alive, of anticipating and preparing our hearts for all the good gifts of creation, as thawing roots plunge deeper into the warm, moist soil and gorgeous green tendrils spring forth into budding splendor. What better way to celebrate Prairiewoods as a place of peace and transformation than by spending two days praying and playing in the sun-soaked gardens and basking in the odiferous blossoms? Beginning Friday, we will gather for a celebratory "spring awakening" luncheon on the patio, followed by some free time for prayer, reflection, walking, meditation or a deeply restful snooze in your own comfy room or under your favorite tree. We meet again as a group at 4 p.m. for a prayerful journey of the universe out on the Cosmic Walk and conclude with dinner ala Prairiewoods. On Friday evening, after dinner, we will gather for sunset prayer to enter into the quietude of our innermost sanctuary, where Spirit stills and anoints us for the journey. Saturday morning, following a hot breakfast, we will gather for some gentle tai chi movement and time for spiritual journaling,

meditative art or poetry for the soul. A silent nature mindfulness meditation walk follows, concluding the morning with lunch on the patio (weather permitting), and leading into the festivities of Saturday's Praise be! 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Celebration & Open House. We can't wait to host you in this beautiful, Edenic oasis!

**Fee:** \$175 includes sessions, lodging and all meals (*Lodgers only, please.*)

### June & July Silent Directed Retreats

**Sunday, June 19, 5 p.m.–Saturday, June 25, 1 p.m.;** or

**Sunday, July 24, 5 p.m.–Saturday, July 30, 1 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Rose Blank; Ann Jackson, PBVM; & Lucille Winnike, FSPA

Join us for a week of sacred space, silence, solitude, rest and prayer. Steeped in the love of all of creation on 70 acres of prairie and woodland, deepen awareness of life's gifts; restore balance; live in the moment; and nurture relationships with Creator, Earth, self and others. Each day affords opportunities for healthy meals, quiet personal reflection and an hour-long session with a spiritual director. An optional centering prayer session closes each day. Body modalities, such as massage, healing touch and reflexology, may be available for an additional cost. Silent directed retreats are ideal for anyone who desires quiet time away to return to one's center, to learn the art of deep listening, to recover a sense of wonder and gratitude for life, and to fall in love again with all of creation.

**Fee:** \$495 includes spiritual direction, lodging and all meals (*Lodgers only, please.*)



## Rest & Restore on Retreat

Prairiewoods warmly invites individual, private and directed retreats all year round. Retreatants can choose lodging that best suits their needs: a silent, private, solar-powered retreat hermitage tucked away on the edge of the woods and prairie, with full kitchen to prepare meals, or a quiet, private, comfortable room in the Guest House with meals prepared by our kitchen staff. Art and media and meditation resources are available. Spiritual direction/companionship, guided meditation and body modalities—such as massage, healing touch and reflexology—are also available to assist retreatants in exploring their relationships with the Source of All Being, Earth, self and others. Call 319-395-6700, ext. 201 or ext. 203, to reserve space.

## **Gardening to Ease Stress & Anxiety** **Fridays; April 22, June 3 & June 24;** **4–6 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Jen Kardos

Now more than ever, we need to return to our gardens. We all know instinctively how we feel better with time outside with wild



plants. Intentionally cultivate and grow that connection in this in-person series. Easy-to-understand, scientifically proven benefits will be covered alongside hands-on gardening techniques. Offering many of the benefits of meditation, gardening can be a powerful mindfulness practice. All are welcome, whether we plan on growing an herb container garden in a window, joining a community garden for the first time or growing veggies in our own backyard.

**Fee:** \$20 per session (or \$50 for series)

## **Metta Yoga**

**Mondays & Thursdays; May 2–June 30; 9:30–10:30 a.m., 10:45–11:45 a.m. & 5:30–6:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Heather English

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga from the spiritual environment and natural beauty of Prairiewoods. Join us in person as we link our movements with our breath and cultivate strength, flexibility and relaxation through regular hatha-style yoga classes. RYT-200 Hour Certified Yoga Alliance Instructor Heather English offers Gentle/Beginner's Yoga every Monday and Thursday. People of all fitness levels and abilities are encouraged to participate whenever available. Registration is required for each session.

**Fee:** \$99 for eleven-punch card or \$60 for six-punch card, one punch per session

## **Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations**

**Mondays; May 2, May 16, June 6 & June 20; 6:30–7:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Kathy Broghammer

Experience sound, stillness, playfulness and relaxation through the enigmatic vibrations of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls. During this in-person hour, we connect with our inner selves through

the song of bowls. We are invited to sit or lie down to listen and just be. We hear the sounds and feel the vibrations of the singing bowls going inward. Let's let our souls rest and allow ourselves to be recreated! Registration is required.  
**Fee:** \$10 per session

## **Prayer Experience Series**

**Tuesdays, May 3–June 28,**  
**11:30 a.m.–12 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Angie Pierce Jennings

We are blessed with many ways to pray and reflect including songful prayer, contemplative prayer, visio divina, embodied prayer, silent prayer, guided meditation and many others. All are welcome to join this ongoing prayer series via Zoom and experience the joys of prayer and meditation together.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## **Woodland Wednesdays**

**Wednesdays, May 4–June 29,**  
**9 a.m.–12 p.m. or 2–5 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** August Stolba & Nancy Hoffman, FSPA

Spring has sprung, and that means Woodland Wednesdays are back!

Are you interested in learning about prairie and woodland restoration, vegetable gardening and food forests, or just like to help Prairiewoods, drive tractors and move logs? Join us every Wednesday from 9–12 or 2–5 for our regular volunteer hours. Do those times or activities not work for you? Don't worry—there are plenty of other times and ways to get involved! Reach out to August at [astolba@prairiewoods.org](mailto:astolba@prairiewoods.org).

**Fee:** Free

## **Prairiewoods Nature**

**Arrangements: Community Supported Restoration**  
**a year-long offering beginning May 5**

**Facilitator:** August Stolba

Each month the Prairiewoods Outdoors team will harvest and handcraft an arrangement of natural goods that represent the beauty of the season, similar to a flower CSA. Whether you're someone who wants to develop a deeper connection with nature from the standpoint of understanding ecology, or you just want to experience the beauty of the season, this program is a great way to do both and help Prairiewoods in its mission of stewarding our beautiful 70 acres of woodland, prairie and wetland. Arrangements will be available for pickup on the first Thursday of the month. These are 12 natural arrangements for your

home and your soul! Register by April 22.  
**Fee:** \$120 for 12 monthly bouquets, May 2022–April 2023

## **Go Deeper Thursdays**

**Thursdays; May 5, May 19, June 2 & June 16; 4–5 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Ellen Bruckner & Laura Weber

Join this ongoing program focused on recognizing our place in the wider "We."  
**Fee:** \$10 per month

## **Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton**

**Thursdays; May 5, May 19, June 2 & June 16; 7–8:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Carole Butz

The practice of contemplative living helps us respond to everyday experiences with greater awareness of our connections with God and others. It becomes a positive force in our lives and provides direction for our journey, enabling us to embrace our truest selves. This group meets via Zoom on the first and third Thursdays of each month. We use the *Bridges to Contemplative Living* series, which includes excerpts from the writings of Thomas Merton and other authors, to explore the truths of human existence. The process involves readings, reflections and contemplative dialogue. Book purchase is required after your first session. Please register for your first session to get the Zoom link.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## **Day of Self Renewal**

**Mondays, May 9 & June 13,**  
**8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Angie Pierce Jennings

Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services, group guided meditation, singing bowl prayer, a private guest room, a fresh lunch, and access to the labyrinth and all that Prairiewoods has to offer. (Choose from massage, head and shoulder massage, reflexology, healing touch, spiritual direction, Nature & Forest Therapy Experience, yoga or chair yoga.) Registration, a nonrefundable/nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three services choices are required eight days in advance. (Masks and vaccination may be required by the holistic provider.)

**Fee:** \$110 includes two services, guided meditation, singing bowl prayer, private guest room and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room)

## Praise be! 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Celebration & Open House Saturday, May 7, 2–4 p.m.

**Facilitators:** Prairiewoods staff

All are welcome to join us for this celebration of 25 years of Prairiewoods! Our theme for the day will be joy and gratitude for the many friendships, opportunities and blessings of the past 25 years. In true jubilee fashion, the sisters and staff will welcome friends, family, volunteers, donors and community members who have loved and connected with Prairiewoods at any time here in this sacred space. This will be a chance to reconnect with Prairiewoods friends, explore all that has developed over the last 25 years, see the new peace sculpture designed by artist Lisa Williams, check out our new Green Community Gardens, and join us in joy and gratitude for all that is Prairiewoods! While the afternoon will be a true open house, there will be a brief program of gratitude at 2 p.m., followed by refreshments. Registration is requested.

**Fee:** Free

## Singing Bowl Prayer Mondays, May 9 & June 13, 12:45–1:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Kathy Broghammer

Throughout history, singing bowls have been used around the world to foster meditation, relaxation, prayer and mind-body-spirit wellness. In these in-person sessions, we let the resonant sounds of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls relax the entire body and create a pathway for clearer connection with the divine. We are invited to just receive and breathe. Registration is required by noon.

**Fee:** \$5 per session

## Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences

**Afternoon Experiences:** Mondays, May 9 & June 13, 2:30–3:45 p.m.

**Full Moon Nature & Forest Therapy Experience:** Saturday, May 14, 7–9 p.m.,  
**Celebrating the Summer Solstice with Forest Bathing:** Wednesday, June 22, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:**

Emelia Sautter

Join the land and certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide Emelia Sautter for a walk with the



natural world. Experience Forest Therapy, a sensory-focused practice that invites us to slow down and be present with self and the natural world around us. According to the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy, “Forest Therapy is a practice that supports health and wellness through guided immersion in forests and other environments to promote the well-being of both people and the land. It is inspired by *shinrin yoku*, the Japanese practice of ‘Forest Bathing.’” Time with our nature kin reduces stress and depression, improves cognitive functioning, boosts our immune system, regulates blood pressure, improves relationships, increases feelings of gratitude and much more. Registration is required by the day before. Please bring a water bottle and dress for being outdoors.

**Fee:** \$20 per session (\$15 for shorter afternoon sessions)

## Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul Tuesdays, May 10, May 24, June 7 & June 21; 9–11 a.m.; or Wednesdays, May 11, May 25, June 8 & June 22; 6:30–8:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Ellen Bruckner

The Celtic people seemed to be very much in tune with their environment and the natural world. What is the wisdom from our Celtic ancestors we instinctively recognize and trust as we travel through these seemingly disturbing times? John Phillip Newell explores some of this wisdom by looking at the lives and teachings of prophetic figures throughout the centuries in his newest book, *Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul: Celtic Wisdom for Awakening to What Our Souls Know and Healing the World*. It offers us a chance to more fully recognize some of these wisdom callings from within ourselves. Let’s gather with others in conversation around the people and ideas introduced by Newell. We will gather via Zoom for a total of four sessions. We will try to pay close attention to how the wisdom we explore has an impact on our own lives today. Much of the time will be spent in conversation.

**Fee:** \$30 for four-part series

## Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitches Tuesdays, May 10 & June 14, 9:30–11 a.m.; & Wednesdays, May 25 & June 22, 6:30–8 p.m.

**Facilitators:** participants

Practice knitting and stitching in the company of new friends! This is a group of crafters of various skill levels who create handmade goods for charity. New participants are always welcome, including those who are new to knitting

and crocheting. Together we create hats, mittens, blankets and baby items for charity. Grab your needles and join us! This group meets in person on the second Tuesday morning and fourth Wednesday evening of each month.

**Fee:** Free

## Mindfulness for Mothers: Good Morning, I Love You Tuesday, May 10, & Wednesday, May 11, 10 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

**Facilitators:** Kim Seward, BSN, RN, CMI, & Ann Jackson, PBVM

Stress is abundant in the world today, and mothers of all ages are uniquely affected by it. Stress builds and manifests as tension in the body, resulting from isolation, loss, uncertainty and external pressures—media, school closures, illness, primary care responsibilities, child care ... the list goes on and on. Learning concepts of mindfulness, compassion and self-care may be the perfect gift for any mother who desires to rediscover her identity, find her voice and reconnect relationally. Gift yourself or a mother in your life with this holistic opportunity to break away from routine and focus inward, to rest in solitude and creative energy, to laugh and to rejuvenate. Moms will learn mindfulness and self-compassion practices, including those resourced in Shauna Shapiro’s book *Good Morning, I Love You: Mindfulness + Self-Compassion Practices to Rewire Your Brain for Calm, Clarity + Joy*. These practices help women create intention, cultivate greater love for self and others, focus attention in the present moment, and invite kindness and curiosity to each and every experience. The spring garden will welcome each mom to plant seeds of presence and compassion for herself, to tend these seeds as they grow and strengthen self-love and love of others, and to send these seeds of blessing out into the world.

**Fee:** \$150 includes Tuesday lodging, all meals and *Good Morning, I Love You*

**Commuter Fee:** \$100 includes daily lunch and *Good Morning, I Love You*

## Walk with an Eco-Ologist Tuesdays, May 10 & June 14, 4–6 p.m.

**Facilitators:** Scott Koepke & Frank Olsen

Join us on the second Tuesday of each month as we walk with an Eco-Ologist! Each program will give you the opportunity to learn from a local ‘ologist and dive deeper into specific topics within the field of ecology. Come prepared to

walk our trails and, depending on the topic, get a little dirty and meet some of our plant and animal kin! We are excited to offer seven programs from April through October on the following topics: raptology (birds of prey), agronomy (farming), lepidopterology (butterflies and moths), wild ethnobotany (wild edibles and medicines), ornithology (birds), entomology (bugs) and dendrology (trees). Our May walk will feature Agronomist Scott Koepke from Gardens Heal People. Scott will help us understand the critical role soils play in agriculture as well as in ecological restoration and the well being of people. In June, join Lepidopterologist Frank Olsen as we frolic through the prairie and woodland in search of moths and butterflies. Frank will help us to connect the dots between prairie grasses and flowers and how they connect to the charismatic insects that leave us in awe. Registration is required.

**Fee:** \$20 per session

## Evening Centering Prayer

**Tuesdays; May 10, May 24, June 14 & June 28; 5:30–7 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Judith Smith

Come to Prairiewoods for Evening Centering Prayer on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. This is a prayer/support group for people who enjoy centering prayer, a form of meditation focused on silent prayer. In this time of silence, we relax, empty our minds and find God's presence within us. Sessions stand alone.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## Men Exploring Faith

**Thursdays; May 12, May 26, June 9 & June 23; 4–5:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Linzy Martin

Behavioral scientists and spiritual guides have noted a major transformation in the life direction of many men as we mature. It may happen gradually or abruptly, as early as our 20s or in our 50s or 60s. Some men never make this shift, described as a change from goal drivenness to receptivity, from ego to wisdom. The transition can start from the inside (*Why am I doing what I'm doing?*) or the outside (from a loss or threat), and it may seem disruptive while on the way to being life-enhancing. Join with a small group of reflective men in honest conversation about these changes. This group meets in person the second and fourth Thursdays of each month.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## Offered in Partnership with Unity Point Hospice

### Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Group

**Wednesdays, May 18 & June 15, 5:30–7 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Jamie Siela, LISW, & Kristine Shultis, MDiv, LMT, CHT

In grief, our very foundation can be rocked. Take time to connect with others in grief and engage the creative spark. This online monthly grief group is open to anyone grieving loss through death. On the third Wednesday of each month, explore a different creative art medium. On May 18, we will do a paper flowers activity. In a world of grief and pain, flowers can still bloom. We will create lasting paper flowers as we lift the memories of our special person. Although it can be difficult to see these bright spots, these flowers can represent hope for the future. On June 15, we will create a tree of life weaving. The tree of life symbol represents our personal development, uniqueness and individual beauty. Just as the branches of a tree strengthen and grow upward to the sky, we too grow stronger, striving for greater knowledge, wisdom and new experiences as we move through life. Registration is required nine days in advance. This group meets online.

**Fee:** Free, includes all art supplies

### The Art of Nature & Nature of Art

**Saturday, May 28, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Carol Tyx

Join us on the fourth Saturday of every other month as we reflect in nature and express our mindful exploration through

art. The first program in this series will feature Prairiewoods' artist-in-residence, poet Carol Tyx, as we celebrate spring's emergence. We will explore the woodland, prairie, wetlands and gardens, and engage with a deeper understanding of the ecology that encompasses our environment. Upon the conclusion of our walk, Carol will help us to reflect on what we observed and manifest it in the form of poetry.

**Fee:** \$20



## Holistic Healing for Educators & Classrooms

**Facilitators:** Kim Seward, BSN, RN, CMI, & Ann Jackson, PBVM

**Credit 1: Monday, June 27, 1–5 p.m.; Tuesday, June 28, 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m.; & Wednesday, June 29, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.**

Have the stressors of teaching, the pandemic, hybrid-learning and daily life affected your personal happiness and well-being? Have you experienced difficulty finding time to engage in self-care activities that may help? In this in-person, 1-hour credit course, learn "micro-interventions" to use daily to reset your brain and empower you to fully show up with a compassionate heart toward yourself, your students, your family and the world. Through practices of mindfulness, self-compassion and neuroscience, begin to restore holistic healing and build resiliency, joy, optimism and curiosity, leading to health and well-being. It provides educators and any school or university staff or administrator with research-based theory, collaborative design and opportunities to practice. A text, *Practicing Presence*, is included in the registration fee.

**Credit 2: Wednesday, June 29, 1–5 p.m.; Thursday, June 30, 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m.; & Friday, July 1, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.**

In this in-person, 1-hour credit course, learn practices of mindfulness, self-compassion and neuroscience to develop a personal classroom toolkit for use with students. Deepening our own mindfulness and self-compassion skills will also be explored.

Dual registration with Grant Wood Area Education Agency is required.

**Fee per Credit:** \$100 includes sessions, lodging and all meals

**Commuter Fee per Credit:** \$50 includes sessions and daily lunch  
There is an additional charge of **\$35** to Grant Wood AEA. (Thanks to a generous donation by the Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, all additional costs will be covered.)

# Donors (January & February 2022)

We appreciate all of the generous people who donate their time, money and other gifts to Prairiewoods! For a complete, up-to-date list between Newsletters, please visit [www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate](http://www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate).

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Thank you!



120 E Boyson Rd  
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Are you on social media? Find "Prairiewoods FSC" on:



# You're Invited

## Praise be! 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Celebration & Open House

**Saturday, May 7, 2-4 p.m.**

open house with brief program of gratitude at 2 p.m.

at **Prairiewoods**, 120 East Boyson Road in Hiawatha, Iowa 52233

RSVP to 319-395-6700 or at [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org)

(See page 9 for details.)

July/August 2022

# Prairiewoods

A CATHOLIC, FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

## A Midsummer Night's Dreaming- into-Being

*"The course of true love never did run smooth."*

—Lysander, from William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

*"Lord, what fools these mortals be!"*

—Puck, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

*"Are you sure that we are awake? It seems to me that yet we sleep, we dream."*

—Demetrius, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Love takes us through some fantastical, mysterious meanderings, as though Earth herself was dreaming us into our destiny. Fraught with unexpected twists and surprising jolts of improvisation, love invites us to lose our carefully constructed selves and dance with the muses. Lingering in the twilight of our global imagination, and courting the dynamic World-Soul means we must spend some time in-between, conjuring, creating, dreaming. As we wait for dancing fireflies and blinking starlight to announce the arrival of our evening reverie, when dreams mesh and meld with our heart's deepest yearnings and constellations are blazing, we fall deeply into wonderment and awe. What we find beautiful, we fall in love with, entranced as those characters whose eyes were magically enchanted to perceive beauty and to fall in love, as in Shakespeare's classic paean to love.

When self-described geo-logian Thomas Berry wrote his now-classic *The Dream of the Earth*, he had in mind this mutual exchange of intimacy, this co-creative dance of lover and beloved. "Our relationship with the Earth involves something more than pragmatic use, academic understanding, or aesthetic appreciation. A truly human intimacy with the Earth and with the entire natural world is needed." Thomas knew that what we perceive as beautiful, we come to love and to cherish, forming an intimate bond whose strength is unparalleled. It is an intimacy that has the power to unite what seems disparate, to heal and bind, even to co-create and welcome new life.

Illustration by Julian Bauer

(continued on page 3)

2018

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Dear Friends:

One of my great pleasures these past seven years has been to observe the passing of the seasons here at Prairiewoods. The prairies, the woods, the gardens and landscapes each express their aliveness in such varied ways as Earth makes her annual journey around Brother Sun. Even in the aftermath of the derecho, when our hearts were cracked with sorrow, autumn held beauty and life to appreciate.

People have their seasons as well, though they aren't quite as regular as Earth's, nor can we always anticipate when they will change. Between the publication of our May/June newsletter and this one, I have experienced the ending of one season—my season as director of Prairiewoods—and the beginning of my next.

Leaving people and places that we love is rarely easy. I can assure you, leaving Prairiewoods has felt both right and very difficult. Overriding my other emotions is the immense gratitude I feel for the gift of Prairiewoods; for the commitment made by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration to protect this sacred space in perpetuity; for a mission that grows deeper and wider with the passing years; for the people who have and continue to invest their love, talents and support in the evolutionary consciousness at the heart of this place of peace and transformation.

Please accept my deep thanks for all of the care and support you have lavished on me and on Prairiewoods over the years.

As is often the case when I can't quite find the words to express my feelings, I've found a Mary Oliver poem that does it with beautiful simplicity. Here's to my season of letting go:

*To live in this world*

*you must be able  
to do three things:  
to love what is mortal;  
to hold it*

*against your bones knowing  
your own life depends on it;  
and, when the time comes to let it go,  
to let it go.*

—Mary Oliver, from *In Blackwater Woods*

Peace and all good,

Jenifer Hanson, Director



Prairiewoods is a Catholic ecospirituality retreat and conference center in the Franciscan tradition. It is a nonprofit ministry sponsored by Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

**Mission:** Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality 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.

The Prairiewoods staff collaborates to publish this newsletter bimonthly. Content, except where otherwise noted, is created by our staff in consultation and with care to offer a uniquely Prairiewoods perspective.

Please address all correspondence to:

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120 E Boyson Rd  
Hiawatha, IA 52233  
319-395-6700

[www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org)

[Ecospirit@Prairiewoods.org](mailto:Ecospirit@Prairiewoods.org)



(continued from page 1)

What does a “truly human intimacy with the Earth and with the entire natural world” look like? Perhaps it looks like whatever we perceive as beautiful, like a fiery sunset or a grove of aspens on a breezy afternoon. Maybe it looks like the dyings of autumn arbor elders, whose most splendid colors and aromas occur just before they fade and fall away for the winter. Or else, it might look like spring’s first emergent bulbs, pink and green, tinged with snow-melt and promising warmer days ahead. Perhaps love appears as a speckled doe leaping gracefully through the thicket, or as the lilting song of the male cardinal resounding in a forest cathedral. Love may feel like the ocean cataracts or the gentle, pooling eddy of a mountain stream. It may look like the blooming prairie flowers or the dancing yellow-tails alight on their petals in the heat of a summer day. It may look like a silent snowfall cascading over the hillside as the moon rises to cast its luminescent glow. Whatever love looks like in the panoply of magnificence that is creation, we are drawn inexorably into that familiar embrace, wooed and held so that “what dreams may come,” Love endures.

It may be now more than ever, in the midst of this Sixth Great Extinction, when human-caused planetary dis-ease is threatening global decimation, we need to succumb to the elixir of Love that invokes the dreaming of the wider “We.” Perhaps it is Earth’s own dreaming, and Creator’s own reverie, that is dreaming us into being.

What dream does Earth have for us? When we linger at the thresholds of our planetary whirling, wailing and rejoicing, of day becoming night or night becoming day, we celebrate those liminal spaces with deepening awareness, receptivity and gratitude for all we might become. We are caught up, as at the threshold of dreaming on a midsummer’s night, falling in love with all creation. “The universe, by definition, is a single gorgeous celebratory event” (Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*). Perhaps we humans are a glistening part of the engaging drama, shimmering as nuanced colors, aromas, musical notes, delicious morsels and gentle caresses of Creator’s dreaming-into-being. Perhaps we are stirring in the cocoon of Love’s imagination, ready to burst forth with one thrumming heartbeat and “with Ah, bright wings” (Gerard Manley Hopkins, *God’s Grandeur*).

## New Peace Sculpture at Prairiewoods

In the wake of World War II and the first nuclear attacks, Masahisa Goi of Japan launched a world peace initiative and began installing peace poles to act as symbols of peace and solidarity around the world. Today there are over 200,000 peace poles in more than 200 countries, one of which called Prairiewoods home until it was destroyed in the derecho of August 2020.

Going forward it became apparent that many of us here at Prairiewoods wanted to reimagine what a monument to peace might look like, while still participating in this global act of solidarity. We began to envision what that might look like. After many conversations with our team, we enlisted the help of the Iowa Ceramics Center and Glass Studio’s Director, Ellen Kleckner, and ceramic artist Lisa Williams to make our idea a reality. Then the stars aligned and just as we came up with a plan and had a budget, Amy Starr came forward to help fund this beautiful monument to peace. We send a special thank you to all the volunteers along the way that helped create this beautiful monument to peace, located behind the Center!



Ellen Kleckner, Amy Starr and Lisa Williams

# Spiritual MAPPING at Prairiewoods

The picture below is my most vivid experience at Prairiewoods. Robyn and I met there, have attended many incredible events and have a fondness for the space and its people. However, when I took a week off to come and work on clearing the land after the derecho it was an experience like no other. Over a thousand trees leaving and this incredible oak tree felled took a bit of processing. We recently attended the anniversary celebration. It was wonderful. I hiked in the woods. I was expecting a sadness both in the forest and in my heart. Instead, I experienced a sense of all the “Re” things happening in our world and certainly at Prairiewoods. Regenerate, Renew, Reforming, Resurrection, Rejuvenate, Restoration, etc. I had a sense that nature knows best, that the cycles of life, death and resurrection remain true. I had this sense there are changes on the horizon for Prairiewoods, exciting new co-creations emerging. I have come to know the sisters, the staff and many folks like Robyn and me. New, change, shifts are difficult. However, Prairiewoods has a resiliency that I experienced in the woods that most beautiful Saturday afternoon. We are excited to see what emerges, and while honoring the past, embracing the present, we are excited to see what the future holds for our children and their children, and their children. Blessings to you all.  
—Tim McCoy



An owl on this sacred place gifted me with this Haiku I wrote when I stayed at Prairiewoods many years ago:  
Wisdom comes on wings  
Owl glides silently through night  
Hope in the darkness  
—Cindy Chicoine

Deep peace of the flowing wave to you; deep peace of the shining star.

Deep peace of the blowing air to you.

Deep peace of the quiet Earth.

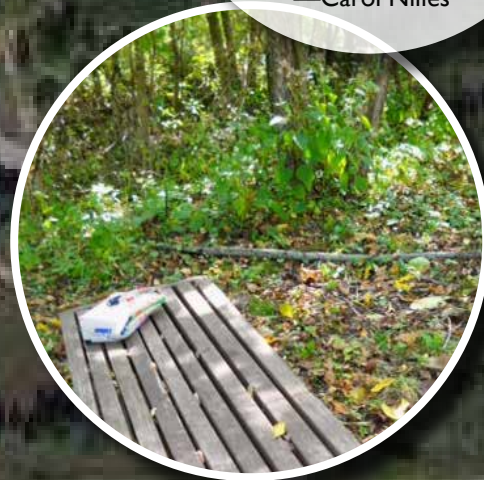
Let peace, let peace, let peace fill your soul.

May peace, may peace, may peace keep you whole.

—Gaelic Blessing

Prairiewoods' *Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* event inspired spiritual map-making. Jim Enote, Zuni tribal member and farmer of land stewarded by Zuni for over 600 generations, invited all to co-create unprecedented maps. Inspired by Jim's invitation, people sent us photos, illustrations and poetry that capture their experiences of the woods, prairies, trees, animals, plants and creek to create a spiritual map of Prairiewoods. We thank you as your spirit, energy and contributions co-create a beautiful map of Spirit animating LIFE!

This photo was taken in late September 2015. My purse is on the bench where I was sitting pondering in the woods. Should I continue the e-mail conversation with my widowed, high school classmate in Japan? About a year later, we married.  
—Carol Nilles





FSPA affiliation is joy, gratitude, growth as we join our energies in community to love and care for Mother Earth and each other.  
—Robyn Krell



This image was received while I was taking photos of milkweed at Prairiewoods. The sunspot in the shape of a heart with God beams radiating from it along with the other white space in the shape of a bird had me jumping for joy at the message from above that I was in the right place. I have been coming to Prairiewoods ever since.  
—Diane Wheeler Dunn

I've been to numerous spiritual centers and natural parks, and they are welcoming, peaceful, sometimes exciting. Prairiewoods is too. But as I enter, I feel the area hushed, and I know I am entering an awesome place. The trees ... the prairie ... the woods beckon, "Come and rest." Slowly walking the paths, I may see no-one, no animals or other beings, but I know I am in their place too. I feel grounded and enveloped by a comforting energy, assuring me I am at home here, part of this family and this land. Clearly a big awakening point on the map of my long spiritual journey.  
—Robert Engler



The small savanna is one of my most cherished places at Prairiewoods! The savanna called me home ... The small savanna of six white swamp oaks drew me to enter into council with them ... I was able to approach, honor, and converse with the six oaks ... I heard gratitude for the life-giving fire Prairiewoods' staff had given to the oaks' companions—soil and plants beneath and beyond its canopy of branches. I heard an invitation to touch one of the tree's rough, hard trunks, to close my eyes and to feel the turning of Earth. I heard their plea to stop cutting and poisoning, which has made the oak savanna an even more endangered landscape in our state than the prairie itself ... the sturdy sentinels ... told me they were a bound family rooted in ground and held together in this place. And they were also holding me ... they are nature's family, always there for me to return home.  
—Thomas Dean, from "Home" in *Tallgrass Conversations: In Search of the Prairie Spirit*



Prairiewoods has held my grief, my love, my wonder, my pain, my questions, my transformations. I met Grandmother Oak while my mother was dying from ovarian cancer. I was also grieving the death of my beloved soul-cat, Ruby ... I followed the creek, and saw the grand, sprawling oak, whose trunk spreads like a sacred lap. I leaned into her, pressed my forehead against her skin, and received her blessing ... Prairiewoods is not only a place of refuge; it is also a place that reminds us that we are never, ever alone.  
—Amy Nolan

# 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Celebration & Open House

On Saturday, May 7, Prairiewoods celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> jubilee with a Praise be! 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Celebration & Open House. It was an afternoon of joy and gratitude for the many friendships, opportunities and blessings of the past 25 years. In true jubilee fashion, the sisters and staff welcomed more than 100 friends, family, volunteers, donors and community members who have loved and connected with Prairiewoods over the last few decades. One of the highlights of our jubilee celebration was the unveiling of our new peace sculpture. (See page 3 for details on this beautiful new monument to peace.) What follows here are some of the readings contributed during our jubilee program and photos from the day to give you a taste of the joyous occasion. We hope you'll join us in ushering in the next 25 years of peace and transformation!



I want to speak of dreams today. I want to recall how vivid and powerful they can be, how they seem to rise mysteriously within us. They can stir there, perhaps for years, waiting for the right time for us to respond. Dreams won't let us rest, they catch fire within us. The amazing power of dreams can set us off in new and unexpected directions. Sometimes we dream alone, sometimes we feel impelled to come together.

The dream we celebrate today began in the early 1960s when the FSPA community purchased farmland on Boyson Road, meant for the purpose of building a headquarters for the new province. When the FSPA community decided not to build, the question for two decades became "What will we do with the farm?" In the '90s, as women religious began to look at their land with new eyes, the question became, "What is the land asking of us?"

A group called the Farm Committee was formed to lay the groundwork for an ecology center. Six of us who heard the dream came together in August 1994 to begin the two-year process of building Prairiewoods. We opened our doors on July 5, 1996. Our mission was to be "a sacred space where all 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." The dream had become real!

Today, as we celebrate with gratitude and joy the first twenty-five years of Prairiewoods, I want to talk again about gathering dreamers, awakening the sleeping and giving birth to the dream. All of us gathered here are the dreamers; together we are expanding the mission and vision of Prairiewoods into the future. May the dream that caught fire all those years ago ignite its flame in many more hearts well into the next twenty-five years.

—Joann Gehling, FSPA, Prairiewoods foundress

## A CELEBRATION, JUBILATION

The prairie speaks  
in wildflower fragrance,  
in fire, in the receding from,  
in the reseeding of,  
in seasons, in cycles of rebirth.

The woods speak  
with wisdom,  
in grandmotherly oaken sapience,  
with adaptability and tenacity,  
in that sassy start-up, too, of saplings.

The water speaks  
in rivulet rhythm,  
in the caroling croak and hum of ponds,  
in the melodic fall and rise of a creek.

Six women, in the spirit of Saints Francis and Clare,  
listening, attuned, aware, talked, walked this ground,  
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration,  
founded, planted, labored, dreamed, a place

of peace, of healing and transformation,  
welcome and contemplation, joy and exploration—  
the work of earth, sowing, growing, restoration,  
remembering stardust, honoring creation.

In stories, in songs, we continue the conversation  
of this space, of this place, this land,  
and we gather in hope, in gratitude, in jubilation—  
twenty-five years, a jubilee, a celebration.

—M.L. Folkedahl-meehleder, friend of Prairiewoods  
*(written specifically for this day)*



**T**oday we celebrate Prairiewoods' land. All land is sacred. Land gives everything of itself so we may live. Land is the matrix of all we have. Prairiewoods' land is also sacred in this regard, but in addition it is also the matrix of our mission!

Prairiewoods is a sacred space where people of all faiths and cultures are invited to explore and nurture their relationships with God, Earth, self and others, with an increasing awareness of the story of the universe. Prairiewoods' land is the matrix of our mission. It helps support and make possible everything our mission is about.

This land is open and welcoming. No matter our color, our faith or our culture, it invites us to delight in its energies, its animal residents, its beauty, whether you are someone participating in a retreat, spiritual direction, a program or just walking the trails.

Sometimes a spiritual director may suggest someone might ponder a particular scripture or thought. What better place to do this than in the woods, the prairie or the labyrinth! The land hosts a marvelous school where land care can be taught or modeled.

As a big part of our mission, our Metro Catholic Outreach garden and our newly developed Green Community Gardens assist us in sharing our resources. Soon our new Four Winds Food Forest will share its bounty, too.

Many liken the woodland and prairies to a great cathedral. For some who are searching, it is their church. A really strong sense of community among our wonderful volunteers has developed because of their connection to the land. Some people have told us that they sense deeply the sacredness and holiness of the land. Yes, not only is Prairiewoods' land in itself sacred, but it is growing in holiness because of all of you holy people who walk it with the intention of communication with the holiness within. Thousands of people have contributed their holy, sacred energy to this felt sense of sacred energy.

As I look out into this gathering, I see all of you who have been there for us. You have worked and mingled with the land. You are Prairiewoods! You helped and encouraged us to put Prairiewoods' land into a land easement so we can celebrate this land for all future generations. God bless you!

—Nancy Hoffman, FSPA, Prairiewoods foundress



The following are retreats and programs that Prairiewoods is hosting online via Zoom or in person in the next two months. For more information or to register, visit [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org) or call 319-395-6700.

## July Silent Directed Retreat

**Friday, July 22, 9 a.m.–Thursday, July 28, 1 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Rose Blank; Ann Jackson, PBVM; & Lucille Winnike, FSPA

Join us for a week of sacred space, silence, solitude, rest and prayer. Steeped in the love of all of creation on 70 acres of prairie and woodland, deepen awareness of life's gifts; restore balance; live in the moment; and nurture relationships with Creator, Earth, self and others. Each day affords opportunities for healthy meals, quiet personal reflection and an hour-long session with a spiritual director. An optional centering prayer session closes each day. Body modalities, such as massage, healing touch and reflexology, may be available for an additional cost. Silent directed retreats are ideal for anyone who desires quiet time away to return to one's center, to learn the art of deep listening, to recover a sense of wonder and gratitude for life, and to fall in love again with all of creation.



**Fee:** \$495 includes spiritual direction, lodging and all meals (*Lodgers only, please.*)

## Women's Mindfulness & Yoga Retreat

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

**Facilitator:** Allison Peet

Yoga is a healing modality for self-realization, showing how we can progress along life's journey by opening to our Divine Nature. Mindfulness calls on us to literally stop and wake up to exactly how things actually are right now, with self-kindness, which can be deeply healing and transformative.



Come in the spirit of interconnectedness and receptivity to create a deliberate pause for self-reflection. We will explore gentle hatha yoga, yoga nidra, various mindfulness meditations, mandala drawing, breath-focused practice, loving kindness and self-compassion practice. There will be periods of silence offered, as well as time for reflection and inquiry. All scheduled activities are optional and plenty of time and space will be offered for personal rest on your own to return home refreshed, connected and renewed. Some experience with gentle yoga and meditation is preferred. Facilitator Allison Peet is a certified Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction facilitator.

**Fee:** \$230 includes sessions, lodging and all meals

**Commuter Fee:** \$180 includes sessions and all meals

## Save the Date!

*Prairiewoods is pleased to announce our featured speaker for Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 2023: Jeremy Lent!*

**Prairiewoods' Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 2023**  
**Friday, April 28, 7–9 p.m., & Saturday, April 29, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.**  
 (in person at Wanatee Park's Prairie Oak Lodge in Marion, Iowa, and online via Zoom)

Please welcome esteemed author and facilitator Jeremy Lent! Jeremy is the author of *The Patterning Instinct, A Cultural History of Humanity's Search for Meaning* and *The Web of Meaning, Integrating Science and Traditional Wisdom to Find Our Place in the Universe* ([www.jeremylent.com](http://www.jeremylent.com)). It is a delight and a great gift for Prairiewoods that he will be joining us LIVE and in person in spring 2023, along with our favorite musician-of-Earth, Sara Thomsen ([www.sarathomsen.com](http://www.sarathomsen.com)).



Jeremy is well known for his eclectic approach to the integration of science and holistic spirituality, and he is also quite adept at presenting embodied spiritual wisdom streams across many traditions. His arc of presentation for the weekend will be a brief overview based on his book *The Patterning Instinct* on Friday evening. On Saturday morning, he will highlight his work on Liology ([www.jeremylent.com/liology.html](http://www.jeremylent.com/liology.html)), an integrated, embodied approach to sustainable living and spiritual groundedness. On Saturday afternoon, he will introduce his approach to co-creating an Ecological Civilization. Sara's soulful music will be woven throughout, moving us all into sacred, shared "We" space, where our imagination and dreams will meet the world's great needs. We are the ones we've been anticipating!



Please join us for what promises to be an inspiring, soul-transforming event!

The early-bird cost is just \$90 and limited lodging is available, so register today at [www.Prairiewoods.org/Spirituality-in-the-21st-century](http://www.Prairiewoods.org/Spirituality-in-the-21st-century).

## Metta Yoga

**Mondays & Thursdays,**

**July 7–Aug. 29, 9:30–10:30 a.m. & 10:45–11:45 a.m.**

**Facilitator:** Heather English

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga from the spiritual environment and natural beauty of Prairiewoods. Join us in person as we link our movements with our breath and cultivate strength, flexibility and relaxation through regular hatha-style yoga classes. RYT-200 Hour Certified Yoga Alliance Instructor Heather English offers Gentle/Beginner's Yoga every Monday and Thursday. People of all fitness levels and abilities are encouraged to participate whenever available. Registration is required for each session. **Fee:** \$99 for eleven-punch card or \$60 for six-punch card, one punch per session

## Go Deeper Thursdays

**Thursdays; July 7, July 21, Aug. 4 & Aug. 18; 4–5 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Ellen Bruckner & Laura A. Weber, Ph.D.

Go Deeper Thursdays emerged in the context of the global pandemic, or as Prairiewoods calls it, the *PanDeepening*. Our reflective and lively conversations opened us to spiritual deepening, providing a sacred space to share our PanDeepening awareness, a place where we explored venues for collective presencing and delving into the wider "We" space. As our journey meandered through topics associated with inter-breathing and collective consciousness, we embraced diverse resources for consideration. Through simple breathing meditations, poetry, practicing mindfulness, storytelling, re-languaging, listening to creation's song and many small group experiences, we have been learning to read the collective and listen deeply to our emergent, inter-connected wisdom. In the process, we are becoming more expansive, more inclusive, recognizing our place in the wider "We." Who is this "We" that we mean? It is wider than our own ego or individual selves, wider than our most intimate circles, our community, work, worship and social circles, and wider even than our human community. It is no less than the "We" of all creation. A one-time registration for July and August is required.

**Fee:** \$10 per month

## Women in Interfaith Dialogue Saturday, July 9, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

**Facilitators:** Angie Pierce Jennings, Virginia Melroy & Dr. Paula Sanchini

Come together quarterly with women of various faith traditions and spiritualities for conversation and community. The topic of our summer gathering is music and spirituality. How does music compliment and inform our spiritual experiences? How does music move our spirits? Do you have a favorite song or hymn that expresses your spirituality? Participants are invited to share a song (either a recording or by performing). This will be a joyous gathering of music and sharing. Registration is required eight days in advance. This group will meet in person with an online option available upon request.

**Fee:** \$15 includes lunch

## Summer Mindfulness Meditation Retreat Day

**Sunday, July 10, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Chris Klug

"Dwelling in stillness and looking inward for some part of each day, we touch what is most real and reliable in ourselves and most easily overlooked and undeveloped," writes Jon Kabat-Zinn in *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*. "When we can be centered in ourselves, even for brief periods of time in the face of the pull of the outer world, not having to look elsewhere for something to fill us up or make us happy, we can be at home wherever we find ourselves, at peace with things as they are, moment by moment." This day will be spent in silence practicing mindfulness through sitting meditation, walking meditation, mindful movement and mindful eating. There will be time for sharing and questions during the final 30 minutes. Please bring your own lunch.

**Fee:** \$50 (A reduced fee is available for those of limited means.)

## Day of Self Renewal Mondays, July 11 & Aug. 8, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Angie Pierce Jennings

Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services, group guided meditation, singing bowl prayer, a private guest room, a fresh lunch, and access to the labyrinth and all that Prairiewoods has to offer. (Choose

from massage, head and shoulder massage, reflexology, healing touch, spiritual direction, Nature & Forest Therapy Experience, yoga or chair yoga.) Registration, a nonrefundable/nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three services choices are required eight days in advance. (Masks and vaccination may be required by the holistic provider.)

**Fee:** \$110 includes two services, guided meditation, singing bowl prayer, private guest room and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room)

## Singing Bowl Prayer Mondays, July 11 & Aug. 8, 12:45–1:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Kathy Broghammer

Throughout history, singing bowls have been used around the world to foster meditation, relaxation, prayer and mind-body-spirit wellness. In these in-person sessions, we let the resonant sounds of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls relax the entire body and create a pathway for clearer connection with the divine. We are invited to just receive and breathe. Registration is required by noon.

**Fee:** \$8 per session

## Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences

**Afternoon Experiences:** Mondays, July 11 & Aug. 8, 2:30–3:45 p.m.

**Nature & Forest Therapy Creek Walk:** Thursday, July 28, 6–8 p.m.

**Full Moon Nature & Forest Therapy Experience:** Thursday, Aug. 11, 7–9 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Emelia Sautter

Join the land and certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide Emelia Sautter for a walk with the natural world. Experience Forest Therapy, a sensory-focused practice that

invites us to slow down and be present with self and the natural world around us. According to the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy, "Forest Therapy is a practice that supports health and wellness through guided immersion in forests and other environments to promote the well-being of both people and the land." Time with our nature kin reduces stress and depression,



improves cognitive functioning, boosts our immune system, regulates blood pressure, improves relationships, increases feelings of gratitude and much more. Registration is required by the previous day. Please bring a water bottle and dress for being outdoors. **Fee:** \$20 per session (\$15 for shorter afternoon sessions)

**Walk with an Eco-Ologist: Wild Ethnobotany & Ornithology**  
**Tuesdays, July 12 & Aug. 9, 4–6 p.m.**  
**Facilitators:** Mandy Dickerson & Jim Durbin

Join us on the second Tuesday of each month as we walk with an Eco-Ologist! Each program will give you the opportunity to learn from a local 'ologist and dive deeper into specific topics within the field of ecology. Come prepared to walk our trails and, depending on the topic, get a little dirty and meet some of our plant and animal kin!

In July, join Mandy Dickerson of Backyard Abundance and herbalist at Plantchanters Garden on a joyful ramble along the trail and sunny edges. Get to know some of the remarkable plant allies we have in our bioregion and discover how their phytochemical potency has been recognized and interwoven into diverse traditions as flavor and medicine.

In August, join ornithologist Jim Durbin of the Cedar Rapids Audubon Society as we explore the prairies, woodlands and wetlands in search of a diverse array of birds. We will share fun facts, observation techniques and connections these creatures have to the environment. If you have binoculars, a camera with zoom or a butterfly net, feel free to bring them.

Registration is required.

**Fee:** \$20 per session

**Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations**  
**Mondays; July 18, Aug. 1 & Aug. 15;**  
**6:30–7:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Kathy Broghammer

Experience sound, stillness, playfulness and relaxation through the enigmatic vibrations of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls. During this in-person hour, we connect with our inner selves through the song of bowls. We are invited to sit or lie down to listen and just be. We hear the sounds and feel the vibrations of the singing bowls going inward. Let's let our souls rest and allow ourselves to be recreated! Registration is required.

**Fee:** \$10 per session

*Offered in Partnership with Unity Point Hospice*

**Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Group**  
**Wednesdays, July 20 & Aug. 17,**  
**5:30–7 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Jamie Siela, LISW, & Kristine Shultis, MDiv, LMT, CHT

In grief, our very foundation can be rocked. Take time to connect with others in grief and engage the creative spark. This monthly grief group is open to anyone grieving loss through death. On the third Wednesday of each month, explore a different creative art medium. On July 20, we will paint a sun with rays over water. Our emotions ebb and flow like the ocean—each day can bring new highs and lows in our grief journey. Our painting can represent these aspects as we continue fellowship with others who are grieving. On Aug. 17, we will work with a wooden finger labyrinth, which is similar to a full-sized labyrinth but on a much smaller and more portable scale. We will trace the path to the center using our finger rather than our feet. We will create a finger labyrinth of our own to use for centering. We will begin with a wooden circle, add our labyrinth pattern and decorate. Registration is required nine days in advance. This group is a hybrid, offered both online and in person. **Fee:** Free includes all art supplies

**The Art of Nature & Nature of Art: Willow Weaving**  
**Saturday, July 23,**  
**9 a.m.–12 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Mary Kopecky

Join us on the fourth Saturday of every other month as we reflect in nature and express our mindful exploration through art. The second program in the series will feature weaver Mary Kopecky as we explore and celebrate the expressions of willow. Together we will learn to weave a simple willow cone that can be put to many uses and reflect on how this bit of nature has become a gift through art and the art a gift from nature. Fill it with suet to attract feathered friends, store garlic and shallots attractively, hang with a votive candle for a charming glow, or fill with greenery and flowers. No experience is required, but participants should have good hand, wrist and finger strength.

Please bring sharp hand pruners and an old towel that may get stained.

**Fee:** \$20



**Awakening Awareness of Energy through Meditation**

**Thursdays; Aug. 4, 11, 18 & 25;**  
**10 a.m.–12 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Ann Jackson, PBVM, & Nancy Hoffman, FSPA

We have the power to awaken to a new energy within ourselves, to connect with our personal biochemistry and cellular structure, and to even develop new brain circuitry. These experiential gatherings invite women of all ages to engage practical, meditative practices to integrate the mind, body and spirit for healing and wholeness. These practices will be taught and repeated throughout the sessions so the practices become habits that, when lived out daily, may enhance mental and spiritual health and well-being. This group will meet in person with an online option available upon request. These conversations may lead to a future time to meet together in person. **Fee:** \$100 for four-week series

*Save the Date!*

for these ongoing programs:

**Prayer Experience Series,** Tuesdays, July 5–Aug. 30, 11:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

**Woodland Wednesdays,** Wednesdays, July 6–Aug. 31, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. or 2–5 p.m.

**Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton;** Thursdays; July 7, July 21, Aug. 4 & Aug. 18; 7–8:30 p.m.

**Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers;** Tuesdays, July 12 & Aug. 9, 9:30–11 a.m.; & Wednesdays, July 27 & Aug. 24, 6:30–8 p.m.

**Evening Centering Prayer;** Tuesdays; July 12, July 26, Aug. 9 & Aug. 23; 5:30–7 p.m.

**Men Exploring Faith;** Thursdays; July 14, July 28, Aug. 11 & Aug. 25; 4–5:30 p.m.

Visit [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org) for details on these ongoing programs.

We appreciate all of the generous people who donate their time, money and other gifts to Prairiewoods! For a complete, up-to-date list between Newsletters, please visit [www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate](http://www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate).

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*In honor of Nancy Hoffman, FSPA, & Ann Jackson, PBVM*  
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## Saying Goodbye with Gratitude

**A**fter seven years of distinguished service, Jenifer Hanson is resigning as Prairiewoods' Director. Through a time of tremendous transition, anticipation and planning for the future, Jenifer's legacy has been one of co-creative, imaginative leadership. Her service has embodied our Franciscan values with a profound reverence for creation and all our relations, coupled with a fierce and abiding loyalty to our evolutionary mission. Through her genuine and personalized care for colleagues, board members, volunteers and guests, Jenifer has left an indelible handprint on our hearts. Thank you, Jenifer. An Irish blessing for the next phase of your journey:

*May the road rise up to meet you.  
May the wind be always at your back;  
May the sun shine warm upon your face;  
the rains fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
may God hold you in the palm of Her hand.*



# Prairiewoods

A CATHOLIC, FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

## Animating Active Hope

*“Hope sees what is not,  
but yet will be.”*  
—Charles Péguy, poet

**A**ctive Hope—What is it? In spite of despair, how might we practice Active Hope?

In their book *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in without Going Crazy*, Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone write, “So this is where we begin—by acknowledging that our times confront us with realities that are painful to face, difficult to take in, and confusing to live with. Our approach is to see this as the starting point of an amazing journey that strengthens us and deepens our aliveness. The purpose of this journey is to find, offer, and receive the gift of Active Hope ... Active Hope is a practice ... it is something we *do* rather than *have* ... The guiding impetus is intention; we choose the values and action we aim to bring about, act for, or express” (2).

Further defining Active Hope, Macy and Johnstone introduce the image of a spiral detailing the journey:

## Trusting the Spiral

Active Hope is not wishful thinking.  
Active Hope is not waiting to be rescued  
by the Lone Ranger or by some savior.  
Active Hope is waking up to the beauty of life  
on whose behalf we can act.

We belong to this world.

The web of life is calling us forth at this time.

We've come a long way and are here to play our part.

With Active Hope we realize that there are adventures in store,  
strengths to discover, and comrades to link arms with.

Active Hope is a readiness to engage.

Active Hope is a readiness to discover the strengths  
in ourselves and in others;

A readiness to discover the reasons for hope  
and the occasions for love.

A readiness to discover the size and strength of our hearts,  
our quickness of mind, our steadiness of purpose,  
our own authority, our love for life,  
the liveliness of our curiosity,  
the unsuspected deep well of patience and diligence,  
the keenness of our senses, and our capacity to lead.

None of these can be discovered in an armchair or without risk.

—Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone, *Active Hope:  
How to Face the Mess We're in without Going Crazy*, p. 35

*(continued on page 4)*

# A Message from the Board

## PRAIRIEWOODS STAFF

**Joann Gehling, FSPA**  
Holistic Services, Spiritual  
Director

**Trace Harshman**  
Housekeeper

**Brydon Hill**  
Cook

**Nancy Hoffman, FSPA**  
Holistic Services  
Coordinator, Outdoor/  
Land Management

**Ann Jackson, PBVM**  
Spiritual Services  
Coordinator, Spiritual  
Director

**Melissa Kurt**  
Cook

**Andi Lewis**  
Marketing Coordinator

**Erik Meggers**  
Maintenance Coordinator

**Mary Rasmussen**  
Hospitality Assistant

**Nancy Schrimper**  
Office Administrator

**August Stolba**  
Land Care & Holistic  
Ecology Coordinator

**Dan Sutherland**  
Chef/Kitchen Manager

**Laura Weber**  
Retreats Coordinator,  
Associate Director

**Lucille Winnike, FSPA**  
Retreats, Spiritual  
Director



Hello!

My name is Barb Gay and I am grateful to currently serve as the vice chair of the Prairiewoods Board. While we are in the search process for our next Director, I have been invited to share with you in this space.

On behalf of the Board, I first offer tremendous appreciation to all members of the current Prairiewoods staff. Your dedication, passion and extra efforts are noticed and appreciated during this time. When things are different, often we talk about how things are changing. I encourage us to focus on the transitions, rather than the changes.

In his book *Transitions*, William Bridges, Ph.D., shares that change is situational (going to a new school, starting a new job). In comparison, he says transition is psychological; it is a three-phase process that we go through as we internalize and interact with the details of the new situation that the change brings about. For me, the focus on the transitions means that the focus is on us—all of us who love, respect and enjoy all that Prairiewoods is and offers.

In June and early July, we were in the first phase of transition, the ending of what had been. We are currently in the second phase, the in-between. The old is no longer but we aren't yet to our new. This is truly an exciting time! The time of exploration, trying out opportunities, and seeing what fits for us for the future. Understandably, it can also feel like a challenging time, because we can't rely on what we've known.

Being together, joining with our networks, can be a tremendous support during this phase of transition. I encourage all of us to: join together in programs, walk the land, enjoy the beauty of Prairiewoods and connect with each other during this phase of transition. Perhaps invite someone who hasn't been to Prairiewoods in awhile with you, or someone who hasn't been yet, to experience the in-between and imagine the new. Our connection and experience at and with Prairiewoods during the in-between will shape our new.

It is said that transition starts with an ending and finishes with a beginning. We will soon get to the final stage of transition, where we will welcome the new director of Prairiewoods. We will develop and experience together the new.

With much appreciation of being in the in-between with you all, I am also eagerly looking forward to developing and experiencing the new with you.

Sincerely,  
Barb Gay



Prairiewoods is a Catholic ecospirituality retreat and conference center in the Franciscan tradition. It is a nonprofit ministry sponsored by Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

**Mission:** Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality 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.

The Prairiewoods staff collaborates to publish this newsletter bimonthly. Content, except where otherwise noted, is created by our staff in consultation and with care to offer a uniquely Prairiewoods perspective.

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[www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org)

[Ecospirit@Prairiewoods.org](mailto:Ecospirit@Prairiewoods.org)





## With Gratitude for Another Great Garden Party!

The Prairiewoods Garden Party: A Night in the Cosmos was a great evening of food, friendship and fundraising! This was our 15<sup>th</sup> in-person Garden Party after two years hiatus due to the pandemic. It featured live and silent auctions and our signature Dough for Dough, in which guests bought a loaf of Prairiewoods bread for a chance to win \$300 cash. Thanks to our sponsors, auction item donors and attendees, we raised more than \$25,000 for the future of Prairiewoods!



# Activating Active Hope

(continued from page 1)

Prairiewoods' interactive landscape invites a unity of the metaphysical and physical realms; dwelling in and among the space urges one beyond the solitude of an "armchair" and into dialogue with the essence of our existence (35).

These last couple of years have tried and tired our souls. As many have shared, the collective pain is palpable. Macy elevates the voice of a young monk who suggests the power of making and keeping vows; the practice channels the energy required to rise above trying times. Through vows, we cultivate and nurture hope.

"I vow to myself and to each of you:

To commit myself daily to the healing of our world and the welfare of all beings.

To live on Earth more lightly and less violently in the food, products, and energy I consume.

To draw strength and guidance from the living Earth, the ancestors, the future generations, and my sisters and brothers of all species.

To support others in our work for the world and to ask for help when I need it.

To pursue a daily practice that clarifies my mind, strengthens my heart, and supports me in observing these vows" (203).

The transformative power of such a contemplative practice as Active Hope cannot be practiced in isolation from the broader global context. Our spiritual journey is part of the evolutionary process; that's where Prairiewoods comes in.

Example is contagious! We co-inspire one another whenever we engage our desire for the world's healing—in individual actions or though collective action. This is how cultures change! We offer these examples of Prairiewoods' guests who embody Active Hope.

Prairiewoods serves in a variety of ways to animate Active Hope: hosting private and group retreats, welcoming all visitors and neighbors to embrace its peaceful space imbued with Spirit. Many walk the land. Our annual *Spirituality in the 21st Century* event offers Active Hope through lifting emerging trends in the future of spirituality. Student groups, support groups and individual guests in search of solace find Prairiewoods a place of welcome, peace, renewal and transformation. For that, we give thanks and extend our welcome to lovers of soul work who animate hope!



Prairiewoods volunteer Tom Stoeber engages Active Hope as he plants and tends the new Four Winds Food Forest.



Silent Directed retreatants spend a week in silence together to awaken to the beauty of life and their sense of belonging in the world, engaging in discernment of how the web of life is calling us forth at this time.



Ta'sjé Carrasco, AmeriCorp volunteer and Coe College student, provides an outlet for people to feel a connection to something larger than themselves. Ground Yourself meditation sessions "for people who look like me" invite such connection to Earth, Self, Others and Source of All Being.

"Prairiewoods is a nature spa for the soul. My soul overflows with the goodness of God."

—retreatant

"I walk on the path at a gentle pace  
Seeing the beauty of Queen Anne's Lace  
Open to God's gift of grace  
That I may see in every person  
God's face."

—Kathy Braun, SSND



Iowa BIG Students enact hope as they restore Prairiewoods' prayer circle.



Cub Scouts build bat houses to preserve ecosystems at Prairiewoods.

## Touching One Another

"I am on my way quickly this morning, noticing all there is to see.

All of a sudden—there you are,  
blooming in the morning as you are want to do.  
I call you by name, Oh ... Spiderwort\*, my very favorite.  
You are beautiful! You are Beauty itself.  
Delicate, soft, bright, perfect.  
My pure delight.

Later today, I will come and sit with you, my hand outstretched to you,  
Your long slender leaf reaching me.  
The dewdrops a tender touch between us.

Just me with you—no words.  
Simply together.  
I am you. You are me. We are One."

—CMK, retreatant

\* Spiderwort flowers open in the morning, lasting only one day. The flowers have three blue to purple petals and yellow stamens. They have long grass-like leaves up to 15 inches long.



Elementary and high school teachers, principals and school staff study mindfulness at Prairiewoods to discover the healing elements involved in neuroscience, mindfulness and self-compassion meditations in order to strengthen healing and hope in themselves and in students.



Walk with an Eco-Ologist participants enact hope for Earth and all creatures.

## Belovedness

"You are my beloved, in whom I take delight."

Such is our love note from God!

Make it your mantra.

Repeat it again and again

until it breaks your heart

and rests in you,

soft as an easy chair.

God whispers for you to love your life.

Accept His grace

and free yourself from the wrath

of the wicked stepmother,

who mocks you as unworthy

of the blessing bestowed.

Shh! Listen to the whispers of your heart.

You are not alone.

Live in solidarity

with your beloved neighbors

in God's delightful embrace,

and love them as yourself!"

—Bill Stigliani



S.E.E.L. Retreatants are commissioned to embody hope wherever they go!

Looking for a way to engage your hopes? Attend a new program at Prairiewoods!

### Animating Active Hope: Healing Our Divides

Thursdays; Sept. 15, Sept. 29, Oct. 13 & Nov. 3; 11 a.m.–12 p.m., plus lunch

Facilitators: Ann Jackson, PBVM, August Stolba & Laura A. Weber, Ph.D.

These times confront us with realities that are painful, difficult and confusing. How could we begin to launch an amazing journey together that strengthens, deepens and activates our hope? Join us on four Thursdays as, together, we co-inspire one another to find, offer and activate hope in service to the world. We will reflect on:

Gratitude—what's going right with the world

Grief—honoring pain in the world

Vision—seeing and sensing with new awareness and understanding

Active Hope—activating hope locally and globally

Please feel free to attend any one or more of these sessions.

Fee: \$25 per session, includes lunch

The following are retreats and programs that Prairiewoods is hosting online via Zoom or in person in the next two months. For more information or to register, visit [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org) or call 319-395-6700.

**Writing from Nature Retreat: Practices in Eco-poetics & Slow Seeing**  
**Friday, Sept. 16, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Sept. 18, 1 p.m.**  
**Facilitators:** David Duer & Cecile Goding

What happens when we spiritually connect with our natural environment? How do we record these experiences in words? How do we communicate those moments to others through poetry? What do we come to learn about ourselves through realizing our place in the natural world?

This weekend retreat will include three components: learning (looking at forms, techniques, other poets), practicing (writing from prompts and from our direct engagement with the woods and prairie) and responding (sharing and discussing our work with others).

The over-arching goal is, as Thoreau says, to return to our senses. Or to take ourselves to a place where, as Annie Dillard writes in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, we are “gazing beyond ... into the realm of the real where subjects and objects act and rest purely.”

David Duer recently retired from teaching English language arts at Cedar Rapids Washington High School. He served for many years as the Washington Literary Press faculty advisor. His work has appeared in *Ascent*, *Exquisite Corpse*, *English Journal*, *Little Village*, *North American Review* and *Poetry*, among others. A chapbook of his poetry, *To Bread* (o.p.), has been published by Coffee House Press.

Cecile Goding is from South Carolina, where she worked in her county’s adult literacy movement. She has taught at the University of Iowa, Mount Mercy University and the Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County. Her poetry chapbook is *The Women Who Drink at the Sea*. Along with composer John Lake, she wrote the opera *The Machine Stops*, which debuted at the Coralville Center for the Performing Arts this past July.

**Fee:** \$230 includes sessions, lodging and all meals  
**Commuter Fee:** \$180 includes sessions and all meals



**As Things Fall Apart: Reconnecting to Hope & Resilience Retreat**  
**Friday, Oct. 21, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Oct. 23, 1 p.m.**  
**Facilitator:** Kathleen Rude

These are challenging times. Things in our lives, in our communities, in the world feel like they are falling apart. How can we take this all in and not fall apart ourselves? By reconnecting to hope and resilience! Join facilitator Kathleen Rude in this in-person weekend retreat exploring the life-changing and life-affirming process known as the Work That Reconnects. In supportive community, we will ground ourselves in gratitude, honor our pain for the world, reconnect to active hope, strengthen our resilience and find clarity around how we can play a part in the healing of our communities and our planet. This retreat includes experiential practices, time outside, inspirational readings and simple rituals. It’s engaging, invigorating and gives us tools for dealing with the challenges of living in volatile times.

Kathleen Rude fell in love with the natural world as a young child and found her voice for environmental activism at age 10. She has a bachelor’s degree in wildlife ecology and a master’s in natural resources. Kathleen began her career as an environmental writer. Her studies of indigenous spiritual practice eventually led her to become a shamanic practitioner, ceremonial leader and teacher. She is a senior facilitator of the Work That Reconnects (WTR), an interactive process/workshop that helps to transform despair and overwhelm into empowerment and inspiration. She has been mentored by Joanna Macy, the internationally-acclaimed root teacher of the WTR. Kathleen has created *A Guided Self-Practice of The Work That Reconnects* (42 minutes), available as a digital download. She is the author of the novel *The Redemption of Red Fire Woman*, a spiritual story of suspense and romance in the Colorado high country. She is currently working on a new book, *How To Be An Every Day Difference Maker*.

**Fee:** \$230 includes sessions, lodging and all meals  
**Commuter Fee:** \$180 includes sessions and all meals



**Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (S.E.E.L.) 15 Retreat**

**Saturdays, monthly beginning Sept. 10, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.**  
**Facilitators:** Rose Blank; Ann Jackson, PBVM; & Lucille Winnike, FSPA

Do you long for GOD? Do you desire time to reflect on your spiritual path and the movement of the Spirit within your life? Do you wish to enrich your spiritual experience through monthly prayer and reflection? Would you like a framework in which to explore and pray your “heart’s desire”? Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (S.E.E.L.) is a nine-month retreat based on the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Ignatius explored a number of different kinds of prayer in creating the Exercises. He recognized that emotions and feelings in addition to the intellect help us to sense the movement of the Spirit in

our lives. The Exercises develop dispositions of the heart for prayer, which then become part of daily life.

Retreatants in S.E.E.L. become increasingly aware of the presence of and activity of God in all things. They learn to discern that movement of God in their lives and in the world and to integrate meditation, contemplation and action. We invite you to commit to one hour of prayer each day for nine months, at least one monthly meeting with a spiritual director and nine monthly Saturday sessions (Sept. 10, Oct. 15, Nov. 6, Dec. 3, Jan. 7, Feb. 4, March 4, April 1 and May 6). This retreat is best suited for those who have or are interested in establishing a discipline of regular personal prayer; have experience sharing their spiritual journey with others, and are called and committed to deepening personal faith.  
**Fee:** \$450 (payable in September or in monthly installments of \$50) plus monthly spiritual direction sessions paid separately

## **Metta Yoga**

**Mondays & Thursdays, Sept. 1–Oct. 31, 9:30–10:30 a.m., 10:45–11:45 a.m. & 5:30–6:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Heather English

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga from the spiritual environment and natural beauty of Prairiewoods. Join us in person as we link our movements with our breath and cultivate strength, flexibility and relaxation through regular hatha-style yoga classes. RYT-200 Hour Certified Yoga Alliance Instructor Heather English offers Gentle/Beginner's Yoga every Monday and Thursday. People of all fitness levels and abilities are encouraged to participate whenever available.

Registration is required for each session.

**Fee:** \$99 for eleven-punch card or \$60 for six-punch card, one punch per session

## **Go Deeper Thursdays**

**Thursdays; Sept. 1, Sept. 15, Oct. 6 & Oct. 20; 4–5 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Ellen Bruckner & Laura A. Weber, Ph.D.

Go Deeper Thursdays emerged in the context of the global pandemic, or as Prairiewoods calls it, the *PanDeepening*. Our reflective and lively conversations opened us to spiritual deepening, providing a sacred space to share our PanDeepening awareness, a place where we explored venues for collective presencing and delving into the wider “We” space. As our journey meandered through topics associated with inter-breathing and collective consciousness, we embraced diverse resources for consideration.

Through simple breathing meditations, poetry, practicing mindfulness, storytelling, re-languaging, listening to creation's song and many small group experiences, we have been learning to read the collective and listen deeply to our emergent, inter-connected wisdom. In the process, we are becoming more expansive, more inclusive, recognizing our place in the wider “We.” Who is this “We” that we mean? It is wider than our own ego or individual selves, wider than our most intimate circles, our community, work, worship and social circles, and wider even than our human community. It is no less than the “We” of all creation. A one-time registration for September and October is required.

**Fee:** \$10 per month

## **Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton**

**Thursdays; Sept. 1, Sept. 15, Oct. 6 & Oct. 20; 7–8:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Carole Butz

The practice of contemplative living helps us respond to everyday experiences with greater awareness of our connections with God and others. It becomes a positive force in our lives and provides direction for our journey, enabling us to embrace our truest selves. This group meets via Zoom on the first and third Thursdays of each month. We use the *Bridges to Contemplative Living* series, which includes excerpts from the writings of Thomas Merton and other authors, to explore the truths of human existence. The process involves readings, reflections and contemplative dialogue. Book purchase is required after your first session. Please register for your first session to get the Zoom link.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## **Prayer Experience Series**

**Tuesdays, Sept. 6–Oct. 25, 11:30 a.m.–12 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Kim Seward & Diane Wheeler Dunn

We are blessed with many ways to pray and reflect, including songful prayer, contemplative prayer, visio divina, embodied prayer, silent prayer, guided meditation and many others. All are welcome to join this ongoing prayer series via Zoom and experience the joys of prayer and meditation together.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## **Walk with an Eco-Ologist: Mycology, Entomology & Dendrology**

**Tuesdays; Sept. 6, Sept. 13 & Oct. 11; 4–6 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Roger Heidt, Matthew O'Neal & Nick McGrath

Join us on the second Tuesday of each month as we walk with an Eco-Ologist! Each program will give you the opportunity to learn from a local 'ologist and dive deeper into specific topics within the field of ecology. Come prepared to walk our trails and, depending on the topic, get a little dirty and meet some of our plant and animal kin!

On Sept. 6, join mycologist Roger Heidt, president of the Prairie States

Mushroom Club, as we celebrate our fungal family. We will not only be searching for and identifying specimens of the mycological world, but also discussing the role that mushrooms and their mycelium play within our ecosystem.

On Sept. 13, join entomologist Matthew O'Neal, professor of entomology at Iowa State University, as we inspect the insects of Prairiewoods. Matthew focuses on managing insect pests and conserving beneficial insects in the agricultural world by exploring how native, flowering vegetation can increase abundance and diversity of all insects.

On Oct. 11, join arborist Nick McGrath, east central Iowa field coordinator for Trees Forever, as we admire our arbor elders. Nick will help us identify different types of trees while also helping us understand their value and importance to not just us but also our greater ecological environment.

Closed-toe shoes and long pants are recommended. Registration is required.

**Fee:** free-will offering

## **Woodland Wednesdays**

**Wednesdays, Sept. 7–Oct. 26, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** August Stolba & Nancy Hoffman, FSPA

Are you interested in learning about prairie and woodland restoration, vegetable gardening and food forests, or just like to help Prairiewoods, drive tractors and move logs? Join us every Wednesday morning for our regular volunteer hours. Do those times or activities not work for you? Don't worry—there are plenty of other times and ways to get involved! Reach out to August at [astolba@prairiewoods.org](mailto:astolba@prairiewoods.org).

**Fee:** Free

## **Dream Workshop Series**

**Wednesdays, beginning Sept. 7, 1–3 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Karen Sindelar, MA, LMT

Dreams can open us into our inner landscape and help us to grow spiritually. Working and playing with dreams can bring transformation and inner healing. This Dream Workshop Series at Prairiewoods will take place on four Wednesday afternoons (Sept. 7, 14, 21 and 28). As a participant, you will be exposed to a Jungian approach to deciphering your dreams. You

will be prepared to work with your dreams individually or in a group. After completing these four workshop sessions, you will be eligible to join a monthly Dream Group. Facilitator Karen Sindelar holds a master's degree in applied psychology with an emphasis in Jungian studies. Karen has been an active participant in dream groups since the 1980s. Registration is requested by Aug. 29.

**Fee:** \$100 for four-week series, whether present or not (payable in advance or \$25 at each session)

### **Men Exploring Faith Thursdays; Sept. 8, Sept. 22, Oct. 13 & Oct. 27; 4–5:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Linzy Martin

Behavioral scientists and spiritual guides have noted a major transformation in the life direction of many men as we mature. It may happen gradually or abruptly, as early as our 20s or in our 50s or 60s. Some men never make this shift, described as a change from goal drivenness to receptivity, from ego to wisdom. The transition can start from the inside (*Why am I doing what I'm doing?*) or the outside (from a loss or threat), and it may seem disruptive while on the way to being life-enhancing. Join with a small group of reflective men in honest conversation about these changes. This group meets in person with an online option available on the second and fourth Thursdays monthly.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

### **Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences**

**Full Moon in the Prairie: Nature & Forest Therapy Experience:** Saturday, Sept. 10, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

**Afternoon Experiences:** Mondays, Sept. 12 & Oct. 10, 2:30–3:45 p.m.

**Autumn in the Woods: Nature & Forest Therapy Experience:** Thursday, Oct. 20, 6–8 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Emelia Sautter

Join the land and certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide Emelia Sautter for a walk with the natural world. Experience Forest Therapy, a sensory-focused practice that invites us to slow down and be present with self and the natural world around us. According to the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy, "Forest Therapy is a practice that supports health and wellness through guided immersion

in forests and other environments to promote the well-being of both people and the land."

Time with our nature kin reduces stress and depression, improves cognitive functioning, boosts our immune system, regulates blood pressure, improves relationships, increases feelings of gratitude and much more. Registration is required by the previous day. Please bring a water bottle and dress for being outdoors.

**Fee:** \$20 per session (\$15 for shorter afternoon sessions)



### **Day of Self Renewal Mondays, Sept. 12 & Oct. 10, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Kim Seward

Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services, group guided meditation, singing bowl prayer, a private guest room, a fresh lunch, and access to the labyrinth and all that Prairiewoods has to offer. (Choose from massage, head and shoulder massage, reflexology, healing touch, spiritual direction, Nature & Forest Therapy, yoga or chair yoga.) Registration, a nonrefundable/nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three services choices are required eight days in advance. (Masks and vaccination may be required by the holistic provider.)

**Fee:** \$110 includes two services, guided meditation, singing bowl prayer, private guest room and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room)

### **Singing Bowl Prayer Mondays, Sept. 12 & Oct. 10, 12:45–1:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Kathy Broghammer

Throughout history, singing bowls have been used around the world to foster meditation, relaxation, prayer and mind-body-spirit wellness. In these in-person sessions, we let the resonant sounds of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls relax the entire body and create a pathway for clearer connection with the divine. We are invited to just receive and breathe. Registration is required by noon.

**Fee:** \$8 per session

### **Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitches Tuesdays, Sept. 13 & Oct. 11, 9:30–11 a.m.; & Wednesdays, Sept. 28 & Oct. 26, 6:30–8 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** participants

Practice knitting and stitching in the company of new friends! This is a group of crafters of various skill levels who create handmade goods for charity. New participants are always welcome, including those who are new to knitting and crocheting. Together we create hats, mittens, blankets and baby items for charity. Grab your needles and join us! This group meets in person on the second Tuesday morning and fourth Wednesday evening of each month.

**Fee:** Free

### **Evening Centering Prayer Tuesdays; Sept. 13, Sept. 27, Oct. 11 & Oct. 25; 5:30–7 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Judith Smith

Come to Prairiewoods for Evening Centering Prayer on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. This is a prayer/support group for people who enjoy centering prayer, a form of meditation focused on silent prayer. In this time of silence, we relax, empty our minds and find God's presence within us. Sessions stand alone.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

### **Animating Active Hope: Healing Our Divides Thursdays; Sept. 15, Sept. 29, Oct. 13 & Nov. 3; 11 a.m.–12 p.m., plus lunch**

See p. 5 for details.

### **Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations**

**Mondays; Sept. 19, Oct. 3 & Oct. 17;  
6:30–7:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Kathy Broghammer

Experience sound, stillness, playfulness and relaxation through the enigmatic vibrations of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls. During this in-person hour, we connect with our inner selves through the song of bowls. We are invited to sit or lie down to listen and just be. We hear the sounds and feel the vibrations of the singing bowls going inward. Let's let our souls rest and allow ourselves to be recreated! Registration is required.

**Fee:** \$10 per session

*Offered in Partnership with  
UnityPoint Hospice*

## **Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Group**

**Wednesdays, Sept. 21 & Oct. 19,  
5:30–7 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Jamie Siela, LISW

In grief, our very foundation can be rocked. Take time to connect with others in grief and engage the creative spark. This monthly grief group is open to anyone grieving loss through death. On the third Wednesday of each month, explore a different creative art medium. On Sept. 21, we will use the popular medium of diamond art, a mosaic art form using shiny resins on canvas, to create a beautiful sunflower wall hanging. On Oct. 19, we will use the centuries-old practice of Kente weaving, which was traditionally done by men to make clothing for African royals to wear during prestigious ceremonies. We will create a paper Kente weaving project. Registration is required nine days in advance. This group is a hybrid, offered both online and in person.  
**Fee:** Free includes all art supplies

## **The Blessing of the Animals Sunday, Oct. 2, 1 p.m.**

Prairiewoods' annual Blessing of the Animals and celebration of St. Francis Day (and Sister Betty Daugherty's birthday) will occur Sunday, Oct. 2. We hope to offer a day of mindful Earth activities for individuals and families. The actual Blessing of the Animals will occur at 1 p.m. Stay tuned to [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org) for more details!



## **Dream Group Series Wednesdays, beginning Oct. 5, 1–3 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Karen Sindelar, MA, LMT  
*“Dreams come in the service of  
wholeness and health.”*

—Jeremy Taylor

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 Dream Group, you will be exposed to a Jungian approach to deciphering your dreams. As a prerequisite for taking part in this Dream Group, you must have some dream workshop experience (at Prairiewoods or elsewhere) that has introduced you to working with dreams individually or in a group. This group will meet the first Wednesday of each month (Oct. 5, Nov. 2, Dec. 7, Jan. 4, Feb. 1, March 1, April 5 and May 3).

**Fee:** \$160 for eight-part series, whether present or not (payable in advance or \$20 at each session)

## **The Art of Nature & Nature of Art: Poetry**

**Saturday, Oct. 8, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Carol Tyx

Join us every other month as we reflect in nature and express our mindful exploration through



art. This session will feature Prairiewoods' artist-in-residence, poet Carol Tyx, as we celebrate fall's emergence. We will explore the woodland, prairie, wetlands and gardens, and engage with a deeper understanding of the ecology that encompasses our environment. Upon the conclusion of our walk, Carol will help us to reflect on what we observed and manifest it in the form of poetry.

**Fee:** free-will offering

## **Prairiewoods Harvest Dinner Saturday, Oct. 8, 6–9 p.m.**

See back page for details.

## **The Art of Creating Egyptian Perfume**

**Monday, Oct. 24, 6–7:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Karen Sindelar, MA, LMT

This introduction to perfume creation is influenced by the scents of northeast Africa and the historical practices of ancient Egypt. We will explore a brief history of olfaction in ancient Egypt, the properties of various Egyptian essential oils and blending practices. You will take home perfume in a small, authentic hand-blown glass Egyptian perfume bottle. Karen Sindelar, Prairiewoods holistic services provider and certified clinical aromatherapist, will instruct from her 2020 holistic aromatherapy study tour to Egypt sponsored by the National Association of Holistic Aromatherapists (NAHA).

**Fee:** \$50 (includes \$25 materials fee)

## **Rock Mandala Painting for the Whole Family**

**Saturday, Oct. 29, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Andi Lewis

Spend a few hours creating art with your favorite people! We will spend fun time together as we learn



the art of rock painting with mandalas, which are sacred works of art in the form of a circle. Using smooth stones, paints and fine dotting tools, we will make beautiful, detailed mandalas. This is a fun, relaxing process that can be done by anyone, regardless of age. We will have time to paint several rocks and will be encouraged to take one rock home and leave one as a secret gift for a stranger to find. No experience or artistic skill is necessary, but kids 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult. (It is ideal for ages 10 and older.) This program usually fills up early, so register today!



**Fee:** \$13 includes rocks and all art supplies

# Donors (May & June 2022)

We appreciate all of the generous people who donate their time, money and other gifts to Prairiewoods! For a complete, up-to-date list between newsletters, please visit [www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate](http://www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate).

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Thank you!

*In memory of Mary Carolyn Hogg (cont.)*

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## *Announcing the First Ever Prairiewoods Harvest Dinner!*

**Saturday, Oct. 8, 6–9 p.m.**

Join us for a celebration and showcase of creation's beauty as we share the abundance of local food that Prairiewoods and our local community lend to our pallet!

As we have expanded our food justice mission at Prairiewoods, more time and resources are dedicated to the awareness of and access to fresh, local and sustainable food production. This four-course meal with optional wine pairing is our way of inviting more people to engage with this mission and help ensure its maintenance, sustainability and growth. The meal will be held indoors in the beautiful atrium at Prairiewoods.

For those eager to explore our gardens, edible landscapes and newly christened Four Winds Food Forest, we will be offering a tour and discussion of these spaces at 5 p.m. before the meal.

The cost of this four-course meal to support food justice initiatives at Prairiewoods is \$60, with an optional \$25 wine pairing.



November/December 2022

# Prairiewoods

A CATHOLIC, FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

## It Is **ENOUGH**

**W**hen rolling autumn winds rush us toward the warming hearthfires, it is enough. When our avian kin begin their astounding migratory journeys to warmer climes, it is enough. When we gather together around a table as families and loved ones to share in the harvest's magnificent bounty, it is enough. When gorgeous burnt orange, flaming magenta-red and luminescent yellowing leaves, crackling and golden against the bright blue skies, appear to heighten our senses and help us to breathe deeply, it is enough. When we are invited to live in the fullness of life even as it fades and

returns to Earth, it is enough. We pause to reflect and give thanks. Life in its ripe, effulgent plenitude is upon us. We thank You, O God. It is enough.

Many might be familiar with the sung Hebrew prayer called "Dayenu" from Pesach (Passover). Aptly translated, it means, "It would have been enough." The Dayenu is a gratitude meditation with the repeated refrain "Dayenu," giving thanks for the abundance of divine goodness throughout Hebrew salvation history. Here are a few representative stanzas:

*(continued on page 3)*

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**P**rairiewoods is a story that is forever unfolding. Each new season of people and this place mark transitions—an ending and a beginning. I am conscious of this in my own beginning here as director. Many have come before me and shaped the land and the organization of which I am now a part. This struck me deeply when I found myself reading the title document that captures the recorded history of this piece of land. We do not know the earliest details, but we can read about families named Robins, Martin, Hollingsworth and finally Trzil passing this land from hand to hand. The land rose to meet them—serving as homestead and farm, welcoming generations here. After the Trzils, Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration took up the story. The Trzils had hoped that a church might be built here. The sisters heard a new story emerging from the land and this sanctuary as we know it was born. And so the story continues ...

As I prepared to write my first Director's corner, I found myself thinking about the generous welcome I have received. As a team just this week we were discussing our value of hospitality and the conversation turned from the hospitality shown by the people here to the unending hospitality of the land. God's creation here welcomes us in, over and over, without question. What a miracle! As the world turns and changes, for generations, this land has opened itself to us, forgiven us and offered us beauty and rest. Its seasons and its resilience teach us powerful lessons about God and ourselves if we will let it. Prairiewoods is a microcosm of the larger truth of the unfolding, always creating universe.

So now my story joins the flow of the generations. My first day as director was Aug. 15. But my story began here many years before that. I have been blessed to be connected to Prairiewoods since 2007 when I attended a Women in Ministry gathering and then attended *Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* for the very first time. More recently I have served on the Operating Board.

Even though I have participated in the life of Prairiewoods in several ways in the past, these last few weeks have taught me that Prairiewoods is the place that I have been journeying to all along. Each day at Prairiewoods opens up to me a new discovery and fulfills a longing that I had forgotten or didn't even know that I possessed. My soul is delighted and nourished by the stories of the land, by the morning song of Sabbath retreatants and by the golden light washing over the prairie. I am planted here to join the other souls who have gone before me.

I am so glad your journey brought you here and I hope each of you continues to experience the warm embrace of creation here at Prairiewoods. And I hope that this place also reminds you that you are part of an unending web of stories, woven in surprising and unexpected patterns.

Sincerely,  
Leslie A. Wright



Prairiewoods is a Catholic ecospirituality retreat and conference center in the Franciscan tradition. It is a nonprofit ministry sponsored by Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

**Mission:** Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality 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.

The Prairiewoods staff collaborates to publish this newsletter bimonthly. Content, except where otherwise noted, is created by our staff in consultation and with care to offer a uniquely Prairiewoods perspective.

Please address all correspondence to:

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(continued from page 1)

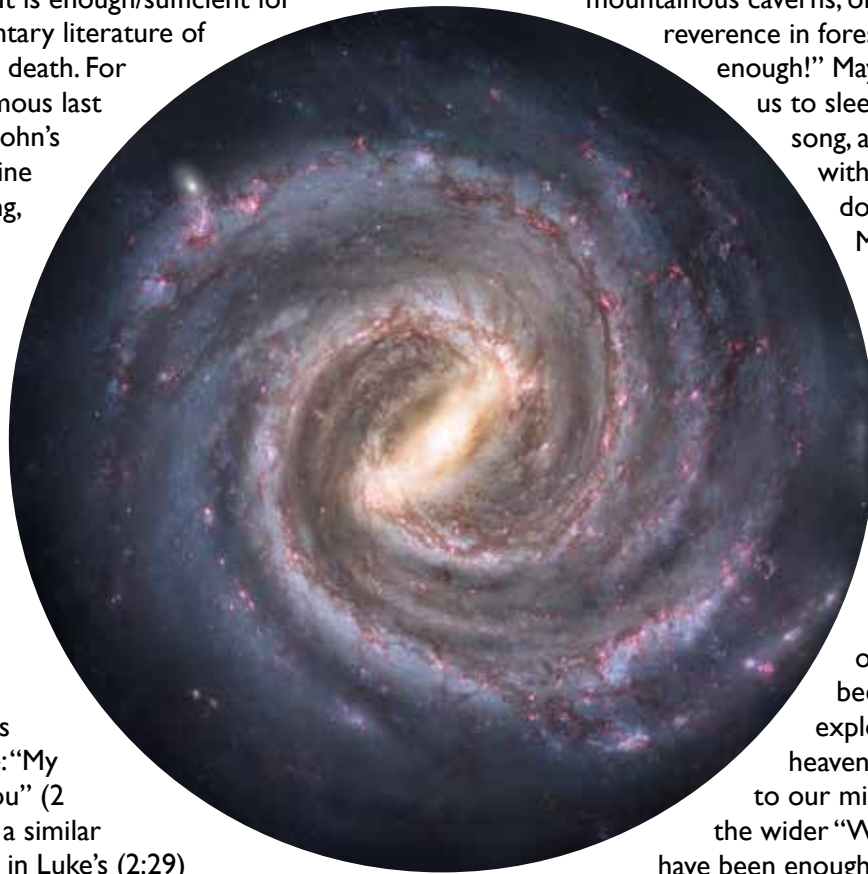
If (G-d) had supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, and had not fed us the manna, Dayenu—it would have been enough!

If (G-d) had fed us the manna, and had not given us the Shabbat, Dayenu—it would have been enough!

If (G-d) had given us the Shabbat, and had not brought us before Mount Sinai, Dayenu—it would have been enough!

([www.haggadot.com/clip/dayenu-english-hebrew-and-transliteration](http://www.haggadot.com/clip/dayenu-english-hebrew-and-transliteration))

The idea of “enough” as a wisdom morsel for the spiritual sojourner’s appetite is quite ancient. “Satis est mihi,” a Latin proverb, “It is enough/sufficient for me,” pervades testamentary literature of the hero/patriarch near death. For example, note Jesus’ famous last word in the Gospel of John’s crucifixion scene, in Koine Greek, *tetelestai*, meaning, “It is a completion/ fulfillment/enough/ finished” (John 19:30). Earlier, the idea appears in biblical wisdom texts of the Hebrew Scriptures, such as Elijah’s prayer of surrender (1 Kings 19:4), or the Psalmist who trusts in God alone (Psalm 4, 31, 62, etc.). A similar refrain emerges in Christian Scriptures, Paul’s famous reliance on God’s grace: “My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Corinthians 12:9). And a similar formulation is reflected in Luke’s (2:29) Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, placed on the lips of the old man, Simeon: “Sovereign Lord, as You promised, You may now dismiss your servant in peace.” In other words, “It is enough. You can let me die now, God.” Why? Simeon had beheld the child who was the promised savior (Jesus), as the story goes. This is seen in the famous Latin verse, so familiar from sacred music, “Nunc dimittis...” or “Now You may dismiss... (your servant in peace).” In other words, it was “enough.” St. Augustine’s famous quote from his Confessions, “You have made us for Yourself, O Lord. Our hearts are restless until they rest in You,” captures this same idea later in the fourth-early fifth century C.E. It is enough just to rest in the Love that made us. It is enough.



While the concept is ancient, there has also been a resurgence of recent interest in the Swedish notion of “Lagom,” or “just enough” ([bigthink.com/thinking/swedish-philosophy-lagom-just-enough](http://bigthink.com/thinking/swedish-philosophy-lagom-just-enough)). Practicing restraint for the good of the whole in the context of avoiding excess is a hallmark of spiritual discipline. “Lagom” is gaining traction in eco-justice movements, in which care for all of creation is paramount. “Just enough” is the mark of one who practices moderation and self-awareness, the one who knows s/he is fulfilled in this moment.

How might creation—the wider “We”—sing this great litany of thanks in the context of the Universe Story? Maybe the song that reverberates in the valleys and mountainous caverns, or hushes us to profound

reverence in forest cathedrals, says, “It is enough!” Maybe the refrain that lulls us to sleep each night with owl-song, and wakes us each dawn with the coo of mourning doves, says, “It is enough!” Maybe the song sounds something like this:

“It would have been enough if You had flared forth in the outpouring of creative Love and energy. It would have been enough!

“If the great Flaring Forth had just emerged from the foundation of Love, it would have been enough. But Life also exploded into myriads of heavenly arrays, giving birth to our miraculous universe, the wider “We.” And that would have been enough! If the universe had

unfolded to swirl into a multitudinous variety of gorgeous and diverse galaxies, constellations and nebulae, it would have been enough. But one particular galaxy, the Milky Way, with a spiralling impetus for life, gave way to a heliocentric system of planetary orbits that inspired just the right conditions for one planet to host human life. And that would have been enough. If Home planet had provided the perfect conditions for biological fecundity, it would have been enough. But Life also found breath in these curious, fragile, creative, wild and wonderful human-merely-beings, as part of a vast, mysterious web of Life. And that would have been enough. But now humans are becoming conscious of being part of the interconnected Mystery. And that is enough.”

# A Litany of

**N**ow it is our time to sing! How might we proclaim our litany of gratitude today in the heart of the wider “We”? What is “enough” for us? Prairiewoods joins with all creation to invite us all to co-create a litany of gratitude with this formula, or another of your own creation. Here is a suggested litany of gratitude template and a couple of examples from some Prairiewoods friends.

We give You thanks, O Love ever Ancient, and Source of All Being.

It is enough that I have been called into life with my family/community of origin: \_\_\_\_\_. It is enough!

It is enough that I have known a place to call “home,” and shared it with: \_\_\_\_\_. It is enough!

It is enough that I have been blessed with significant life relationships: \_\_\_\_\_. It is enough!

It is enough that I have been given gifts of: \_\_\_\_\_. It is enough!

It is enough that I have experienced these amazing life markers, and crossed these thresholds: \_\_\_\_\_. It is enough!

It is enough that I have been able to give life in these ways: \_\_\_\_\_. It is enough!

It is enough that I have been able to celebrate life in these ways: \_\_\_\_\_. It is enough!

It is enough that I have learned, most importantly: \_\_\_\_\_. It is enough!

It is enough that I have been part of family, community, globe and a wider “We” consisting of: \_\_\_\_\_. It is enough!

It is enough that...\_\_\_\_\_. It is enough!”

## *It Is Enough* by Thomas Dean

It is enough that in this middle land, the big bluestem rises tall, flares forth its progeny of seed, reddens, and falls to brittle dormancy, to assure us that it will rise again. It is enough!

It is enough that in this middle land, compass plant rises tall with sunny, showy yellow plumage, yet teaches, more subtly, to protect ourselves with leaves that turn and shield our tender core. It is enough!

It is enough that in this middle land, the savanna grounds its sentry oaks in individual solidity and communal solidarity, living the balance between solitude and kinship. It is enough!

It is enough that in this middle land, goldfinch sings, barred owl hunts, bumble bee and monarch pollinate, deer runs, squirrel stores, all playing their part in the miraculous web of life. It is enough!

It is enough that in this middle land, streams run with life-giving water, providing habitat to aquatic plants and creatures, flows to nourish all life, and blessings of the spirit of an unfurling universe. It is enough!

It is enough that in this middle land, cosmic creation has given us prairies, woodlands, wetlands, rivers, and creeks to call home. It is enough!

*sunset photo by  
Joni Reed Cooley*

# Gratitude

## *It Is Enough*

by Mary L. Cohen, Ph.D.

We give You thanks, O Love ever Ancient, and Source of All Being.

It is enough that I have been called into life with my family/ community of origin:

But wait! To what extent are we talking about the exterior or the interior? Months where there is not enough cash to pay bills; it is not enough. With too much clutter to find what I need; it is too much! With too many responsibilities and not enough energy to complete them all it is both too much and not enough!

It IS enough that I can breathe in this body and honor my process of making sense of who, where, and what I am. It IS enough that I have the wisdom to pray in my discernment process in choosing my actions or my time to pause.

Thomas Hubl, author of *Healing Collective Trauma*, calls us to awaken ancestral wounds to acknowledge suffering and to spread compassion. As the youngest child from maternal German roots and paternal Russian roots, my grandparents colonized the western plains of Kansas. There is so much we need to do to decolonize and heal generations and heal our land.

It is more than enough that I have been loved unconditionally by caring parents, supporting me in my love for playing piano and allowing me to journey on my own path. It is enough!

It is enough that I have known a place to call “home,” and shared it with:

I am currently feeling like a transplanted plant moved into the Iowa soil of academia and music education, exploring what it means to make community with others in a place where I have no biological family. So I built the Oakdale Prison Choir family comprised of people who have been displaced behind prison walls and people from outside prison who sang together for twelve years before the pandemic. It is difficult to say “it is enough” when I know how horrific the situation is for people in Iowa living behind bars and their families. Separation from families and home communities is difficult. Lack of any proper mental health care is a human rights issue. Long sentences can lead people to a sense of institutionalization. There are vital needs for an overhaul of the punishment-focused penal practices. Is it enough if we are each doing all we can to create communities of caring within ourselves, in our immediate communities, and beyond into our larger social communities?

It is enough that I have been blessed with significant life

relationships:

A loving, caring husband of 28 years, loving parents, friends and colleagues, and a beautiful world of trees, rivers, hills and valleys, insects and animals, and aqua marine life and flying birds. It is enough!

It is enough that I have been given gifts of curiosity, self-discipline, creativity, desire to teach and mentor, wise women to lean on for spiritual growth, piano lessons, and musical mentorship. It is enough!

It is enough that I have experienced these amazing life markers and crossed these thresholds:

24 years of regular yoga asana practice and 200 hours certified yoga teacher training

13 years of regular Transcendental Meditation practice  
Certified InterPlay leader

Grief and mourning and deep Love for my role mentor sister Judy who’s passing in May 2012 inspired my first visit to Prairiewoods

Musical composition, improvisation, and songwriting

Earned doctorate in 2007, tenure in 2013, and completed and co-authored *Music-Making in US Prisons: Listening to Incarcerated Voices* coming onto bookshelves this fall. It is enough!

It is enough that I have been able to give life in these ways:

Birthing over 150 original songs, creating incarcerated-non-incarcerated pen pal songwriting partners, facilitating creative musicianship for elementary and college students. It is enough!

It is enough that I have been able to celebrate life in these ways:

Forest bathing (shinrin yoku) with Emelia Sautter, post prison choir concert parties before the pandemic, transform daily life activities into parties—dishwasher party, folding clothes party, etc. It is enough!

It is enough that I have learned, most importantly Divine Love is within each living being—mine, yours, all of nature, past and future. It is enough!

It is enough that I have been part of family, community, and globe, and a wider “We,” consisting of:

Energetic vibrations that swirl through the universe, grounded by embodied beings and centered in Divine Love. It is enough!

It is enough that “Love Lives On” (title of original song by Oakdale Choir member Arnold Grice). It is enough!

# Holiday Bazaar



## *Prairiewoods Holiday Bazaar*

Saturday, Nov. 19, 8 a.m.—1 p.m.

Join us for Prairiewoods' annual *Holiday Bazaar* to jump start your Christmas shopping and get in the spirit of the season! There is no entrance fee, and coffee, warm apple cider, breakfast pastries and lunch will be available for purchase.

*The Holiday Bazaar features more than a dozen local artists offering handcrafted works of art including:*

- one-of-a-kind jewelry
- pottery
- mixed-media art
- brooms and baskets
- upcycled wool and denim items
- handknit hats, mittens, blankets and other goods
- Christmas ornaments
- baked goods
- fairy gardens and globe air plants
- journals
- purses
- and much, much more!

*In addition, the Prairiewoods Gift Shop offers:*

- Prairiewoods Tree-shirts in new kelly green (long-sleeve and short-sleeve)
- Trappistine caramels and chocolate-covered nuts
- felted wool ornaments, change purses and finger puppets
- Prairiewoods journals and reusable shopping bags
- books on spirituality and ecology
- wind chimes
- unique gifts for kids and adults
- and so much more!

*Don't miss this chance to shop handcrafted goods from local artists and get into the spirit of the season!*

The following are retreats and programs that Prairiewoods is hosting online via Zoom or in person in the next two months. For more information or to register, visit [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org) or call 319-395-6700.

### Silent Mindfulness Meditation Retreat

Friday, Nov. 11, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Nov. 13, 1 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Chris Klug

As Jon Kabat-Zinn writes in *Full Catastrophe Living*, “Life unfolds in moments. The healing power of mindfulness lies in living each one as fully as we can.” Mindfulness is the awareness of what is happening in the present moment as it is happening. It shapes a wise and compassionate relationship with and response to experience as it unfolds moment by moment. As Joseph Goldstein writes in *A Heart Full of Peace*, “Mindfulness is the quality and power of mind that is deeply aware of what’s happening—without commentary and without interference ... keeping us connected to brushing our teeth or having a cup of tea ... connected to the people around us.” Scientific research shows that mindfulness can positively affect stress resilience, physical and mental health, the ability to sustain attention, self-regulation of emotions, interpersonal skills, and general well-being and happiness. Join facilitator Chris Klug for a retreat to cultivate mindfulness in silence amid instruction, questioning, sitting meditation, walking meditation, mindful movement and mindful eating. All are welcome to participate, whether we are interested in beginning a formal mindfulness meditation practice or have been practicing for some time.

**Fee:** \$230 includes sessions, lodging and all meals

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



### Winter’s Wisdom, Rest & Renewal: A Solstice & Advent Retreat

Friday, Dec. 16, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, Dec. 18, 1 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel

Like quiet Earth in winter, we—amid the stress and conflicts of these times—need revitalizing ways to pause for rest and compassionately “letting be” amid the darkness so we can open to mysterious healing forces working with and in us to birth life anew. Join us for a weekend of Light; for cultivating Night Vision and awareness of Light in everything—including darkness, wintery seasons of our lives and in our own beings. Includes ways of transforming our relationship with uncertainty or fear and for experiencing mystical union with The Sacred amid The Dark Night, all of Creation, and in our bodies, minds and souls.

Specifically, this retreat includes inter-spiritual, mystical wisdom and practices to help cultivate ease, peace and awareness of Oneness. It taps winter’s wisdom from our brothers and sisters found in the rest of nature—quiet earth, still waters, spirit of Bear, night sky, moon and stars. It also includes soothing night prayers, a night walk in the woods and fire, as well as insights from Advent and Celtic Christian spiritual ways of being, Buddhism, Taoism, Qigong and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). It includes energy and compassion-based seated, reclined and Yin (tranquil, slow, and gentle) meditative mind-body-spirit practices, such as yogic sleep (Yoga Nidra), vibrational singing bowl sound healing and TCM-informed Qigong and Yin (tranquil) Yoga for rebalancing mind, body and spirit.

**Fee:** \$230 includes sessions, lodging and all meals

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



### Save the Date!

#### Prairiewoods’ Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 2023

Friday, April 28, 7–9 p.m., & Saturday, April 29, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

(in person at Wanatee Park’s Prairie Oak Lodge in Marion, Iowa, and online via Zoom)

Please welcome esteemed author and facilitator Jeremy Lent! Jeremy is the author of *The Patterning Instinct*, *A Cultural History of Humanity’s Search for Meaning* and *The Web of Meaning, Integrating Science and Traditional Wisdom to Find Our Place in the Universe* ([www.jeremylent.com](http://www.jeremylent.com)). It is a delight for Prairiewoods that he will be joining us LIVE and in person in spring 2023, along with our favorite musician-of-Earth, Sara Thomsen ([www.sarathomsen.com](http://www.sarathomsen.com)).

Jeremy is well known for his eclectic approach to the integration of science and holistic spirituality, and he is also quite adept at presenting embodied spiritual wisdom streams across many traditions. His arc of presentation for the weekend will be a brief overview based on his book *The Patterning Instinct* on Friday evening. On Saturday morning, he will highlight his work on Liology ([www.jeremylent.com/liology.html](http://www.jeremylent.com/liology.html)), an integrated, embodied approach to sustainable living and spiritual groundedness. On Saturday afternoon, he will introduce his approach to co-creating an Ecological Civilization. Sara’s soulful music will be woven throughout, moving us all into sacred, shared “We” space, where our imagination and dreams will meet the world’s great needs. We are the ones we’ve been anticipating!

Please join us for what promises to be an inspiring, soul-transforming event!

The early-bird cost is just \$90 and limited lodging is available, so register today at [www.Prairiewoods.org/Spirituality-in-the-21st-century](http://www.Prairiewoods.org/Spirituality-in-the-21st-century).



## Prayer Experience Series

**Tuesdays, Nov. 1–Dec. 20,  
11:30 a.m.–12 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Kim Seward & Diane Wheeler Dunn

We are blessed with many ways to pray and reflect, including songful prayer, contemplative prayer, visio divina, embodied prayer, silent prayer, guided meditation and many others. All are welcome to join this ongoing prayer series via Zoom and experience the joys of prayer and meditation together.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## Woodland Wednesdays

**Wednesdays, Nov. 2–Dec. 14,  
9 a.m.–12 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** August Stolba & Nancy Hoffman, FSPA

Are you interested in learning about prairie and woodland restoration, vegetable gardening and food forests, or just like to help Prairiewoods, drive tractors and move logs? Join us every Wednesday morning for our regular volunteer hours. Do those times or activities not work for you? Don't worry—there are plenty of other times and ways to get involved!

Reach out to August at [astolba@prairiewoods.org](mailto:astolba@prairiewoods.org).

**Fee:** Free



## Resting in Awareness: The Art & Practice of Mindfulness Meditation

**Wednesdays; Nov. 2, Nov. 9,  
Nov. 16, Nov. 30, Dec. 7 &  
Dec. 14; 5:30–7 p.m.** (via Zoom)

**Retreat Day: Saturday, Dec. 10,  
9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.** (in person)

**Facilitator:** Chris Klug

*Offered in Partnership with Cedar Memorial*

*“Meditation is the cultivation of that gesture of welcoming*

*unflinchingly whatever arises—of welcoming it wholeheartedly into awareness.”*

—Jon Kabat-Zinn

Are you interested in developing a mindfulness meditation practice, or in renewing the practice you began months or years ago, or in deepening the practice you have now? Participants in this class will learn and practice mindfulness meditation as described by Jon Kabat-Zinn in his book *Mindfulness for Beginners*. Some of the topics to be explored include what mindfulness meditation is and isn't; the central role of intention and attitude in meditation practice; posture: standing, sitting, lying down or walking; silence; working with physical and emotional pain; breathing and the body; and thinking and thoughts.

This series will meet online via Zoom weekly for 90 minutes for meditation practice, group sharing/discussion (optional) and instruction. Participants will be asked to do guided meditation practice each day when not in class. If you are unable to attend the session at Prairiewoods on Dec. 10, you can still take the class. Participants need access to Jon Kabat-Zinn's book *Mindfulness for Beginners*.

**Fee:** \$130 (Scholarships are available if needed.)

## Metta Yoga

**Mondays & Thursdays, Nov. 3–Dec. 22, 9:30–10:30 a.m., 10:45–11:45 a.m. & 5:30–6:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Heather English

Experience the healing powers of meditative yoga from the spiritual environment and natural beauty of Prairiewoods. Join us in person as we link our movements with our breath and cultivate strength, flexibility and relaxation through regular hatha-style yoga classes. RYT-200 Hour Certified Yoga Alliance Instructor Heather English offers Gentle/Beginner's Yoga every Monday and Thursday. People of all fitness levels and abilities are encouraged to participate whenever available. Registration is required for each session.

**Fee:** \$99 for eleven-punch card or \$60 for six-punch card, one punch per session

## Go Deeper Thursdays

**Thursdays; Nov. 3, Nov. 17, Dec. 1 & Dec. 15; 4–5 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Ellen Bruckner & Laura A. Weber, Ph.D.

Go Deeper Thursdays emerged in the context of the global pandemic, or as Prairiewoods calls it, the *PanDeepening*. Our reflective and lively conversations opened us to spiritual deepening, providing a sacred space to share our PanDeepening awareness, a place where we explored venues for collective presencing and delving into the wider “We” space. As our journey meandered through topics associated with inter-breathing and collective consciousness, we embraced diverse resources for consideration. Through simple breathing meditations, poetry, practicing mindfulness, storytelling, re-linguaging, listening to creation's song and many small group experiences, we have been learning to read the collective and listen deeply to our emergent, inter-connected wisdom. In the process, we are becoming more expansive, more inclusive, recognizing our place in the wider “We.” Who is this “We” that we mean? It is wider than our own ego or individual selves, wider than our most intimate circles, our community, work, worship and social circles, and wider even than our human community. It is no less than the “We” of all creation. A one-time registration for November and December is required.

**Fee:** \$10 per month

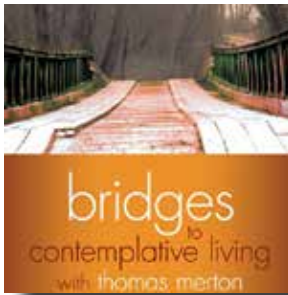
## Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton

**Thursdays; Nov. 3, Nov. 17, Dec. 1 & Dec. 15; 7–8:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Carole Butz

The practice of contemplative living helps us respond to everyday experiences with greater awareness of our connections with God and others. It becomes a positive force in our lives and provides direction for our journey, enabling us to embrace our truest selves.

This group meets via Zoom on the first and third Thursdays of each month. We use the *Bridges to Contemplative Living* series, which includes excerpts from the writings of Thomas Merton and other authors, to explore the truths of human existence.



The process involves readings, reflections and contemplative dialogue. Book purchase is required after your first session. Please register for your first session to get the Zoom link.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## Going Inward with Sounds & Vibrations

**Mondays; Nov. 7, Nov. 21, Dec. 5 & Dec. 19; 6:30–7:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Kathy Broghammer

Experience sound, stillness, playfulness and relaxation through the enigmatic vibrations of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls.



During this in-person hour, we connect with our inner selves through the song of bowls. We are invited to sit or lie down to listen and just be. We hear the sounds and feel the vibrations of the singing bowls going inward. Let's let our souls rest and allow ourselves to be recreated! Registration is required.

**Fee:** \$10 per session

## Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitchers

**Tuesdays, Nov. 8 & Dec. 13, 9:30–11 a.m.**

**Facilitators:** participants

Practice knitting and stitching in the company of new friends! This is a

group of crafters of various skill levels who create handmade goods for charity. New participants are always welcome, including those who are new to knitting and crocheting. Together we create hats, mittens, blankets and baby items for charity. Grab your needles and join us! This group meets in person on the second Tuesday morning of each month, and it will resume meeting on the fourth Wednesday evening of each month in January.

**Fee:** Free



## Evening Centering Prayer

**Tuesdays; Nov. 8, Nov. 22 & Dec. 13; 5:30–7 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Judith Smith

Come to Prairiewoods for Evening Centering Prayer on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. This is a prayer/support group for people who enjoy centering prayer, a form of meditation focused on silent prayer. In this time of silence, we relax, empty our minds and find God's presence within us. Sessions stand alone.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## Nature & Forest Therapy Experiences

**Full Moon Nature & Forest Therapy Walks:** Wednesdays, Nov. 9 & Dec. 7, 6–8 p.m.

**Afternoon Experiences:** Mondays, Nov. 14 & Dec. 12, 2:30–3:45 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Emelia Sautter

Join certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide Emelia Sautter and the land for a walk with the natural world. Experience Forest Therapy, a sensory-focused practice that invites us to slow down and be present with self and the natural world around us. According to the Association of Nature and Forest

Therapy, "Forest Therapy is a practice that supports health and wellness through guided immersion



in forests and other environments to promote the well-being of both people and the land." Time with our nature kin reduces stress and depression, improves cognitive functioning, boosts our immune system, regulates blood pressure, improves relationships, increases feelings of gratitude and much more. Registration is required by the previous day. Please bring a water bottle and dress for being outdoors.

**Fee:** \$20 per evening session, \$15 per afternoon session

## Men Exploring Faith Thursdays; Nov. 10, Dec. 8 & Dec. 22; 4–5:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Linzy Martin

Behavioral scientists and spiritual guides have noted a major transformation in the life direction of many men as we mature. It may happen gradually or abruptly, as early as our 20s or in our 50s or 60s. Some men never make this shift, described as a change from goal drivenness to receptivity, from ego to wisdom. The transition can start from the inside (*Why am I doing what I'm doing?*) or the outside (from a loss or threat), and it may seem disruptive while on the way to being life-enhancing. Join with a small group of reflective men in honest conversation about these changes. This group meets in person with an online option available on the second and fourth Thursdays monthly.

**Fee:** Free-will offering

## Day of Self Renewal Mondays, Nov. 14 & Dec. 12, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Kim Seward

Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features

your choice of two services, group guided meditation, singing bowl prayer, a private guest room, a fresh lunch, and access to the labyrinth and all that Prairiewoods has to offer. (Choose from massage, head and shoulder massage, reflexology, healing touch, spiritual direction, Nature & Forest Therapy, yoga or chair yoga.) Registration, a nonrefundable/nontransferable deposit of \$50 and your top three services choices are required eight days in advance. (Masks and vaccination may be required by the holistic provider.)

**Fee:** \$110 includes two services, guided meditation, singing bowl prayer, private guest room and lunch (or \$95 without a private guest room)

### **Singing Bowl Prayer** **Mondays, Nov. 14 & Dec. 12,** **12:45–1:30 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Kathy Broghammer

Throughout history, singing bowls have been used around the world to foster meditation, relaxation, prayer and mind-body-spirit wellness. In these in-person sessions, we let the resonant sounds of Himalayan and crystal singing bowls relax the entire body and create a pathway for clearer connection with the divine. We are invited to just receive and breathe. Registration is required by noon.

**Fee:** \$8 per session

### **Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Group**

**Wednesdays, Nov. 16 & Dec. 21,**  
**5:30–7 p.m.**

**Facilitator:** Jamie Siela, LISW  
*Offered in Partnership with*  
*UnityPoint Hospice*

In grief, our very foundation can be rocked. Take time to connect with others in grief and engage the creative spark. This monthly grief group is open to anyone grieving loss through death. On the third Wednesday of each month, explore a different creative art medium. On Nov. 16, we will spend our time together using small strips of yarn to create a unique animal silhouette. These strips are similar to the many layers of emotions we experience in grief. On Dec. 21, we will create disc bracelets. In grief we all experience different journeys

that are unique to our own experiences. A basic bracelet pattern will be provided, but we will use our creativity to differ our projects. Registration is required nine days in advance. This group is a hybrid, offered both online and in person.  
**Fee:** Free includes all art supplies

### **Prairiewoods Holiday Bazaar** **Saturday, Nov. 19,** **8 a.m.–1 p.m.**

See page 6 for details.

### **Practice Ancient Fire-Making** **Saturday, Nov. 19, 2–7 p.m.**

**Facilitators:** Fred Meyer & August Stolba

*Offered in Partnership with*  
*Backyard Abundance*

You may have seen wilderness survival programs showing skilled people easily creating campfires without matches or lighters. You can learn those same valuable fire-making skills to become more confident in your hiking and camping endeavors. During this class, we will experience the basics of friction fire-starting using a bow drill. We will slowly wander through the woods, carefully identifying and gathering ideal species of trees, barks and grasses for a primitive fire. We will then learn to craft those natural materials into a bow, fire board, spindle, handhold and tinder bundle. Proper techniques for spinning up an ember from the tools we create will then be learned and practiced. Tips will be shared about tending the wilderness to increase its health when foraging for materials. We will make new plant friends and enjoy a closer, mutualistic relationship with Mother Earth. Afterward, a rich, forest tea and snacks will be enjoyed around a fire we helped bring to life. All are invited, no matter your level of outdoor experience. Everyone will leave with an improved understanding of how to successfully make a fire. The class is hosted in collaboration with Backyard Abundance. Please register on their website at [www.BackyardAbundance.org](http://www.BackyardAbundance.org).  
**Fee:** \$90

**Volunteering:** Do you want to learn how you can get more involved at Prairiewoods? Learn all about our volunteer opportunities at [www.Prairiewoods.org/Volunteer](http://www.Prairiewoods.org/Volunteer).

### **Guest House Chairs:**

Prairiewoods recently celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee and the incredible people, animals, plants, trees and land who have helped manifest the dream of Prairiewoods! Founded in 1996, Prairiewoods accumulated many furnishings second-hand at that time. We have done our very best to steward these items over the years.

Now in its 26<sup>th</sup> year, Prairiewoods needs to responsibly replace some of its original furnishings. Over the years, guests have shared that the bedroom chairs were not comfortable for reading, and many of the rocking chairs were difficult for guests with stability concerns.

Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, we were able to purchase 23 simple, sturdy, comfortable chairs for our Guest House and Hermitage bedrooms. Thank you so much for your generosity! Be sure to check out the chairs during your next overnight stay!



We appreciate all of the generous people who donate their time, money and other gifts to Prairiewoods! For a complete, up-to-date list between newsletters, please visit [www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate](http://www.Prairiewoods.org/Donate).

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## HONORARIA

*In honor of Jenifer Hanson*  
 Marj English, OSF  
*In honor of Nancy Hoffman,*  
 FSPA, & Ann Jackson, PBVM  
 Anonymous  
*In honor of Nancy Hoffman,*  
 FSPA, & Lucille Winnike, FSPA  
 Andrey Schneider  
*In honor of Ann Jackson, PBVM*  
 Mary Ann Maynard  
*In honor of Dorothy Dvorak*  
 Mullaley  
 Meredith Crawford

*In honor of Prairiewoods staff*  
 M.L. Folkedahl-meehleder  
*In honor of August Stolba*  
 David Maier & Matthew  
 McGrane

## ENDOWMENTS

Marie Des Jarlais, FSPA

## MEMORIALS

*In memory of Martha Barry*  
 Marj English, OSF  
*In memory of Frank Carolan*  
 Jan Reiger  
*In memory of Marie Diebold*  
 Mary Mockler  
*In memory of Jo Ann Gehling*  
 Jerry Gehling  
 Joann Gehling, FSPA  
 Relatives & friends  
 Gary & Jolene Riesselman  
 Georgia & Robert Von Arx  
 Allen & Diane Vonnahme  
*In memory of Donna Gelski*  
 Prairiewoods Knitters &  
 Stitchers  
*In memory of Deborah Godwin*  
 Laurie Erlacher  
*In memory of Tara King*  
 Renee Sneitzer Kooker  
*In memory of Larry Kennedy*  
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 Nordstrom  
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*In memory of Larry Kennedy*  
 (cont.) Rebecca Wilson  
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*In memory of Mary Severidt*  
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## IN-KIND DONATIONS

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120 E Boyson Rd  
Hiawatha IA 52233

You may send this by mail, email [ecospirit@prairiewoods.org](mailto: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 "Prairiewoods FSC" on:



The holidays are right around the corner! Are you ready to snuggle in for a cozy Christmas? Join us at the *Holiday Bazaar* on *Saturday, Nov. 19*, as we kick off the holiday season with homemade goods from more than a dozen local artists! Learn all about it on page 6.

